



# National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section

Bulletin

www.NCJWneworleans.org

January 2011

## Joan S. Berenson to receive Hannah G. Solomon Award



**DATE**

Monday, Feb. 28, 2011

**TIME**

11:30 am

**LOCATION**

New Orleans Hilton  
Riverside Hotel

**COST**

\$55.00 per person

The Hannah G. Solomon Award is given annually to a community leader 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.

This year, the Greater New Orleans Section is proud to confer our highest honor on Joan Seidenbach Berenson.

As chair of the 2011 selection committee, I have the privilege of preparing a profile of Joan. While the usual method would be a simple interview, Joan suggested a written question and answer, and so, appropriately, I followed her leadership and developed the following questions. Her answers give us insight into the commitment and dedication she has brought to our community; yet these answers only touch the tip of the iceberg of her involvement.

We are so honored that she has chosen to share herself with us throughout her life. Congratulations, Joan!

~ Dana Shepard

**You have been a volunteer since childhood; what are some of your earliest memories of volunteering?**

*I remember them well. Not surprisingly, my first volunteer job was at an NCJW service, The Well Baby Clinic at Touro Infirmary, where Mother volunteered once a week. In the summer I would go with her. My job was taking the charts from the central desk to the correct examining room. If children did not have runny noses, it was ok for me to entertain them.*

*Later I went almost weekly with Mother to Red Cross Headquarters. Together we folded bandages. I would have liked a blue uniform and white cap. Mother taught me to knit squares that later would be sewn together as blankets for*

*soldiers overseas. I was the only child so this was really grown up.*

**What part did your family play in your enthusiasm for becoming a volunteer?**

*“Enthusiasm” is not the right word. “Passion” might be better. Mother and Daddy left a strong imprint. I grew up during the Great Depression, but Mother always had a plate of food for the steady stream of people at our back door.*

*Daddy was a big supporter of U.S. Savings Bonds that helped the war effort. He bought bonds and encouraged me to save so I could buy savings stamps. When I filled a book we’d go to the bank and exchange them for a bond.*

*(Continued on page 2)*

# President's MESSAGE



A FAITH IN THE FUTURE.  
A BELIEF IN ACTION.

Dear Members,

January is an exciting month for us. We have so much programming coming up – try to participate in as much as you can. January 10 is a Lunch and Learn Program on early childhood education at the Kingsley House. We will learn about early childhood education in Louisiana and have a tour of the Kingsley House. The program will be conducted by Melanie Bronfin – an exciting speaker. January 11 is our General Meeting where we will learn about domestic violence and its ramifications on our lives. This meeting will take place at the home

of Susan Hess. I know you will enjoy this meeting. Please try to attend. Coming up in February is the Hannah G. Solomon lunch honoring our own Joan Berenson. With so much to see and do at this time of year, I know you will want to book these events in your calendar now so you won't miss them. I'll be looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Nitzkin

## Joan Berenson (Continued)

*I had better not forget "charity" for Sunday School which I had to take out of my allowance. When I forgot, I heard all the things that people would go without and how they would feel.*

*Three children in my class from the Jewish Children's Home often were in our home or went places with us. These were not random acts of kindness. They were every day experiences. I learned to be caring and to share by example.*

### What role did NCJW play in your commitment to our community

**NCJW**<sup>®</sup>

National Council of Jewish Women  
Greater New Orleans Section

**President**

Phyllis Nitzkin

**Vice President, Administration**

Jill Zimmerman

**Editor**

Mary Stein

**Photographs**

Ina Davis

### and to volunteering in general?

*NCJW made me a better volunteer then and now. NCJW is important and important to me. It is my organization. Their issues were my issues: social justice, civil rights, individual rights and women's rights; Soviet Jewry, Israel, hunger and poverty. Like Hannah G. Solomon, NCJW is part of "the fabric of my life." I would not be receiving this prestigious award had it not been for the first class training that I and everyone else received. To this day, so many of us credit NCJW for our success. After four vice-presidencies and being the President of the New Orleans Section and nine years on the national board where I initiated Major Gifts, served on many national committees and twice on their nominating committee, I was well prepared to handle challenges.*

