



National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section

Bulletin

www.NCJWneworleans.org

August 2016

2016 NCJW's 50th Hannah G. Solomon Award Recipients: Ana and Juan Gershanik

Interviewed by: Loel Weil Samuel, Hannah G. Solomon, Chair

The Hannah G. Solomon Award is given annually to a community leader(s) who exemplifies the qualities of Hannah G. Solomon, founder of the National Council of Jewish Women. Recipients selected are known for their interest, activity and stand on issues with which NCJW is in sympathy. They have brought about important community programs and services through their leadership in a volunteer capacity and each has been a catalyst for social change.

The Greater New Orleans Section has been giving this award since 1966. This year the Greater New Orleans Section is proud to recognize Ana and Juan Gershanik with our highest honor.

A few weeks ago, we asked Ana and Juan to tell us about their background, their families, and what motivated them to give so much to their community.

When, and why did you come to NOLA? (We are glad you did)

We left Argentina in June 1966 as newlyweds to come to Miami where my husband had arranged to do an



Juan and Ana Gershanik

internship in pediatrics for one year. Twenty days after we arrived to Miami, a military coup ousted the most honest President that Argentina ever had, Dr. Arturo Illia and things started going down the hill. Following the advice of friends, medical colleagues and former Professors of Juan at the Medical School in Rosario, he decided to stay and do a residency

in Pediatrics. Therefore, we moved to Lexington, Kentucky, where he completed a 2 years residency and decided to specialize in Neonatology.

In the meantime, upon our arrival to Miami, I revalidated my teaching degree and my undergraduate studies in political science and was able to get a teaching job in a Catholic school in Perrine, Florida. I continued my teaching career in Lexington, Kentucky, until I became pregnant with my first child, Alex, and had to quit for a while. In 1969, we moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where Juan did his Fellowship in Neonatology and started his career in Academic Medicine. Political turmoil had continued in our native country, and we decided to stay in the United States so Juan would continue his research endeavors. I became the first female teacher in a prestigious private high school for boys in Charleston and also, started my graduate studies at The Citadel so I could get a master's degree in education.

In 1971, Juan was hired as a
(Continued on page 3)

President's MESSAGE

Letter from the President



When I began my presidency, Julanne Isaacson asked, “What do you want to accomplish?”

My answer was embarrassingly inadequate: I most wanted to avoid big mistakes. It’s also worth admitting that I was reconciled to making small

ones. I did not have the vision Julanne was looking for.

It’s now a year later and I have an answer to her questions. I want, very much, to witness the inter-generational movement of our membership. This is not a reference to the admittedly sweet moment my six-year-old grand-daughter Josie sang the H’mozie at the installation in May. Rather, the goal, now in focus, is the way we have become actively relevant to Generation X, Millennials, and their successors. Those women are crystallizing new ideas about work, relationships, gender, sex and love, as well as race, islamophobia, general xenophobia, nationalism, globalism and empowerment.

Participation in NCJW’s social justice momentum is our work and has been the work of our NCJW mothers and grandmothers. We are and have been entrepreneurs of social change. We each participate in ways that are manageable, that fit into our daily life, our energy and our budget. Engagement in the NCJW life, the one I’ve lived this past year and hopefully this coming year, the one you live with me, is full of meaning because of the work we do. While “work” is

most often used to refer to how the economy produces goods and how people earn income, we know that it is also the activity that lends meaning and purpose to many people’s lives. That’s the kind of work you and I do together.

History is being made around us in such quick strokes. Every moment seems like it could be an historical moment: the election, the climate, economics and its stratification, mass incarceration and its effects in our city, automation and its effects on jobs, the Internet challenges, all the many structures that make the world vastly different than it was even 10 years ago. We have, with these, an infinitely varied number of hopes and fears about the near and not-so-near future.

Reading the pages of this bulletin, we can take a deep breath, because our hopes clearly keep pace with our fears. We are a determined, multi-generational organization, and we now look forward to another year together to continue making history.

