

Garden State Region News - February 6, 2026



**STAND
WITH
ISRAEL**



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MESSAGE FROM SHEILA KAUFMAN, GSR PRESIDENT

Dear Affiliate,

Shalom!

It is kind of ironic having Ground Hog Day and Tu B'shevat on the same day. For one, we are anxiously waiting to see if it is six more weeks of winter or an early spring and for the other, we are celebrating the rebirth or reawakening of trees. On second thought, it isn't so much ironic as it is perfect timing. A friend of mine always says, "It is the right time for it to happen." She is right because no matter how you look at it, spring is the rebirth of the earth and it was meant to be. So, enjoy every moment.



This past Shabbat I had the pleasure of joining the women of Congregation B'nai Israel of Millburn for their Sisterhood Shabbat and Kiddush. It was a delightful experience, they were all so talented. They welcomed me and were glad that I was able to join them. I announced that the Region will be having our Region Spring Conference there and I hope to see many of them in attendance. This coming Shabbat I will be joining the women of B'nai Shalom in West Orange and look forward to seeing them.

Please invite me to your sisterhood programs, I look forward to joining you!

In our Programming Newsletter, in addition to publicizing your sisterhood affiliate events we will showcase your events, so get those phone cameras rolling!

We have a few wonderful programs coming up including February 22 at 11 am when we will have a Coffee and Conversation with our Israeli Kehillot counterparts discussing "Joy in Judaism: Family and Community." Our speakers will be from Moreshet Avraham in Jerusalem, Torat Hayyim in Herzliya, and Orlie Prince from Miriam Sisterhood of Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange. See the flyer below and please join us.

Shabbat Shalom,

Sheila

Sheila Kaufman
President, Garden State Region WLCJ
gsrpresident24@wlcj.org
"Networking to engage, enrich and empower Conservative Jewish women"

2024-2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President - [Sheila Kaufman](#)
VP, Programming - [Susan Winter](#)
VP, Sisterhood/Affiliate Support - [Cheryl Sessler](#)
VP, Torah Fund - [Sindy Manas](#)
Secretary, Communications - [Ilene Rothman](#)
Secretary, Corresponding - [Susan Sferas](#)
Secretary, Financial - [Lisa Katz](#)
Secretary, Recording - [Carol Kotch](#)
Treasurer - [Donna Franklin](#)
Parliamentarian - [Dorothy Cohen](#)
Immediate Past President - [Lynette Seader](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Meryl Balaban](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Heddy Belman](#)

MESSAGE FROM SINDY MANAS, TORAH FUND VICE PRESIDENT

Shalom,

In December, I attended the Torah Fund Event at Congregation Torat El in Oakhurst, NJ. Eva Weiner was the guest speaker, and she spoke of her journey as a young child when her family traveled on the SS St Louis. The St Louis carried more than 900 Jewish refugees and headed to Cuba from Nazi Germany. After Cuba refused to allow them to disembark, Captain Gustav Schroder tried to enter the United States and Canada, but those countries also refused entry. He finally returned the ship to Europe and through negotiation with various countries, was able to find countries including the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and France to let them leave the ship, which then returned to Germany with no passengers. In 1993, Captain Schroder was posthumously named as one of the **Righteous Among the Nations** at the **Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial** in Israel.



In 2012, The US Dept of State formally apologized in a ceremony and invited 14 of the survivors to tell their stories. Eva Weiner was one of the survivors to tell her story. The survivors presented ambassadors from four European countries with a proclamation

of gratitude for accepting some of the ship's passengers into their countries.

Have you had any memorable Torah Fund events that you would like to tell us about? Sisterhoods/affiliates are always looking for ideas for Torah Fund programs.

The Women's League *Oseh Shalom Campaign* is doing well. Continue to send in checks and transmittal forms using a trackable delivery method. Online donations generate a receipt at the end of your transaction. Here is the website to donate to the Torah Fund *Oseh Shalom General Campaign*. It gives you the opportunity to choose a one-time amount or a monthly amount.

<https://inspired.jtsa.edu/give/649648/#!/donation/checkout>

Remember to indicate the name of your sisterhood/affiliate when submitting a donation.

