

National Council of Jewish Women

Bulletin

www.NCJWneworleans.org

June 2024

New Orleans Police Superintendent to Keynote NCJW Closing Meeting *Barbara Kaplinsky to receive NCJW GNO Harold Salmon, Sr. Award*

Salutations!

Greeting

Anne Kirkpatrick

New Orleans Police Superintendent

Guest Speaker



Honoring

Barbara Kaplinsky

*Harold Salmon, Sr.
Award Recipient 2024*



— VOTE THE SLATE —

New Elected Board members will be Installed

SUNDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2024

11:00 Mimosas & Mingle 11:30 Brunch

Metairie Country Club, 580 Woodvine Avenue, Metairie

RSVP www.NCJWneworleans.org or call
(504) 861-7788 for tickets

*Please bring adult or children's toothbrush and toothpaste to support our
community service project, New Orleans Family Justice Center*

New Orleans Superintendent of Police Anne Kirkpatrick will keynote the Annual Closing Event and Installation on Sunday, June 30th, and address the city's efforts to "Meet the New Police Chief."

Superintendent Kirkpatrick is one of the most tenured police executives in the country with over 35 years of policing experience and 20 years as a Chief of Police. Her track record crosses a diverse number of jurisdictions. Prior to Kirkpatrick's assignment in New Orleans, she served as Chief of Police in Oakland, successfully increasing police accountability and transparency, which resulted in a 20-year low in the homicide rate and a decrease in non-fatal shootings. Kirkpatrick also held top law enforcement positions in Chicago and various cities in Washington state as well as serving as Undersheriff of the King County Sheriff's Office.

Barbara Kaplinsky will be presented with the *Harold Salmon, Sr. Award*, named for a man who recognized the value of volunteerism and who demonstrated his strong commitment to the welfare of NCJW GNO. Last presented in 2020, this award is given to worthy recipients who have helped to create an overall awareness of NCJW by giving their time and talents to the organization and serving as an innovator and motivator of people and resources. Kaplinsky, in addition to serving as the

(continued on page 2)

Presidential MESSAGE



Dear Members,

This has been a year of growth for me personally and, I believe, for the section as well.

I certainly learned so much more about the important legacy of NCJW, which has made possible the important role it plays in the broader community. I learned that the section is fueled by the power of community and that so many of us are seeking ways to become part of that community, strengthening it in the process.

And I really learned about the importance of teamwork and of having a cohesive team. The vice presidents—Susan Greenberg, Jody Braunig, Robin Giarrusso, Sara Lewis, Carol Newman, and Karen Sher; the treasurers Kathy Shepard and Tricia Kirshman; the secretaries Diana Mann, Loel Samuel and Tana Velen; and past presidents Gail Pesses, Susan Hess, Dana Shepard, and Ina Davis all fulfilled their roles admirably. How lucky am I that all will be continuing, except for Karen, who will get a well-deserved but short respite (we hope). I am looking forward to working with our new vice

president, Nancy Pesses, who will take on the portfolio of membership and engagement.

I am so proud of what we accomplished this past year.

We started the year with a workshop led by National staff on advocating for abortion access. We learned how to talk about abortion and how to implement effective strategies for change in our state.

Given that we Louisianans do not have the right to put referenda on the ballot and with the Republican supermajority in the legislature, we turned to the courts to make that change. Our Reproductive Justice/Religious Freedom committee, so ably chaired by Sara Lewis and Tana Velen, is exploring the best legal strategy to use, seeking partners for our fight, and creating ways to educate the community about our effort.

So many of us had the privilege of attending the Hannah G. Solomon luncheon in the fall, where we honored Anne Levy for her decades of educating the community about the horrors of the Holocaust. Love and respect for Anne filled the room, as she spoke so eloquently about her life's work. Thanks to Susan Hess for chairing this meaningful event.

Though traditionally not a focus of NCJW's work, October 7 changed all that. We invited Brenda Brasher, Israel Chair and now a resident of Jerusalem, to a board meeting to talk about life in Israel during the war (see her article in this issue). The board decided unanimously to donate \$1,800 to NCJW's Israel Emergency Fund, which funds initiatives meeting the needs of women, children, and families.

As the months of fighting continued, divisions grew within the American Jewish community about the best way to secure a lasting peace in the region. They affected our section as well, with some women deciding not to renew their membership, despite their support for NCJW's progressive agenda.

I was confident that the big tent of NCJW would enable us to provide a space for dialogue on these difficult issues—not for the purpose of one convincing another, but rather to

gain understanding and to search for common ground.

