Garden State Region News - November 6, 2026

Garden State Region
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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GSR. 2026-27 Calendar

Read the latest WL Week

STAND UP TO JEWISH HATE

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Message from Sindy Manas, GSR President- The Power of Laughter



Dear Affiliate,

Last week at Broadway's Imperial Theatre I watched Billy Crystal in his new one-man show, *860*. The title is the street address of the Pacific Palisades home where he and his family lived for decades. That home burned to the ground in the Los Angeles wildfires of January 2025.

You might expect an evening about losing everything to be a heavy one. Instead, the theater was filled with laughter. Crystal walked us through the rooms of a house that no longer stands, sharing the stories of a lifetime: family, friendship, love, luck, and loss. As the evening went on, I realized that the fire had taken his house, but not what mattered most. He still had his people, his memories, and his gift for finding the funny side of life, even in the ashes.

Many of us are carrying heavy things right now: illness, loss, worry for our families, for Israel, for the world. I won't pretend that a joke can fix any of that. But I have seen, in our sisterhoods and around our Shabbat tables, how a shared laugh can lighten a heavy heart, even for a moment, and remind someone that she is not alone.

So, as we head into the shorter, darker days of winter, we head toward Chanukah, our Festival of Lights, I have a small request. Be the one who brings laughter. Call a friend who is struggling and make her smile. Bring your warmth, and your sense of humor to your next Sisterhood gathering. Laugh with each other and laugh often.

At the very end of the show, Billy Crystal held up a rock that had been salvaged from the ruins of his home. On it was a single word: “Laughter”. Of everything the fire took, that is what survived. He lost a house, but not his home, because home is the love and laughter we carry with us. No fire can touch that.

If you registered for our Fall Torah Fund Event on November 15, we will start check-in at 12:45 pm. The program will begin at 1:15 pm.

Our next Coffee and Connections will be on December 16th at 7:30 pm on Zoom. ”Our Jewish Responsibility as Guardians of Creation” will be presented by Rabbi Melanie Aron, Co-Chair of the Jewish Earth Alliance, Registration is now open.

Our Spring Conference date has been changed to May 23, 2027, details to follow.

I look forward to seeing you at future programs and visiting your sisterhood/affiliate.

Shabbat Shalom,

Sindy

Sindy Manas
President, Garden State Region WLCJ
gsrpresident26@wlcj.org

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

Message from Ilene Weber - GSR VP Torah Fund



Dear Sisters,

Last week, I had the absolute joy of walking my daughter down the aisle to the Chuppah. My heart was filled with happiness and gratitude as I watched her reach this beautiful milestone with her new husband. It was truly a *Shehecheyanu* moment!

As the ceremony came to its culmination and her groom stepped on the glass, I found myself looking at the broken shards and reflecting on their deeper meaning.

The breaking of the glass carries many interpretations. Two, in particular, resonated with me:

- **Remembering the Temple:** The traditional significance reminds us of the destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem, tempering even our greatest moments of joy with a reminder of our collective history and sorrow.
- **The Fragility of Life and Marriage:** The broken glass reminds us that relationships are precious and fragile. They require ongoing care, patience, commitment, and nurturing to flourish.

It was this idea of care, patience, and nurturing that brought my thoughts to Torah Fund. We give to Torah Fund, and we nurture this campaign, so that our Conservative/Masorti institutions of higher Jewish learning have the resources they need to thrive. Just as we wish every newly married couple a long, healthy, and happy life together, we want the same for our Movement. We want it to grow, flourish, and remain strong for generations to come.

As the JTS website so beautifully states:
“At JTS, We Turn Jewish Scholarship Into Transformative Action And Leadership.”
This is the WHY!

Just as pieces of broken glass can be transformed into something beautiful, incorporated into a mezuzah, a work of glass art, or a treasured frame, our Torah Fund pins serve as beautiful reminders of the sacred work we do together. They represent more than our generosity. They symbolize our commitment to Jewish learning, leadership, and the future of our Movement.