### Tell me about the organizations with which you have been involved and why you chose to work with them.

*In the beginning I volunteered only for NCJW and the Jewish Federation. Both have had a profound influence on my personal and communal life. Because of Federation missions and programming,*

*I began to understand and appreciate my Judaism. I felt a greater obligation to tikkun olam (repairing the world) and tzedakah. I hope that I made a contribution as President of the Federation and as the only woman to chair the Federation campaign, on national boards and committees, chairing the Task Force on Continuity and Identity, and after Katrina, chairing the Task Force on bringing back those in the Jewish community who had left and retaining those who stayed.*

*I chose NCJW and Federation initially because "community" is a core value of each. Federation because it funds those in need, particularly the most vulnerable, and it is the backbone of the Jewish agencies here in New Orleans. I liked and admired the people involved.*

*NCJW because of their reputation of getting things done, and done well, because there were so many areas for me to select from, and because it was a given. Everyone I knew belonged. I wanted a place where I could work and contribute to the larger community as well as the Jewish. I particularly like the process of studying, selecting, training, advocating and serving.*

*Later I added the Jewish Children's*  
**(Continued on page 3)**

Regional Services and the New Orleans Jewish Day School. My choices in no way demean all the other wonderful agencies. There is just a limit to my time.

**I know you served on the national board of NCJW and were chair of Federation's campaign; what do you think is our responsibility to national and international needs?**

*I long thought, even before I was President of the Section or the Federation, that we in New Orleans have a responsibility to the national bodies and they to us. Could either achieve its vision or mission without the other? We learn from each other. That is why we welcome national meetings in our city, like the recent Federation General Assembly, in spite of the hard work, effort, and time that goes into planning, logistics, and providing enough trained volunteers and professional staff.*

*After Katrina, there was no doubt of the connection. Did you know that, through the United Jewish Communities (Federation's national umbrella organization), over \$16 million was pumped into the local Jewish community, in addition to the busloads of volunteers?*

*Tikkun Olam has no boundaries. Gerald and I respond to disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, diseases, and starvation, with contributions to the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).*

**You have been involved in many organizations; what do you see as the greatest impact of your commitment?**

*I don't think of myself as a "feminist,"*

*but there were rights denied women in the Jewish community that needed correcting. The term "feminist" had not been coined yet when I made sure the following rules were changed:*

- that the chair of the Federation Women's Division has a permanent seat on the Federation board and*
- that the criteria for the Young Leadership Award were the same for women and men.*

*I am not a mover or shaker, but I do have a strong sense of what is right and what is not. This I got from my parents and Gerald. But I am most proud that in accepting the presidency of the Federation mid-year, I held the organized Jewish community together after two years of wrangling. It was tough in the beginning, but in just six short months and face-to-face visits, the Federation was on track to do what Federations are supposed to do.*

**What made you decide to concentrate your volunteer efforts in the Jewish community?**

*I do work primarily in the Jewish community. I feel the bond that connects us by a common history and heritage. We are responsible to address needs and injustice. It is incumbent upon us to right wrongs in the general, secular community as well as in the Jewish community. That I do through NCJW. Furthermore, the Holocaust survivors we saw in 1961 in Vienna and Jerusalem on the first national United Jewish Appeal Young Leadership Mission affected me greatly. I devote a great deal of time to trying to ensure that Jew-*

*ish communal organizations and agencies get the financial support that they need.*

**Please tell me a little bit about your family.**

*I owe so much to Gerald, my husband, for turning me towards the Jewish community. I have had a wonderful journey because of him and his support. We both work hard to make our community a better place. As I have looked back, I see I have carried on a family tradition. I am so proud that our children, Les, Ann, Bobby and Laurie and some of our ten grandchildren, all volunteer and are caring, responsible men and women. They carry on the tradition, L'dor v'dor – from generation to generation. And now there is one year old Max, a great grandchild, to step into the shoes.*

**And finally, 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?**

*Because I love doing what I do! I'm not retiring any more than Gerald is. I like being involved, part of something. New Orleans is on a roll and I want to have a hand in it. Join me!*

Thank you, Joan. We know that she will continue to play a role in our community.

Please join us as we recognize her with the 2011 Hannah G. Solomon Award on Monday, February 28, 2011, at 11:30am at the Hilton.