Please invite me to your Torah Fund events. I would love to attend.

Your generous contributions to Torah Fund are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for all you do for Torah Fund.

Shabbat Shalom,

Sindy Manas
Torah Fund VP Garden State Region
Smanas750e@gmail.com
(908) 208-8230

GSR REGION PROGRAMS

- **Thurs. Feb. 19 @ 7:30 pm** - Sisterhood Presidents - Joys and Oys on zoom
 - **Sun. Feb. 22, 2026 @ 11 am** - Coffee and Conversation on Zoom - Meet with our Israeli Kehillot counterparts on "Joy in Judaism: Family & Community."
 - **Mon. Mar. 9, 2026 @ 7:30 pm** - Coffee and Conversation on Zoom - Rabbi Stefanie Dickstein compares Vashti to Queen Esther in "Naked Under the Crown: Evolving Views of Esther and Vashti as Role Models for Jewish Women."
 - **Sun. May 3, 2026 @ 9 am - 4 pm** - GSR Spring Conference and Installation of Officers - "Jewish Latinos - Coming to America" at Congregation B'nai Israel, Millburn
 - **Sun.-Wed. July 12-15, 2026** - WLCJ Convention 2026, Alexandria, VA
-



SAVE THE DATE

**2026 Garden State Region
Spring Conference & Installations
Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ 9:00 to 4:00 pm (TBD)
Congregation B'nai Israel, Millburn, NJ**



GSR Coffee and Conversation on Zoom

Sunday, February 22, 2026 at 11 am EST / 6 pm IST

Joy in Judaism: Family and Community

What does "Joy in Judaism" mean to Israeli families and communities and in the Garden State Region?
Discussion will be led by our Masorti Kehillot (congregations)
- Moreshet Avraham and Torat Hayyim.
There will also be a speaker from the Garden State Region.



Topics and speakers are:

Moreshet Avraham, Jerusalem

Joy in Israeli "Family Day" (Henrietta Szold) - Rabbi Amirit Rosen
The Joy of Chesed - Natalie Mendelsohn

Torat Hayyim, Herzliya

Joy and Judaism: Community - Tahlil Ilan Ber
Joy and Judaism: Family - Iris Sadeh Rosler

Garden State Region, NJ

Community: Inside and Out - Orli Prince,
Oheb Shalom Congregation, South Orange



Questions? Susan Winter at winter.susan@gmail.com

Register at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/UMnEPpK/joy>

Register

SISTERHOOD AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Temple Beth El of Somerset

presents

A Women's Seder

A Celebration of the Women in Our Lives

*Sunday,
March 8, 2026*

4:30 pm

\$36 pp

*Be a part of this event with
Special Guest Chef, Naomi
Lasky and Special Guest
Leader, Sherri Morris.*

See below for details.



A dedicated Haggadah has been written for this very special event.

All women are invited, and you do not need to be a temple member or Jewish. To make this event memorable, we do ask for just a few things from you to help us prepare.

Submission for Haggadah: Think of a woman in your life you would like to celebrate by having her picture and a dedication in our personalized Haggadah.

\$5 - Please email or bring to the temple a picture of her, with a 1-2 sentence dedication written below.

\$3 - If you would like to do just a dedication **or** just a picture.

*Please provide this information ***no later than Jan. 30th***: Complete the information below, email this form and the picture you've chosen to Lisa, tbesomerset@gmail.com. You can also come by the temple during office hours and provide this form, payment and your picture will be scanned and returned to you.

Your name: _____

Your email: _____

Name of pictured person: _____

Their relationship to you: _____

**If you are doing a dedication, please provide 1-2 sentences about this person: _____

Your submissions will become part of the Haggadah, making this event even more special and memorable! Please join us!

An email invitation will be sent separately. Invite and bring your family, friends, neighbors!

TO PRINT FORM

Questions? Lisa at tbesomerset@gmail.com

Please send your programs that you would like posted to both [Ilene Rothman](#) AND [Sheila Kaufman](#).