Thank you for all you do for Torah Fund. Through our collective care, commitment, and nurturing, we are helping ensure that the light of Jewish learning continues to shine for generations to come.

Together, we are making a difference!

Shabbat Shalom,

Ilene Weber
VP Torah Fund - Garden State Region
ileneweber22@gmail.com



Click HERE to donate to this year's 2026-27 Torah Fund Campaign
Click HERE to participate in the Torah Fund Legacy Society
Click Here for Latest Issue of Chadashot
Click Here for FAQs about Torah Fund
Click HERE to send a Torah Fund E-Card
Any questions please e-mail **Ilene Weber.** GSR VP Torah Fund

MEET GSR PROGRAMMING VP - BONNIE ISAACSON



Shalom!

I'm proud to be writing my first article as the Garden State Region VP of Programming and Education. The year for programming is well underway! With the midterm elections only days after our scheduled program on October 21 st we were thrilled to have our opening program on the history of voting rights for women. Reclaiming Our Voice – The Role of NJ Women in the Fight for Women's Suffrage with Carol Simon Levin, told the story through character acting, of the 70-year uphill struggle of the brave women who paved the way for us to participate and use our voting power in local, state and federal elections. Women from around the Garden State Region came out in force to the JCC in West Orange, a first for in-person programming since the Pandemic. It was a fun evening to learn, have a bite and shmooze. We were fortunate to have our local Co-Presidents from the Livingston chapter of the League of Women Voters on-hand to support us and provide important voting information.

Did we have any inkling that the election was going to be this momentous? Though results are still coming in, there were quite a number of historic firsts for women. For one, there were a record number of women Governors elected – 17 to be exact!!! The prior record of 14 women Governors was shattered. Georgia will have the first black woman to serve as Governor of the state. New Mexico will have the first Native American woman to serve as Governor; Texas will have the first Latina Governor and Minnesota will have the first Native American woman elected to the Senate. With the

long and painful fight for women in this state and country to have the right to vote fresh in our minds, these results felt all the more joyous and meaningful.

Our next Coffee and Conversation program will be “Our Jewish Responsibility as Guardians of Creation” with Rabbi Melanie Aron, Co-Chair of the Jewish Earth Alliance. Rabbi Aron is a Jewish educator, scholar, and environmental activist. She will discuss why we, as Jews, should be concerned about the environment, what we can do individually and collectively to promote environmental stewardship and the importance of legislative initiatives and international agreements to protect our planet. The program is on December 16th at 7:30PM and will be on Zoom. Please join us!

B'Shalom,

Bonnie Isaacson
VP Programming - Garden State Region
bonnie.isaacson17@gamil.com

GSR Coffee & Connections - Register for Zoom Wednesday, December 16, 7:30PM

Garden State Region

COFFEE & CONNECTIONS

JEWISH EARTH ALLIANCE

Garden State Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism
Presents

"Our Jewish Responsibility as Guardians of Creation"
Wednesday, December 16, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Presenter: Rabbi Melanie Aron,
Co-Chair of the Jewish Earth Alliance

The Torah calls upon us to be Shomrei Adama-Stewards of the Earth- in order to protect and preserve it for future generations. Please join us for a workshop with Rabbi Melanie Aron, a Jewish educator, scholar, and environmental activist who will lead us in a discussion about why we, as Jews, need to be concerned about the environment using Jewish texts as our guide. In addition to changes, we can make as individuals and organizations to promote environmental stewardship, we will discuss the importance of legislative initiatives and international agreements to protect our planet.



Register here to obtain the Zoom link for our program

This program is being offered at no charge on Zoom. Registration required to attend. A recording will be offered to all registrants.

