



National Council of Jewish Women Greater New Orleans Section

New (and New Life) Members Feted at Inaugural Event! Jane Kahn welcomes attendees to her Old Metairie Home

By Karen Sher, Membership VP

NCJW recently threw a festive, fun-filled party to welcome and honor nearly fifty guests including NCJW’s newest members as well as longtime members who elevated their membership status to life member.

The Membership Party was hosted with pizzazz by NCJW’s Life Member Jane (“Janie”) Kahn at her elegant home. Blue lights twinkled in the front of the house as the guests arrived. Once inside, they beheld a cathedral ceiling lit with an eye-catching chandelier. A few steps in, guests could see a stunning floral arrangement with white roses and blue flowers atop a pedestal table. The flowers adorned a tall silver menorah bedecked with a royal blue ribbon accentuated with darker blue Jewish stars.

Jane’s round dining room table was heavily laden with Middle-Eastern food expertly cooked by Byblos of Old Metairie, as well as canapes, finger sandwiches, and other tantalizing



Event Organizer Karen Sher and Host Jane Kahn



Baty Landis, Jeff Sbisa and Gail and Nancy Pesses

foods supplemented by party hostess Jane. Homemade desserts, a fruit tray, and other sweets were provided by the Party Committee, as well as a chocolate chip cake baked by President Gail Pesses. Three well-stocked open bars added to the lavish, “over-the-top” atmosphere.

Treasurer Kathy Shepard, who also baked a yummy almond dessert, sat at a table in the foyer passing out nametags and asking each new member to fill out a survey form designed by Membership Involvement board member, Lisa Heller.

More twinkling blue lights studded the large backyard graced with a fountained swimming pool. Tables and chairs dressed in blue and white coverings beckoned beneath a tent canopy. Heaters offered extra warmth to the guests, but a clear and balmy starry evening added to the comfort and pleasure of the guests. New

members sat four to a table engaged in rapt conversations, while partaking of food and drink.

President Gail welcomed the new members, sharing NCJW’s history, and a brief overview of our Section’s activities and elaborating on the accomplishments of the Development and Community Services Departments (standing in for Carol Newman and Barbara Greenberg who were unable to attend). Vice-Presidents - Judge Robin Giarrusso (Administration), Gail Chalew (Programming), Al Page (Public Affairs), and Karen Sher (Membership) - highlighted their department achievements. They also encouraged new members to become involved in NCJW’s smorgasbord of activities and impressive array of community services. Karen Sher

(continued on page 4)



(Sitting, l to r) Julie Schwartzwald Meaders, Michele Gelman, and Michelle Soll (Standing, l to r) Caroline Brickman and Maureen Gershanik

(Photos by Jeff Strout photography)

Presidential MESSAGE



By Gail Pesses

Where were you and what were you doing on January 22, 1973? Some of you had an ordinary day, working, taking care of children, going to luncheons, meetings etc. Some of you were attending classes - college, high school, what was then “junior high” or even grammar school. Some of you were not even born yet, right? That day literally changed history as well as the future for just about all of us. That was the day that Roe v. Wade was argued and decided and a woman’s right to personal privacy including the right to decide whether to continue a pregnancy was legally ensured across the nation.

At the time, staff and law clerks inside the Supreme Court chambers recognized how historic the decision was. But neither they nor the Justices had any idea how historical and divisive it would become.

In 1973, abortion was considered a health issue for women. The male-dominated legal system, conservative in most issues, had little female participants at most levels and felt no need to examine the issue from any additional context.

No one could foresee how controversial Roe would be 50 years later or that it would be the issue that turned our country’s politics into single issue politics.

Over the last 50 years, abortion became a routine part of life, an option women could exercise if their individual set of circumstances required. Women could determine their own destiny and the course of their lives. They could achieve

“NCJW is committed to advancing these goals of reproductive justice.”

