

Garden State Region News - March 6, 2026



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HATE

WL Week

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MESSAGE FROM SHEILA KAUFMAN, GSR PRESIDENT

Dear Affiliate,

Shalom!

With the attack on Iran beginning this past weekend. It stirs me to the core. I have trouble with war, shooting, and conflict in general. I hope and pray that this is over quickly, with limited casualties, and that the people of Israel and the innocent are safe and out of harm's way.

Our last Coffee and Conversation of the year will take place on Monday, March 9 at 7:30 pm. Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein will discuss **Naked Under the Crown: Evolving Views of Esther and Vashti as Role Models for Jewish Women**. Please see the flyer below and register.



Save the Date for our **GSR Spring Conference** on May 3rd at B'nai Israel in Millburn. An all-day event is planned that will celebrate "Latino Jews-Coming to America" and culminate with installations of the GSR 2026-29 Administration. Registration will open very soon. This will be a wonderful opportunity to catch up with friends and make new ones. I look forward to sharing this day with you.

The Women's League Convention 2026 is July 12-15 in Alexandria, VA. Registration is open. Celebrate the B'not Mitzvah class, Installation of the WLCJ International Board 2026-2029, daven in a women's minyan, shop, celebrate America's 250th anniversary and a whole lot more. The deadline for submission of applications for the Jewels in the Crown Awards to be presented at convention is extended to March 17, so get it in! Check out the [Convention Website](#).

Ahm Yisrael Chai!

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](#)
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Advisor to the Board - [Meryl Balaban](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Heddy Belman](#)

MESSAGE FROM SINDY MANAS, GSR TORAH FUND VICE PRESIDENT

Shalom!

Oseh Shalom, our Torah Fund theme for this year is doing well. In the Garden State region, we have donated \$ 70,038 toward our goal of \$ 82,310. Our campaign will continue until June 2026. Please continue to send in checks and transmittal forms using a trackable delivery method.

Have you tried to donate online? 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.

<https://inspired.jtsa.edu/give/649648/#!/donation/checkout>
It gives you the opportunity to choose a one-time amount or a monthly amount. Please share your receipt with your sisterhood affiliate Torah Fund chair so she knows a donation has been made. Remember to indicate the name of your sisterhood affiliate in all online donations.



Our Torah Fund theme is very relevant this year with the current fighting in Iran. Oseh Shalom, "May the One who makes peace in the heavens, bring peace upon all of us, all of Israel, all over the world." My hope is for the fighting to be swift, casualties to be minimal and for peace to reign all over the world.

The current issue of Chadashot is available [online](#).

Have you had any memorable Torah Fund events you would like to share with us?
Sisterhoods affiliates are always looking for ideas for Torah Fund programs.

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

GSR REGION PROGRAMS

- **Mon. Mar. 9, 2026 @ 7:30 pm EST**- Coffee and Conversation on Zoom - Rabbi Stephanie 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
-



GSR Coffee and Conversation on Zoom

Monday, March 9, 2026 at 7:30 PM

**Naked Under the Crown:
Evolving Views of Esther and Vashti
as Role Models for Jewish Women**

Speaker - Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein

Once, only wild girls dressed up as Vashti. Then it was Esther who was boring and possibly problematic. Is the pendulum swinging back again? We will explore how assessments of Queens Esther and Vashti as heroines, a villain or even a significant part of the Purim Story have evolved over the centuries and especially in our own times.



Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein was the first woman with young children ordained at JTS to serve as a pulpit rabbi in New Jersey. She also worked as a chaplain, a Rabbinical School Assistant dean and continues to offer Jewish spiritual care and learning.

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

Register at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/yFWivt0/VashtiEsther>

Register



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

SISTERHOOD AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Highland Park Conservative Temple-Congregation Anshe Emeth
201 South 3rd Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 07632
Tel: 201-981-1100

Open to the Public!
All are welcome!
Bring a Friend!

