



Chai Lines

International Northeast Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Networking to Engage, Enrich and Empower
Conservative Jewish Women

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BREAKING NEWS

ROCHESTER, NY – A Jewish cemetery in Rochester, New York, was vandalized, the third such incident in the United States in less than two weeks.

Five headstones were found toppled Thursday morning at the Waad Hakolel Cemetery, also known as the Stone Road Cemetery, in the city in western New York, according to News 10 NBC WHEC.

The president of the nonprofit managing the cemetery said he did not want to call the incident a hate crime or anti-Semitism.

"I don't want to label it a hate crime. I don't think there's any proof of that. I don't want to label it anti-Semitism. I don't think there's any proof of that," said Michael Phillips, president of the Britton Road Association, according to The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

Phillips contrasted the damage this week with that scene recently at Jewish cemeteries in Philadelphia and Missouri. There, grave markers were defaced, some marred with spray paint. "There was no defacing" with the headstones that were pushed over, he said.

Officials at the nonprofit Jewish Federation say the vandalism should be viewed in the current environment.

"The Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester condemns the recent act of vandalism at the Stone Road cemetery," Karen Elam, the Federation's Director of Community Relations, said in a statement.

Noting reports of more than 180 anti-Semitic incidents in the past month, Elam stated, "We

are deeply disturbed by rising acts of anti-Semitism across the country, including bomb threats made to Jewish community centers, Jewish day schools, and synagogues. We encourage our elected officials to continue to denounce publicly these actions and call on local, state, and federal law enforcement to investigate and swiftly bring the perpetrators to account."

Gov. Cuomo Thursday called for the State Police to investigate the desecration.

FROM JTA and Democrat & Chronicle News, Rochester

PLEASE NOTE that this is breaking news and updates will be forthcoming

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ORIGINAL ARTICLE](#)

FROM OUR REGION PRESIDENT



Part of my responsibilities as International Northeast Region president is to participate in monthly conference calls with the other twelve region presidents of Women's League. I met these women in person at our Presidents' Training in NYC two years ago, and I expect to see them all again this summer at convention. We are not really friends but, perhaps not surprisingly, I feel a bond between us. I know whose grandchild is about to celebrate a first birthday, whose daughter is getting married, and who has just returned from a wonderful vacation. We participate in monthly meetings, and I read their Shabbat newsletters weekly. I learn about the challenges and successes their regions face. And I feel connected.

Modern technology keeps me in touch with my peers who are both local and far away. However, there's no substitute for meeting someone "in real life." Visiting the sisterhoods of our International Northeast Region offers me the opportunity to have face to face invaluable experiences which, in turn, I try to share with you.

At Women's League for Conservative Judaism Convention 2017 in Arlington, Virginia from July 23-26, 2017, you will be able to mix and mingle, form new relationships, and strengthen existing ones. Over coffee, lunch, or dinner, you may connect with the perfect mentor. Or, at a breakout session, you may find yourself sitting next to someone who will offer ideas about your next sisterhood event.

There's nothing like feeling the energy of being in a room with like-minded people. You discover that you're not alone in wanting to improve your skills and bring fresh ideas back to your sisterhoods and synagogues.

The convention will combine networking, training, and fun into a single package. Live events-workshops, crafts fair, women-led services-will provide unique learning and sisterhood building opportunities that you just won't find anywhere else. I look forward to seeing you there.

Shabbat Shalom,

Eleanor
diamondeleanor@gmail.com

FROM THE EDUCATION VP LOIS SILVERMAN

As a grandmother, I can't see a child crying without wanting to comfort and ease the child's discomfort or pain. I want to take the child in my arms and rock and soothe the hurting child. I'm sure most of you feel a similar emotion.

But when do we feel about the hurting children by the millions who are hurting, who are starving, who are being exploited, and who for whatever reason aren't allowed to experience a loving, secure childhood?

Below is a prayer for children adapted from one by Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund

Shabbat Shalom

LOIS

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Adapted from Marian Wright Edelman

O God of the children of Syria, Nigeria and Liberia, of Sudan, South Africa and South Carolina,
Of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Myanmar, of Israel, Iran and Iraq,
Of the Congo, Central America, Charleston, and Cleveland, of Darfur and Detroit,
Of Libya, Yemen and Ukraine, Nepal and New Orleans,
Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all.