- Gail Pesses

in science, education, professions without fear of being thwarted or held back by an unplanned pregnancy or pregnancy resulting from a violent act.

By being able to control when and whether they would have children, Roe gave women a sense of dignity and deep freedom, a path towards independence and towards truly being equal in our society. But restrictions like the Hyde amendment, passed just 3 years after Roe, banning Medicaid funding for abortions and restricting who was eligible to get an abortion, soon gave public voice to groups who opposed abortion based on their religion, view of women and government’s participation to name a few. The issue commuted from being a health and privacy issue to an anti-choice, government control one, with lines sharply drawn. Too many women were caught in the middle with limited options.

In 1973, when Roe was affirmed, I was a senior at Ben Franklin High School. Although I was aware of national issues including Watergate, the issue of abortion seemed more symbolic to me than relevant

to my life. What I now understand is that our reproductive rights are intrinsically bound to our religious liberty and to our ability to make our own decisions about our bodies, our health and our families based on our own morals and faith.

NCJW is committed to advancing these goals of reproductive justice. As our President, Sheila Katz says, “Until every person has the power to make their own informed decisions about their body, sexuality, and future, our work is not over.” NCJW, Greater New Orleans Section will be sponsoring 2 events the last week of March on this issue. The first will be a General Meeting with Reproductive Rights as the topic. The second will be Reproductive Rights (Repro Rights) Shabbat on March 31, 2023, a service where we recognize and enjoy the intertwining of our rights as women with our Jewish faith. I hope to see all of you at both of these important events.

Gail Pesses

“Until every person has the power to make their own informed decisions about their body, sexuality, and future, our work is not over.”

Sheila Katz, ,NCJW President

Stand with NCJW New Orleans

The 2022-23 Annual Personal Giving Campaign is ON!

Each year, the NCJW New Orleans Personal Giving Campaign is charged with raising \$26,500 to support our section’s activities and provide critical operational support. Thanks to generous gifts and pledges from 56 members, we are already 60% of the way to this goal. Now, more than ever, NCJW stands up for the rights of women and children in our region and throughout Louisiana. Your gifts are essential. Please join the campaign and make your gift today.

Donations can be made online at ncjwneworleans.org or mailed to Jenny Simoneaux, PO Box 791398, New Orleans, LA 70179.

Questions about your 2022-23 gift or pledge? Please contact Jenny at jenny.nathan@gmail.com.

REPRO SHABBAT



Repro Shabbat Coming Soon!

Last summer, the Supreme Court decision to reverse Roe v. Wade paved the way for states across the nation to pursue abortion bans and restrictions on birth control and fertility treatments. But reproductive freedom is a Jewish value, and we’re not going to back down. NCJW, GNO will be bringing Repro Shabbat, a program of NCJW and Jews for Abortion Access, to our community this spring. Stay tuned for details.

NCJW

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater New Orleans Section

President

Gail Pesses

Editor

Barbara Kaplinsky

VP of Administration

Judge Robin Giarrusso

Painting with a Purpose Brought out the Best in NCJW Artists

Painting With a Purpose, the second in NCJW's 'Knowledge is Power' series, took place in December 2022 at Painting with a Twist, a painting studio in Metairie. The series focuses on mental health, cancer, and genetics.



Painting with a Purpose Co-Chairs Nancy Pesses and Lilli Geltman

Dr. Daliah Bauer addressed some of the science behind mental health as well as actionable ways to better our daily mental health, including painting! Attendees participated in a fun, interactive instructor-led painting class, where everyone started out with the same palette and colors for a floral painting. Interestingly, by the end of the event, everyone had a unique and wonderfully bright paintings to bring home to adorn their walls.

Robin Giarrusso won a self-care mental health package door prize, donated by Nancy Pesses. Brunch and libations were enjoyed by all.

