



**MetroNorth Region / Hudson Valley Area  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism**

## *Torah Fund Dinner*

*Honoring Our  
Pri Yadeha  
Award Recipients*

**April 26, 2017  
Bet Torah  
Mount Kisco, NY**

# *Women's League For Conservative Judaism*

Carol Simon, *International President*

Rabbi Lilly Kaufman, *Executive Director, Torah Fund Campaign*

Debbi Kaner Goldich, *International Torah Fund Chair*

## *Metro North Region*

### *Executive Committee*

Mindy Steinholz, *President*

Florence Wolpoff, *Sisterhood Support VP*

Lucy Becker, *Education VP*

Fran Olmsted, *Membership VP*

Linda Klempner, *Torah Fund VP*

Danielle Calo, *Administrative Secretary*

Lisa Green, *Communications Secretary*

Cedine Issman, *Financial Secretary/Treasurer*

Claire Gondelman, *Immediate Past President*

## *Metro North Region/Hudson Valley Area*

### *Sisterhood Presidents\**

Bet Torah .....	Harriet Blumencranz
Beth El Synagogue Center.....	Barbara Horowitz
First Hebrew Congregation.....	Fran Olmsted
Greenburgh Hebrew Center.....	Yanira Quinones
Montebello Jewish Center .....	Elinor Silver
.....	Karen Stein
Nanuet Hebrew Center.....	Mindy Sayer
	Karen Schragenheim
New City Jewish Center .....	Susan Sicherman
Orangetown Jewish Center.....	Cedine Issman/Presidium
Temple Israel Center.....	Linda Lurie

*\*Sisterhoods participating in this evening's event*

# *Metro North Region/Hudson Valley Area*

## *Torah Fund Area Directors*

Mid-Hudson .....	Lisa King-Smith
Rockland.....	Nancy Scheff
Westchester .....	Gaye Altman

## *Torah Fund Chairs*

Bet Torah .....	Gaye Altman
Beth El Synagogue Center.....	Rita Kaufman Susan Morris
First Hebrew Congregation.....	Danielle Calo
Montebello Jewish Center .....	Jackie Walzer
Nanuet Hebrew Center .....	Rose Pollack
New City Jewish Center .....	Alyse Alper Beth Israel
Orangetown Jewish Center.....	Carmel Rosenthal Nancy Scheff
Temple Israel Center.....	Robyn Sokol

## *2016-17 Pri Yadeha Award Recipients*

Bet Torah .....	Robin Wald
First Hebrew Congregation.....	Shelley Kessler
Greenburgh Hebrew Center .....	Debbie Erdheim
Montebello Jewish Center .....	Susan Ecker
Nanuet Hebrew Center .....	Sheila Reiter
New City Jewish Center .....	Fran Satran
Orangetown Jewish Center.....	Mimi Rosenstock
Temple Israel Center.....	Eva Toth Beth Grafman

## *Thank You to Our Raffle Gift Donors*

*This evening's raffles will benefit the "She Plants a Seed for the Future" Torah Fund special project. Many thanks to Lisa Siegal, MetroNorth Public Policy and Advocate Chair and Immediate Past Torah Fund VP, for serving as Raffle Chair.*

Ben's Deli  
Boscobel House and Gardens  
Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts  
Challah Fairy  
JCC Mid-Westchester  
JCC Rockland  
Jewish Book Council  
Katonah Museum of Art  
Laline  
Kosher wine from Israel  
New York Philharmonic  
Penguin Rep Theatre  
Westchester Philharmonic

# *Program*

**Welcome and Remarks**..... Harriet Blumencranz  
*Bet Torah Sisterhood President*

Debbi Kaner Goldich  
*WLCJ International Torah Fund Chair*

Mindy Steinholz  
*President, MetroNorth Region*

**HaMotzi**.....Marcia Stone

## **Dinner**

**Introduction of Speaker** .....Linda Klempner  
*Torah Fund VP, MetroNorth Region*

**Speaker**..... Benjamin Chaidell  
*Rabbinical Student, JTS*

**Birkat Hamazon**..... Judi Kenter

**Award Presentations**..... Gaye Altman and Nancy Scheff  
*Westchester and Rockland Torah Fund Area Directors*

# *Benjamin Chaidell*

Benjamin is in his fourth year of rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). He aims as a rabbi to assist people to be their best selves and to build strong Jewish communities.