For questions, please contact Helene Knee at kneenote@gmail.com

Register Here

[Learn more about Jewish Earth Alliance]

SIX13 LIVE EVENT AT B'NAI TIKVAH, NORTH BRUNSWICK



Kristallnacht, also referred to as the November Pogrom or the Night of Broken Glass, was a series of violent antisemitic attacks which took place across Germany on November 9-10th, 1938. Kristallnacht was a wake up call marking a dramatic escalation in the Nazi's treatment of Jews.

Kristallnacht started in response to the murder of Ernst vom Rath, a German official in Paris. Vom Rath was shot by Herschel Grynszpan, a seventeen-year-old Jewish teenager, on November 7.1938. Grynszpan stated that he shot vom Rath to bring the world's attention to the plight of his family and other Jews born in Poland, but living in Germany.

That evening after Vom Rath died, the Nazi Party leadership met in a Beer Hall where Joseph Goebbels gave a speech mandating Jewish businesses and synagogues be destroyed. The police were told to stay away and not interfere with the attacks. Violence spread across the nation in almost every city and town led by the Nazi party. Over 7,500 businesses had their windows smashed by the SA (Sturmabteilung, or "Storm Division") and Hitler Youth.

Over 1,200 synagogues were desecrated, looted and burned and at least 90 people were killed.

In November,1938 over 25,000 men were arrested and sent to Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps and many women were also arrested. Conditions in the camps were horrific where Jews endured extreme violence. Hundreds of people died from the brutal treatment. **It was just the beginning.**

The greater majority of German and Austrian Jews incarcerated during the November pogrom were gradually liberated between November 18, 1938 and the spring of 1939 on the condition that they undertake to emigrate without delay leaving behind most of their belongings. The Quaker and Jewish community in Britain did secure visas for 10,000 child refugees in a scheme known as the Kindertransport, but this was financed privately and not by the British government.

Anti-Semitism - "Stand Up to Jewish Hate "

New England Patriot's owner Robert Kraft launched the **"Stand Up to Jewish Hate"** campaign through his Foundation to Combat Antisemitism to fight a sharp rise in antisemitism and discrimination.
The Blue Square Symbol: The campaign uses a small blue square as a visible sign of solidarity for the Jewish people. The Jewish population in the U.S. (about 2.4%), yet Jews are the target disproportionate percentage of religion-based hate crimes.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental organization with 35 Member Countries, 1 Liaison Country, and 7 Observer Countries. IHRA was founded in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson addressing issues related to the Holocaust and genocide. Please review the links.

STAND UP TO JEWISH HATE



[United Holocaust Memorial Museum.]

What is antisemitism – video from University of Pennsylvania

BDS – Anti Zionism on College Campuses

[Stand up to Jewish Hate]

WL Reads/WL Youth 2026-2027 Books



Shalom Jewish Book Readers,

As your new WL Reads Co-Chairs, Lynette Seader and Corrine Hammerschlag our objective is to engage you in reading, introduce you to new authors and spark provocative discussions and collaboration. This year we also will engage our younger population with inspirational children's authors designed for younger family members.

Please review and register for our upcoming book/author discussions on zoom. Zoom links to register are available on WL Week

Our Selections

Sunday, November 29, 2026, 11am-12:15 pm EST
Henna House: by Nomi Eve.
HENNA HOUSE is an engaging work of historical fiction. An intimate family portrait is interwoven with the traditions of Yemenite Jews and the history of the Holocaust and Israel. Register
Sunday, January 10, 2027, 11am -12:15pm, EST
Concealed: by Esther Amini

CONCEALED is a heart wrenching memoir. It tells the story of being caught between these two worlds of Queens, NY and Mashhad, Iran. Esther Amani is the dutiful daughter of tradition-bound parents who hungers for more self-determination than tradition allows. Register

Sunday, March 28, 2027, 11am-12:15 pm EST. *Women's League Youth*

Ruth Spiro – Ruth Spiro is our first speaker for **WL Youth.** She has written over 30 books ranging from baby science board books to books for youth exploring science topics like climate, robotics and more. Share this info with your children and grandchildren.

