



## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

How many of us remember Gary Mandel? He was my contemporary and probably was known to many of you.

Gary died of a brain tumor in 1956. I no longer remember whether it was shortly before his Bar Mitzvah or just after it.

He left his parents and an older sister, Gail. I knew him but we weren't close; I remember him being particularly friendly with Sandy Katz.

Gary is gone. Who remembers him?

I didn't. Not until I went on one of our cemetery tours three years ago. I was walking around the New Brunswick Avenue cemetery seeing who was there when I saw Gary. The stone is small but it's clear and it and Gary's grave have been maintained ... and when I saw it, Gary came to mind, clearly focused. A memory of my youth.



Writers as diverse as Elie Wiesel and Marcel Proust have written extensively on memory and its importance. As I age, I come to understand more fully Dryden's line, "All mortal things are subject to decay" and remind myself that a generation or two from now, even among those of us who leave grandchildren or great-grandchildren, the memory of us will have all but vanished. What will keep us alive then are our books and our tombstones.

Friends' mission is to preserve a portion of that memory and to slow that decay. It's a mission which requires only two ingredients in order to succeed – dedication and money. We provide the dedication; we look to you to provide most of the money. The task isn't made any easier by the fact that people who have run Jewish cemeteries have for generations underestimated the costs of operating them and consequently have let them erode.



Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery  
in Hopelawn, NJ

By giving to Friends, you not only make a contribution to preserve the physical integrity of the cemeteries, you make a contribution to the maintenance of the memory of the vibrant Jewish community which Perth Amboy once had. You help keep alive people with whom you once had connection and, in some small way, maintain the continuity of the Jewish community of Perth Amboy and greater Middlesex County.

We've enclosed all the materials you need to make a contribution.

Please remember Gary Mandel.



Congregation Shaarey  
Tefilah Cemetery in Perth  
Amboy, NJ

Bardin Levavy

## CEMETERY TOURS

Our Cemetery Tours have attracted visitors from both near and far — most of whom have come to remember and respect relatives interred there. The tours have also provided many attendees with opportunities to meet friends and relatives, connect with their pasts, explore family genealogy, locate graves of special interest, understand cemetery art and traditions, and learn about the fascinating history of our community.

### 2014 CEMETERY TOURS

*have been scheduled on the following Sundays:*

- May 11 (Mother's Day)
- June 15 (Father's Day)
- September 28 (between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur)

All tours begin at noon at the Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery entry gate on New Brunswick Avenue in Hopelawn. After visiting the Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery, we will drive to the Congregation Shaarey Tefilah Cemetery and the Congregation Beth Mordecai Cemetery on Florida Grove Road. WEAR VERY COMFORTABLE CLOTHES AND SHOES – appropriate for standing and walking outdoors for 2 hours, and please wear a head cover too. All tours are followed by an optional visit to a local, casual restaurant for continued socializing with old friends.

Although all tours are free, advance registration is recommended so that we can notify you of any weather-related cancellations and can locate any family graves of special interest to you. If you can't visit in person, we will be glad to visit for you and will place stones on the graves for you too.

Please contact us for more information through our Web site at [www.friendsofjewishcemeteries.org](http://www.friendsofjewishcemeteries.org), by e-mail to [friends@friendsofjewishcemeteries.org](mailto:friends@friendsofjewishcemeteries.org), or by phone at 856-222-1418. Check our Web site frequently for more information about the tours, including any schedule changes.

## 2013 ANNUAL HONOR ROLL

*We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the following donors, each of whom contributed at least \$1,000.00 to our organization during calendar year 2013:*

### \$1000+

B. Harrison and Phyllis Frankel

Jennie Parnes Miller

Norma Jacobson Messing

Mona Shangold

Neil & Blanche Eisemann Sosland

### MAZEL TOV TO BETH MORDECAI

As we go to press, we send our congratulations to Beth Mordecai for its upcoming Homecoming Weekend (scheduled to take place March 14-16). This gala event will already have taken place by the time most of you read this newsletter. Mazel Tov on this celebratory achievement!

### MONUMENT PHOTOS AND TRANSLATIONS

Please contact us if you would like our help in translating any Hebrew monuments --- at our cemeteries or elsewhere -- or if you would like a photo of any monument at any of our cemeteries. We are happy to offer these services --- and we will certainly welcome any contributions you would like to send us in appreciation.

### WINTER WEATHER WOES

With one of the most brutal winters of all time not quite behind us, we remind all of our readers that our cemeteries are not immune to the destructive elements we have faced in all aspects of our lives throughout our entire country. News reports have kept us informed about the massive power outages, highway accidents, home damage, illnesses, and deaths from snowstorms, deep freezes, droughts, and floods that have occurred recently in various parts of our country. However, these adverse weather conditions also affect the final resting places of our loved ones. We plan to assess the conditions of our cemeteries as soon as weather conditions permit, and we will report back to you about this in our Fall 2014 newsletter — and even sooner by email and on our website.

## CEMETERY COSTS SHOCK EVERYONE

We received many comments from readers in response to the article about cemetery costs in our Fall 2013 newsletter — confirming the article's statement about how surprised — even shocked — most people are about the true costs of running a cemetery. Since publication of our Fall 2013 newsletter, we have read several similar articles about the widespread and increasing cemetery neglect and abandonment that result from insufficient cemetery funds — problems that are certainly not limited to Jewish cemeteries. Among these articles was a very informative one written by Julie Wiener (a features writer for Jewish Telegraphic Agency) and published in many Jewish weekly newspapers (Jewish Voice, Jan. 22, 2014), quoting several Jewish cemetery authorities. According to Stan Kaplan (chair of the

Jewish Cemetery Association of North America and executive director of the Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts), "By the time a cemetery is full, it should have 20 times its annual operating expenses in an endowment — but few do." Gary Katz (president of New York's Community Association for Jewish At-Risk Cemeteries) predicted that "Based on current practices, substantially all Jewish cemeteries will be unable to pay for their upkeep within 25 to 50 years after their last grave is sold." While many cemeteries have formed alliances to face the future together, it is unfortunate that most financially healthy cemeteries do not become interested in this problem until their funds have become depleted. We hope this information will remind our readers to be as generous as possible.

# THANKING OUR DONORS

The following list includes all donations received and processed between September 22, 2013 and March 2, 2014. All donations received prior to September 22, 2013 were listed in previous issues of THE ETERNAL VINE. All donations received after March 2, 2014 will be listed in the next issue of THE ETERNAL VINE. We gratefully acknowledge generous donations from the following individuals:

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Drucker, Math and Whitman  
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Gary and Nona Schwartz – *in memory of Reuben Levine*  
William Sewitch – *in memory of Seymour Buchsbaum; in memory of Annette Pitluck; in memory of Arthur Roth*  
Mona Shangold – *in memory of Harriet and Jack Shangold*  
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Robert Weiss  
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Rachel Frankel, B. Harrison Frankel, Daniel Chazin

**JEWISH COMMUNITY  
HISTORY BOOK**

*Available for sale*

*Perth Amboy's Jewish Community: History, Memories, Tribute* has been available for sale since December 2012. The book is an elegant 9x12 coffee-table book that presents the complete and accurate history of the Perth Amboy Jewish Community — with many photos, stories, tributes, and memories.

According to the book's authors, it was written "to honor our ancestors and to provide a lasting record for our descendants." Many recent book orders have been from people who initially purchased books for themselves and now want books for their children and grandchildren so they can appreciate their Perth Amboy legacy. To purchase the book — while supplies last — send your request for an order form to PAJewishBook@aol.com or call 856-222-1418.