Raised in a warm Conservative synagogue in Riverdale, New York, Benjamin graduated Yale College in 2011, where he majored in religious studies and co-ran the student Conservative community on campus. He currently serves as the rabbinic intern at Hofstra University Hillel and led High Holiday services at Cornell University this year.

After college Benjamin embarked on a two year Education Fellowship with the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) in Jackson, Mississippi, where he created and delivered education programs for 13 different communities across the South.

As a dual degree student in the Davidson School of Jewish Education at JTS, Benjamin has acquired skills and knowledge to share Jewish tradition with people of all ages- from Tot Shabbat and Hebrew School to adult education and senior citizen Shabbat services.

In 2014-2015 Benjamin studied in Israel as part of the JTS program. He spent a summer at Camp Ramah assisting young adults with disabilities. He also completed one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Mount Sinai Hospital caring for people of all faiths.

Benjamin's interests include music of all genres, baseball and the New York Mets, and exploring the city in which he lives.

# *Robin Wald*

## **Bet Torah**

Robin Wald is a Jewish educator, yoga instructor, student of Torah and mysticism, mother of three, daughter, sister and friend.

An active member of Bet Torah for eighteen years, Robin volunteered on the Nursery School board, the Board of Directors, and the Ritual Committee, and has worked as a teacher in the Religious school for over thirteen years. As Lead Teen Educator at Bet Torah, Robin is a mentor, role model, and nurturing support for youth. She teaches teens Nosh and Drash, Jewish Cooking, Jewish meditation, Comparative Religion and Holocaust Studies, and supervises the teen Madrichim teaching assistant program. Robin teaches Jewish ethics in seventh grade and Torah, values and theology in fifth grade, and leads three Rosh Hodesh groups for teenage girls at Bet Torah and Congregation B'nai Yisrael in Armonk.

Robin has taught an array of Jewish adult education programs for a various Westchester synagogues, the UJA, WJCS, and the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. She created and led a successful Jewish yoga program which ran at Bet Am Shalom in White Plains for ten years. A dedicated participant in Bet Torah's weekly Women's Torah study for over sixteen years, Robin currently facilitates the study of Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Sages) for that group.

Most recently, Robin envisioned and spearheaded an intergenerational program which brings teenagers and seniors in the Bet Torah community together on a monthly basis to engage in friendship, learning and oral history.

Beyond the Jewish world, Robin teaches yoga and mindfulness in Chappaqua elementary schools, at Club Fit Briarcliff and with private clients. When she isn't teaching, Robin loves to read, exercise, hike, travel, and spend time with her children, family and friends.

# *Shelley Kessler*

## **First Hebrew Congregation**

Shelley was born and raised in New Jersey. She graduated from Douglass College, Rutgers University with a major in psychology. She obtained her Master's in Education from Boston College with a major in mobility for the blind. She furthered her education with an MBA from SUNY Binghamton. She has worked as a marketing analyst since 1984.

With her previous husband Stephen Kessler, Shelley has one son Daniel born in 1987. Dan is a multi-handicapped individual. "He is the greatest challenge and greatest joy of my life. I have had to be his advocate since he was born, but he has taught me more about what to value in life, and what it means to succeed than anyone I know." When Dan was a teenager, Dan and Shelley moved from Vermont to New York because the adult services which would be available for Dan would be much better here. Dan now lives in a group home in Hastings run by YAI-National Institute for People with Disabilities.

In 2011 Shelley married Rob Muhlrud. Rob's son Jeff lives in Chicago with his fiancée Jessica. Shelley sees her son Dan once a week and says his "smile lights up my life even at the most stressful times." Shelley serves on the parents advisory council of YAI and is also on the board of GROW (Groups Residents of Westchester)- a political action group. Shelley has been part of First Hebrew Congregation for the past 12 years. She serves on the membership committee of the shul and as the Sisterhood treasurer. Despite her many commitments and family obligations, we can always count on her support and active participation! Mazal Tov Shelley!



# *Susan Ecker*

## **Montebello Jewish Center**

In the summer of 1971, a sixteen-year-old Susan Denner got a free trip from her grandparents for a USY Pilgrimage to Israel. It was then that she developed her love of Judaism. It was also then that Susan's Judaic "rebellion" began. It never sat well with Sue that girls weren't counted in the USY minyans. So what did she do? She learned to read Torah as soon as it was permissible. Twenty-one years later she was accepted by Women's League as a Shlichot Tzibbur... a Torah Reader. Now, Sue not only reads Torah and Haftorahs on a regular basis, she also uses her skills to teach other women... and men.

