

# Protecting the tradition

By MAIA FREEDMAN, Staff Writer

Raising community awareness and support is a top concern of the Jewish Cemetery and Burial Association of Greater Pittsburgh. Born in March, the organization is only the second of its kind in the US, in addressing rising concerns about maintaining older Jewish cemeteries.

According to Howard Reinfeld of the United Jewish Federation, the concept began with a task force of the Synagogue-Federation Committee of UJF, operating over a period of years. As a merger of the Hebrew Burial Association and the Jewish Cemetery Association, the Jewish Cemetery and Burial Association carries out the functions of both the former groups.

The new group provides dignified traditional burial for indigent Jews in its

## SHUC urges citizens to have Block Watch

August 4th is National Light-Up Night. The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition is making a special push to organize block parties throughout Squirrel Hill and Point Breeze. A block party is a first step toward organizing a Block Watch organization. They fight crime by helping citizens become aware of their neighbors.

Call the Coalition at 422-7666 for help with planning neighborhood crime prevention programs.

Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery and holds a yearly group unveiling before Rosh Hashana. It also preserves Jewish cemeteries whose fraternal organizations or congregations are no longer in existence, or whose remaining members are no longer able to physically or financially care for the property.

In both functions the group is performing what Jewish tradition considers a high ranking mitzva, aiding fellow Jews who will never be able to return the favor in their lifetime.

According to Nelson Young, chairman of the former Syn-Fed task force and now chairman of the board, "It's a caring concept. We're a growing young organization and will work to accommodate the needs of the community."

A board with officers, member cemeteries, and community support make up the structure of the Association. According to Libby Lee Forman, corresponding secretary and 15-year member of the former Hebrew Burial Association, board meetings have increased from once or twice a year to two or three times a month -- a reflection of the group's activity.



BOARD members of the Jewish Cemetery and Burial Association of Greater Pittsburgh include, from left: Nelson Young, Howard Reinfeld, Harvey Wolsh, Blair Jacobson, Eric Kruman, Libby Foreman, Bruce Horovitz, Carol Beth Jaffe, Ron Hartman and Bernie Bauer.

The model for the Association is the Jewish Cemetery Association of MA, which Forman estimates has been in existence for 10 years. The Boston group began with three cemeteries, and now serves as an umbrella for at least 50. Reinfeld remarks that he wouldn't be surprised to see similar organizations arising all over the country, to oversee cemeteries begun around 80 to 100 years ago.

Forman relates that the Pittsburgh board flew in a speaker from the Boston group who "described his group's organization and made suggestions for how to structure this one."

Young recalls, "He emphasized the need to communicate within the community. Unlike Boston, Pittsburgh is unable to commence with major endowments." Thus, they are seek-

ing grassroots support.

The board has also compiled a list of Greater Pittsburgh Jewish cemeteries, including those in Beaver, Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, and has viewed videos of its own cemeteries, and several of prospective member cemeteries to assess the maintenance needs of each.

According to Young, "We are visiting prospective cemeteries, and working with groups who have come to us." They will take 'before' and 'after' videos "to show what the cemeteries can look like under proper management. This is one of the modern techniques available to bring awareness," about the refurbishing process.

Speaking of the group's older Chesed Shel Emeth cemetery, dating back to the 1800s, Young remarks, "the realization of the con-

dition of the cemetery comes home when one views the videos."

One interesting outcome of their work, he adds, is "finding geneological family relationships within cemeteries," that the group will be able to preserve.

Although funding is provided by the UJF, private donations from the community at large will be a very important source for the new group.

"We need a great deal

of public exposure," explains Forman. "Once people are made aware of the need, we'll be able to raise the funds to carry on our future work -- taking care of the cemeteries of Greater Pittsburgh after the people in our age group are gone. We need the firm support of people from the Pittsburgh Jewish community."

For information contact Reinfeld at the UJF, 681-8000. President is Bernard Bauer.



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## Did You Know...

...That oddly, most cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever do NOT occur in the Rocky Mountain area.

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...That it takes an oyster about 5 years to make one pearl.

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...That Australia is the only continent in the world that contains only one country.

And, here's another interesting fact...

