



Chai Lines

International Northeast Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Networking to Engage, Enrich and Empower Conservative
Jewish Women

February 17, 2017

Volume 2, Issue 47

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FROM OUR REGION PRESIDENT



I don't like flying, but I enjoy travelling. The rewards are meaningful and often life-changing.

I get to see how the rest of the world lives. That means realizing that the way we organize our lives is not necessarily the only way, let alone the best way. I learn about the differences and embrace the similarities. I am not there to complain about how it is "so different than back home" but rather to appreciate these dissimilarities. Because something is different does not mean that we should reflexively reject it; on the contrary, embracing these differences allows us to do better.

So it is with our Women's League sisterhoods, our congregations and our communities. Some of us are Canadian, some American. Some of our congregations are egalitarian, in others we are not counted in a minyan. Some read Torah facing the Aron Kodesh, some face the congregation. Some silently read certain prayers, others sing them out loud. Some of our sisterhoods have no trouble attracting people to events, others struggle with attendance.

So, what does it all mean?

For me, recognizing and respecting our differences, learning and listening to each other, understanding that we are not the centre of the universe, allow us to move forward with

respect for each other's culture and tradition. I feel fortunate to live in a country that offers universal healthcare, inexpensive university education and excellent maternity benefits. Is it perfect? Is it the only way? Of course not.

Let's strive to work together to support each other and our sisterhoods. Join us for Women's League for Conservative Judaism Convention 2017, July 23-26, in Arlington Virginia. We will learn from each other, pray and have fun together.

OUR REGION WEBSITE IS LIVE! <http://www.wlcjregion.org/northeast/> A special thank you to our webmaster Lois Silverman for her time, commitment, and expertise in putting it all together.

Shabbat Shalom,

Eleanor
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514-458-6204

FROM THE EDUCATION VP LOIS SILVERMAN

I repost this piece by an unknown author. It is especially relevant in today's world.

Shabbat Shalom
LOIS

Fable of the Porcupine

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold.

The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After awhile, they decided to distance themselves one from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth.

Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the heat that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities.

SHARING A 100th BIRTHDAY

Dear Friends,

As we all know Woman's League is celebrating its 100th Birthday this year. Happy Birthday to all the dedicated women who have made the Woman's League such a

wonderful giving, caring group.

Our Temple Beth El Sisterhood in Utica, NY, has been a member of Women's League for 95 years.

This year Temple enjoyed celebrating the 100th Birthday of one of our members (however, we are so fortunate to have 3 other Sisterhood members that are over 100: Florence Levinson, Mollie Wertheim, and Alice Rosen). Our wonderful Millie Rokeach turned 100 on December 25; all our guests at the congregation's Chanukah dinner on December 30 were fortunate enough to celebrate with her.

A past president of Sisterhood, Millie has been very active in everything Sisterhood for more than 60 years. She never misses a meeting or a function, Sisterhood, Temple, the JCC, or her friend's invitations. She is a past president of The National Council of Jewish Women and Haddasah. She is the most avid reader I have ever known often reading a book a day, and she has belonged to book clubs for as long I can remember.

Millie is a former pre-school teacher and has taught many of the men and women in our community who now have or have had children and grandchildren going to pre-school at the JCC. Millie also taught at the Temple Beth El religious school on Genesee Street for many years. At our Chanukah dinner Millie was delighted to have her picture taken with a few of her many former students.



Millie is a collector of more than just books, for many years she has built a collection of turtles, not live ones, but many made from fabric, sculptured, wearable or just nice to look at. She has all the programs she has written, poems, stories, installations for all her organizations and letters. She also has many hats that she always wore, and when scarves became the rage Millie had a new collection, many of which she made for herself and others.

All of us who are lucky enough to know Millie know that she has always been a woman of great style. She loves lots of color, jewelry, and layers. Always looking bright, very put together and beautiful, she is still stylish at 100.

Sometimes we save the best for last, so here is the sum total of Millie.

Millie is the most caring, capable person you will ever hope to meet. Her poetry, stories, and beautiful notes should be in a collection all of their own. Spending time with her is always a fun and learning experience. Her book reviews were enlightening, and her smile lights up a room.

How fortunate Temple Beth El is to have Millie as such a prominent part of Temple and Sisterhood! How fitting that the Women's League and Millie will celebrate 100 years together!

Happy Birthday and happy days to our remarkable friend Millie.