**HPCT-CAE SISTERHOOD & HADASSAH
JOINT EVENT**

**I'M STILL HERE: A LOOK AT LIFE'S MOMENTS
THROUGH THE LENS OF MUSICAL THEATER**

A Lively Musical Presentation
with Dr. Amy Eisenberg
Producer, Director and Performer

Tuesday, March 10, 2026
at 7:30 pm



**Broadway doesn't only sparkle with youth – it sings eloquently
about life's later chapters.**

Join us for an entertaining and thought-provoking evening filled with storytelling, laughter, and unforgettable music as we explore how musical theater reflects the joys, challenges, humor, and the hard-won wisdom of life experiences.

From *Fiddler on the Roof* to *Hamilton*, this program reveals how beloved shows capture changing roles, resilience, and cultural shifts often with surprising warmth and wit.

**Fun and interactive, this is a program that invites you to
listen, laugh, reminisce, and join the conversation.**

No fee to attend but RSVP requested to
Helene Knee - kneenote@gmail.com or
Ruth Fineberg - ruth.fineberg@gmail.com



Light refreshments will be served.

Come for the music. Stay for the insight. Leave inspired.

Highland Park Conservative Temple-Congregation Anshe Emeth
201 South 3rd Avenue, Highland Park, NJ (enter through back parking lot entrance)

RSVP

Sisterhood Affiliates,

Do you have any programs that you would like others to know about? Either to publicize your event in advance or to share your affiliate program afterwards.

- To publicize your event in advance, send a flyer in jpg or pdf format with Registration link.
- To showcase your affiliate programs post event, submit up to 3 photos with captions and a few sentences to describe your program. (We will shorten if necessary.)

Please e-mail your programs that you would like posted in this newsletter to both [Ilene Rothman](#) AND [Sheila Kaufman](#).



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 Rabbinico 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

Any questions please e-mail Sindy Manas at 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 March anniversaries and birthdays, **Yom Huledet Sameach!**

Mazel Tov

- **Sindy & Howard Manas**, GSR VP Torah Fund, recently had a granddaughter, Melody Ruth, born to her daughter, Stephanie & Alan Masinter, and proud big sister, Vivian.
- **Robin Bauer**, Sisterhood President, Congregation Torat El, recently had a granddaughter, Penelope Mae, born to her daughter Emily and husband.

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

Statement on the US-Israel Operation in Iran

Yesterday, WLCJ issued a statement of solidarity and support regarding the ongoing joint US-Israel military actions in Iran. As we approach Purim, we pray that the enduring threats against the Jewish people are thwarted, just as they were in ancient Persia. While we unequivocally stand behind efforts to safeguard Israel and promote regional stability, our Women's League sisters remain a vital focus. To our members navigating the anxiety and uncertainty of this moment: WLCJ is here for you. We pray deeply for the physical safety of all who are in harm's way and for a lasting peace to blanket the region.

READ

Shabbat Message

March 6, 2026 | 18 of Tevet, 5786

Try To Be Happy, or You Miss Out on Living

Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields

WLCJ Executive Director



In this month of *Adar*, we are told to be happy, as stated in the saying that goes along with the month: *Me She'nichas Adar, Marbim B'Simcha*. When you enter the month of *Adar*, your happiness is to be increased. However, can one really command a feeling? We are commanded to love God, but how can that be commanded? How can we be told to be happy? Maybe one does not feel happy. And there is a good reason to not feel happy this month. We all are living through Operation Roaring Lion. Evil people are being eliminated, at the same time innocent lives are being lost and people's homes are being damaged and destroyed. One of the most fun holidays in Israel has been curtailed with restrictions on gatherings and people being able to travel. But the Jewish people and the State of Israel are strong. We persevere and we are resilient. Nothing stops us from observing the holiday of Purim, even if we do not feel in a celebratory mood.

[Read more](#)

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS: WHY WL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP?

TERRY WINSTON AND STAYING CONNECTED

After moving downtown and stepping back from her WLCJ roles, **Terry Winston** discovered that a **WL Individual Membership** keeps her connected. With online programs, meetings, and resources, she can engage on her own schedule, continue learning, and build meaningful connections. It's a flexible way to stay involved even when traditional sisterhood membership isn't feasible. Read why she believes membership is a gift worth recognizing.

