

# New Eruv now eases life for observant

By IRIS M. SAMSON, News Editor

In the past two weeks, Squirrel Hill residents may have noticed a subtle change in their neighborhood.

On Saturdays, more baby carriages and strollers are being pushed along the streets. Men with kipot-yarmulkes-walk by on their way to synagogue, carrying their prayerbooks and tallitot, prayer shawls. Women and children dressed in Shabbat finery stroll along, holding clothing, toys, books.

The transformation in the observant community is due, in part, to the erection of a community Eruv, an artificial perimeter that allows the carrying of objects on the Sabbath.

"Jewish law distinguishes between different domains relative to the laws of Shabbat," Rabbi Moshe Kletenik of Shaare Torah Congregation notes. "Carrying or transferring an object is forbidden in a public domain and permitted in a private one.

"A private domain is not determined by private ownership but rather is defined as an area which is enclosed. The Eruv serves as a Halachic, legal enclosure around the Squirrel Hill community, and thereby permits carrying of those objects needed on Shabbat."

The Rabbi, the appointed area authority on Halachic questions about the Pittsburgh Eruv, is quick to point out that the Eruv "is just a legal enclosure making use of existing utility wires, cable wires and natural barriers. There is no physical wall or impediment to free passage into or out of Squirrel Hill.

"I want to stress," he adds, "that it makes things convenient for the observant community without infringing on the rights of any other citizen. We're not

creating a ghetto; we're merely accommodating the needs of the observant. Unless you know what to look for, you wouldn't even recognize that the Eruv is up. It doesn't affect the landscape in any way."

The Eruv was conceived and established by the Rabbinical Board of Greater Pittsburgh, along with a committee of lay people headed by Sharon Zuckerbrod and Jeffrey Joseph. A Committee for Halachic Review has been set up to oversee the operation, policies and guidelines of the Eruv, comprising members of the Rabbinical Board appointed by Board Chairman Rabbi Baruch Poupko.

Why did members of the observant sector of the community devote one and a half years--and several thousand dollars--to erecting a Eruv? The 17-mile boundary, among the largest in the country, will be a boon to many members of the community, including "observant mothers with young children," notes Rabbi Kletenik, explaining that they can now wheel their children in carriages to the synagogue or to a friend's house for a visit.

"The Eruv will affect those who are handicapped and the elderly, who in the past could not use their wheelchairs on the Sabbath. These people will no longer be housebound. And it will enhance the possibility of social interaction in the community."

There is another benefit that has accompanied the erection of eruvim elsewhere in the country, he continues.



SIGNING over documents okaying the construction of the Eruv is Pittsburgh Mayor Richard Caliguiri. Rabbi Baruch Poupko, head of the Rabbinical Board of Greater Pittsburgh, witnesses the signature.



MEMBERS of the Eruv Committee, first row, from left: Sharon Zuckerbrod, Rabbi Bernard Poupko. Second row: Jeffrey Joseph, Rabbi Isadore Marine, Rabbi Moshe Kletenik, and Rabbi Yisroel Pfeffer.

"I know of cases where the property values of homes inside the Eruv have risen by 25 to 50 percent."

Rabbi Kletenik, who points out that the Eruv was really a "joint effort of the rabbis, lay leaders and the community," singles out two civic leaders for recognition.

"We couldn't have received approval from the utility and cable companies without the support of Mayor Richard Caliguiri and State Sen. James Romanelli. Their help was essential to the project."

relay whether the Eruv is functioning or not. Those numbers are-Shaare Torah, 521-9938; Poale Zedeck, 421-9787; and B'nai Emonoh, 521-1477.

The Pittsburgh Eruv is not an isolated project; in some 50 other cities around the country--including Baltimore, Detroit and parts of New York City, Eruvim have been erected. Rabbi Kletenik points to the

phenomenon, explaining: "The establishment of the Eruv is yet another indication of the dynamics of Halaha and the ascendancy of observant Judaism in the United States.

"Many young people are becoming more observant; for them and others, the Eruv is a tremendous convenience, and an expression of their involvement with Jewish law and Torah observance."

## Nevada appeals raise questions of legitimacy

The Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation has received several inquiries regarding a recent mailing from Senator Chic Hecht (NV) concerning the National Jewish Coalition.

The Senator's letter is a fundraising appeal for this rightwing group, which claims to monitor South American and Central American anti-Semitism, a group which is actively involved in Soviet Jewry issues and also pro-aid to Israel.

The letter also describes the National Jewish Coalition as a group that "recognized that the traditional liberal approach to America's domestic and foreign policy has failed to protect our interest."

The National Jewish Coalition is an arm of the Republican National Committee. The group was organized prior to the 1984 Presiden-

tial election as an offshoot of the Republican National Committee's efforts in involve a larger Jewish constituency.

Those with questions about this or any other mailings from national organizations should call the Community Relations Committee at 681-8000, ext. 235.

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