



Greater
New Orleans
Section

National Council of Jewish Women

The Birth of RJRF: The Reproductive Justice through Religious Freedom Committee

When *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, we all started asking ourselves the same question.

What do we do now?

NCJW GNO answered with a bit of hope by inviting the community to collectively view *Under G-d*, a documentary short film about the national Jewish response to the Dobbs decision. The film's focus is on state lawsuits that argue abortion ban laws violate the separation of church and state and infringe on religious freedom. After the screening another question was asked.

How do we do that in Louisiana?

The NCJW Advocacy Committee, which brought *Under G-d* to everyone's attention on the big screen, took the next step to respond. The committee organized a meeting on January 4 for anyone interested in fighting for abortion rights through religious freedom. Twenty-six people turned out, many of whom were not already involved with NCJW. They shared their skills, what this fight means to them, and the need to invite other religions to the table.

Thus, the Reproductive Justice through Religious Freedom (RJRF) Committee was born, continuing NCJW's legacy of leadership in this movement.*

*Because we chose it.

The goal is to file a lawsuit to challenge Louisiana's abortion bans through the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Louisiana is a desert of reproductive injustice, and we are going to walk through it together for as long as it takes



with the patience of our ancestors who followed Moses for 40 years without stopping to ask for directions.

The only other question is... how can **you** help?

The RJRF Committee formed several subcommittees that either have already met or will be meeting for the

first time soon: Legal, Fundraising, Medical, Administration, Networking/Partnerships, Marketing/Social Media, and Religion. We especially need people interested in finding grants and other financial support.

If any of those committees speak to you, even if the first meeting of the committee has taken place, or if you want to be added to our mailing list, please email RJRF Committee Co-chairs, Sara Lewis and Tana Velen, at reprojusticela24@gmail.com.

We are doing this knowing it is all uphill from here. It will take time, hard work, and the ability to remain calm when faced with opposing viewpoints and even misogyny. But as the Pirkei Avot says, "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

Save-the-Date

Gelato May Soirée

A delightful and elegant affair
that promises an evening of sweet indulgence

Saturday night, May 25th, 2024

Patron Party 6pm - 7pm
General Admission 7pm - 9pm

Mingle, Eat and Drink as We Support NCJW GNO
At the Home of Susan and Bill Hess

Sponsorships, tickets and details are on
our website: www.ncjwneworleans.org

Presidential MESSAGE



Last month I received an email from one of our members informing me that she would not be renewing her membership, despite her support of our

progressive domestic agenda, because of our stance on Israel.

She was horrified by the Hamas attacks of October 7, supports the release of the hostages, but sees an unconditional ceasefire as the best way forward.

She is not alone in this position. Divisions over how to respond to the October attacks and reestablish peace have driven wedges between family members — including my own — as well as between many Jews and the organized Jewish community.

One of the strengths of NCJW is that it is a big tent, with members of all ages and denominations and backgrounds. What unites our members is their support for a progressive domestic agenda and their agreement with a guiding principle of NCJW: “The survival and security of the State of Israel and the establishment of a just and permanent peace are central to the Jewish people and vital to the interests of the United States.”

Emotions run very high on this issue precisely because people care so much about Israel; in our polarized times, positions harden, and those with differing views find it difficult to talk to each other.

I am under no illusions that this letter can heal these divisions. But I want to

share NCJW’s position, which aligns with mine, and to issue a call for dialogue and against demonizing the other.

NCJW supports an agreement between Israel and Hamas, as well as international entities, to freeze combat operations for extended periods of time to allow Hamas to release hostages and help get further aid to hostages and civilians. It also supports “a mutually agreed, secure, and just two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

There are no easy solutions to the current tragic situation, and we may passionately disagree about ways to achieve peace.