- Do you have any programs that you would like others to know about? Easy way to publicize your event! Let us know. Send a flyer in jpg or pdf format.
- Starting in January, we will also showcase affiliate programs. Submit up to 3 photos with captions and 2 sentences to describe your program. (We will shorten if necessary.)



Torah Fund supports programs and scholarships at the five Conservative/Masorti global institutes of higher education.



Announcing Our 2025-2026 Campaign Theme:

Oseh Shalom

עשה שלום

Maker of Peace

We strive to make a significant impact through scholarships and programs that benefit students at The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Schechter Institutes, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, and The Abraham J. Heschel Seminary.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we help committed Jewish students become the rabbis, cantors, educators, synagogue administrators, social workers, scholars, researchers and lay leaders of tomorrow.

When you support Torah Fund, you help educate students in New York, Los Angeles, Israel, Latin America and Europe—and you align with those who value learning, knowledge and providing the future generation with relevant skills to fortify the Jewish people.

Visit www.jtsa.edu/torah-fund

Oseh Shalom Bimromav, “may the One who makes peace in the heavens, make peace for us and all the people of Israel,” appears at the end of Kaddish and in other prayers, and is also a song. We help foster Jewish unity by our support of the five global Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher education.



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO TORAH FUND!

TORAH FUND GIVING LEVELS

Golden Supporter: \$8,100
Keter Kavod \$5,000
Scholarship Patron \$2,500
Patron \$1,200
Associate Patron \$600
Guardian \$300
Benefactor \$180

FOR OUR U.S. SUPPORTERS, go to inspired.jtsa.edu/torahfund
Or send your check to the Torah Fund office.

FOR OUR CANADIAN SUPPORTERS, go to torahfundecards.jtsa.edu/canadian
Make a donation of any amount with the minimum purchase of one ecard.
Or send a check to The Jewish Theological Society, 100 Elder Street, North York, Ontario, M3H 5G7.

The dedicated philanthropy of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, Torah Fund supports scholarships and programs in the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher Jewish learning.

TORAH FUND

3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-8876
www.jtsa.edu/torah-fund • torahfund@jtsa.edu

We have beautiful new ecards!
Think of Torah Fund for any greeting.

We're expanding our collection with two new designs by Israeli artist Bracha Lavee—a thank-you card and a mazal tov card.

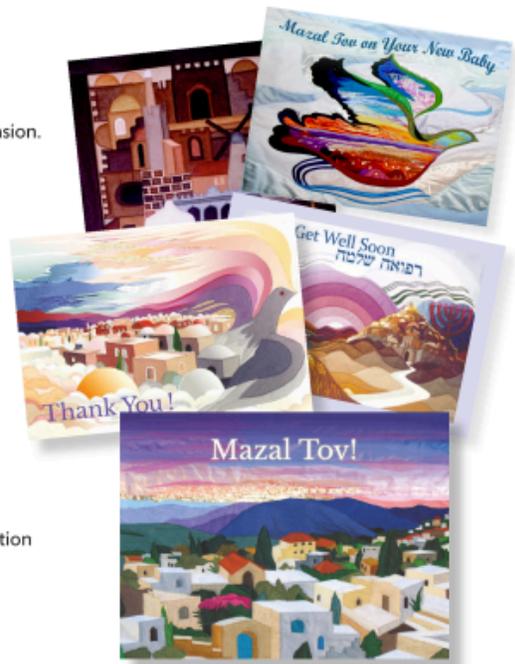
Show your care by sending a Torah Fund ecard for any occasion. For only \$5 per recipient you can send an attractive ecard—and you can even schedule it for a specific time!

Revenue from ecard purchases benefits the Torah Fund general campaign, and our affiliates receive credit for purchases. Make your selection today at torahfundecards.jtsa.edu

For our Canadian supporters, go to torahfundecards.jtsa.edu/canadian

And for our Canadian donors: Make your gift to Torah Fund online via our ecards! For a minimum C\$5 ecard purchase, you can add a contribution of any amount to Torah Fund.

It's easy! Select the card design you'd like to send and follow the user-friendly prompts to complete your transaction.