[READ](#)

ALL THAT JAZZ AND MORE: JEWS AND 1970'S HOLLYWOOD MUSICALS

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



NO LAUGHING MATTERS—DRAMATICALLY THEMED MUSICALS

Mon | Mar 9 | 3:00 pm ET | Online

Discover the Jewish roots of 1970s Hollywood! In this stand-alone session focusing on dramatically themed musicals, we will use film clips to uncover the Jewish creators behind classics like *Cabaret*, *All That Jazz*, and *A Little Night Music*. A live Q&A will follow the presentation. Even if you missed the first session of the series, you won't want to miss this deep dive into cinema history!

[REGISTER](#)

WL INCLUSION AND MISHPACHAH

B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (ADRABA) OF THE MASORTI MOVEMENT

Sun | Mar 22 | 12:00 pm ET | Online

Join the WLCJ Inclusion and Mishpachah Committees to hear from the founders of Adraba, an incredible Masorti program in Israel preparing young adults with special needs for their B'nai Mitzvah. They will share how we can bring this "hidden gem" to our North American communities.



[REGISTER](#)

UPDATES: PROGRAMMING WITH PANACHE

LOOKING FOR FRESH PROGRAM IDEAS?

The WLCJ Kehilah and Education Committee is preparing the third edition of our program guidebook, updating our collection of creative, meaningful programming for Regions and Sisterhood Affiliates.

We need your help! Submissions are open to EVERYONE (not just officers) and may include successful programs you have presented or attended. Or that you plan to present. Share your ideas and help inspire others!

For reference, you can view past editions here:

[Volume I](#)
[Volume II](#)



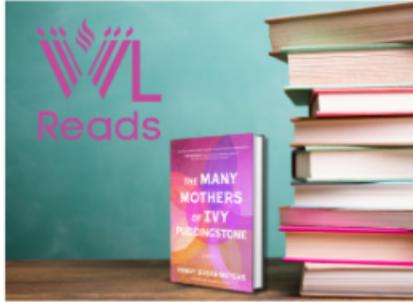
[SUBMIT A PROGRAM](#)

Use the online form to submit program ideas or send any questions to Fran Hildebrandt at fhildebrandt@wlcj.org or 248-318-8301.

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 2026

It's Official: WLCJ Convention 2026 Registration is OPEN!

WLCJ SHABBATON & CONVENTION 2026

Friday–Wednesday, July 10–15, 2026

Registration is Now Open! Take advantage of our **Early Bird discount available through April 30, 2026** and secure your spot today.

Hotel room rates are guaranteed through **June 7, 2026**, so be sure to make your reservations early.



VISIT THE
CONVENTION 2026
WEBSITE

Register

JEWELS IN THE CROWN 2026

Celebrate your Sisterhood's achievements by applying for *Jewels in the Crown*, a special recognition honoring outstanding programming, leadership, and community impact. Award recipients will be recognized at **WL Convention 2026**.

Click [here](#) to complete the online application

[here for PDF](#) version.

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

**"Jewels in the Crown" Deadline
Extended to March 17!**



Be sure to submit your application by **March 17!**

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

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 Ki Tisa

This week's *parashah* is best known for the golden calf, which the Levites and women did not join, earning them lasting spiritual rewards—Levites assisting in worship, and women *Rosh Chodesh*. Moses asks to see God, but God shields him, letting him see only God's back, interpreted as the *tefillin* knot. Moses carves new tablets, and God declares the Thirteen Attributes of mercy, showing forgiveness and teaching prayer structure with a *tallit*. By wearing *tallit* and *tefillin* each morning, we emulate God, beginning the day in prayer, while hoping for a secure right to pray at the Egalitarian Kotel.

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

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 our newsletter 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.



3080 Broadway, Suite K900
New York, NY 10027
Office: (405) 870-1260



Garden State Region
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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

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