

## Community News

# Cemetery President's Annual Message

By Mike Littauer, president,  
Hebrew Cemetery Association

If the old adage that "hell have no fury like a woman" is true, then Florence did not disappoint. Fortunately and due to good planning, we did not incur any damage to the Cemetery. It was a difficult decision to cancel the Annual Memorial Service, however the safety of our family and friends always takes precedence over an event, even one as important and meaningful as our Annual Memorial Service. Due to scheduling difficulties we will not be able to conduct that service this year and look forward to seeing you all in 2019. What follows is the President's message I was to give at that service edited to comply with the space requirements of the CJN:

2018 has been a busy and productive year for the Hebrew Cemetery Association. With your support we have been able to begin to position ourselves for the future by bringing our back office operations into the 21st century.

We continually look for ways to make our Cemetery more effi-

cient and to take advantage of the talent and passion of those I am proud to serve with on the Cemetery Board of Directors. To that end we reorganized our Board of Directors in to four working committees that are focused on four key areas of our Cemetery business, each with their own chair - Building and Grounds, Robert Valenstein; Finance and Technology, Barry Blau; Outreach and Events, Brian Yesowitch; and Executive Committee and Ritual, Mike Littauer. This has given us both the focus and productivity we needed to manage the Cemetery and stay productive 365 days a year.

In January, we contracted to move our manual systems to a cloud based system that will make our operations more efficient and provide our community with an electronic interface that will access to plot locations, family histories, community history, personal accounts, and other essential information. On the business side it will give us better control over many aspects of our grounds management, our

membership lists, management reporting, and accounting. We have been working closely with our partner CIMS since January and will begin moving to this system in the 4th quarter of this year. This is and continues to be a monumental effort and task and I want to take a moment to thank Barry Blau and our entire Finance and Technology committee for their extraordinary work on this project.

We have initiated a "redo" of the HCA website. Long overdue, we are in the process of finalizing our wish list and working with a new website design company to make our site user friendly, relevant, and a "go to" for current Cemetery information and events. Again, many thanks to our Finance and Technology committee for their hard work on this much needed project.

Since the completion of our memorial building many in our community have preferred to have their funeral service at the Cemetery. The Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel was designed to seat 50 people comfortably and

we have had situations where the congregation has exceeded the capacity of the room. In September, we completed the installation of a closed circuit TV and sound system in the adjoining Gorelick Gathering room so up to 125 congregants may be seated and participate in the service comfortably.

I want to take a moment to thank our Legacy Members. Your gift and commitment to our Cemetery is greatly appreciated and helps ensure we will be there for our community in perpetuity. I also want to thank our Board of Directors and volunteers whose dedication and passion inspire me every day. And thank you to Sandra Goldman, our Director, Robert Taylor our Groundskeeper, and Arlene Lott our Administra-



tive Assistant for their dedication and commitment to our Jewish Community 24/7, 365 days a year.

Mark Twain once said that "the secret of getting ahead is getting started." I think that sums up 2018 for our Cemetery team pretty well.

May the new year bring you, your families, and your friends good health, happiness, and peace. ✨

# The Ruach Keeps Spreading the Joy of Judaism

The Ruach, Charlotte's only band playing modern Jewish music, continues its mission of spreading the joy of Judaism through new Jewish musical experiences that are meant to create and maintain personal connections and inspire and engage people to embrace the religion and all that it has to offer. After hosting The Rosh Hashanah Experience on September 10, the Ruach travelled to Raleigh on Friday, September 28 to provide Temple Beth Shalom with The Ruach Shabbat Experience. The congregation sang, clapped, and let the spirit move them. Lisa Turkel of Raleigh had this to say about The Experience, "If Fleetwood Mac were to lead a Shabbat service, this is what it would be like; it was amazing and uplifting." Her friend, Linda Green Bradley from Durham, chimed in, "It made my heart sing."



Joe Buchanan

Temple Beth Shalom's Director of Religious School, Lynn Calnek, beamed, "I'm over the moon about having had The Ruach here at our Temple tonight for Shabbat. Everyone was saying that they didn't want The Experience to end. The energy of the evening was phenomenal. We will definitely have The Ruach back soon."

On October 21, The Ruach was the headliner at the Greensboro Jewish Festival at Temple Emanuel. The band played two half-hour sets, each set containing music from both their first CD - *The Ruach: Real. Jewish. Rock*, as well as from their untitled, upcoming CD. One of the new songs, "Adonai S'fatai" ("Open Up My Mouth") really got the crowd up and out of their seats. Here's how Dan Ruda, The Ruach's bassist

and backup vocalist describes the song, "It takes the Hebrew words of the original liturgy, adds in some English translation and interpretation, and puts all of that to music that is a cross between funk, rap, and classic rock. It really is a great groove with a lot of spirituality! If it doesn't get you going, nothing will."

Back again in Charlotte, on October 26 the band took The Ruach Shabbat Experience to a new venue: Heist Brewery in NoDa. Franklin Kaunitz, the band's regular violin player was unavailable to play for The Experience so the band invited professional fiddler, Tom Eure, to sit in. His bluegrass style added a country flavor to The Ruach's music. Tom plays guitar, as well, and during the time of personal reflection played the very moving song "How Did We Use Our Time," from his album, *With Grateful Heart*.

In addition to playing for The Ruach Shabbat Experience itself, the band has a goal of bringing other Jewish artists to Charlotte a few times a year. Said Peter Levinson, lead guitarist and spokesperson for The Ruach, "There is a lot of new Jewish music out there and we want people here in Charlotte to have an opportunity to experience it." With this in mind, on November 9, The Ruach will be hosting Joe Buchanan at The Rabbit Hole in Plaza Midwood in what will be an unforgettable evening.

Joe is one of the biggest names in new Jewish music today and calls his music, "Jewish Americana." He is a Jew by choice and weaves the story of his spiritual journey to Judaism into his music. He will be leading a Shabbat Experience that he designed and with music he wrote. Through his music he will share his very moving and compelling story.

Admission to The Shabbat Experience featuring Joe Buchanan is free but due to the size of The Rabbit Hole only 150 tickets will be available.

To keep up with The Ruach, like them on Facebook /theruachband, and follow the band on Instagram @the.ruach.new.jewish.music and Twitter @TheRuachSpirit.

And, if you'd like to get on their email distribution list, send an email to the.ruach.band@gmail.com. ✨

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