

Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, publicity

Jewish tradition calls for Jews to bury our own and it is the obligation of every Jewish community to do so. This obligation, however, does not come without a high price tag.

Although the Charlotte Jewish community has historically prospered and flourished, the hard economic times our country has suffered has greatly impacted our community and the level of giving that it once was so committed to. No Jewish agency has been untouched by the effects of the economic downturn and the Charlotte Hebrew Cemetery Association is no exception.

As a non-profit organization, the Hebrew Cemetery depends largely on donations, annual membership dues and the sale of graves for the resources needed to maintain the sanctified grounds of the cemetery in perpetuity for all those who precede us in eternal life. The Cemetery Association's mission is a commitment to God's commandment that we bury our own, and the cemetery has done so, regardless of the deceased individual or family's ability to pay. The Cemetery Association has long struggled with the issue of the burial of indigent Jews and the current reality is that this mitzvah is becoming more and more difficult to do as inflation continues to drive prices up, while the horrific economy drives donations down. The total cost of a funeral

today ranges from \$6,000 - \$11,000 and obviously no one organization can handle that burden on its own.

The cemetery is leading a community wide approach to deal with this dilemma. The Jewish Federation of Charlotte, along with the Temples and Jewish Family Services, are all working cooperatively to create a common plan in order to meet the crisis. Currently, Jewish Federation funds about 10% of the overall operating budget of the cemetery which allows some measure of assistance. In addition, Jewish Family Services qualifies individuals as to the level of need and pays towards the cost of burial. Local funeral homes also help. The point is, however, that due to rising cemetery costs and concerns of elder care givers for end of life planning, we need a community wide participatory plan sooner rather than later. No one organization can handle the mitzvah of burying our own when the very minimal cost for an indigent burial is \$6,000.

As a means of proactively meeting this great challenge head on, Mr. Norman Steinberger has created and endowed the Steinberger Funeral Assistance Fund. The goal of this fund is for it to be the collection point for monies collected specifically for

the fulfillment of the commandment to bury our own and it will become the distribution point to cover all indigent burial expenses, including funeral service, grave, grave markers and perpetual care.

In the secular world, February is Random Acts of Kindness month. In the Jewish world everyday is a day for G'melut Hasadim (loving acts of kindness). To show your own loving act of kindness, make a donation today to the Steinberger Funeral Assistance Fund. Send your checks payable to the Hebrew Cemetery and earmarked for the Steinberger Funeral Assistance Fund directly to the Charlotte Hebrew Cemetery Association, 4229 Peggy Lane, Charlotte, NC 28227.

For more information about membership benefits, graves, pre-paid funeral costs, endowments, and/or including the cemetery in your estate planning, contact Cemetery Director, Sandra Goldman at 704-576-1859 or 704-944-6854 or director@hebrewcemetery.org.

Visit the cemetery website at www.hebrewcemetery.org.

The cemetery would like to thank Les Bergen for donations made to the cemetery and to the Steinberger Funeral Assistance Fund in December. ☆



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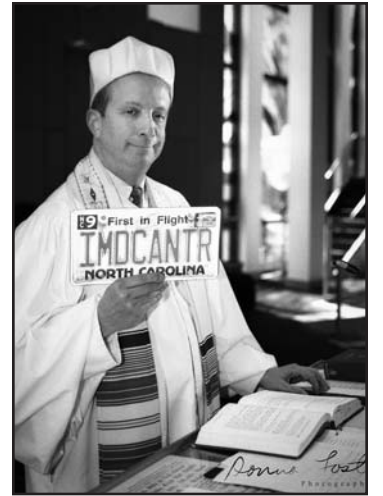
Charlotte Photographer, Donna Foster, Seeks Those with Jewish (Yiddish or Hebrew) Words on Vanity License Plates

Award winning photographer, Donna Foster, is seeking people who have a vanity license plate with Jewish (including Yiddish or Hebrew) words on it for a project on stories related to people's vanity plates. According to Ms. Foster, she wants to know the story someone is trying to tell in only eight letters.

Foster, a portrait photographer is interested in people's stories and uses her camera to tell stories. According to Donna, "Some car tags are silly and some are serious but all have a story behind them and it's the story that interests me. As a photographer, and a Jewish woman, this project let's me continue to focus on portraiture and explore Jewish stories at the same time."

Donna was one of eight photographers, who in 2005-06 documented the daily lives of Jewish, Christian and Muslim families for the Families of Abraham project that was first exhibited at the Museum of the New South in 2006.

Donna Foster is based in Charlotte, NC. She has studied



Cantor Roochvarg has one of the license plates that photographer Donna Foster has already photographed for her Jewish Vanity Plate project.

and worked in photography for over 30 years and today is the owner of a boutique style portrait studio. Donna can be reached at donna@donnafooster.com or 704-525-5188 or donna@donnafooster.com. ☆

JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER CHARLOTTE
www.jewishcharlotte.org



Photos by Emily Mattos, ArtShots Photography

I grew up in a small town, where I attended services and celebrated holidays with my family. As I grew older, was confirmed, married and began my own family, I developed an immense pride in Judaism. I wanted to instill this in my children. I became a religious school teacher, where I continued to learn as I taught these wonderful children, our next generation. I hope I have instilled the love and pride that I feel, as we have celebrated our holidays, learned about our rich traditions, and studied the history that has brought us where we are today. **FRANCES LISS**

It's what being Jewish feels like



I'm a convert. We belong to Lubavitch. I've been to Israel. I have found a home!
MICHAEL RAFFLER

PRIDE CONNECTION IDENTITY

Members of the Charlotte community share their thoughts and feelings.

Every day of the year, the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte works with hundreds of local, national and international agencies to transform lives and deliver hope, dignity and comfort to millions of Jews here at home, in Israel and around the world.

Please consider a gift to our 2011 Annual Campaign, and know that you're making a difference in so many lives.

It's what being Jewish feels like.