**DEFENDERS**

**THE FOX 8 DEFENDERS would like to put RETIRED HUSBANDS to work! Will you join us?**

We help a large number of people whose consumer problems wouldn't be solved without the intervention of the Fox 8 Defenders. We've even had calls for help from some of our own members. No, we can't solve every issue, but we try, and we have a good success rate. We work closely with the BBB and have contacts with City Hall, S & WB, Entergy and many other agencies. We are Volunteers doing very rewarding work. Oh, if your husband isn't interested, we'd love to have you.

Call: Babs Isaacson - 861-0716 or Lois Shepard - 861-4692

# Public AFFAIRS

## Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote

### Elections “Poll Running” raises money and awareness for Section

by Ina Davis

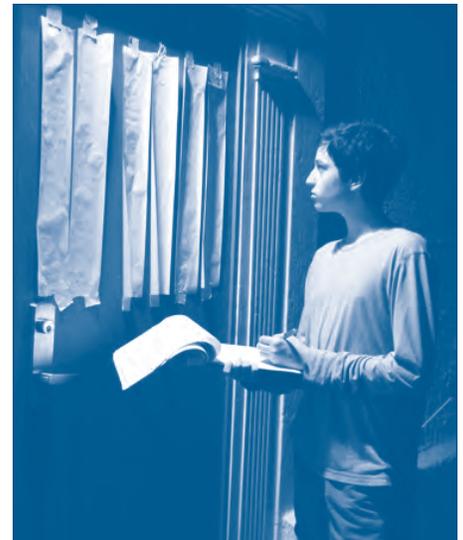
On November 2nd, election eve, NCJW members and friends collected poll data from many polling places around the Parish. “Our volunteers were at the polls at 8 p.m. to collect the vote tallies; these results were then reported to our partners at WVUE-TV FOX8. The station pays us for this service, hence raising money for the Section,” said Michelle Erenberg, VP Public Affairs.

But even better, it allows us to get in the process.”

youngsters to participate and get excited about the election process. So next election sign up to help! Grab one of your children, grandchildren or neighbors, and be part of the action. It’s fun, educational, and supports our Section!

Many thanks go to those who participated at quick notice for the Section: Michelle Erenberg, Ina and Brett Davis, Joel and Bert Myers, Ann Leyens, Sue and Jack Jernigan, Amy Nicole Stewart, Jill Kenyon, and Jayeesha Dutta.

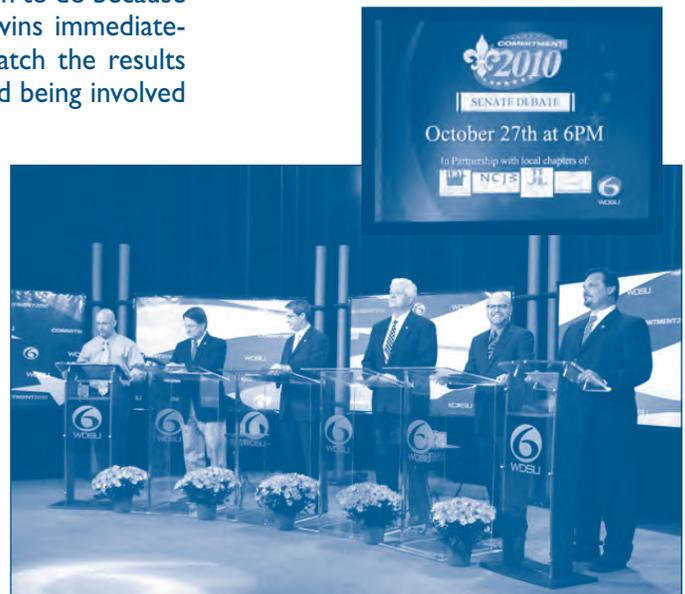
Brett Davis collected election data in Gentilly during the general elections. Brett said, “It’s fun to do because you get to see who wins immediately, and then get to watch the results coming in on TV. I liked being involved



### NCJW Sponsors Live U.S. Senate Debate

by Jill Zimmerman

On October 27th, NCJW partnered with WDSU-TV6 and the League of Women Voters, Junior League and American Association of University Women to host a Louisiana senatorial debate. The one-hour, live broadcast debate was moderated by WDSU news anchor Norman Robinson and featured Republican incumbent Sen. David Vitter, Democratic nominee and current U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon, Independent candidate Mike Spears, Independent candidate Ernest Wooten, Libertarian candidate Randall Todd Hayes, and Reform Party candidate William McShan.