Torah Fund supports scholarships and programs at the five worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher education:

Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, Schechter Institutes in Jerusalem, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires, and The Abraham J. Heschel Seminary.

Thanks to our donors, we ensure quality education and diverse opportunities for students to become future Jewish leaders serving the broader Jewish community.

Our Jewish future is in your hands!
Visit torahfundecards.jtsa.edu
and send an ecard today.

[Click HERE](#) to send a Torah Fund E-Card
[Click HERE](#) to donate to this year's 2025-26 Torah Fund Campaign
[Click HERE](#) to donate to the Torah Fund Legacy Society
[Click HERE](#) for the Torah Fund Chadashot Newsletter

Torah Fund pins will be distributed in September.
Any questions please e-mail [Sindy Manas at smanas750e@gmail.com](mailto:smanas750e@gmail.com).

GOOD & WELFARE - GARDEN STATE REGION

Share your news and nachas with us!

Let us know if you have any simchas, well wishes, and sorrows to pass on to [Sheila Kaufman](#).

Birthday Wishes

Wishing all who have February anniversaries and birthdays, **Yom Huledet Sameach!**

Mazel Tov

- Marcia Klioze, Immediate Past President HPCT-CAE, on the engagement of her daughter Julianna to Aidan Sawyer.

DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Make a Donation to the Garden State Region to:

- Honor someone special
- Wish a Mazel Tov to a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family
- Send get well wishes
- Send condolences

Our **Scholarship Fund** helps to send women to WLCJ Convention and Leadership Institute where they learn necessary skills to share with our sisterhoods.

The **Sunshine Fund** supports members of the GSR Board in their time of need.

The **Evelyn Auerbach Education Fund** to sponsor an annual GSR Region educational event.

To make donations, contact Donna Franklin, GSR Treasurer, at gstrtreasurer@wlcj.org and include which fund(s) to make the donation to.

Or mail your check payable to "GSR-WLCJ" to
Donna Franklin, 7 Liddy Place, West Caldwell, NJ 07006
Donations can also be made via Credit Card.

[Donate to GSR using Credit Card](#)

WLCJ PROGRAMS AND MESSAGES

Shabbat Message

February 6, 2026 | 20th of Shevat, 5786

Connections Through Quilting

Esta Z. Lichtenstein

WLCJ International Vice President and Communications Chair



I recently returned from a five-day quilting retreat. I love attending them and try to do three annually.

So, what is a quilting retreat? Usually held in a hotel or resort-type venue, it is the chance to spend time solely focusing on something I love for up to 15 hours a day. This one had 60 attendees, 57 ladies and three gentlemen.

[Read more](#)

 **ONLINE**

Monday, February 23, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM ET



Please join us as **WLCJ Executive Director Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields** receives an honorary doctorate from JTS.

[Register for the Livestream](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PROGRAMMING WITH PANACHE

Searching for new programs to showcase and present? Wondering what kinds of educational programs are available to offer?

The WLCJ Kehilah and Education Committee are putting together a third edition of program ideas. We have not updated our reservoir of ideas in almost three years. Our hope is to create a new and updated guidebook that will not only provide you with spectacular program ideas but will also give you a plethora of information and resources that you can use in your Region and with your Sisterhood Affiliate.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Please send us program ideas and descriptions that we can include in our guidebook. There is no restriction on topic nor is it only Officers that can submit; this is open to anyone! These can be programs that have already been presented over the last few years or will soon be presented. Please include the following in your submission:

- The name of the program
- A brief description of what the program is about
- Any other pertinent information you would like to include (name of the presenter/s, necessary materials, what made it such a great program, etc.)
- The name and contact information of someone for more information

All submissions must be sent to Fran Hildebrandt at fhildebrandt@wlcj.org by March 15. If you have further questions, contact Fran via email or Whatsapp 248-318-8301.

WLCJ WORKSHOP: TOOLBOX TALKS SERIES



If you said yes, then Toolbox Talks for Sisterhood Affiliates is for you!

Join us for one session, all six, or however many work with your schedule.

Register

Announcing: Toolbox Talks for Sisterhood Affiliates
a dynamic Zoom series open to all Women's League members

Are you looking for solutions to today's leadership challenges?
 Would you like to learn the difference between having a title and being an effective leader?
 Do you want to turn goals into accomplishments?