Happy 100th Birthday to Millie and Women's League,

Shalom

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 20: Personal Conversation: Finding the Right Summer Camp

March 23: Eikhah Study with Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner



Purim will be here before you know it

If your sisterhood would like to use the beautiful Women's League Megillah for this year's Purim reading, now is the time to request it. For information about how to be considered, please contact Lisa Kogen asap

at lkogen@wlcj.org



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.

Share this information with all your bridge playing friends. If they are not Women's League members they can always join as individual members.

Public Policy

Women's League has a long and proud history of speaking out on topics impacting the wellbeing of all Americans. Here are some important resolutions from our past that are of particular import today:

1982 Women's League ...believes that the practice of the principle of separation of Church and State guaranteed by our Constitution has kept our nation strong and preserved full freedom for the individual. Women's League believes that transmitting religious values is the responsibility of the religious sector.

Women's League urges its Sisterhoods to oppose any legislative attempts through Constitutional amendments, the deprivation of Medicaid, family services, and/or other current welfare services, to weaken the force of the Supreme Court's decision permitting abortions.

2012 ...biblical and rabbinic sources provide the background for the Conservative Jewish response to a woman's right to bodily autonomy and to the relative rights of a woman versus a fetus...

Women's League calls upon its sisterhoods to:

- Educate their members about the Jewish perspective on when life begins utilizing the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards teshuvot on the subject;
- Support full access for all women to the entire spectrum of reproductive healthcare;
- Urge its members to oppose all efforts by governmental, private entities or individuals to limit such access or to require unnecessary procedures.

2014 ... many women cannot afford to pay for contraceptives either on a monthly basis or when there is a large upfront cost ...nor can they afford ongoing reproductive health care; ... Women's League calls on its Sisterhoods to:

- Encourage increased discussion about the harmful impact of difficult life circumstances and inequities in the choices that women (and men) in all walks of life may face as well as disparities across different geographic, socioeconomic and other populations regarding access to quality fertility/infertility,

- family planning, and abortion services;
- Oppose any legislative efforts to deny a woman's right to meaningfully access the full range of reproductive health services, and fully exercise her constitutionally protected reproductive rights;
 - Oppose legislation that seeks to practice medicine, such as defining when and what specific medical or surgical procedures are appropriate and lawful when applied to a woman and her ability to access reproductive health services;
 - Oppose any effort that would restrict funding of an institution or program which provides health services including education, birth control or abortion.

Members of Women's League are encouraged to be proactive on these issues, in their sisterhoods, regions and as individuals.

Resolutions

The Public Policy and Resolutions Committee is looking to craft additional meaningful and timely resolutions for your consideration. If you have any specific requests or input, please contact Committee Chair [Marion Mayman](#).

A BOLD NEW OUTLOOK



CONVENTION UPDATES

Registration is open! Register early for Convention 2017 and get your friends to register, too! You need to log onto www.wlcj.org and choose Convention 2017 Registration. We are looking forward to welcoming you personally to Arlington, Virginia, for our most exciting convention yet.

On Line Study Sessions

Convention will convene during the nine days between rosh chodesh Av and Tishah b'Av, traditionally considered a period of mourning with limitations on activities like listening to music and eating meat. To permit a meat meal on Tuesday night, we are hosting a siyyum, which is a short study session following our year-long study of the book of Eikhah (Lamentations) that is read on Tishah b'Av.

To prepare for the siyyum, Women's League is offering monthly on-line study sessions, from March through June, led by Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner (JTS), Rabbi Cheryl Peretz (Ziegler School of Rabbinics), Rabbi Lilly Kauffman (Executive Director, Torah Fund). The first session, will Dr. Lerner, is scheduled for March 23.

Dates and topics of the study sessions will be posted shortly.

Sisterhood stipends for convention!

Win a \$500 convention stipend for your sisterhood! How to do it?

1. Get the members of your sisterhood to log onto the Women's League website, www.wlcj.org, by clicking on the button on the top right.
2. They need to log in by following the directions given, if they haven't already. If they have any questions, please contact Razel Kessler at rkessler@wlcj.org or 212.870.1263.
3. They should click on: Update My Profile
4. In the first section, last line, they should click on the box that says: I wish to receive periodic email updates from WLCJ
5. Then they must scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Update Profile Information.

Four sisterhoods with 75% of their members "clicked" will be eligible to win \$500 toward their convention expenses.