But I urge that those who support an unconditional ceasefire *not* be

(continued on page 6)

Bringing Joy to Louisiana Children in Crisis

NCJW GNO supports the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights, a non-profit organization protecting the rights of children in the juvenile legal system and providing specialized, free legal representation of children in the juvenile justice system and to adults who were sentenced as children. They work with every client to address their unique needs both inside and outside the courtroom. Additionally, LCCR provides crisis intervention and mental health screenings for children in need of support, enrolls children in the schools that best serve their needs, and raises funds for children to engage

in positive extracurricular activities like sports or band, including assisting in purchasing school uniforms.

NCJW volunteers cannot interact with the juvenile legal system due to confidentiality issues; however, we have found ways to make the children feel that someone cares about them. In the past, we have designed holiday cards along with goodie bags, which the director of LCCR has told us have brought joy to the children who are incarcerated. In March, we will continue this work to help children celebrate the spring holidays.



We need a volunteer to step into the chair position for

– LCCR (Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights)

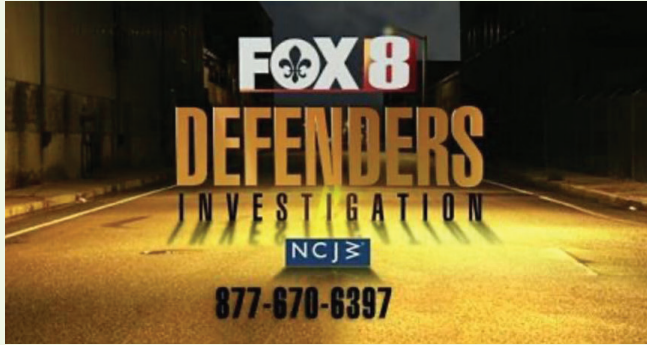
Need more information? Might you step up to lead?

Contact
Robin Giarrusso
to learn more:
(504) 400-7011 or
rmgiarrusso@gmail.com



During December’s monthly meeting, board members multitasked, creating holiday cards and candy bags while also taking care of important NCJW business.

NCJW FOX 8 Defenders win prestigious Emmy award!



At the end of last year, WVUE reporter Meg Gatto and the NCJW FOX 8 Defenders won a prestigious Suncoast Regional Emmy award for stories that changed state law in Louisiana. The first law change requires carbon monoxide detectors in all homes bought or sold after our stories exposed just how easily the deadly gas can get into someone's home from a whole home generator.

The Louisiana state constitution is also now changed because of our impactful reporting. Local municipalities are now able to pull the tax exempt status of nonprofits that own residential housing if that housing poses a health or safety risk to its tenants. Our stories on a multi-million dollar religious non-profit shocked lawmakers when we

showed the deplorable conditions in which the tenants of the non-profit were living. After our reports aired, a state representative drafted legislation to change the law. The measure was approved by the state legislature, then put on a statewide ballot for voters to decide on. Voters in Louisiana overwhelmingly approved the change to the state constitution. Meg's reporting, with the help of the volunteers from the NCJW FOX 8 Defenders, reflects the tremendous impact great journalism can have as we truly give a voice to the voiceless.



Front L-R: Nora McAlister, Meg Gatto holding Emmy, Ann Levine; Back L-R: Susan Kappelman, Susan Greenberg, Michele Gelman; NCJW Fox 8 Defenders missing from photo: Meredith Cunningham, Loel Samuel, Susan Tramontana.

Julius Rosenwald's Legacy: Building Schools Across the South



Many of the members who came to the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience to tour the special exhibit, **“A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America,”** likely knew only a few details about the philanthropist. They may have known that he grew Sears from a back-office operation to a multimillion-dollar company and that his philanthropy was the catalyst for

building thousands of schools for African American children.

After listening to Susan Hess's enlightening PowerPoint presentation, NCJW members gained a much fuller understanding of Julius Rosenwald, his personal life, his business acumen, and his deep philanthropic legacy. Susan's husband Bill is his great-grandson, and he grew up hearing stories about Julius, some of which Susan shared.

