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Scott is a long time community volunteer, leader, and sponsor in the Jewish community since 1985. Both he and Tricia, along with their dental team, volunteer their time and expertise to make a positive impact in our community.

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Community News

Final Wishes

By Sandra Goldman

In some ways, we are a nation of planners. We make reservations weeks in advance; make plans to attend movie premiers months in advance and schedule dream vacation years in advance. But when it comes to deciding on that final resting place, we aren't as quick to plan that far ahead.

It comes as no surprise to cemetery operators that choosing your final destination does not top the majority of people's to-do-list. In fact, indications point to a continuing downward trend for advance sales.

In 1995, the AARP conducted its first Funeral and Burial Planners Survey, targeting individuals at least 50 years old who had pre-planned or prepaid for a funeral or burial in advance of the need for these services for themselves or someone else. Updated surveys were conducted in 1998, 1999, and, most recently in 2007. Amongst the findings from the latest survey: 23% of respondents prepaid at least a portion of the expenses for themselves or someone else. About one in four isn't too bad one might argue, until you consider the rate was 28% in 1995 and 32% in 1998. Why the decline? Experts agree on a number of reasons: the economy, cremations, and the option for memorialization and more permanent final disposition.

Economic uncertainty has stopped many families from purchasing something they may not

need for years. A lot of people don't know what the future holds, and don't know what's happening in Washington, D.C.; people, who think about how they will pay for their children's college tuition, how they will pay for daily expenses. They are distracted because of all of these things, and when you get distracted you tend to focus on the right now. Plus planning ahead is for many considered a big taboo.

It is no big revelation that the situation is not that much different at the Hebrew Cemetery. Most people contact us when they have a death in their family or circle of friends. That is when it hits home. That is when they call us to start the process of pre-arrangements.

There is nothing scary about pre-planning. One can meet with me at my office at Shalom Park or make an appointment to tour the brand new memorial building, walk the grounds and see firsthand which plots are available for purchase. Once the decision has been made on the plot - be it one where only flat markers are allowed or one where an upright marker may be placed - a purchase agreement and contract is filled out. The purchaser has two years to pay off the plot free of interest as long as at least quarterly payments are being made.

Pre-planning takes away a lot of stress a family may experience when they don't have the luxury of time and choice. How much easier to deal with everything with only one phone call from the com-



fort of one's home to the funeral home, which then will contact the cemetery. How much easier, when one doesn't have to come out to the cemetery to choose plots at the time of need and when one doesn't have to deal with the sudden expenses that have to be paid up front, before even a funeral can take place. Not to forget that unless one has been a member of the Hebrew Cemetery for at least two years; an at-need funeral can cost a couple of thousand dollars more than a pre-planned one.

So next time you sit together with your spouse, partner, children, or parents consider a conversation about your final resting place. Only once you have made your arrangements will you realize what great comfort you give to your family and how much at peace you can feel. That is the moment when you realize that pre-planning is one of the biggest gifts you can give to you and your loved ones.

If you wish to make pre-planning arrangements please contact Director Sandra Goldman at 704-576-1859 or email at director@hebrewcemetery.org Please let us know as well if you are interested in leaving a Legacy gift to the cemetery. Your bequest will ensure that these holy grounds will always be cared for not only today but in perpetuity. ✪

Federation Past Presidents

(Continued from page 6)

Shop on Trade Street. After a particularly difficult financial period, his collections could not meet the needs of the underprivileged in our community; therefore, Marvin Bienstock, the Federation Executive Director, and I were inspired to create a Federation Social Service Committee. This Committee eventually grew into Jewish Family Services. My involvement with Federation began because I wanted my children, my niece, and nephews to have a strong Jewish community of which they could be proud. And now I watch as our Federation grows stronger each year. ... To me that legacy is worth more than anything.

Jill Newman:

I consider my greatest accomplishment during my term of office to be the hiring of Sue Worrel as Executive Director. Her leadership has greatly enhanced the status of Federation within our community. I also am proud to have brought on board many of Federation's current leaders who are so ably leading Federation into the future.

Rich Osborne:

For many years our Federation allocated dollars based on the current year campaign. We paid the local recipient agencies and then, if there was a shortfall from our goal, we'd send UJA its final payment. Over the years, we accumulated a significant debt to UJA, and the proportion of the cam-

paign sent to Israel and Diaspora Jewry steadily declined to about 30%.

We finally settled with UJA, and agreed to

- * annually allocate at least 30% of the campaign to overseas needs
- * pay UJA along with the local agencies
- * allocate the prior year campaign instead of the ongoing campaign

In retrospect, I realize this was a great deal which served Israel and Diaspora Jews, plus made our Federation financially stronger.

Sara Schreibman:

One of the highlights during my presidency was attending the General Assembly in Jerusalem. The North Carolina delegates walked through the streets of Jerusalem with GA attendees from around the world. We extended our trip and made our first connections with our Hadera "family." I recall visiting their JCC, spending a day at the High School, meeting wonderful women who have become life-long friends. The P2Gether program has since become a central focus of our entire community - teacher, teen, and firefighter exchanges have built human bridges between Charlotte and Hadera.

Emily Zimmern:

I had the privilege of serving as president at an extraordinary moment in Jewish history - a time when Char-

lotte was asked to step up and become an active partner in the relief and rescue of Soviet Jewry. Images of visiting Moscow in March 1990 on the first UJA Operation Exodus mission to the former Soviet Union will be with me forever - the excitement was palpable as people prepared for the first communal Seders in more than 70 years, as children studied Hebrew for the first time, as Shabbat services were allowed without government interference, and as Jews of all ages waited in long lines that wrapped around city blocks to request exit visas.

Leaving behind the dark cold of Russia and arriving in the bright warmth of Israel, we saw firsthand the comprehensive planning underway in anticipation of welcoming these newest olim. As we headed home, all of us on the mission knew that we would do whatever it would take to ensure adequate resources for the resettlement of 1,000,000 Russian Jews. Charlotte answered the call. Penny Eisenberg mobilized local volunteers to re-settle Russian families here and led by co-chairs Meg Goldstein and Jared Schwartz, our community raised \$1 million over and above the annual campaign for Operation Exodus. ✪



Jewish Federation
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