Sunday, June 6, 2027, 11am-12:15pm EST

All Afternoon by Susan Kleinman

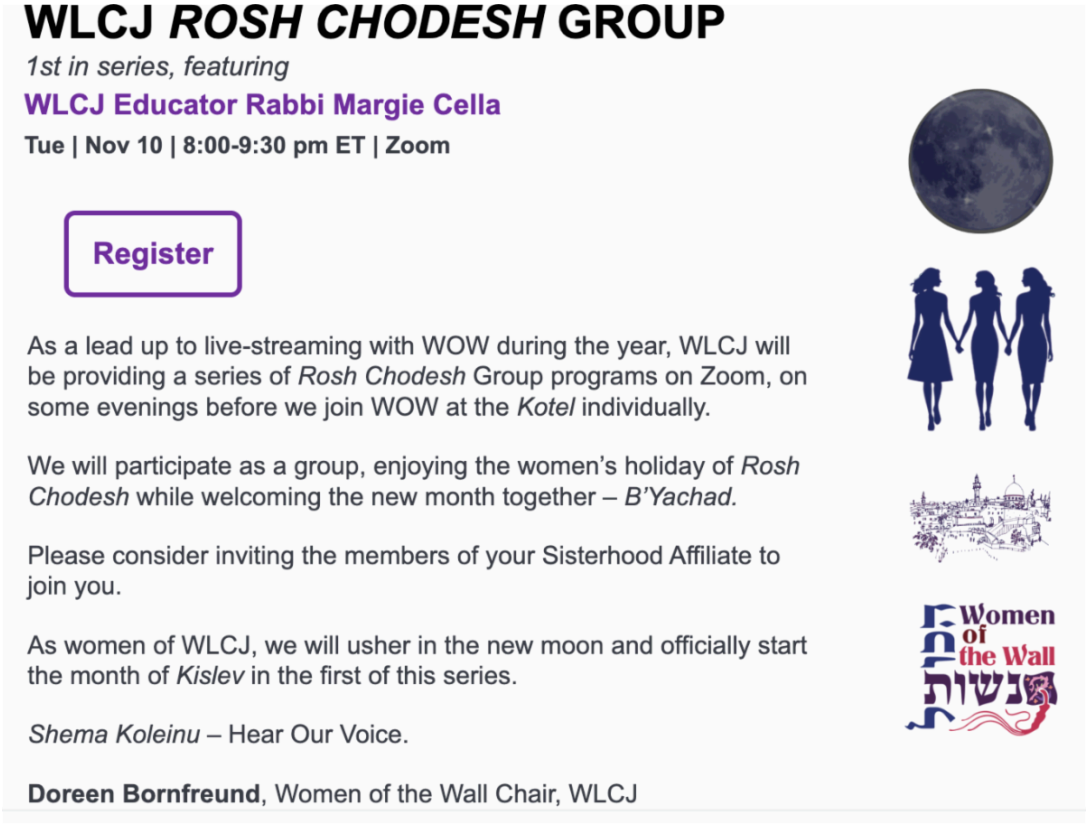
ALL AFTERNOON is a witty and touching tale of a woman in 1978 exploring feminism that takes root in her tight-knit Jewish community, challenging their synagogue's long-standing rules. Marilyn, caught between the comfort of tradition and the thrill of new possibilities will have to decide what price she is willing to pay, and without regret.

Tuesday July 13th 8:30-10PM EST -SUMMER BOOK CHAT FORUM on Zoom with Lynette and Corinne provide you the opportunity to collaborate, share and swap your Sisterhood's favorite book club selections.

Enjoy your reading journey!