Summer is just beginning, and it's SALE time already, with terrific selection in all sizes of Spring and Summer clothing and sportswear. With 20% off and free alterations, conditions are ideal for adding that missing piece or satisfying an urge to splurge.



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391-1288  
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## ADOPTION

All you want to know

All you need to know

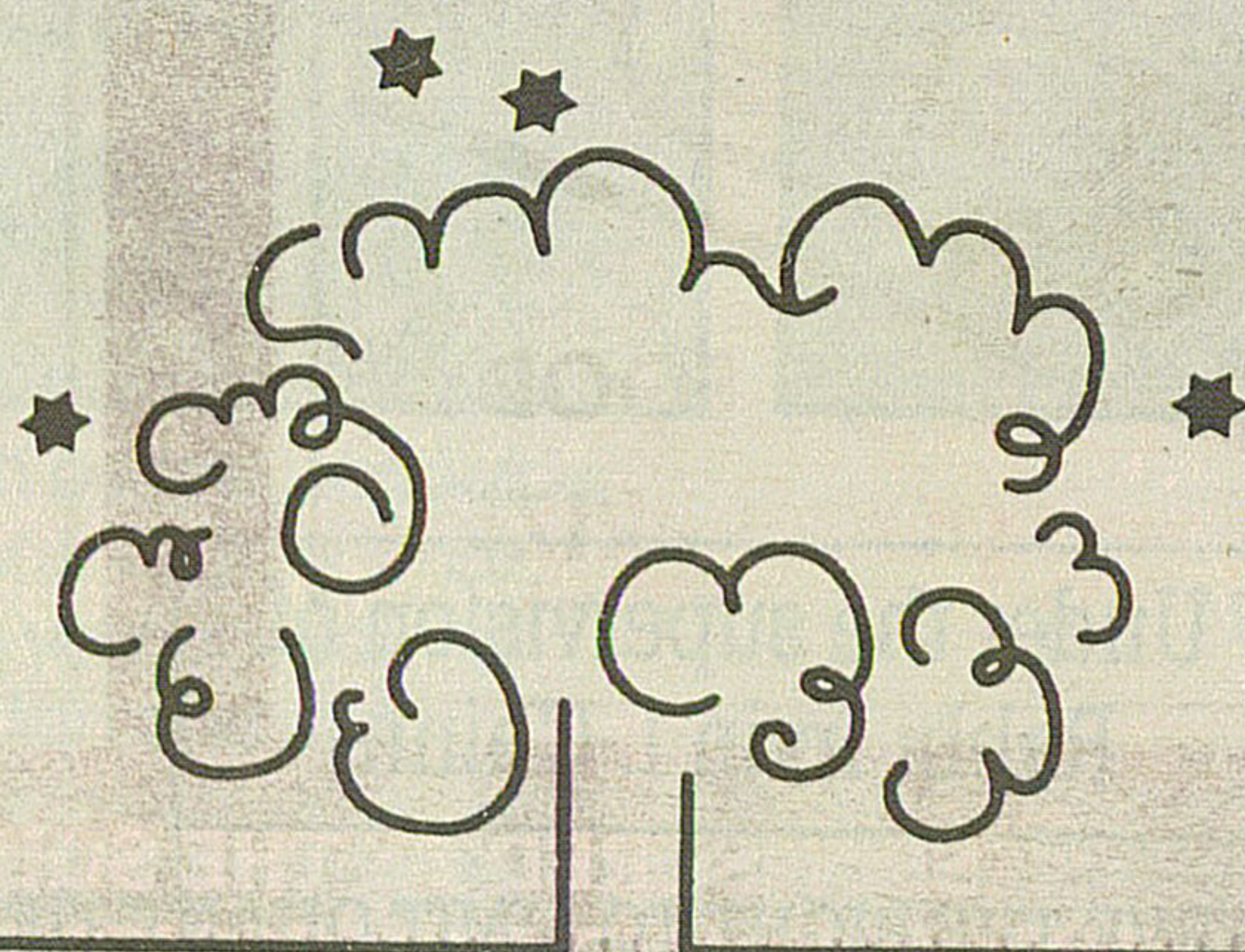
....TOWN MEETING.....

July 23, 7:30 P.M.

Jewish Community Center  
Forbes and Murray

683-4900

Contact: Barbara Shapira



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