



# Hoping for the Best, Planning for the Worst

The first of three articles on planning for Jewish end of life

When Woody Allen was asked what he thought about death, he famously said, "I'm against it." Aren't we all?

One of the great things about being a Temple Israel member is that when the unwanted event does occur, you have guidance. You have a rabbi, and you have Jewish custom and ritual to guide you. Plus, you get a reduced rate for burial in the Jewish cemetery on Beech Street.

This is the first of three articles about matters concerning death that are planned for the Temple Israel newsletter. This article will be about funeral homes, the second article will be about *tahara*, the third will be about the *Hevra Kadisha*.

In the fall after the holidays, Rabbi Gary plans to give a course covering all of these issues. Time and dates to be announced.

Regarding funeral homes, Goodwin Funeral Home is going out of business, and is not doing any funerals at all right now, at least until October 1 when it may or may not be sold. People who have prepaid their funerals at Goodwin will be able to transfer their payments to another funeral home in the area because the money is in a trust account.

The closing of Goodwin concerns the *Hevra Kadisha* because that was the funeral home where the *Hevra* most often performed *tahara*, i.e., the ritual preparation of a deceased Jew (*met/meta*) for internment.

In light of this development, the *Hevra Kadisha* has done some research and discussed the matter with Rabbi Gary.

We have identified three funeral homes where the *Hevra* will be performing *tahara* from now on. Of course, no Jew will be denied *tahara*. However, for purposes of planning, three funeral homes have met the necessary criteria, and the *Hevra Kadisha* stands ready, with men for men and women for women, to perform *tahara* when called to any of these three funeral homes.

The criteria applied by the *Hevra* were as follows:

- 1) The home should be knowledgeable about Jewish customs and interested in serving the Jewish community in a friendly manner.
- 2) The funeral home should charge no additional fee to have *tahara* and/or *shmira* performed,
- 3) The funeral home should be well appointed and comfortable for families, especially for *shmira*.

- 4) The price of a funeral should be available and transparent and not exorbitant.
- 5) The funeral home should be family or individually owned, not an anonymous corporation.
- 6) Kosher caskets should be available.

Three funeral homes met our criteria:



**Lambert Funeral Home** on North Street in Manchester is a spacious elegant funeral home that will not charge additional fees when the *Hevra Kadisha* performs a *tahara*, nor will they charge to

have friends and family sit *shmira* in association with a funeral. Prices for a funeral range from \$5000. This is a family-owned facility. Owner Brian McHugh welcomes the Jewish community.



The couple who owns **Petit-Roan** trained in Brookline at Stanetsky, which is a Jewish funeral home. They are fully versed in Jewish custom. The facility is totally renovated, elegant and clean. No

additional fees will be charged to have *tahara* performed, or *shmira* observed. Funerals cost around \$5000, or less.



**Waters Funeral Home** at 50 South Main Street in Concord has been family-owned for generations. They are fully

versed in Jewish customs, and the *Hevra* has already performed *tahara* there many times for Jews in the Concord area. Funeral costs are in the same range as Petit-Roan and Lambert.

In Concord, the *Hevra* has had good experiences with **Bennett Funeral Home**. It would have made the short list if it were still family-owned, it was taken over by a corporation several years ago.

All funeral homes mentioned in this article provide kosher caskets and convenient scheduling, in light of the fact that Jewish funerals are usually prompt.

Please look for more information on this subject in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, live long, live well, and be healthy!