The third event in the 'Knowledge is Power' series will be focused on bringing accessible and affordable cancer genetic screening/testing to the community. Members are encouraged to get



NCJW aspiring Picassos deep in thought and creation.

involved on the planning committee for this third event by contacting Co-Chairs Nancy Pesses or Lilli Geltman.

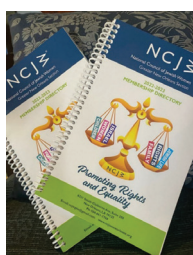
Thank You To Our Volunteers And Advertisers

Barbara Greenberg, Bluebook Directory Chair

To our volunteers who solicited and proofed, thank you, thank you, thank you. And hats off to **Dana Shepard** who compiled our office database as well as aided and supported me throughout this undertaking.

We also **thank our advertisers** for their participation in helping make possible our vital community programs and services.

To show appreciation, we encourage our NCJW membership to patronize these advertisers and thank them. **Let the advertisers know we saw them in our NCJW Blue Book Directory!**



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NEW (AND NEW LIFE) MEMBERS FETED AT INAUGURAL EVENT! – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



(Sitting) Jane Kahn with “good dog” Dalilah, and Dr. Agnes Kotler; (Standing, l to r) Amelia Halstead and Sara Lewis



Robin Giarrusso, Eva Lessinger and Bonnie Chambliss



Menorah

thanked Jane for her gracious hosting of the party and recognized Barbara Kaplinsky, both Past NCJW President and Marketing/Media Relations Chair, for her vital role in producing the NCJW

Bulletin, as well as garnering NCJW exposure around the region through her publicity efforts.

New members attending were: Marc Behar (with partner Jeff Sbisà), Carol Berman, Caroline Brickman, Naomi Chalew, Bonnie Chambliss, Susan Constant, Meredith Cunningham, Alison Duncan, Rebecca Friedman, Michele Gelman, Maureen Gershanik, Amelia Halstead, Sara Kottle, Dr. Agnes Kotler, Eva Lessinger, Sara Lustig, Julie Schwartzwald Meaders, Dr. Nancy Pesses, Valerie Polmer, Dr. Michelle Soll, Marcela Totah, Rebecca Waxman, and Erika Zucker with her mother Susan Zucker.

Playwright Joyce Pulitzer, Baty Landis (Silence is Violence Chair), and Diana Mann (Corresponding Secretary) were celebrated as longtime members who elevated their memberships to life status. (Dr. Heather Kahn became a life member the day after the party!).

The diligent Party Committee attending Zoom meetings and



Joyce Pulitzer and Barbara Kaplinsky

doing work behind the scenes and on the scene were: Sue Silverman Singer (Hospitality/Venue), Dana Shepard (Office Coordinator), Kathy Shepard, Amanda Loflin (also a new member), Ronda Kottle (Membership Recruitment), Sheryl Title (NCJW Cares), Lisa Heller, Carol Newman (Vice-President of Community Services), Lilli Geltman (SisterHearts), Sara Lewis (New Orleans Abortion Fund and Hannah Solomon Chairman), Karen Sher, Barbara Kaplinsky, Carol Philipson, and Gail Pesses.

Sheryl Title designed a glittery sign for the living room couch which read, courtesy of the wit of Sheryl's husband Peter Title: “Please keep me white by sitting on me without food tonight.”

Peter also served as bartender at the party.

New members received Welcome Mugs, and each new member and new life member were given a party favor of a red rose. A rose is a symbol of love, and all of us wanted the new members/new life members to know how much we appreciated their joining our ranks.

At this joyous, light-hearted, warm celebration, the Hebrew phrase L'dor V'dor: “from generation to generation,” proved true: Seven mother-daughter/daughter-in-law pairs were in attendance: Hostess Jane Kahn and Dr. Heather Kahn (a new life member), Ronda Kottle and Sara Kottle, Gail Chalew and Naomi Chalew, Diana Mann and Amelia Halstead, Susan Zucker and Erika Zucker, and Gail Pesses and Dr. Nancy Pesses. In the case of new member Rebecca Waxman, she had both her parents present, Peter Title and Member Sheryl!