My confidence was more than justified: in early May, twelve members gathered to share their differing views and emotions in an atmosphere of respect and openness created by our skilled facilitator Laura Stein; a second listening session will be held on June 18. In this way, NCJW will continue to be a model for respectful dialogue.

At our closing meeting, we will join in honoring Barbara Kaplinsky with the Harold Salmon, Sr. Award for distinguished leadership through the years. From the time she joined the section, through her tenure as president, and ever since, she has executed all her varied responsibilities with distinction. Mazel tov, Barbara!

Recharge and rejuvenate this summer and be on the lookout for ways you can become more involved in the NCJW community.

Kel tw, Gail Naron Chalew

NCJW CLOSING MEETING – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

NCJW President 2017-2019, has served in leadership and committee positions within every NCJW department including Advocacy/Public Affairs, Development, Community Services, Administration, Programs, Membership and a variety of presidential committees.

At the event, President Gail Chalew will remark on the accomplishments of the section in the past year as well as the opportunities and challenges facing the future of the section.

As this is the closing general meeting for the year, Nominating Committee Chair, Barbara Kaplinsky will present the new slate for the membership to vote on; Installing Officer Judge Robin Giarrusso (ret.) will follow by inducting the newly elected board members.

To attend visit www.ncjwneworleans.org or call (504) 861-7788. Tickets are \$65/person or \$40/age 36 and under. The event is open to the public.

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

President

Gail Naron Chalew

Editor

Ina Weber Davis

CoEditor

Killian Philipson

VP of Administration

Susan Constant Greenberg

Contributors:

Sammy Bosalavage, Sylvia Finger, Michele Gelman, Judge Robin Giarrusso (ret.), Barbara Kaplinsky, Tricia Kirschman, Chip Mann, Carol Newman, Jennifer Nierman, Dana Shepard, Karen Sher, Nancy B. Timm

OPINION

Writings from the War *by Brenda Brasher, Jerusalem*

Saturday morning, October 7, 2023, came on Simchat Torah, the close of a long sequence of Jewish festivals in Israel. In my hometown of Jerusalem, my husband and I had a huge Sukkah party that week. Family and friends from near and far crowded into our modest Sukkah commemorating the harvest celebrations of our ancestors. I can still recall the happiness I felt that night. Seven years after making aliyah, I was at last truly at home in Israel. To be Jewish and live in Israel can be a source of great, almost inexplicable joy. That night, I had the privilege of experiencing it.

Two days later, as I drank my first cup of coffee at six in the morning, the sounds of bombs dropping over Jerusalem shattered the early morning calm. Ear splitting explosions were followed by increasingly horrific news reports. We were under attack throughout the country. Hamas had broken through the border with Israel, and their terrorists were roaming the country sexually assaulting, murdering, burning people alive, kidnapping some alive, and even some of the dead. We were at war.

For Israeli adults, all that followed -- the trauma, the tension, the dislocations, the military call ups, the waiting to see whether loved ones are alive or are hidden somewhere in the bowels of Gaza, the repeated mourning rituals -- was almost unbearable. But as adults, we had some historical perspective to gauge what happened even as it provided an agonizing reminder that

for the Jewish people as a people, no period of peace, even in our own country and perhaps especially in our own country, has been permanent.

For Israeli children, it was an unknown experience. Their schooling and typical 'growing up in Israel' experiences profoundly disrupted by Covid had just begun returning to normal. But normal disappeared that October day, and stayed away for days, then weeks, then months. Numerous children were killed or kidnapped in the first vicious onslaught. Tens of thousands of children were dislocated due to Hamas bombings in the South. Thousands more were dislocated due to Hezbollah bombings in the North. Temporary school arrangements became a widespread standard. In our age of mass, instant, easily accessible communications, our children were

not protected from the new reports on all that had occurred. Instead, they were inundated by it.

As the war/s dragged on and the quantity of bombings diminished, the summer of 2024 seemed to promise that long postponed camping trips, hikes, Scout activities, travel would finally occur. A plethora of grandchildren visiting my husband and I for a Shabbat meal spoke avidly about the outings they believed were finally to take place. Then, on Shabbat April 13th, 2024, Iran began bombing us, and continued to do so for five hours. The activities that the children were so excited about were once more cancelled.

We adults were aided by the knowledge that so many countries came to our aid and helped block the incoming missile barrages. In the midst of war, we had defenders. It was truly a comforting thought. But for our children...I honestly am not sure how much the defense of other nations truly meant to them. Teachers, principals, fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles had died, or were called up for military service and away for long periods. The fun rites of passages of Israeli childhood that their oldest brothers and sisters had enjoyed had not happened for them.