We learned that his schools educated more than 600,000 African American children; at one point, more than one-quarter of Black children had gone to his schools. We also learned about his innovative approach to philanthropy and his deep friendship with Booker T. Washington,

and that the Rosenwald Fund gave grants to hundreds of Black artists, writers, actors, and dancers for decades.

After the presentation, Kenneth Hoffman, executive director of MSJE, led a brief tour of the exhibition of photographs of some of the remaining Rosenwald schools and their students. Thanks to Kenneth and to Emma Herr, Susan Hess and Carol Newman for their help in arranging this educational morning.



January General Meeting



Michael Hecht addressed the SRO crowd of seventy attendees.

On January 29, NCJW GNO hosted Michael Hecht, GNO, Inc. President, as a featured speaker for the January General Meeting. He acknowledged problems in New Orleans, such as crime, drainage, and population loss, but he gave a mostly optimistic take on the future of NOLA and the region. He noted that crime was declining and that tourism was increasing. He predicted that our area would become a clean energy mecca and a center for geriatric medical research and projected cautious optimism that Louisiana's new governor Jeff Landry was advancing a pragmatic, pro-New Orleans set of policies. He educated the audience about Mississippi River diversion and various taxing options.

Michael took a number of questions. Notably, he acknowledged that Gov.

“NCJW makes a tangible impact on the community, which propels me to do this work.”

-Sara Lewis

Landry's positions on reproductive and LGBTQ rights are conservative, but he stressed that there are many other issues on which we share common ground and on which much progress can be made.

Also that evening, our community service partners fared well with donations from our members. Training Grounds received a new, formidable library and Louisiana Center for Children's Rights received black socks as they requested. Thanks to everyone who collected and to Robin Giarrusso for delivering the gifts.



NCJW GNO thanks Joyce and Sydney Pulitzer for opening their home for this event. Pictured: Leo Krasnozhan, husband of NCJW Emerging Leader Award winner Sara Lewis (center), and Joyce.

Many thanks go to the organizing committee led by Susan Greenberg along with Tamie Bressler, Ina Davis, Lilli Geltman, Robin Giarrusso, Diana Mann, Carol Newman, Joyce Pulitzer, Sue Singer, Kathy Shepard, Dana Shepard, Lynne Wasserman, and Gail Chalew.

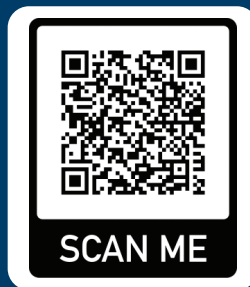
Take Action Now

The Equality Act is proposed federal legislation that would establish non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ Americans.

If passed, the Equality Act will update the Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, public education, federal funding, credit, and the jury system. Passage of the Equality Act will provide LGBTQ people nationwide with protection against discrimination. Contact Nancy Pesses for more info: npresses07@gmail.com

Share Your Voice

Scan to contact your Senators about the Equality Act:



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President
Gail Naron Chalew

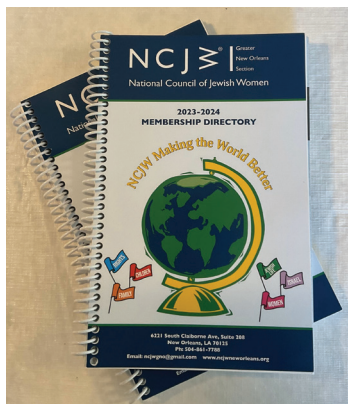
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Thank You To Our Volunteers and Advertisers

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

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Visiting Angels of GNO
Windsor Court Hotel

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

branded as enemies of Israel — nor should those who are against such a ceasefire be seen as indifferent to the loss of Palestinian lives in Gaza.

There is a Jewish value, *makhloket*, which means a disagreement for the sake of Heaven. After all, what is the study of Talmud other than engaging with different opinions in order to learn from them?

Through a mediated discussion in the spirit of *makhloket*, what may have felt threatening and hostile can become an opportunity for understanding.