Being on her temple's ritual committee and a past ritual chair has been very fulfilling, but since Sue attended Ithaca College and majored in drama her most enjoyable job at Montebello Jewish Center has been being a participant in, and the director of, her synagogue's annual Purim shpiel.

Sue met her husband Lloyd at Ithaca College and they were married two years later. For the past forty-one years they have been partners in several businesses as well as having raised three wonderful children. They now have a daughter in-law and a grandson to add to their happy family.

For the last ten years Sue and Lloyd have been working on their newest and most exciting venture, *The Sophie Tucker Project*. She was a Jewish entertainer from 1906 -1966 and was the first woman to perform risqué material on stage. She paved the way for the likes of Bette Midler, Madonna and Lady Gaga. But to Susan, the most impressive part of Sophie's career was her unending philanthropy for any Jewish cause and her unwavering courage in the face of show business anti-Semitism.

The Eckers read Tucker's 400 scrapbooks over seven years, got nominated for a Grammy and made a critically acclaimed documentary, *The Outrageous Sophie Tucker*. They also wrote a fictional memoir, *I Am Sophie Tucker* and are producing a musical version on Broadway.

Since the film was released in 2014, Susan and her husband have been traveling with it to help raise funds at over 150 Jewish organizations. From England, Australia and Israel to the Rockland JCC, Jewish Federation and Montebello Jewish Center these benefits have raised over half a million dollars. A true labor of love.

# *Sheila Reiter*

## **Nanuet Hebrew Center**

Sheila grew up in Brooklyn, NY. She met her husband Allen in Queens on a blind date, and they have been married for almost 53 years. She graduated from Brooklyn College in 1964 and became a math teacher.

Sheila has two children, Howard and Karen, and 4 grandchildren, Samuel, Isabel, Jared, and Russell. When her children were both in school, Sheila went to RCC for computer programming. Sheila and her family moved into their house in Spring Valley in 1976 and joined the JCC of Spring Valley. They were members there for 28 years. During that time Sheila held many different positions, the last of which was co-president.

When the JCC closed in 1974, Sheila and her family joined the Nanuet Hebrew Center. Sheila has held several different positions on the Sisterhood Board. Currently, she is co-vice president of fund raising. Sheila is also very involved in working on the Purim Baskets and also types up the monthly Leagram lists that are sent to the congregation with the monthly bulletin. These are used to send birthday cards and anniversary cards to those on the list.

# *Fran Satran*

## **New City Jewish Center**

Michael and I moved to New City the first Friday in September of 1972. We joined NCJC on Sunday and celebrated our first Rosh Hashanah the next Friday!

We have gained so much from NCJC. It is our extended family! My favorite accomplishment is helping to establish an Adult B'nai Mitzvah class. A two year cycle began in September 1984 and culminated in a Rosh Chodesh service in June 1986. 35 other women joined me on this journey. I read Torah for the service and it brought me closer to what a former Rabbi at NCJC told me. Judaism is a personal religion.

Through my involvement in Sisterhood, I learned about the Volunteers for Israel program. In August 1986 I celebrated my 40th birthday in Tel Aviv on my weekend off from Sarel.

Although my parents helped to establish Rosedale Jewish Center when I was a child, I was not sent to Hebrew School and I knew little about the Conservative Movement. I knew little about the formalities of the shul. I knew little about davening. I had a year of Hebrew in high school, a life saver. When my boys were attending bar mitzvahs, I sat in the back during services and learned a great deal of davening.

And finally, through my involvement in NCJC, I learned about Women's League for Conservative Judaism and Torah Fund. Visiting the Seminary Library was very exciting. We "visited the shelves" dedicated through the donations made to Women's League. We learned about the fund raising that helps support education for rabbis, cantors, educators, etc. Michael and I were the recipients of an honoring in 1995 and we had the privilege of attending a commencement at which Vice President Al Gore was the speaker.

And, finally, thank you all for supporting Women's League and Torah Fund.