### Fun at meetings and business, too!

*Bylaws and Community Needs were the topics of the December Board Meeting. Thanks to Ina Davis for the photo.*

*(More PUBLIC AFFAIRS on next page)*

## Public Affairs (Continued)

### Save the Date!

by Michelle Erenberg

NCJW will join with Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, the National Organization of Women, and the American Civil Liberties Union to host an event commemorating the anniversary of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision. Please join us in affirming the protection of every female's right to reproductive choices, including safe and legal abortion, and the elimination of obstacles that limit reproductive freedom.

### Cocktails and conversation

Cocktails and conversation will be held at Oak Bar, 8118 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118 on Saturday, January 22nd from 5pm - 7pm. For more information, please contact Michelle Erenberg 504-451-8489 or [merenberg21@gmail.com](mailto:merenberg21@gmail.com)

*We need you to get involved in  
Public Affairs activities,  
join a committee and  
make a difference!*

Contact Michelle Erenberg,  
VP Public Affairs  
[merenberg21@gmail.com](mailto:merenberg21@gmail.com)  
451-8489  
or  
Ina Davis  
State Public Affairs Chair  
[InaNew@me.com](mailto:InaNew@me.com)

## Help NCJW while you shop for groceries... Absolutely NO EXTRA COST for you!

To help raise money for NCJW Greater New Orleans Section while shopping at Winn-Dixie, just cut out or copy the activation coupon below. Keep one coupon for yourself and give one to a friend or family member who also wishes to participate in supporting our organization! The next time you shop at Winn-Dixie, present this activation coupon along with your Winn-Dixie Customer Reward Card at checkout. The cashier will scan both the Customer Reward card and the activation coupon, instantly enrolling you and earning points for our organization. Your Reward Card will thus be linked to our NCJW account; there is no need to scan the coupon on future visits.

PLEASE NOTE, IF YOU HAVE REPLACED YOUR REWARD CARD WITH THE NEW WINN DIXIE FUEL PERKS REWARD CARD, YOU MUST SCAN THE NCJW COUPON ONCE AGAIN TO LINK THE NEW CARD WITH OUR ORGANIZATION.

For all future purchases, you'll collect points for our organization when you use your new Customer Reward Card. We must achieve \$5,000 in purchases at Winn-Dixie each quarter to earn the minimum \$100.00 donation, but we are eligible to receive up to \$1,800 quarterly! If you don't have a Winn-Dixie Customer Reward Card, no problem! Just stop by Customer Service and sign up for one – it's FREE and you will help NCJW every time you are doing your regular shopping.



by Susan Kierr  
Vice President of Community Services

NCJW has a history of making a difference to individuals and families. For generations NCJW women in New Orleans have earned this reputation by their actions on the local level. Improving the lives of women, children and families is most often the hook that pulls new members into our organization and activates the involvement of our entire membership. Our community services are what make us important to our city and to the families and individuals we serve. It is also

the source of our sense of pride and reward, as you can see by reading the pages of this bulletin.

NCJW is not just about like minded women getting together, though it is about that too.

NCJW is not just about finding funds to support projects, though it is about that too.

NCJW is about actions we take to make the world a better place. Sometimes we take actions daily, sometimes we are involved on a weekly or month-

ly basis. Sometimes it is a single action that can make a difference.

Our In-House Hotline is 432-4324 – a number you can call when you want to talk about a situation that you think needs help. When you call the hotline and speak with our NCJW Vice President of Community Services, or email her at [skdance@bellsouth.net](mailto:skdance@bellsouth.net), you open up a line of thought and concern.

## Past Presidents' Pride

by Ina Davis

One of the perks of being an NCJW, GNO President is that when you retire, you get to attend the very special Past Presidents' Cabinet Luncheon. Chaired by Sara Stone with Celia Katz and Barbara Bresler, the table glitters, the food is scrumptious, plus, the company is outstanding! Stories from the past expound and our hopes for the future of the organization are explored.