O God of Black and Brown and White and Albino children and those all mixed together
Of children who are rich and poor and in between
Of children who speak English and Russian and Hmong and Chinese and Spanish and Arabic and languages and dialects our ears cannot discern,
Of refugee children without a country
Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all.

O God of the child prodigy and child prostitute, of the child of rapture and the child of rape,
Of run or thrown away and sexually trafficked children who struggle every day without parent or place or friend or future,
Of LGBT children struggling to be who they are and Dalit children roaming across nations in search of a place called home,
Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all.
O God of children who can walk and talk and hear and see and sing and dance and jump and play and of children who wish they could but can't
Of children who are loved and unloved, wanted and unwanted,
Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all.

O God of incarcerated, beggar, beaten, abused, neglected, homeless, AIDS, drug, violence, and hunger-ravaged children,
Of children who are emotionally and physically and mentally fragile, and of children who rebel and ridicule, torment and taunt,

Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all.

O God of children of destiny and of despair without hope for the future, ravaged by wars of adults
Of refugee children without a country to welcome them, at sea in flimsy boats, or caged in juvenile and adult prisons and holding pens as they seek asylum
Of disfigured, diseased, and dying children,
Of children without hope and of children with hope to spare and to share,
Help us to love and respect and protect and welcome them all on this day of Peace and Rest as we affirm the sacredness of every child in our own country and all around the world.

FROM WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



*Networking to engage,
enrich and empower
Conservative Jewish women*

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

March 5: *Annual Meeting, American Jewish University, Los Angeles*

March 7: *Distance Workshop: Merged Sisterhoods/Sharing Tradition*

March 20: *Personal Conversation: Finding the Right Summer Camp*

March 23: *Eikhah Study with Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner*

May 8: *Personal Conversation: Celebrating the Shabbat Bride*

New Personal Conversation added:

May 8, 2017

Lekha Dodi: Celebrating the Shabbat Bride

Speaker: Author/Artist Debra Band

In preparation for Mother's Day, Debra Band reveals the Kabbalistic puzzles in the beloved ode to the Shabbat Bride who gives birth to new souls, drawing upon clues hidden in her illuminations of *Lekha Dodi*

in Kabbalat Shabbat: the Grand Unification.

The talk will be via webinar so you can enjoy Debra's beautiful art work. Register [here](#).

Don't forget to [register](#) for the next Personal Conversation, **Finding the Right Summer Camp, on March 20**, with representatives from the Foundation for Jewish Camp. This conversation is for parents and

grandparents.

Eikhah On-Line Study Chapter 1: A Woman's Perspective

Even if you are not attending Convention 2017, you are invited to participate in our webinar classes on the Book of Eikhah in preparation for the siyyum at Convention.

The first class, **Chapter 1: A Woman's Perspective**, will be taught by Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner, of JTS, on Thursday evening, March 23 at 8:00 pm. There is no charge for the classes but pre-registration is necessary. You will be able to participate either on your computer or by phone. Directions will be sent at a later date.

[Click here to register.](#)

Region Websites Update

Now **six** regions have updated their websites with the new Women's League templates. This is an ongoing project for all the regions and we want to thank Cathy Leonard and Lois Silverman for guiding the changes with care, consideration and creativity.

Check them out:

[International Northeast](#)

[Intracontinental](#)

New: [Mid-Atlantic](#)

[North by Northwest](#)

[Pacific Southwest](#)

[Seaboard](#)



Jewels in the Crown Deadline extended

Every sisterhood should want to be a recipient of a **2017 Jewels in the Crown Award** for outstanding programming and involvement. **The deadline for applications has been extended to 31!**

The Modern Jewish Family, Expanded

Today, the variations in Jewish family units vary far beyond intermarried couples. The modern Jewish family is same sex unions, bi-racial unions,

merged families, families with internationally adopted children, single parent (sometimes by choice) and single member households. This last category -- single, either by choice or situation -- is the fastest growing demographic in general, and in the Jewish community, as well.