# *Mimi Rosenstock*

## **Orangetown Jewish Center**

I was born and raised in Ridgewood Queens. My father owned a retail store and my mother served as president of her Sisterhood and Hadassah chapter. Following in her footsteps, I was founder and president of a new Junior Hadassah chapter. I met my best friend and dear husband Mel at our first Junior Hadassah social event and have been married for 64 years. I am proud to be part of a family of 4 generations of lifetime members of Hadassah. Having worked in my father's store from childhood on it was only natural that I enrolled in the School of Retailing at NYU where I received my B.A. degree. After graduation I worked as a buyer for a chain of ladieswear stores.

My family moved to Rockland County in 1968 and we became members of a conservative synagogue where I held various positions in Sisterhood and the School Board. I went back to school for a Master's degree and took a "temporary" teaching job at the Yeshiva of Spring Valley. I was challenged as a new teacher and loved interacting with Jewish children. "Temporary" became 27 fulfilling years before retirement.

In 1999 Mel and I joined Orangetown Jewish Center where I have served on the Sisterhood board in various positions and am currently co-chair of the Ways and Means committee. I have been involved in a variety of fundraising, educational, and social programs. I am also an active member of the Chesed Committee. I love our OJC community and feel enriched and enveloped beyond words by the warmth, love, and support of the outstanding rabbinate and congregation. I have led several informative trips to JTS and am proud to have been a Torah Fund benefactor for many years and more to come.

My husband and I have 2 very special daughters and sons-in-law, Ruth and Stuart of Paramus NJ and Carol and Dennis of Brookline MA. We were blessed with four exceptional grandchildren Joanna, Michael, Benjamin, and Jeremy.

Thank you all for the honor you have bestowed upon me.

# *Beth Grafman*

## Temple Israel Center

Beth began serving Women's League/Sisterhood at Temple Israel Center of White Plains shortly after moving to New York from Chicago in 1997 with her husband, Allan, and their four (then three!) children Joshua, Rachel, Daniel and Ryan.

Beth's entre into Sisterhood leadership was as Program Committee Chair, focusing first on activities to bridge the Hebrew School/Day School divide and second on intergenerational events so "more experienced" synagogue members could share their wisdom with "newer" members.

Riding a wave of renewed interest in Women's League, Beth became Membership VP and then moved up to Sisterhood President- a post she held with pride for five terms.

A dedicated TIC Board member, Beth now chairs "The Dors" committee to engage adults whose children are all post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah. She has stirred the community with thoughtful D'verei Torah at Sisterhood Shabbat and was honored by the congregation in 2015 as the Kallat Bereshit on Simchat Torah.

Professionally, Beth is the new Director of Development and Donor Engagement at the JCC of Mid-Westchester, after more than five years at the Harold Grinspoon Foundation as a Program Officer for PJ Library.

Beth is grateful to the TIC Sisterhood Board for naming her a Torah Fund honoree along with her treasured congregant and friend, Eva Toth.

# *Eva Toth*

## Temple Israel Center

Eva and Arpad (Ari) were introduced to each other at Friday night services at the Jewish Rabbinical Seminary's synagogue in Budapest. Later, Rabbi/Professor Sándor Scheiber, one of the most prominent Hungarian rabbis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, director of the [Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest](#), and an eminent Jewish scholar who discovered many [genizah](#) fragments married them. Eva worked as Accounting Manager at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics and Ari worked at Hotel Royal, the most popular hotel then among religious Jews visiting from the U.S. Ari also travelled all over Hungary, to each and every town and village where they ever had a Jewish congregation, documenting with photos and notes synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. They finally visited the U.S. in 1983 and settled in Borough Park. Eva's mother Judit followed them from Hungary and they all worked in the jewelry district of NYC. Three years later Jessica was born and the following year Michelle. In 1989 they decided to move to White Plains. While shopping for a synagogue, they heard Cantor Jacob Mendelson singing and they fell in love. Many of his tunes were familiar from Hungary, especially for Eva who was a member of the Rabbinical Seminary's choir. They knew right away that TIC was the right choice for them and Eva had to join the choir.

For the last 24 years Eva has been employed at a large Management consulting firm's Digital Marketing department and Ari has his own insurance inspection business. Although they moved to Peekskill, they never left TIC. During the 26 years at Temple Israel Eva volunteered in many areas, some of which are Torah reading assignment for the Days of Awe, Ushering on Shabbos, Feeding the homeless at Sharing Community in Yonkers, Mishloah manot preparation, Volunteering at cantorial concerts and Sisterhood events, Midnight Run in NYC, Habitat for Humanity - Building houses for disadvantaged.

