



Vice-President's Message

I was never particularly interested in family history as a child. I suppose I felt I didn't have to pay attention on the "begats" because there would always be older relatives to explain them to me. The Elders, as my cousins and I called them, held the history of our family and could be counted on to answer any questions of relationships. In

fact I seem to remember that my Aunt Ruth Jacobson couldn't tell a story without a five-minute genealogical prologue — rich history that I am abashed, Dear Reader, to admit I usually tuned out.

And now I am one of those Elders, part of the Perth Amboy diaspora that has physically left the town but whose roots remain. For many of us, our synagogue and the cemeteries have been the physical embodiments of that attachment. And now that Shaarey Tefiloh has closed its doors many of us are feeling particularly reflective — and maybe even a little bereft.

I know I'm not unique in this. Even before the building was sold many people had begun asking for their family members' bronze memorial plaques. It became clear that most people wanted them because they represented a visible and tangible connection to our pasts — a way to honor and remember loved ones and to remember their *Yahrzeit* dates. It's been an enormous job to catalog and disseminate the list of these plaques, but we are pleased to contact and assist families and to organize, sort, and distribute the plaques.

While working on the "Plaque Project" we've ended up learning more about Perth Amboy Jewish genealogy than any of us knew, and frequently more about our individual family histories as well. In the course of coordinating which family members want whose plaques, many of us have had an opportunity to contact siblings, cousins, and friends — to reminisce about the people whose names are on the plaques and our connections to them. My cousins and I enjoyed the chance to compare happy memories of grandparents and great aunts and uncles we hadn't thought about in many years, and we plugged holes in our knowledge of our family tree.

While the plaques are a mobile and convenient way to remember family, our cemeteries are even more important as a connection to our lineages. We honor our ancestors by visiting and by assuring that the cemeteries have sufficient funds to be maintained in a dignified manner --- assurances that can't continue without your financial contributions. As we assist Congregation Shaarey Tefiloh in distributing plaques throughout the US and world (including England, Israel, Australia, and other international locations), please remember the need to provide continuing support for our ancestors' final resting places, and donate from your hearts.

Norma Jacobson Messing



Hebrew Fraternity Cemetery
in Hopelawn, NJ



Congregation Shaarey
Tefiloh Cemetery in Perth
Amboy, NJ

CEMETERY TOURS

Our Cemetery Tours continue to provide a special opportunity for us to honor and remember our loved ones together, and we hope you will be able to join us for one or more of these. These 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.

2015 CEMETERY TOURS

have been scheduled on the following Sundays:

- May 10 (Mother's Day)
- June 21 (Father's Day)
- September 20 (*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 Tefiloh 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, by e-mail to FPMCJC@gmail.com, or by phone at 856-222-1418. Check our Website frequently for more information about the tours, including any schedule changes.

2014 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 2014:

\$1000+

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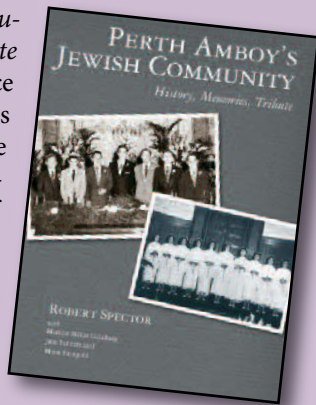
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Bonnie Messing, Robin Messing, and Susan Messing
on behalf of the Morris and Helen Messing Family Charitable Fund

Perth Amboy's Jewish Community – History, Memories, Tribute 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.



Daniel Chazin, David Greenhouse, Jeannie Pavlovsky, Sheldon Cheuse, Sara Greenhouse



Abe Greenhouse, Barbara Spector Eisner, Shep Sewitch, Mona Shangold, Vevy Sewitch



Board members (front row L-R): Mona Shangold, Daniel Chazin, Norma Jacobson Messing; (back row L-R): Gary Shangold, Barry Rosengarten, Shep Sewitch, Bardin Levavy

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Anita and Franklin Hannotch – <i>in memory of all dear ones</i>		
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Middlesex County Jewish Cemeteries, Inc.**

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www.friendsofjewishcemeteries.org

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REQUESTING SHAAREY TEFILOH MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Congregation Shaarey Tefilah considered many relocation options for its memorial plaques and those it inherited from Congregation Beth Israel (“little shul”), and — with strong encouragement and requests from many family members — the synagogue leaders decided to return individual memorial plaques to family members requesting them — a plan that will allow family members to honor and remember their loved ones by selecting the best future location for their plaques.

These memorial plaques were donated to the synagogue by the families of the deceased to serve as a remembrance of their lives and to record publicly their *Yahrzeit* dates. Each plaque contains the Hebrew and English name of the deceased and the Hebrew and English dates of death. Since these plaques are of historical and genealogical importance, a digital image of each plaque will be retained for genealogical records.

It has taken considerable time to organize the plaques, since



there are more than 1,300 individual plaques in several locations — some mounted on large memorial boards and others unmounted. We offered to help in this daunting project — contacting family members, organizing the plaques, photographing the plaques, and preparing them for distribution to

family members requesting them.

If you are interested in obtaining the plaques of your family members — and if you haven’t already sent us your request — please contact us by email (FPMCJC@gmail.com) or phone (732-826-2977) to request a list of plaque names and to obtain a request form. If you have already sent us your request for specific plaques, we will contact you when your plaques are ready for pick-up or mailing. There is no charge for the plaques if you (or your designated agent) can pick them up. If no one can pick up your plaques, you will be charged to cover the costs of mailing them to you. All details will be sent upon request. We thank you for your patience as we try to accomplish this task as efficiently as possible.