As hard as it is to write this in the midst of ongoing war when we still are being bombed almost every day and Hamas continues to refuse to release our people taken hostage, I ponder and even ache over the suffering of the families in Gaza as well.

How many shattered dreams can children experience and still be children? I wonder and worry for us all, and now more than ever, I pray.



Brenda Brasher made aliyah in 2017 and retains her NCJW GNO membership.

Dear Editors

Your March bulletin was a great example of how much NCJW GNO is doing and how much you all are thinking and feeling about the world we live in today.

In Colorado much thought is given to the National headlines as well as the depth of the snow and the best hiking and skiing trails. However, I grew up with women who dedicated time and energy to social justice. I didn't fully realize that this is somehow unique to New Orleans.

While I am surrounded by loving and caring individuals here in Colorado, I miss the institutional dedication of NCJW GNO.

I know you will find a dedicated chair for the liaison we have built with and for the children serviced by LCCR. It is not a time consuming position. I am available to mentor.

Susan Kierr
NCJW GNO President 2015-17
Harold Salmon Sr. Award 2020

Editor's note: Since this letter was written, Diane Katz Africk has stepped up to take the chair position for LCCR. ©

2023-24 Nominating Committee Report New Nominations

Officers

Nancy Pesses	Vice President 2024-26
Tana Velen	Recording Secretary 2024-26
Loel Samuel	Financial Secretary 2024-25

Continuing in Elected Positions

Gail Naron Chalew	President 2023-25
Jody Portnoff Braunig	Vice President 2023-25
Susan Greenberg	Vice President 2023-25
Robin Giarrusso	Vice President 2023-25
Sara Lewis	Vice President 2023-25
Carol Newman	Vice President 2023-25
Diana Mann	Corresponding Secretary 2023-25
Kathy Shepard	Treasurer 2023-25
Tricia Kirschman	Assistant Treasurer 2023-25
Gail F. Pesses	Ex-Officio Past President 2023-27
Susan Hess	Ex-Officio Past President 2021-25

New Elected Board Members

Meredith Cunningham	2024-26
Leslie Fischman	2024-26
Robin Goldblum	2024-26
Barbara Greenberg	2024-26
Carole Neff	2024-26

2024 - 2025 Elected Board

Continuing in Elected Positions

Jessica Bach	2023-25
Sylvia Finger	2023-25
Lilli Geltman Vohs	2023-25
Amelia Halstead	2023-25
Ronda Kottle	2023-25
Killian Philipson	2023-25
Lynne Wasserman	2023-25

2024-25 Nominating Committee

Chair	Susan Hess
Ex-Officio Chair	Barbara Kaplinsky
Ex-Officio Past President	Gail F. Pesses

From the Board

Lilli Geltman Vohs
Robin Giarrusso
Ronda Kottle
Nancy Pesses

From the Membership

Michele Gelman
Beth Shapiro Lavin
Ellie Streiffer
Joy Willig

Respectfully submitted:

2023-24 Nominating Committee

Chair	Barbara Kaplinsky
Ex-Officio Chair	Ina Weber Davis
Ex-Officio Past President	Gail F. Pesses

From the Board

Cathy Glaser
Dana Shepard (Vice Chair)
Jenny Nathan Simoneaux
Lynne Wasserman

From the Membership

Dana Keren
Rollie Rabin
Pamela Steeg
Joanna Sternberg

Community Needs Committee Identifies Newest Service Projects

NCJW GNO has two new community service projects this year. First is **Covenant House New Orleans (CHNO)**. Since 1987, CHNO has served unhoused youth with immediate and intermediate needs to help them recover from homelessness and achieve stability to prevent future homelessness. This is rooted in their core principles of absolute respect, unconditional love, and relentless support. They are the **ONLY** youth homeless shelter for unaccompanied minors in the Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish homeless continuum of care.

Our second new community service project is **ricRACK**. This organization was founded in 2011 with a goal of keeping textiles out of the landfills and teaching people to sew. It has grown into so much more, now providing a space for community support. They also work with Son of a Saint, teaching male youth to sew as a way of therapy while learning a new skill. NCJW's administrative assistant, Carolina, teaches at ricRACK.

In the past, we have supported the Anti-Defamation League's program entitled "No Place for Hate." This year they submitted an application for a different program, which we enthusiastically agreed to support. **ADL's "Not On My Campus"** program will train local college students to combat antisemitism on campuses in Louisiana.

