

# Some see new life for abandoned graveyard

By **PAUL KOEPP**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Several people who have shown interest in tending to the run-down Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery will first have to clear a big hurdle — finding missing records and an orphaned trust fund rumored to hold more than \$40,000.

The key to solving the mystery may be a set of keys that would allow entry into the locked house at the Newark Avenue entrance that was occupied until recently by the caretakers of the 179-year-old graveyard, which is being overrun by vegetation and has many toppled grave markers.

The keys have now been located and the house will be searched soon, according to Jeff Lamm, spokesman for the New Jersey Cemetery Board, which

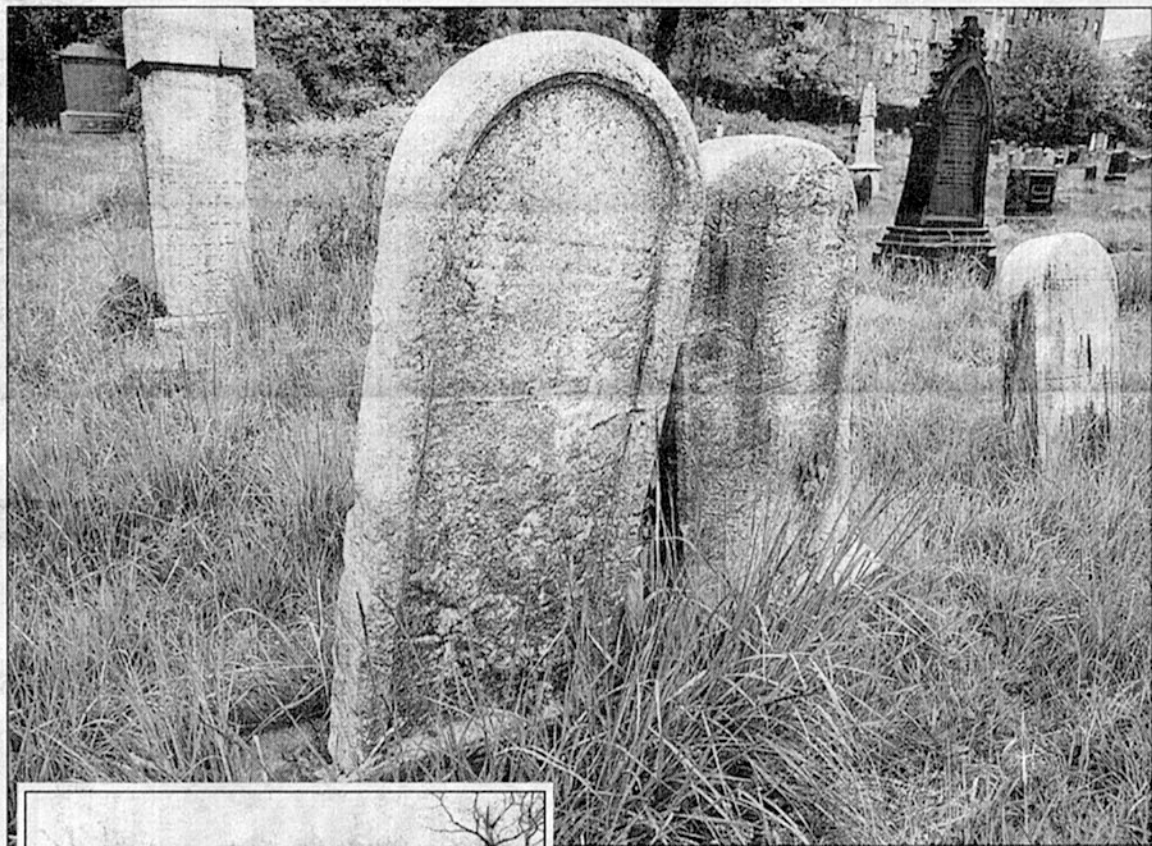
regulates non-religious ceremonies.

At a meeting of the NJCB Thursday in Newark, several people involved in a recent cleanup of the cemetery said they want a new board of directors to be set up because the previous one has faded into oblivion as its members died off.

The NJCB told them that a new board can be formed through a meeting of all current plot owners.

Two such owners, Darlene Cimino and Mildred Kwozko, said they also want to know what happened to the \$2,000 in fees they each paid to have their mothers buried in the cemetery this year.

"We do not know exactly where it all is at the present time," admitted NJCB member William Nichols. He said it's not



EMILY ANNE EPSTEIN JOURNAL FILE PHOTOS  
**JERSEY CITY-HARSIMUS** Cemetery has been in shambles since its caretakers have died or moved away.

He said he could invest up to \$200,000 and generate revenue at the Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery

by placing new plots in the current walkways and possibly building a mausoleum and crematorium.

"I think the problems can be solved there," Cicalese said. "The first step is to get all the information."

known how much money is in the cemetery's required maintenance and preservation fund, which takes in 15 percent of the revenue from each plot sale.

Also at the meeting was Louis Cicalese, who said he manages 13 cemeteries across the state.

Meanwhile, local radio host Pat O'Melia says he too is interested in putting together a group, composed of local developers, to oversee a restoration of the cemetery. O'Melia wrote in a letter to the NJCB that he had arranged for the Jersey City Incinerator Authority and Hudson County Improvement Authority to maintain the grounds until a new board is formed.

**PAUL KOEPP** can be reached at (201) 217-2400.