

Garden State Region News - February 13, 2026



**STAND
WITH
ISRAEL**



**STAND UP
TO JEWISH
HATE**

WL Week

Visit GSR Website

GSR REGION PROGRAMS

- **Thurs. Feb. 19, 2026 @ 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 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

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 - Tahel Ilan Ber
Joy and Judaism: Family - Iris Sadeh Rosler

Garden State Region, NJ

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



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

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

Register



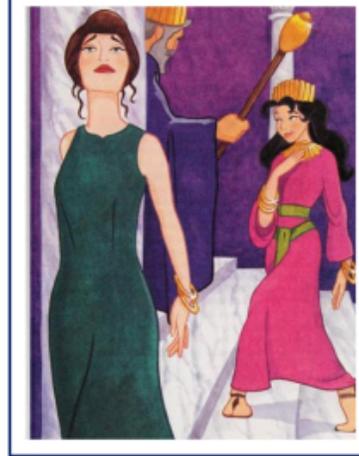
GSR Coffee and Conversation on Zoom

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

B'nai Shalom Sisterhood and Men's Club

Invite you to join us for a presentation on:

SCAM AND FRAUD AWARENESS with Gregory Drucks

Director of Community Security Training at Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest



Thursday, February 19th at 7:00pm

Gregory has been leading initiatives that not only enhance the safety of our synagogues, early childhood centers, and day schools, but also empower congregants and staff with the knowledge and tools they need to protect their community. Since joining Federation just under two years ago, he has trained over 3,400 people across 150 sessions, each of which has been a step toward fostering a more secure and resilient environment.

This seminar will empower participants to recognize and protect themselves against online scams, identity theft, and cyber fraud. It will provide practical tools to navigate the digital world safely.

Program is free, but please

RSVP by Sunday, February 15th to
[ShulCloud Registration](#) or sisterhood@bnaishalom.net

Send us an email if you need a ride.

B'nai Shalom supports full inclusion and participation of individuals having all abilities in both religious and communal life.



B'nai Shalom

MORRIS AND MIRIAM HAMMER CAMPUS
300 Pleasant Valley Way
West Orange, NJ 07052
(973) 731-0160 • www.bnaishalom.net

Register

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.



[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 February anniversaries and birthdays, **Yom Huledet Sameach!**

Refuah Shlema

- **Jerry Saferstein**, husband of Janice Saferstein, EBJC Sisterhood Liaison and GSR Support Team.

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 13, 2026 | 27 of Shevat, 5786

Finding Our Way Through the Fresh Snow

Lymor Wasserman

International WL Budget Chair, WLCJ Consultant, WLCJ Executive Committee, Southern Region Treasurer



I'm writing this after an incredible eleven inches of snow fell in Charlotte, NC—something this city hasn't seen in more than twenty years. Having grown up in northern New Jersey, gone to school in the Catskills, and spent a decade in Chicagoland, I wasn't especially fazed. Still, sitting here with my morning coffee, looking out at my snow-covered backyard, I found myself thinking: What happens after the storm?

That's a question *B'nai Israel* might have asked after standing at Mount Sinai. They had just experienced thunder, lightning, certainty, and awe. Hashem felt close. Everything was clear. And then . . . what next?

[Read more](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS



[JOIN LIVESTREAM](#)

ROSH CHODESH WITH WOMEN OF THE WALL

**Wed | Feb 18 | Online & In Person
7:00 am Israel Time; Midnight ET**

Join Women of the Wall for their upcoming **Rosh Hodesh gathering** at the Kotel.

This monthly service offers a meaningful opportunity to unite in prayer and song at the women's section of the Western Wall. For those unable to attend in Jerusalem, you can still participate in this powerful spiritual experience by joining the live online broadcast.

WLCJ International President Julia Loeb and **WLCJ Executive Director Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields** will be present in person at the Kotel.

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](#)

UPDATES: 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 is preparing a third edition of our program guidebook, aiming to refresh our reservoir of ideas for the first time in three years.

Our goal is to create an updated, comprehensive resource filled with spectacular programming and valuable tools to support your Region and Sisterhood Affiliate.

We need your help to fill these pages! Submissions are open to everyone—not just officers—and can cover any topic from recent years or upcoming plans.



Use the form below to submit program ideas. Send any questions to **Fran Hildebrandt** at fhildebrandt@wlcj.org or WhatsApp 248-318-8301.

The deadline to submit programs is Wednesday, March 25.

[SUBMIT A PROGRAM HERE](#)

ORDER YOUR CHARM - MAKING KITS



[REGISTER](#)

Create Your Own Israel Flag Purse Charm

Kits must be ordered by February 27!

Create your own Israel flag purse charm with us on Zoom to show your support for Israel! Kits are available for purchase through Jody Glass at glass.jody@gmail.com for \$15, with a discounted rate of \$9 for any additional kits shipped to the same home. While the event takes place Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 pm, **place your orders via Zelle, PayPal, or check by February 27.**



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

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](#)



WHEN?

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



WHERE?

**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](#)

WEEKLY WORDS OF TORAH



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 Mishpatim

In a Torah portion containing a wide variety of *mitzvot*, we focus on the profound obligation of *hashavat aveidah*—returning lost objects. Through a heartwarming personal story of a "treasure trove" of family heirlooms discovered in a new home, Rabbi Margie Cella explores how this commandment is not just about property, but about bridging time to reunite families with their history.

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

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.



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

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