This year we heard a very special story by Sara Stone: "When European ships arrived in the Port of New Orleans around 1950, immigrants were greeted at the docks by NCJW volunteers who welcomed, fed, and helped transport the tired but free arrivals to their new destinations."

Sara added that years later, when she was being honored at an NCJW national convention, a young woman [conference participant] came up to her and stated that she was just two months old when she arrived in this country. That woman told Sara, "My mother has told me

the story so many times... we were welcomed with such love and grace... and when we received our first meal, the women even laid out white table linens for us!"

Needless to say, this is a very im-

portant NCJW story. Our volunteerism is meaningful in ways that we may never know. Many thanks go to all of our Past Presidents for leading the way as we turn progressive ideals into action.



**L-R: Barb Herman, Ina Davis, Celia Katz, Dana Shepard, Barbara Bresler, Flo Schornstein, Cynthia Farber, Shelley Farber, Loel Weil Samuel, Babs Isaacson, Pamela Lyles, Eddy Rosen, Julianne Isaacson, Beth Bloch Rosenthal, Joan Berenson. Seated: NCJW Matriarch Sara Stone, newest President Phyllis Nitzkin.**

# Dedicated FUNDS

## Birthday Dollars...

- ▶ Ana Gershanik

## H.I.P.P.Y. ...

Home Instruction Program for  
Parents of Preschool Youngsters

## In honor of Susan Forsyth Bauman

- ▶ Edel Gainsburgh
- ▶ Judith Gainsburgh
- ▶ Celia Katz

## NCJW Medication Cards are a hit!

Lakefront Pharmacist, Ted Nguyen, recently called to say he needed a “refill” of NCJW Medication Cards. “My customers really appreciate them, and often take extras for loved ones.”



Thank you, NCJW!



## January General Meeting

An exciting General Meeting will be held at the home of Susan Hess on Tuesday evening, January 11, 2011.

NCJW is introducing a national effort to confront and curtail Domestic Violence. The program, Higher Ground, is focusing on providing strong solutions to improve women’s security and vulnerability. With the known understanding that there has always been a critical link between violence and economic insecurity, the goal of this effort is not only to ensure resources for education, advocacy, and victim assistance, but to also strengthen and improve the economic status of women.

We welcome Dr. Carolyn White, Chair of the Department of Counseling and Behavioral Sciences and Director of Counseling Programs at Our Lady of Holy Cross College, and coordinator of the community counseling program. She will address Domestic Violence issues and women’s safety in the New Orleans area, with a focus on policy understanding as well as the need to immediately improve women’s economic standing.

**\*Please bring a make-up product  
to be donated to a women’s shelter.**



*Please consider a donation to the  
Irma M. Isaacson Scholarship Fund or  
the Clara and Roy Schwarz Book Fund  
and help a young adult achieve  
her or his dreams.*



National Council of Jewish Women  
Greater New Orleans Section

6221 S. Claiborne Ave., Suite 208  
New Orleans, LA 70125

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit No. 608  
New Orleans, LA

### Have You Changed Your Address?

If so, please remove the mailing label from this issue of the Bulletin, cross out the old address, write in the new one, and send it to our above address.

## Calendar of EVENTS

- |           |  |           |  |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| ▶ Jan. 10 | Lunch and Learn at Kingsley House, 11:30 a.m.    | ▶ Feb. 1  | Board Meeting<br>Uptown JCC, Noon                          |
| ▶ Jan. 11 | General Meeting<br>Home of Susan Hess, 7 p.m.    | ▶ Feb. 22 | Executive Committee Meeting<br>Metairie JCC, 7 p.m.        |
| ▶ Jan. 22 | Roe v. Wade Anniversary Event<br>Oak Bar, 5 p.m. | ▶ Feb. 28 | Hannah G. Solomon Luncheon<br>Hilton Riverside, 11:30 a.m. |
| ▶ Jan. 25 | Executive Committee Meeting<br>Uptown JCC, Noon  | ▶ Mar. 15 | Board Meeting<br>Metairie JCC, 7 p.m.                      |
|           |  | ▶ Mar. 22 | Executive Committee Meeting<br>Uptown JCC, Noon            |