Despite increasing recognition of same sex families, prejudices and social, economic, and legal inequalities against non-traditional family structures still persist.

With this seismic shift in the nature of Jewish households, we need an unambiguous recognition of diversity through passionate advocacy for pluralism. Diversity and pluralism are not synonyms. Diversity is variety, pluralism is an acceptance of and engagement with diversity.

Women's League began this conversation in 2013 through **Mishpachah: The Modern Jewish Family**. Now we are expanding our initiatives to address the wide spectrum of issues of the modern Jewish family, including a focus on social and cultural change in our communities and synagogues and challenging civil and legal inequalities for non-traditional families.

United Nations Update

To read the latest update from our United Nations NGOs, please click [here](#).

Announcing a new partnership



SHARSHERET®

Women's League is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Sharsheret. Sharsheret, Hebrew for "chain", is a national not-for-profit organization that supports women and families, of all Jewish backgrounds, facing breast cancer, at every stage - before, during and after diagnosis. Sharsheret' mission to educate and to offer a community of support meshes perfectly with Women's League's role as the network for women in the Conservative/Masorti Movement. Together we will provide a valued service to our 40,000+ members and their families and Sharsheret will expand its ability to reach more Jewish women.

Sharsheret will have a vital role at Convention 2017, another reason you will want to be there!

CONVENTION UPDATES

A BOLD NEW OUTLOOK



WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR
CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM
CONVENTION 2017

Registration is open!

Log onto www.wlcj.org and choose **Convention 2017 Registration**. We are looking forward to welcoming you personally to Arlington, Virginia, from July 23-26, for our most exciting convention yet.

Virtual Ad Journal

Once again, Women's League is offering a wonderful, ecological and fun way to honor your sisterhood, region, new members of the Women's League board of directors, outgoing members of the board of directors, winners of Jewels in the Crown awards, women who were acknowledged by their regions in the next Women's League calendar/diary for being role models, etc. You are invited to support Women's League and honor your friends and "sisters" by clicking [here](#). If you prefer to submit an ad rather than use the on-line system, an ad blank is attached.



Special Convention project

Mathilde's Mentionables will be an ongoing chesed project of Women's League. For Convention, we are collecting new and gently used undergarments for women in need in the Washington, DC area.

Women's League Reads new selection



The Bridge Ladies, a memoir by Betsy Lerner

"A fifty-year-old bridge game provides an unexpected way to cross the generational divide between a daughter and her mother. Betsy Lerner takes us on a powerfully personal literary journey, where we learn a little about bridge and a lot about life."

The on-line book discussion will start on March 13. On March 27, the author will be joining us for a live interview with Education Director Lisa Kogen. We are thrilled to have Betsy. You will love reading the book and listening to her.

Next Distance Workshop



Merged Sisterhoods/Sharing Traditions
March 7, 2017

To register, [click here](#).

For the complete 2016-2017 schedule of Distance Workshops, [click here](#).

You can read the scripts from the last workshops in the member document section of the website.

**FROM THE TORAH FUND VICE PRESIDENT
MARILYN COHEN**

TORAH FUND CAMPAIGN 2016-2017

TORAH FUND CAMPAIGN

Women's League for Conservative Judaism



Seeds Newsletter, Issue 4



SHE PLANTS A SEED FOR THE FUTURE

Join this Special Project to raise
\$600,000 in two years to support

- Ziegler's Year of Study in Israel
- Refurbishing and Re-sanctifying
the JTS Women's League
Seminary Synagogue

Gifts of \$1800 and higher will be
recognized in a permanent installation
at both campuses.

All gifts will be recognized at Women's
League Convention in July, 2017.

Let us know how this project works
for you at: torahfund@jtsa.edu

Do you have a great idea to share?
Send it in to: torahfund@jtsa.edu

A Successful Fundraising Idea! Try This!

We thank Lori Snow, Torah Fund Vice President from Mid-Atlantic Region, for sharing these successful ideas.

Seeds Project Fundraiser: Mid-Atlantic Region



- For Mid-Atlantic Region's Torah Fund Founder's Day, Gift Baskets were created with items donated from Sisterhood Gift Shops. The Region Gift Shop Chair coordinated collecting items and assembling great baskets. Raffle tickets were sold at the event and all profits went towards their Seeds Pledge.

