



# Chai Lines

## International Northeast Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Networking to Engage, Enrich and Empower  
Conservative Jewish Women

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### FROM OUR REGION PRESIDENT



In this week's Canadian Jewish News, Rabbi Avi Finegold of Montreal and Rabbi Philip Scheim of Toronto wrote about imagining how different our world would be if we were to find more pleasure in sharing positive uplifting stories than in spreading negative ones. To quote Rabbi Scheim, "We so often focus on the negative, the dark stories, of which there never seems to be a shortage. No doubt, there are reasons to fear, to distrust, to be skeptical about almost everything in life, but then we encounter (someone) who restores our faith in humanity, in the innate Jewish instinct to stand by each other." Rabbi Finegold says, "I would venture to say that there is likely more good news in our community than things

to be afraid of."

I couldn't agree more. So share the good news and accomplishments of your sisterhood. Every sisterhood in our region can be a shining jewel when it offers programs that nurture and sustain Jewish life and vitality in their local communities. Sisterhoods which meet a wide range of criteria- activities developed and sponsored by Women's League as well as home-grown programs and initiatives-can be acknowledged by Women's League with a Jewels in the Crown Award. For more information and to apply for the award, go to [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org) and click on Jewels in the Crown Awards 2017. The deadline is March 31. Your sisterhood deserves to be recognized!

Here is my uplifting story: this week, much of the northeast region experienced a severe winter storm which included plummeting temperatures, blowing snow, whiteout conditions, power outages, and school closures. Montreal was blanketed with 42 centimetres (about 16.5 inches) of snow, and most of it seemed to be on our street! As we don't have a contractor to clear our property, I wondered all day how we were

going to find the time and energy to rid our walkway and driveway of all that snow. When I arrived home from work that first day of the storm, I was pleasantly surprised and touched to discover that both had been completely shoveled by one of our neighbours! What a wonderful act of kindness.

*Shabbat Shalom*

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## **FROM THE EDUCATION VP LOIS SILVERMAN**

"I am a Jew."

In the past and even today, how many of us are reluctant to make that statement?

During the past few months, we in North America have seen a rise of hateful incidents directed at our Jewish communities and institutions. Even our cemeteries are not immune.

What can we do? We can call or write your government representatives and demand they take a stand again hate, prejudice, and anti-Semitism. You can take a stand by standing with your sisters and brothers by celebrating our heritage, our communities, and our futures at our synagogues on Shabbat and at daily minyans.

Be a proud Jew!

To see a celebration of Kol Yisrael, [click here](#).

*Shabbat Shalom*  
LOIS

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## **FROM WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**



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

### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**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*

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**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.

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## **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.](#)

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## **Region Websites Update**

All WLCJ 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.

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## **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!**

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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.

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### United Nations Update

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

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### Announcing a new partnership



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's 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!

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## CONVENTION UPDATES

### A BOLD NEW OUTLOOK



### Registration is open!

Log onto [www.wlcj.org](http://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.

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### 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.

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## Next Distance Workshop



Women's  
League

**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.

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**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](mailto:torahfund@jtsa.edu)

Do you have a great idea to share? Send it in to: [torahfund@jtsa.edu](mailto: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!](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4fcgm1vx528ze9x/AADNqaT_GXwnbZalSMo_m6Ona?dl=0)

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4fcgm1vx528ze9x/AADNqaT\\_GXwnbZalSMo\\_m6Ona?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4fcgm1vx528ze9x/AADNqaT_GXwnbZalSMo_m6Ona?dl=0)

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**NEED HELP?**

**HELP IS AVAILABLE ON THE WLCJ WEBSITE.**

Programs, membership ideas, education material, and more available at [wlcj.org](http://wlcj.org)



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



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