It is the hope that this party will be the first of many to come. A big round of applause from all of us at NCJW to our wonderful host Jane, for opening up her warm, beautiful home, just the perfect setting for our party, and for pulling out all of the stops to treat our NCJW members so royally.

(Photos by Jeff Strout photography)



Susan Constant, Joyce Pulitzer, Sheryl Title and Marcela Totah



Leopold and Karen Sher (event organizer)



Host Jane Kahn with Daughter Dr. Heather Kahn



Alison Duncan, Eva Lessinger, Rebecca Waxman, Robin Goldblum and Erika Zucker



Gail Chalew, Marc Behar and Al Page Zucker



Ronda Kottle and Daughter Sara



(Pictured, top to bottom) Barbara Kaplinsky, Meredith Cunningham and Carol Miles Berman



Erika Zucker with her mother Susan Zucker



Sheryl and Peter Title



Delicious, delectable dining from appetizers to desserts were presented to party attendees



Another Way of NCJW Legacy Giving: IRAs

Are you age 72 or older in 2023 (or age 70-1/2 before 1/1/2020)? Then, this is what you'll want to know about taxes and Legacy Giving.

You must withdraw annually minimum amounts from your IRA or employer sponsored retirement plan account.

These minimum distributions are 'Required Minimum Distributions' (RMD's). They are taxable unless you contribute your RMD directly from the IRA to an eligible charity called a 'Qualified Charitable Distribution' (QCD). This Distribution can only be done with your IRA and not an employer sponsored retirement plan account.

IRA owners aged 70-1/2 or older can contribute up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA to the National Council of Jewish Women. GNO, or other 501(c)(3)s and avoid paying income tax on the RMD. By making a QCD, you reduce your current taxable income and the resulting income tax. You also reduce your taxable estate by the amount of the distribution. Spouses can distribute up to \$100,000 as well.

The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions. You must instruct your IRA trustee to make the contribution(s) directly to NCJW, GNO. You should consult your tax advisor, financial planner or investment advisor for specific advice.

NCJW can help answer your questions. Call either Co-Chairs Susan Hess at (504) 615-5294 or Carole Neff at (504) 439-0052.

New Members and Member Changes

October 15, 2022, through January 15, 2023

Welcome to our newest members!



Carol Miles Berman

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4704 Dreyfous Ave
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Hannah Chalew

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(Dr. Sam Langberg)
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Julie Schwartzwald Meaders

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Member Database updates since the 2022-23 Directory

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Nathan, Helena (Ms)
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NCJW: A Force for Women's Rights in Israel

Meet Kalela Lancaster, the Israel program director for NCJW, and learn how NCJW brings its unique Jewish women's progressive approach to advancing social justice and gender equality in Israel.

This eye-opening program will be held on **Sunday, March 26, 11:00 am via Zoom**. It is being coordinated by Brenda Brasher, former New Orleanian and now a proud Jerusalemite. She is chair of our Israeli Affairs Committee.

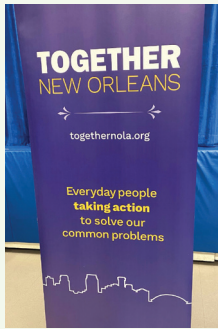
In Israel, NCJW provides grants to innovative Israeli programs, participates in advocacy coalitions, and sponsors a leadership development program for top CEOs and executives looking to strengthen the feminist ecosystem in Israel.

With the election of the most right-wing government in Israel's history, the work of NCJW in Israel is needed more than ever.

Any questions? Contact Brenda at brashebe@yahoo.com.

NCJW Community Service Corner

TNO Celebrates Achievements at Citywide Delegates Assembly



NCJW Delegates Benay Bernstein, Sylvia Finger, Barbara Kaplinsky, Al Page and President Gail Pesses, were among the **130 leaders** from **43 institutions** who joined together January 19th at Corpus Christi Church at the Together New Orleans (TNO) Delegates Assembly to celebrate 2022 accomplishments.