Thank you,

Susan

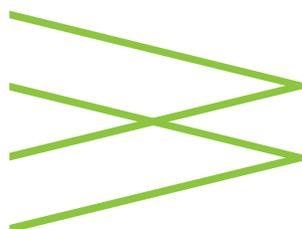
NCJW
National Council of Jewish Women
Greater New Orleans Section

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A FAITH IN THE FUTURE.
A BELIEF IN ACTION.®

Professor at Louisiana State University Medical School in Shreveport, where he developed the first Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in the state and we stayed there until 1979, when he was recruited by Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans to develop a neonatal intensive care unit.

It appeared as a good opportunity. The offer included staffing and equipment to have a state of the art facility.

Tell us about your family.

JUAN: My parents were born in Argentina to Russian immigrants. I have one sister and 3 brothers.

ANA: Juan and I have 3 children: Alex (47), Viviana (44) and Esteban (40) and 6 grandchildren: Sofia (11), Jack (10), Katie and Thomas (8), Charles (7) and Daniel (3).

Both of my grandfathers came to Argentina in the early 1900s from the Ukraine (former Russia) as part of the same Jewish migration flow that arrived in the United States in that era. Many of their relatives settled in the USA. My maternal great grandfather (my grandmother's father) moved to Argentina earlier and was the founder of Sunchales, an Italian colony in the province of Santa Fe, where my grandmother was born. Both of my grandfathers had to work very hard as new immigrants to make a living but they succeeded finding economic opportunities as well as freedom to practice their Judaism, which they lacked in their native country.

My paternal grandfather had a general store and also, was a jazan. My maternal grandfather became a very successful businessman and was one of the builders of the Jewish community in my native city of Rosario. Because my mother was an only child, I along with my two siblings (my sister and my brother) grew up very close to our maternal grandparents and my grandfather became my spiritual leader. My Jewish roots are very deep because of his teachings and leadership in the community. From him, as well as from my father, a very dedicated physician who many times treated

patients without charging them (when they were poor or couldn't pay), and from my mother, who was a social worker, I learned the meaning of social justice and serving others who were less fortunate.

When did you begin volunteering?

JUAN: In the early 80s I became involved with the Hispanic programs of the Council on Alcohol and Drug abuse.(CADA) because I realized the importance of the prevention efforts specially at the high school level, as well as the need for services to the growing Latino community.

ANA: I first began volunteering in Shreveport, where I had moved being pregnant with my second child, Viviana. I became involved with the Shreveport Symphony and as a piano teacher; I joined the Volunteers organization and did the music education programs for Caddo Parish schools. I also joined NCJW and gained better skills as a volunteer through this wonderful organization where I was able to develop more knowledge and awareness in various areas of social justice. At the same time, I was taking care of my three children (my third, Esteban, was born in 1975) and going to graduate school to Natchitoches three times a week to finish my master's degree.

You have done wonderful things in many organizations. What motivates you to give so much of your time and your energy?

JUAN: It feels good!!!

ANA: First, I grew up with the notion that we need to repair the world when things are not right. I had taught in public schools in Charleston at times of desegregation when there was much differential treatment of black children. I had also observed that still in Shreveport there were separate facilities for blacks and whites in certain places and not only blacks were discriminated, but Asians and Latinos as well. Throughout the world, there was turmoil. In many countries, there was neither religious

nor political freedom or freedom of speech. A lot needed to be done starting at home, in the United States.

What are some of the activities that you have found most rewarding?

JUAN: Teaching underprivileged children about the great opportunities that they have in this country, building their self-esteem, and their desire to succeed in life and "be happy".

ANA: It was easy to continue my volunteer work in New Orleans at NCJW and with the Symphony orchestra. The activities that I found most rewarding were the resettlement of Russian Jews and the resettlement of Marielitos, as well as starting new programs of music enrichment in the public schools of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. Later on, with the growth of the Latino population, I found equally rewarding to help the Latino students in the schools to succeed in their studies and to lead healthy lives staying away from dangers like drugs, smoking and peer pressure to do the wrong things.

After so many years of service to our community, when it would be easy to say "I've done enough."

Why do you continue to say "yes" when asked to help?

JUAN: Services to the community are often a privilege, not a chore or a burden.

ANA: Although I kept saying yes when asked to serve my community because I felt there were urgent needs that had to be taken care of, I never felt that I had done enough. To the contrary, I always felt that there was much to be done and that I needed to help to build a better community for all and a better future for my children and grandchildren. We have been lucky that we passed these values to our children and they are as engaged as we have been.