The big tent of NJCW may enable us to provide a space for dialogue on these difficult issues — not for the purpose of convincing the other but rather to gain that understanding and to search for common ground.

When I assumed the many challenges of the presidency last June, I stated that my overarching aim was to mobilize the many strengths of our organization and its members to heal the world.

We are doing that through advocacy, through voter registration, and through volunteering at the many nonprofits we help fund. We are also building a sense of community.

Becoming a model for respectful dialogue in Israel is another way we can help heal the world, providing a valuable service not only to our members but to the broader Jewish community. I fear that without such dialogue, so many thoughtful, committed Jews may continue to feel there is no place for them, their passions, skills, and commitments in the community.

That would be such a great loss.

If you are interested in engaging in dialogue on these difficult issues, please contact me at chalewzim@gmail.com.

Kel tov, Gail Naron Chalew

GIVE NOLA DAY

GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION

NCJW and GiveNOLA Day Tuesday, May 7, 2024 One Day to Give as One

NCJW Participates in GiveNOLA Day*
Hosted by the Greater New Orleans Foundation

Thanks to all our prior GiveNOLA supporters! NCJW is once again participating in this year's GiveNOLA Day on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

Visit www.GiveNOLA.org and search for NCJW from midnight to midnight on Tuesday, May 7 or go directly to our page at <https://www.givenola.org/ncjwgn>. (Minimum gift is \$10).

You may make your **annual Personal Giving gift on GiveNOLA Day**, but you need to let us know **separately!** If you would like your gift to be credited to Personal Giving, please let Kathy Shepard (our Treasurer) know by emailing her at hms55@aol.com.

Not available on May 7 or just don't want to forget to donate? Pre-schedule your donation—donors have the ability to make an online donation starting on April 23 at 12:01 am. To make an early donation during the Early Giving Period between **April 23 – May 6**, go to the GiveNOLA.org website, search for NCJW, create a login, and schedule your gift to be recorded on May 7.

For more information or help making your donation on May 7, please call our office at 504.861.7788. Thanks for your continued support of NCJW and our community!

*GiveNOLA Day is the community's annual, 24-hour online charitable giving event to inspire people to give generously to nonprofit organizations that are making our region stronger and creating a vibrant community for all. It's our day to come together as one!



Inner Chef Awakened



Recipes were revealed while NCJW GNO members gathered to dine and discuss favorite culinary secrets. Gail Pesses' chocolate cake was delectable, and hospitality maven Sue Singer divulged her favorite dessert sauces. This sweet get-together was enjoyed by all!

L-R Sitting: Dana Shepard, Gail Pesses, Monique de la Cour, Sue Singer;
Standing: Susan Scharff, Carol Newman, Lilli Geltman, Ronda Kottle



Urge Congress to help release hostages held by Hamas

TELL YOUR LAWMAKER TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER AND PASS THE PRESIDENT'S SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET REQUEST FOR ISRAEL

www.ncjw.org/act/action/take-action-for-hostages-held-by-hamas/

Take action:

Tell Congress: Protect Children and Expand the Child Tax Credit

TELL CONGRESS TO PASS THE TAX PACKAGE TO HELP MILLIONS OF FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH FOOD, HOUSING, AND CHILDCARE COSTS



National Council of Jewish Women

www.ncjw.org/act/action/tell-congress-protect-children-and-expand-the-child-tax-credit/

Changes and Additions to the 2023-24 Directory Through February 15, 2024

Blumenthal, Harriet (Mrs)
16 Lakemoor Ln
Hendersonville, NC 28739

Bowron, Rachel Timm (M/M Ward)
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Casper, WY 82601

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victoriaannecoy@gmail.com

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Dicharry, Suzanne (Sue) (Ms)
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Slidell, LA 70460

Gainsburgh, Judith A (Ms)
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Gerber, Lauren (Rabbi/M David)
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Gold, Hilary Kathryn
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C: 504-535-9317