Upcoming Toolbox Talks sessions:

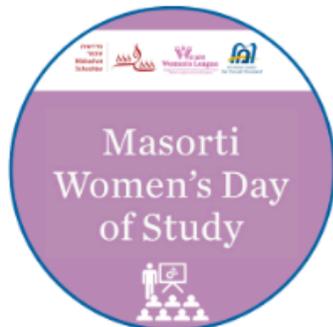
- February 5, 2026
- March 5, 2026
- May 7, 2026
- June 4, 2026

Anise Parnes
 WLCJ International Vice President and Consulting Services Vice Chair
aparnes@wlcj.org

MASORTI DAYS OF STUDY

 **ONLINE**

Sunday, February 8, 2026
 16:50 Israel Time | 9:50 am ET



Schedule Update for February 8
 This program is moved to Zoom. Please join us online!

Topic	Time	Facilitator
Class in English with Rabbi Diana Vila	17:05-18:15	Rabbi Diana Vila
Class in Spanish with Vila Balter	18:25-19:35	Vila Balter
Class in English with Dr. Shana Mauer	19:45-19:50	Dr. Shana Mauer
Class in Spanish with Rabbi Diana Villa	19:45-19:50	Rabbi Diana Villa
Final Words	19:45-19:50	Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields

The Search for Harmony: Text, Prayer, Song

Schedule (via ZOOM)
Welcome (16:50): Rabbi Diana Vila
First session (17:05-18:15)
 Class in English with Rabbi Diana Vila
 Class in Spanish with Vila Balter
Second Session (18:25-19:35)
 Class in English with Dr. Shana Mauer
 Class in Spanish with Rabbi Diana Villa
Final Words (19:45-19:50): Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields

The Masorti Women's Days of Study were created and directed by Women's League for Conservative Judaism, in cooperation with the Schechter Institutes of Jewish Studies and the Masorti Movement.

Register

 **QUESTIONS?**

Diane Friedgut
friedgutdiane@outlook.com

WORLD WIDE WRAP



Registration form for U.S. and Canadian Clubs [here](#). Information and registration for other 2026 International participation here – [English](#), [Español](#), [Français](#).

[Register](#)

For more information or questions:
FJMC WWW Committee
www@fjmc.org

ALL THAT JAZZ

Monday, February 9, 2026
at 3:00 pm ET

Women's League for Conservative Judaism Presents

ALL THAT JAZZ AND MORE: JEWS AND 1970S HOLLYWOOD MUSICALS
with Lois Silverman

DATES:
Monday, February 9 at 3 pm EST
Monday, March 9 at 3 pm EST
Monday, April 13 at 3 pm EST
via Zoom



All That Jazz and More—Jews and 1970s Hollywood Musicals
Explore the Jewish connections behind iconic 1970s Hollywood musicals. Through film clips and visuals, these stand-alone sessions highlight the Jewish actors, composers, writers, and directors who shaped films like *Cabaret*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *A Star Is Born*, and *Saturday Night Fever*. A must for movie and music lovers alike.

Session One—Monday, February 9, 2026
—*Fiddler on the Roof* and Tradition—
Traditional musicals

[REGISTER](#)

Upcoming sessions:
Session Two—**Monday, March 9, 2026**—
No Laughing Matters—Dramatically
themed musicals

[REGISTER](#)

Session Three—**Monday, April 13, 2026**
—*Not Your Parents' Kind of Musicals*—
Rock and contemporary musicals

[REGISTER](#)

 QUESTIONS

Lois Silverman
lsilverman@wlcj.org

WL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

 ONLINE

Sunday, February 22, 2026
at 7:30 pm ET



Join us for an engaging conversation with **Nina Manolson, M.A., NBC-HWC**, Body-Peace Coach, as we explore the complicated relationship Jewish women have with food, body, and tradition. Discover why it's so complex—and how to create more ease, nourishment, and peace for yourself and your legacy.