(Continued on page 4)

Sometimes people who volunteer and serve on boards over-extend themselves. Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever said “Thank you, but no?”

JUAN: Fairly often, but I still have a hard time saying no.

ANA: At present, I enjoy being a grandmother, which requires a lot of time. I realize that you have to enjoy each day because time passes by too fast and each minute with your family is very precious. So, I learned to say “no” when I feel that I cannot over extend myself. I would rather volunteer in fewer organizations and do a good job, than serve in many others and not do quite enough.

As you can see, Ana and Juan are following in the footsteps of Hannah G. Solomon. We congratulate them, and know that everyone will want to be a part of the celebration on September 26.

Hannah G. Solomon Award Luncheon

honoring

Ana and Juan Gershanik

Monday, September 26, 2016

The Westin New Orleans Canal Place
Grand Ballroom, 12th Floor

11:30 a.m. – Cash Bar • 12 Noon - Luncheon

Please send your reservation payable to
NCJW, GNO Section by September 16, 2016 to

Kathy Shepard
3311 State Street Drive
New Orleans, LA 70125

\$65 per person • Reserve tables for 8 to 10 people.

To make reservations online go to: www.NCJWneworleans.org.

Self-parking Canal Place Mall \$8. Valet parking available \$20.

NCJW's 'Fox 8 Defenders' celebrate 10,000 cases successfully handled and \$2.5 million saved by consumers

For the past six years, the tenacious volunteers of NCJW have worked in concert with WVUE-TV, Fox 8 to offer consumer advocacy by responding to problems on the Consumer Help Line. To date, 'Fox 8 Defenders' have handled over 10,000 cases and saved consumers more than \$2.5million! This unique program was recognized July 28th, on WVUE-Fox 8 on the 6th Anniversary of 'Fox 8 Defenders'.

The 2015 New Orleans Press Club honored NCJW's FOX 8 Defenders and Producer Shelley Brown with a 2nd place award in the 'Continuing Series' Category. Lee Zurik took 1st Place in this category for his 'SWIPED' Series.

According to Susan Tramontana, Fox 8 Defenders Executive Director, there were over 600 entries.

"Second Place in any category is most impressive," Susan said. "This accolade was accomplished by the hard work of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Defenders! Credit also goes to Fox 8's Shelley Brown for transforming NCJW's successful cases

into a quality product and telling a useful story. We're a winning Team!"

Our consumers are certainly getting great value when they contact NCJW's FOX 8 Defenders. Thank you NCJW for making such a difference in the lives of so many," Susan said.



Fox 8 Defenders helped bring in \$36,080 for Louisiana Flood Victims in a Telethon held at the station. From left: Helena Nathan and Mary Stern

Photo by Linda Friedman

Legislative UPDATE

Victory for Women at the Supreme Court and Beyond

NCJW partners with the Louisiana Coalition for Reproductive Freedom to carry this victory forward in Louisiana

The Supreme Court ruled on June 27th in 'Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt', a historic challenge to a Texas law designed to close abortion clinics. The 5-3 ruling affirmed a woman's constitutional right and ability to make her own decisions about her health, family, and future, no matter where she lives.

According to Michelle Erenberg, Louisiana Policy Advocate for the National Council of Jewish Women, The Supreme Court strongly affirmed that a woman deserves compassion, respect, and dignity in making her own health decisions without barriers imposed by politicians with a religious agenda.

"The ruling is an important first step in dismantling medically unnecessary laws designed to make it harder for women to end a pregnancy," Michelle said. "Louisiana's lawmakers, however, are likely to continue to promote policies that assert one religious point of view over the right of women to make their health decisions based on her own faith and in consultation with her doctor."

The Louisiana legislature passed several new laws this session that will impact abortion access - from delaying

care by tripling the state-imposed waiting period to banning the most common and safest second-trimester procedure. Seven of these new

Louisiana restrictions are now being challenged in court after a lawsuit was filed by the Center for Reproductive Rights.



VOTING – The cornerstone of our democracy

For decades, NCJW advocates have fought to protect voting rights and educate our community about elections. NCJW will be engaging voters this 2016 election by sponsoring candidate forums, sharing information on social media and registering voters.