- For other Region Events, Baskets were made from items donated by the event's committee members and again raffle tickets were sold and all profits went towards their Seeds Pledge.

- 50/50 Tickets were sold at all Region events. One half of the monies collected was awarded to the individual winner. The other half of the monies collected went towards the Region's Seeds Pledge.

- After two MAR events with featured speakers, the Executive Committee reviewed final figures and decided on donation amounts to honor each speaker. The Torah Fund Office graciously sent notes to each speaker to confirm the donation in their honor.

The Mid-Atlantic Region pledged \$1,800 to the two-year Seeds Campaign. Over \$1400 was sent to the Seeds campaign in 2015-16. Mid-Atlantic Region will continue these efforts in 2016-2017.

Inspired by the success of the Seeds Campaign in the Mid-Atlantic Region, the MAR Past President's Council has also pledged \$1,800 to the Seeds Campaign. Thank you!



The Sisterhood of Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun (BTBJ- Erdenheim, PA)

has a long history of supporting Torah Fund and Women's League for Conservative Judaism. In early 2016, Sisterhood Board Members decided to raise money for the Torah Fund Special Campaign "She Plants a Seed for the Future" in honor of their beloved Rebbetzin Linda Grife, who was struggling with a recurrence of cancer. Contributions were collected in secret to surprise Linda with this honor. Donations were collected from the extended BTBJ community and local

friends. Debbi Goldich, Sisterhood member and International Torah Fund Chair, spearheaded the collection efforts.

The money raised through this Campaign supports the student year in Israel for Ziegler rabbinical students and supports the refurbishing and re sanctification of the Women's League Seminary Synagogue at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Linda Grife was a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary with a Master's Degree in Social Work, which gave the donation an even more special connection.

Linda was an active member of BTBJ Sisterhood during her 18 years as Rebbetzin. She attended Board Meetings, gave informative and entertaining *divrei Torah*, participated in programs and events, and was a Torah Fund Honoree. Linda and Rabbi Saul Grife led more than ten congregational family missions to Israel. Each trip was sold out and was more successful than the next.

Professionally, Linda held many jobs in the Philadelphia Jewish community. Most recently, she served as Director of Admissions for the Perelman Jewish Day School and Co-General Manager of Max and David's, a kosher restaurant. Linda touched us all with her love and knowledge of Judaism and Israel, her kind and inspiring stories, and her overflowing optimism.

Everyone knew Linda and Linda knew everyone. Thousands described Linda as their "best friend" and she was a special friend to all! She has been described by congregants as:

...a special soul who touched every person she met. She radiated warmth and goodness and her beautiful smile lit up our shul.

Rabbi Robert Lieb, a family friend, wrote,

We have lost one of the great shining stars in our Jewish universe. Linda was an extraordinary human being. She was and always will be an inspiration to countless numbers for her boundless joy and optimism, her courage and tenacity. May Linda's righteous memory be for an everlasting blessing.

In July 2016, Linda was presented with a framed "She Plants a Seed for the Future" Certificate in her honor. In September 2016, Linda lost her hard-fought battle with cancer. Linda Grife was a remarkable person who will be missed dearly by the entire synagogue and the Philadelphia Jewish community. At her funeral, her three brothers asked us to honor Linda's life and legacy by carrying out extra acts of lovingkindness each day to make the world a better place. The BTBJ Sisterhood and the BTBJ community is committed to carrying out this mission.

Special thanks to Deena Friedland and Debbi Goldich for their input into this article.

Marilyn Cohen, INR Torah Fund VP

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[Check out the New Torah Fund Guide and all the other materials to run a great campaign!](#)

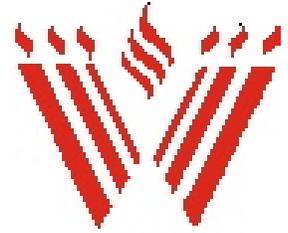
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NEED HELP?

HELP IS AVAILABLE ON THE WLCJ WEBSITE.

Programs, membership ideas, education material, and more available at wlcj.org

[Click here to visit the WL and explore all the resources](#)



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