

Holy bonds



Mesivta photo

Rabbis Tzvi Perecman, left, Nachum Langsner and Moshe Heineman check the newly constructed White Oak eruv.

Working eruv approved in White Oak

BY LEE CHOTTINER

Executive Editor

It's official, White Oak's Jewish community now has a functioning eruv of its own.

Rabbi Moshe Heineman, head of Baltimore's Star-K, a kosher certification organization, visited the borough last week to approve the eruv. He signed off on the religious boundary after hours of inspection.

"There were a few things he wanted to make better, which they did, and he gave the OK," Gemilas Chesed Rabbi Irvin Chinn said. "Last week, I think, was the first week we were able to use it.

"It covers almost all of White Oak," Chinn added, "which means people can buy [houses in] hamlets far away and walk their baby carriages to shul."

Seven years in the making, the Schulhof Community Eruv, as it's being called, was dedicated in memory of Moishe and Sarah Schulhof by the couple's children. They gave a \$10,000 grant to the project, which covered materials, surveying and installation.

The work had to overcome some hurdles, including negotiations with Duquesne Light for use of its utility poles.

Surveying the land for the eruv borders also proved time consuming, people involved with the project said.

"It's a very complicated task," Chinn said, "plus every week you have to go around checking to make sure everything is OK."

The eruv is a perimeter formed by existing utility poles and crosswires designated to create a greater private domain. Since observant Jews don't carry things on Shabbat in public domains — areas such as busy thoroughfares — the eruv permits them to carry prayerbooks and tallitot within its confines.

In addition to poles and wires — lechim and lintels as they're called — hillsides too steep to walk can be designated as part of the boundary, and some hills do

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comprise parts of the eruv in White Oak.

Eruv is a Hebrew word that means to mix or join together.

This eruv takes in more than one square mile of White Oak, stretching from Route 48 to State Street, from the woods behind Gemilas Chesed to the Eisenhower School. It includes Gemilas Chesed, the Mesivta of Allegheny County, the mikvah and Temple B'nai Israel.

"It pretty much takes in everybody who is in the Jewish community area for the most part," Mesivta spokesman Eli Greenfeld said.

It's the second community eruv to be

constructed in the Pittsburgh area. The other community eruv, in Squirrel Hill, was established in 1986. Some Jews also assemble smaller private eruvin in their own yards.

"The Schulhof Community Eruv will enable growing families with children access to the shul, friends and the community on Shabbat," Gemilas Chesed President David Sunstein said in a prepared statement.

The Eruv will be checked weekly by Mesivta instructors Rabbis Nachum Langsner and Tzvi Perecman.

(Lee Chottiner can be reached online at lchottiner@pittchron.com.)