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Heller, Betty (Mrs Theo)
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Metairie, LA 70005

Katz, Roberta
2703 Bridgewood Dr
Boca Raton, FL 33434

Kushner, Ivy (D/M Frederick)
2100 St. Charles Ave, Unit 6C
New Orleans, LA 7013

Loewy, Lynn (Rabbi/M Robert)
2929 Buffalo Speedway, #1804
Houston, TX 77098

Romanik, Cara
51 Gull St
New Orleans, LA 70124

Singer, Dale Nowak (M/M Alan)
dsinger2023@gmail.com

Welcome to our newest members! (November 1, 2023 – February 14, 2024)

Adelman, Aleeza (M/M Andy)
613 Dufossat St #B
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Speck, Ariel (M/M John)
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C: 504-343-3278
evetteungar@yahoo.com

Vellino, Sylvia (M/M Joshua Herlands)
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svellino@hotmail.com

Zoller, Rachel (Jacob Lipsman)
4871 Constance St
New Orleans, LA 70115
C: 843-323-5013
rachel.zoller@gmail.com

Birthday Dollars

Birthday Dollars contributions allow NCJW GNO to support projects in Israel through the Israel Granting Program as well as our local community service projects.

- ◆ Lazelle Alexander, in memory of Fannette Blum
- ◆ Marilyn R. Brown
- ◆ Carole Gottsegen
- ◆ Barbara Greenberg
- ◆ Amy Gainsburgh-Haspel
- ◆ Edward Haspel, in memory of Bebe Haspel and for his birthday
- ◆ Barbara Kaplinsky, in honor of Gail Chalew, our new President, and Susan Hess for her Hannah G. Solomon event chairmanship
- ◆ Andree Moss
- ◆ Mimi Schlesinger
- ◆ Elsa Schneider

Scholarship Fund

The Irma M. Isaacson Memorial Scholarship Fund provides need-based, academic scholarships to local Jewish students.

In memory of Marjorie Bissinger:

Peter and Jean Coleman
Ana Gershanik
John and Amy Haspel
Kim Isaacson
Sarah Pasternack
Lois Sutton
Eileen Wallen
Sue Robin Weinhauer

In memory of Stan Levy and in honor of Anne Levy:

Nancy and Steve Timm

NCJW Cares

In memory of Sam Zurik, M.D.

In honor of Richard Spector, M.D. and Families

- ◆ By Gary Caruso and Michael Caruso

In memory of Stan Levy

- ◆ By Loel and Larry Samuel

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The first Passover seder is on the evening of Monday, April 22, 2024

Calendar!

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2:30 PM

NCJW Goes to the Opera - Lucia di Lammermoor by Gaetano Donizetti at Mahalia Jackson Theatre of Performing Arts. Members will gather for a group photo during Intermission.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

NOMA Exhibit & Docent Tour “Wangechi Mutu: Intertwined,” a major solo exhibition of the Kenyan-American artist’s work

- 12:00 pm Dutch Treat lunch at Cafe NOMA
- 1:30 pm Tour is free for members, all you have to do is sign up!

Register: www.NCJWneworleans.org

Or call the NCJW office for details

TUESDAY MAY 7 - Give NOLA Day

WANGECHI MUTU: INTERTWINED

NOMA



NCJ  [®] Greater
New Orleans
Section
National Council of Jewish Women

Join NCJW for a
Docent-led Tour
Wednesday, April 17

12:00pm lunch
at Cafe NOMA

1:30pm tour
Lunch is Dutch treat
Free Wednesday museum admission

For further information,
contact Vivian Cahn vcahn@cox.net

CLICK TO REGISTER
or go to ncjwneworleans.org

SATURDAY, MAY 25

Gelato May Soiree, support NCJW GNO with an evening of sweet indulgence.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

SAVE THE DATE and stay tuned for our annual closing event and Board installations.