Please join us in continuing this fight. It's important. Here is what you need to know:

- October 11th - The last day to register to vote in the Presidential Election
- October 25th - November 1st - Early Voting
- November 8th - Presidential Election Day/Primary for US Senate and House

For more information about NCJW's voter engagement activities visit ncjwgnn.nationbuilder.com.

To get information about elections and voting, visit GeauxVote.com

SAVE THE DATE AND PARTICIPATE

MOVING THE BALL FORWARD

September 15, 2016

NCJW'S 'Social Justice Happy Hour Series'

Celebrating New Orleans' most dedicated advocates for Social Justice

Sisters Chaverot finds a new home

NCJW-GNO is the new home of Sisters Chaverot, a group founded in 2010 as a local grassroots forum for professional African American women and professional Jewish women. It is committed to authentic dialogue among its participants and to enriching the connections between the local African American and Jewish communities. Every other month, this group of women come together to discuss triumphs and life struggles that both Black and Jewish women face within the workplace, social encounters, and other experiences. The get-togethers take on a variety of forms, usually social and often dialogue-based.

Originally hosted by Jewish Federation, Sisters' move to NCJW is an opportunity to share, learn, laugh, and grow in a circle of old and new friends. Participating provides an opportunity to establish a broader and deeper environment to continue the important conversations about our lives, the world, the importance of a safe environment, and freedom of expression in which to be ourselves.

We have new NCJW members who are excited about being a part of this group and community members who have reached out to us after learning about the group. In November we will have an event especially designed to meet and engage. In the meantime, we can continue to learn about one another from the pages of this bulletin, the Sisters Facebook page and the NCJW social media and websites.

Let's continue the rich dialogue we have begun,

~ **Robin Goldblum**
Chair of Sisters Chaverot

July 22, 2016

Ms. Susan Kierr
President, NCJW GNO

Dear Madame President,

The NCJW newsletter arrived recently and, as usual, it is a rewarding, thoughtful and welcome visitor to my home. Our motto, "A faith in the future, a belief in action," has been sorely tested by events of the past few weeks but it seems particularly apt at this difficult time. Let's keep it in mind; I found it comforting and hopeful.

I also thought recently about my NCJW membership which I am glad to maintain. (Dues will be along shortly.) My NCJW participation might seem a bit odd, since I ostensibly fail to qualify for membership on at least two grounds, but you have welcomed me and I'm glad you did. Here's why:

Maybe it started for me when our member, the indefatigable Flo Schornstein, seized a moribund New Orleans Parks Department by the scruff of its scruffy neck, and without months of discussion and "planning," righted that sinking ship. Or maybe I came to notice too many instances to tell of valiant efforts by NCJW to restore our proud city after The Hurricane. And the ongoing work to bring justice and civil rights to New Orleanians who had been denied them, and are still being shortchanged. I thought then, and still do, that NCJW represents all that is good, fair and effective in our civil life. So it occurred to me that the clearest way to show my support would be to join.

Thanks for having me. Are there any other men out there who agree? It appears that the women of NCJW would welcome us if we asked to be a part of it.

With respect,
David R. Stefferud

Birthday Dollars...

Katie Single, Chairwoman

Summer Birthday Dollars

- ▶ Rebecca Alexander
- ▶ Sue Robin Weinbauer
- ▶ Lee Blotner, in honor of her birthday and in memory of Gertrude Beerman
- ▶ Jeannine Burk
- ▶ Renee Goldstein
- ▶ Harriet Handelman, in memory of Maurice Handelman
- ▶ Celia Katz
- ▶ Marilyn Lassen
- ▶ Fredalee Marsh
- ▶ Marie Wolf

NCJW Cares..

Sheryl Title, Chairwoman

- ▶ In honor of Leona Shlosman upon her 95th birthday
By Jean H. Frank
- ▶ In memory of Bettie Redler
By Sharon Leader and Faye Weisler
By Hella M. Franklin
By Gretchen Becnel
By Marianne Cohn
- ▶ In memory of Zita Oakley
By Dana and Louis Shepard
(mother of JoAnn Katz)
- ▶ In honor of Kathy Shepard's 60th birthday
By Amy Gainsburgh and John Haspel
By Jane Phillips
- ▶ In honor of NCJW
By Elise Cahn, Celeste Cahn, David Cahn, and Jeffrey Cahn

An Interview with NCJW Development Vice Chair Barbara Greenberg

Barbara, tell me how you've managed to make our Blue Book both a resource of information for our members and a financial success.