REGISTER

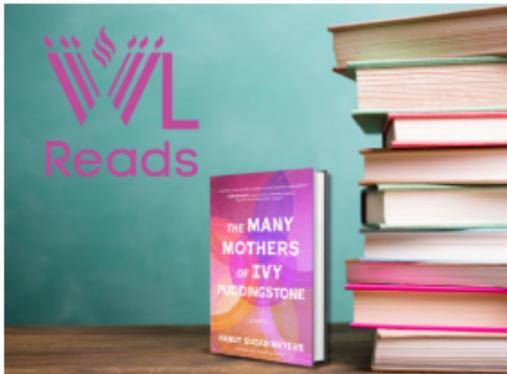
 QUESTIONS

Debbie Bettan
Health & Wellness Chair
dbettan@wlcj.org

WL READS

 ONLINE

Sunday, April 12, 2026
at 1:00 pm ET



Join WL Reads for a lively conversation with international bestselling author Randy Susan Meyers. Known for her compelling voice and acclaimed novels, Meyers will discuss her latest book, *The Many Mothers of Ivy Puddingstone*, a thought-provoking exploration of altruism, justice, and sacrifice. **Registration is now open.** Read along and join us on Sunday, April 12 at 1:00 pm ET—even if you haven't read the book yet.

REGISTER

 QUESTIONS

Karen Block
WL Reads Chair
kblock@wlcj.org

WLCJ CONVENTION



VISIT THE
CONVENTION 2026
WEBSITE



Shabbaton: Friday–
Saturday, July 10–11, 2026
Convention: Sunday–
Wednesday, July 12–15,
2026



**The Hilton Alexandria
Mark Center**
5000 Seminary Road,
Alexandria, VA 22311



[Click here](#) or on the image
to go to the online
application or

[here for PDF](#) version.

NEW - [Click here](#) to view
the video of the application
procedure.

PURCHASE YOUR AD FOR THE CONVENTION 2026 VIRTUAL AD JOURNAL TODAY!

Don't let the moment pass without honoring the people who make our community shine. Whether it's a thank you, "*mazel tov*," or a personal note of appreciation and gratitude, now is the time to secure your spot in the Virtual Ad Journal!

PURCHASE YOUR AD



The WWOT, the Weekly Words of Torah, each week through the end of June 2026, will connect to the **2025-2026 / 5786** Torah Fund general campaign, *Oseh Shalom – Maker of Peace*. To read more Weekly Words of Torah, [click here](#).

Parashat Yitro

Rabbi Margie Cella explores a subtle grammatical anomaly at the foot of Mount Sinai and the profound message hidden within a single Hebrew verb. Discover how the shift from dissent to a singular heart offers a timeless lesson on unity that can bridge our modern differences and bring peace to future generations.

READ THIS WEEK'S WWOT

OTHER WLCJ PROGRAM REMINDERS

Click the image to explore each program series and to register.



Sessions will meet on a Tuesday night each month over Zoom at 7:30PM ET Nov 11, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9

MAKOM B'YACHAD



Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

12 noon ET, 9am PT, 10am MT, and 11am CT

A virtual service for our WLCJ Sisters to recite *Mishaberach* (the Prayer for Healing) and Psalms, and study *Kaddish*.

<https://zoom.us/j/630830287>

Meeting ID: 630 830 287

Password: 875936



Engaging Enriching and Empowering Jewish Women
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

3080 Broadway Suite K900 | New York, NY
10027 | Phone: 405-870-1260 |
info@wlcj.org

WL WEEK

DONATE TO WLCJ

SHARE YOUR SISTERHOOD HAPPENINGS WITH US!

Look for all the info both here and on our Website & Facebook pages.



Follow the Garden State Region!

If you would like to contribute a flyer or picture to upload please forward to [Ilene Rothman](#) and [Sheila Kaufman](#).

Click [here](#) to connect with the Garden State Region Facebook page.

Click [here](#) to visit the Garden State Region website.

Make sure to click both **Like** and **Follow**. It's another great way to learn about everything happening in our Region.



Garden State Region
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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Ilene Rothman
GSR Secretary Communications / Newsletter Editor
gsrccommunications@wlcj.org

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