As Hannah G. Solomon said in 1911, **"Who is this new woman?... She is the woman who dares to go into the world and do what her convictions demand."**

"Throughout its history, NCJW has worked to expand voting rights, drive voter turnout, educate on the issues, and engage advocates. Our work continues today... Our ultimate goal? That every eligible voter is able to register to vote, cast a ballot, and engage in all levels of government in a deep and meaningful way."

NCJW.org

Members of **Engaging New Voices and Voters**, a non-partisan group co-led by NCJW and LWV (League of Women Voters) are working with local schools to form Civic Engagement Clubs to not only organize Voter Registration but to make the students aware of the importance of voting, participating in voter registration, and the responsibilities that go along with being an informed voter. Young people are the largest and most diverse group of potential voters in the country; however, they are not showing up to vote in high enough numbers. The full participation of young people in the political process is essential to a truly representative, vibrant democracy.

Recently ENVV volunteers helped to train students at Ben Franklin High School to lead this initiative by learning to register voters and encouraging students to sign the pledge to vote. Students learned about the effectiveness of using flyers, posters, visits to classes, study halls, and social media as well as notifying the student body during morning announcements and at assemblies.

After the training sessions, the newly formed Civic Action Club, under the supervision of member **Ruth Bilbe**, ENVV High School Coordinator, held a Voter Registration Day. Volunteers stressed that every vote counts and that elections have consequences. After registering to vote, most of the students signed a pledge to vote in future elections!



"We are proud to advocate for and act for Together New Orleans' Pledge to Vote Campaign. Our right to vote is about caring for our community at large and our conviction to promote justice and well being for all."

Robin Goldblum



Ina Davis and Harriet Cortez (L-R), NCJW ENVV volunteers, registered voters at the Pride Prom on May 24th.

NCJW Goes to State Capitol

Jews Against Gassing

After the Louisiana legislature added gassing as a method of execution during the February 2024 special legislative session on crime, the Jews Against Gassing coalition formed. The coalition opposes the use of poisonous gas for state sanctioned execution because it unmistakably and immediately evokes for many Louisiana Jews horrific memories of the depravities our ancestors endured at the hands of Nazi Germany. With approximately 2.7 million Jewish people killed by gas during the Holocaust, the historical association with this execution method is chilling and undeniable. Currently there are no Jewish legislators in office.

The coalition sought and secured a sponsor for a bill in the regular

session to remove the gassing method of execution. Senate Bill 430 by Senator Katrina Jackson-Andrews sought to remove the gassing method from the recently-passed law, leaving lethal injection and electrocution as alternative methods. Though the bill passed many hurdles, the bill was ultimately blocked by Republicans in the Administration of Criminal Justice committee, where it failed 8-3 along party lines.

The coalition hosted two events to bring attention to this issue: a press conference on the steps of the Capitol and, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, a ceremony on the Capitol steps to commemorate the tragic history and to educate the Legislature about the Holocaust as they considered the bill. Both events garnered coverage

on local tv stations, radio, and print publications. After having the chance to explain the visceral association for many Jewish community members, legislators have admitted that they had not even made the association with the Holocaust previously and have thanked the coalition for voicing this unique perspective.

The coalition will continue to advocate against the actual use of this alternative method, as executions are likely to resume this summer. The coalition is led by Samantha Bosalavage, NCJW member and Staff Attorney at the Promise of Justice Initiative, and supported by NCJW GNO, with Sara Lewis, Vice President of Advocacy, serving on its steering committee and many NCJW members engaging in action items in support of SB 430.

Membership & Camaraderie



Left to right: Lilli Geltman, Helen Stone, Alice Yelen Gitter, Leopold Sher, Karen Sher, Laura Carman, Josie Patton, Sheryl Title, and Peter Title.

On Sunday, March 24th, an enthusiastic group of NCJW members and prospective NCJW members attended the matinee performance of Lucia di Lammermore, an opera by Gaetano Donizetti at the Mahalia Jackson Theater of Performing Art.

Member Joanna Sternberg made the arrangements for the section. Thank you, Joanna!



A group of 20 NCJW members enjoyed a docent-led tour of the NOMA *Wangechi Mutu: Intertwined* exhibit and lunch at Café NOMA on Wednesday, April 17. Everyone was amazed at the Kenyan-American's strikingly unusual and beautiful drawings, paintings, sculptures, and collages. NCJW's newest members were welcomed and honored at the event. Our own Ina Davis created unique, painted, collaged, and bejeweled name tags inspired by Mutu's work. New members' tags featured a colorful feather to encourage conversation and new friendships. The event was chaired by Vivian Cahn. New Members attending were: Sandra Herman, Ellen Rosenberg, Monique de la Cour, Helena Nathan, and Naomi Yavneh Klos. New Life Member Dashka Roth was also in attendance.