Attention to detail, appreciation and persistence! I keep copious records, double list payments and submissions so I can check myself. With my wonderful committee, we personally contact every advertiser. I do all follow-ups and reminding of advertisers to make certain all contracts, ads and payments are completed. During the months of solicitation, Blue Book becomes a full time job. Throughout the process, I stay in close contact with my committee by email and phone. Most importantly, I try to be friendly and appreciative of everyone so we develop personal relationships with our advertisers and motivate our committee to want to continue their efforts annually. Seems to be working.

Where do you get advertisers?

I personally think of every possible contact I have at businesses or with professionals who may be inclined to support us or whom our members support. I also encourage our committee to do the same – in fact I encourage everyone!

How do you find the time?

I set aside the Blue Book months trying to clear my calendar so I can devote all my energies to just Blue Book.

Who does the lay out prior to printing?

Since I am the person who keeps all the records and receives the ads, I am most familiar with the advertisers' wishes. I have the full overview so I lay out the book. Members of the committee assist with the much needed proofing.

You have several generations of your family, folks we know and treasure, who also keep you busy, so how do you manage to weigh the demands and challenges of keeping our entire organization connected through the Blue Book.

It's a balancing act. I enjoy my time with my precious grandkids and evenings with my daddy and Sue. If I work all day on Blue Book, I may take off in the afternoon to be with Barrett and Connor or vice-versa.

Why do you do Blue Book each year?

It has become my baby. I find creating a useful, attractive and



Barbara Greenberg

Photo by Michael Maples

financially profitable book to be quite rewarding. We have been lucky enough to raise a nice amount of money to assist NCJW in its endeavors. I just wish I could make more, but production costs just continue to rise. I continually seek solutions to maximize profit.

Do you have any concluding comments?

I want to wholeheartedly thank my devoted committee members who yearly give me their support, efforts and time. They even tolerate kindly my nudging. Of course, I also appreciate our loyal advertisers. We would not have a directory without them!



Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust Renews Sponsorship of NCJW WAY

NCJW Greater New Orleans Section is pleased to announce that the Oscar J Tolmas Charitable Trust will continue to sponsor the 'NCJW WAY: Learning to Lead' Program in 2016-17.

Congratulations to the 2016-17 NCJW Way Participants. They are Victoria Coy, Alysse Fuchs, Emily Good, Heather Kahn, Alanna Rosenberg and Hannah Udell. We look forward to welcoming them into our NCJW community.

NCJW expresses sincere appreciation to Trustees Lisa Romano and Vincent Giardina for their ongoing generous support of our community. We look forward to working together as we honor Mr. Tolmas' Legacy.



National Council of Jewish Women
Greater New Orleans Section

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If so, please contact the office

Phone (504) 861-7788

Fax (504) 861-0044

Email ncjwgn@gmail.com

NCJW receives a \$5000 annual grant from Babs and JE Isaacson fund at JEF

NCJW-GNO gratefully acknowledges the generous annual grant of \$5000 from the Babs and JE Isaacson Unrestricted Memorial Fund at the Jewish Endowment Foundation (JEF) of Louisiana.

According to Sandy Levy, JEF Executive Director, this JEF grant to NCJW was the first allocation made from the fund, in large measure, because of Bab's lifelong devotion to the organization.

"She and JE left the remainder

of their IRA to JEF knowing that it would provide support for our Jewish community and our Jewish organizations," Sandra said. "It is a fitting tribute to their memories to make this special donation to NCJW. This was a very tax wise gift that they made and hopefully it will inspire others to do the same."

Although Babs is no longer with us, her legacy will support the NCJW initiatives which meant so much to her. This annual donation will provide

for the continuation of her Personal Giving and patron sponsorship gifts, as well as provide financial support for the Irma M. Isaacson Scholarship Fund and NCJW's Fox 8 Defenders program, the consumer advocate program founded by Babs more than twenty years ago.

NCJW expresses sincere thanks to Allan Bissinger, Larry Lehmann and Sandy Levy for facilitating this disbursement.