We want to expand our online network. To do that, members need to let us know that they wish to receive email updates from WLCJ to be active members of that network. They get more benefits from Women's League and your sisterhood could win \$500 and benefit from an exceptional Women's League convention. It's a win-win.

Special Convention project



For the past several conventions we have been immensely proud of our social action projects designed to help local communities. With Convention 2017, we are starting a particularly fitting project that hopefully will continue long past next July.

Called Mathilde's Mentionables, in honor of our founder Mathilde Schechter, we will collect new and gently used undergarments for women in need. Start saving those new and very slightly used bras, nursing and mastectomy bras in your sisterhoods and regions bras.

Annual Meeting and Pacific Southwest Celebration March 5

A block of rooms has been reserved for March 3, 2017 - March 6, 2017 at the Hilton Woodland Hills/Los Angeles, 6360 Canoga Avenue, Woodland Hills, California 91367-2501.

The special room rate will be available until February 17th or until the group block is sold-out, whichever comes first. Rate Includes Complimentary Internet Access. \$15 Discounted Valet Parking. Please click [here](#) to access the hotel's booking site.



THE FRUIT OF OUR HANDS

1 Day ~ 3 Celebrations

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 5, 2017

A Day of Celebrating and Honoring the Sisterhoods of PSW

Welcome

Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson
Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies

Rabbi Cheryl Peretz
Associate Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies

Dr. Robert Wexler
President, American Jewish University

Panel

Danielle Berrin
Senior Columnist at The Jewish Journal

Ivy Kagan Bierman
PSW Region Board Chair of ADL

Debbie Green
Assistant Dean, Graduate School
of Non-Profit Management, AJU

Nizan Stein Kokin
Ziegler student, Zacharias Frankel College Potsdam, Germany

Ronda Spinak
Co-Founder & Artistic Director of Jewish Women's Theatre

WLCJ Annual Open Board Meeting

Carol Simon, International President

American Jewish University

15600 Mulholland Drive, Bel Air, California 90077

9:30 Registration/ 10:00 Program

Continental Breakfast and Catered Lunch Included

Attendance by paid reservation only. Please use reply card sent with this invitation.

Our Celebration Finale will be "Entertainment with Surprises"

VIRTUAL TRIBUTE BOOK

Information will be arriving soon to let you know how you can honor our Region, Torah Fund, Sisterhoods, Women's League and friends.

PSW Celebration ~ Reserve By February 20, 2017

Name _____ Sisterhood/City _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Guests included in this reservation: _____

Your Payment is Your Reservation

Before February 20, 2017: \$75/person Number of reservations _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

After February 20, 2017: \$85/person Number of reservations _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

Sorry I cannot attend and wish to make a contribution of \$ _____

Credit Card Payment: PSW is authorized to charge my Visa or Mastercard in the amount of \$ _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date __/__/__ 3-Digit code _____

or contact Kim Memar at (702) 429-0888 to give her your credit card information directly.

Please indicate your lunch entree(s): Chicken Picatta _____ Vegetarian (gluten free) _____

If you have special dietary restrictions, please contact Jina Rezvanpour at (310) 991-2509

Make checks payable to PSW WLCJ.

Return form with payment to: PSW Office, 15600 Mulholland Dr., Bel Air, CA 90077

We Look Forward To Seeing You!

Board Obligations for 2016-2017

All Women's League board members need to update their Conflict of Interest form for 2016-2017 and make a contribution (\$75 minimum) to the Kol Ishah Society Leadership Campaign. The form can be downloaded on wlcj.org or by contacting [Razel Kessler](#).

Next Distance Workshops



Women's
League

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

DISTANCE

WORK
SHOPS

the website.

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

Jewels in the Crown Update



Every sisterhood should want to be a recipient of a 2017 Jewels in the Crown Award for outstanding programming and involvement.

Information and the application are available on the [website](#). To help sisterhoods fulfill the various requirements, we have also prepared a tracking sheet to record programs and events as of Convention 2014. Remember, Jewels in the Crown Awards 2017 cover the period from July 2014 through June 2017 and will be presented at Convention 2017.

**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

h) 416 223 2955

c) 416 518 1860

marilyncohen@bell.net

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

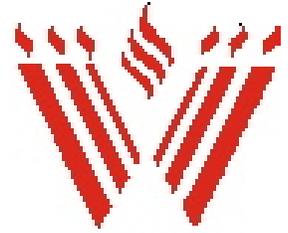
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NEED HELP?

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](#)



INR OF WLCJ | Itsilverman@gmail.com | [Website Click here](#)