Gelato May Soirée A Sweet Success!

Many thanks to Susan and Bill Hess who graciously opened their home, to host *Gelato May Soirée*; to Chairs Jody Braunig and Loel Samuel for their sweet vision and leadership, and to the committee who put the cherry on top! Vivian Cahn, Ina Davis, Robin Goldblum, Barbara Greenberg, Barbara Kaplinsky, Diana Mann, Dana Shepard, Kathy Shepard. Thank you to everyone who contributed, enabling us to replenish resources for next year's volunteer efforts!

Photographs, Chip Mann, May 25.

Thank you to our Sponsors & Patrons*



Midnight Truffle

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Pink Champagne Sorbet

Cathy & Morris Bart - Entergy - Cathy & Charles Glaser - Jane Goldring - Barbara Greenberg
Susan & Michael Greenberg - Susan & Bill Hess - Amanda & Fred Herman - Pres Kabacoff
Lis & Hugo Kahn - Margie Kahn & David Graham - Susan Kierr & David Curley
Tricia & Rick Kirschman - Krewe of Black & Gold - Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home & Cemeteries
Carol & Dale Newman - New Orleans Entertainment Coalition - Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust
Joyce & Sidney Pulitzer - Loel & Larry Samuel - Lori & Bobby Savoie
Dori Halpern Schulman & Jack H. Schulman - Karen & Leopold Sher - Marie & Robert Wolf



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Royal Raspberry Ripple

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Vivian Cahn
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Sylvia & Israel Finger
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Ana & Juan Gershanik

Robin Giarrusso
Robin Goldblum
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Liz Sloss
Joanna Stenberg
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Ann Thorpe Thompson
Eileen Wallen

*As of May 15, 2024



Thank You

On behalf of the Scholarship Committee, we thank the membership of NCJW for supporting The Scholarship Program decade after decade. You have helped our organization to assist hundreds of Greater New Orleans Jewish students who intend to attend a higher institution of learning and need financial assistance to realize their hopes and dreams. This academic year you helped 14 students; whether you have donated directly or supported NCJW's fundraising in any capacity, you have helped.

Your donations affect the lives of others; hear the words of one of our recipients from this year:

"Thank you so very much for your support of my academic pursuits in the form of NCJW-GNO. Only two years ago I was a stay at home mother of three children, itching to re-engage my mind. Through the support of NCJW I have nearly completed my Master's Degree..."

"Clearly, the support has taken me a long way and quite early on, made me feel that others believed in my journey. That encouragement has been invaluable. I am enormously grateful."

If you are interested in applying for a Scholarship, please call Nancy B. Timm at 504-722-8414 or email at nancybtimm@gmail.com. If you are interested in making a donation, please feel free to mail your check to the NCJW office or to Nancy B. Timm, 5708 Garfield Street, New Orleans, LA 70115

Birthday Dollars 🥰

- ◆ Diane K. Africk, in memory of Samuel Katz
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- ◆ Renee Goldstein
- ◆ Susan Good
- ◆ Susan Levin
- ◆ Gail Pesses
- ◆ Cynthia Rittenberg
- ◆ Lorraine L. Williams

New Members and Changes to Directory Information February 22 to May 5, 2024

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

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THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 GIVENOLA DAY DONORS!

NCJW was proud to once again participate in GiveNOLA Day held on Tuesday, May 7. Thank you to all our donors who supported NCJW on this year's GiveNOLA Day sponsored by the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

Justine Aguiar
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Patricia Barnett
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Jody Braunig
Elizabeth and Stephen Brodt
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Lara Crigger
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Rabbi Alexis Erdheim
Shellye Farber
Laurie Frank
Sue Frank
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Take Action Today to Counter Antisemitism

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**Urge Congress
to Counter
Antisemitism**



National Council of Jewish Women

The bipartisan Countering Antisemitism Act would strengthen desperately needed federal government efforts to counter antisemitism and ensure that the current administration and any future administration have the tools they need. This historic legislation is the most far-reaching antisemitism initiative ever to be introduced in Congress and would establish a national coordinator within the federal government to implement the White House National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism released in May 2023. The legislation would also promote Holocaust education, help elected officials better understand the threat of antisemitic violent extremism and online hate, and formally establish Jewish American Heritage Month in law.

Tell Congress to pass the Countering Antisemitism Act today to ensure that our government has the tools and resources to protect Jews around the country from antisemitism.

<https://www.ncjw.org/act/action/take-action-today-to-counter-antisemitism>