Outstanding successes included vaccinating thousands of people in the city through the Vaccine Equity Project, using TNO's network and resources to provide volunteers and battery packs

in the aftermath of the Arabi and Marrero tornadoes and advancing the Community Lighthouse project designed to bring power generation and build infrastructure capacity to respond in the aftermath of disasters. TNO also engaged elected officials around its interests, including disaster response, electricity reform, and tax reform.

Delegates ratified two proposals - - that each institution develop a strategy to engage its own membership and to have quarterly delegates dinners for member institutions to strengthen their relationships within the TNO community. The first dinner is scheduled for March 16 at the City of Love Church.



NCJW, GNO Delegates to the 2023 Together New Orleans (TNO) Delegates Assembly. Pictured (left to right) Benay Bernstein, Al Page, President Gail Pesses, Sylvia Finger and TNO Liaison Barbara Kaplinsky.

Your Hearts, Clicks, & Comments Go A Long Way!

A convenient way to meet you where you already are is on Social Media. Your engagement with our channels -- comments, shares, and 'likes' -- broadens our reach to those who otherwise might not know about NCJW, our mission and good works, both nationally and locally. It's an easy way to let you know what the Section is doing and looking forward to, and a terrific way to hear your thoughts! Join us! Click along:

<https://www.facebook.com/ncjwgn0>

<https://twitter.com/NCJWGN0>

https://www.instagram.com/ncjw_greater_new_orleans/



Fund Facts about BIRTHDAY DOLLARS

Do you know the story of the Hobbits of Middle Earth from The Lord of the Rings? Well, Hobbits celebrated their birthdays by **giving presents** instead of receiving them! NCJW, GNO Section offers an opportunity for you to celebrate your birthday or that of a loved one or friend by donating to **Birthday Dollars**. This program provides funding for our local community service projects as well as assists in supporting the NCJW Israel Granting Program. For details about the Israel services, go to National's website (<https://www.ncjw.org/>).

In summary, by giving to **Birthday Dollars**, you can share your happiness with others. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

- ◆ Lazelle W. Alexander
- ◆ Marilyn Brown
- ◆ Shellye Farber
- ◆ Ana Gershanik
- ◆ Robin Giarrusso
- ◆ Carole Gottsegen
- ◆ Barbara Greenberg, *in honor of her 75th*
- ◆ Amy Gainsburgh-Haspel
- ◆ Jarrett Ann Johnson, *in memory of Aida Johnson & Lucy Stone*
- ◆ Andree Moss
- ◆ Toby L. Schaffer, *in memory of husband, Jeffrey D. Schaffer*

- ◆ Mimi Schlesinger
- ◆ Karen Sher, *in honor of Judy Barrasso receiving the Hannah G. Solomon Award*
- ◆ Eileen Wallen

NCJW Cares

Sheryl Title, *Chairwoman*

- ◆ Alison Maney



Let's collect for SisterHearts Thrift - a service of NCJW GNO

Prom season will be here soon. Donate your Prom and Party Wear for High Schoolers!

Party Dresses, Shoes, Accessories - Tuxedos, Bowties & Cummerbunds

If you have formal wear in your closet, please consider donating!

Contact Lilli:
call/text (610) 999-9204;
lhgeltman@gmail.com



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NCJW 'Artistes' highlighting their beautifully finished products from *Painting with a Purpose* (top, l to r) Daliah Bauer, Marilyn Bernstein, Killian Phillipson, Nancy Pesses, Gail Pesses, Lilli Geltman; (bottom, l to r) Eve Bauer, Gail Chalew, Joan Zaslow, Elizabeth Jacobs, Mindy Levitt, Sue Singer, and Sheryl Title. (Related photos and article on page 3)

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