Lynette Seader and Corinne Hammerschlag. Co-Chairs

Register Below for WLCJ Rosh Chodesh Group with Rabbi Margie Cella



Click to Register

REGISTER FOR SICHOT BEYN ARAYOT SESSION 2

Session 2: Koach Koloteinu – The Power of Our Voices: Giving a Voice to Those Unable to Speak for Themselves
Sunday | November 22 | 12:00 pm ET | Zoom
Our voices form such an integral part of our worship, through singing, talking, and studying. But what about those among us who are non-speaking? We will look at how, using new technological advances, we can enable those who are non-speaking to fully engage in religious life.
GUEST SPEAKERS

- Rabbi Judith Edelman Green
- Rabbi Ruti Regan
- Dror Levy
- Orly Ziv-Maxin
- Judy Chinitz
- Rena Roberman
- Dr. Gila Vogel
- Marianella Kreiman

GUEST SPEAKER BIO

VIEW SESSION 1 Recording of Sichot Beyn Arayot

Click to Register

WLCJ INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM - Thursday, Nov. 19th, 7:00-8:30 PM

THANKSGIVING DELIGHTS AND DISASTERS

Presented by the WLCJ Membership Committee

Thurs | Nov 19 | 7:00-8:30 pm ET | Zoom

Come share a memory, recipe, or an item specific to Thanksgiving!

REGISTER

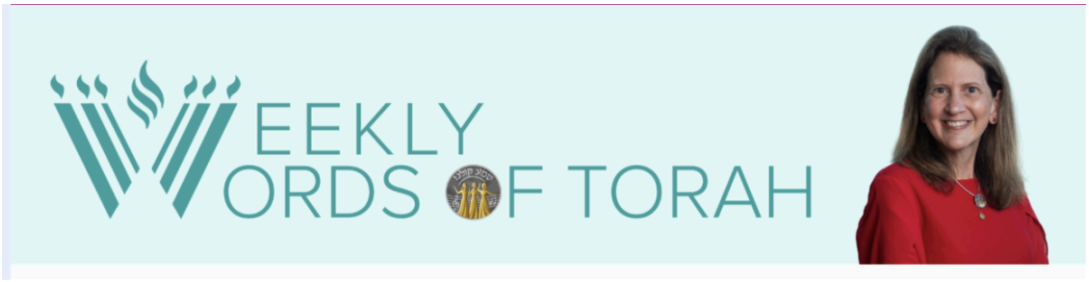


Please join us for a relaxing program about Thanksgiving, which will include a D'var Torah about being thankful for the small moments. The evening will be an opportunity to share your Thanksgiving delights and disasters through a memory, recipe, story, or treasured item from your family's celebration.We will end with celebrations to share and schmooze time.

Our entire WLCJ Membership is encouraged to attend, especially our Individual Members.

Click to Register

Weekly Words of Torah



Read WWOT for Parashat Chayyei Sarah

Written by WLCJ Executive Director Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields

In ***Parashat Chayyei Sarah***, we encounter transitions shaped by both loss and continuity. Sarah's death opens the parashah with silence and grief, yet the narrative quickly moves toward action: Abraham secures a burial place, Isaac is brought into marriage with Rebecca, and the covenantal story continues forward. Life, even in mourning, refuses to end.

Read On Parshat Chayyei Sarah

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

List of Additional WLCJ resources and shortcuts here.

Sharing our Simchas

Mazel tov to Ilene Weber on the marriage of her daughter
Sam Radin to Jeff Kaiser

Refuah Schlema

The Region extends Get Well Wishes to Meryl Balaban

Support the Garden State Region - Donate to Our Funds:

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.

Please specify which fund(s) to make the donation to.Donna Franklin, GSR Treasurer
Mail your check payable to "GSR-WLCJ" to Donna Franklin,7 Liddy Place, West Caldwell, NJ. 07006. email mumzynj@gmail.com
Donations can also be made via Credit Card.

Please Notify Us of your Happenings

If you would like to contribute a flyer or picture to our newsletter
please forward to **Lynette Seader** .

Follow the Garden State Region!

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.

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

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

Garden State Region
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Lynette Seader
GSR Communications/ Newsletter Editor
gsrcommunications@wlcj.org

Garden State Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism | 3080 Broadway Suite K900 | New York, NY 10027 US

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