

COUNCIL BULLETIN

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia Ltd.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rysia Rozen OAM



We welcome Rosh Hashanah 5776 with new plans and renewed energy.

May the New Year be sweet as the honey cake we will be sharing with our families and may we all enjoy good health and happiness. We pray for peace in Israel, and for all Jews around the world. Best wishes to you and your family for the coming year. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life and may there be peace throughout the world.

Read this issue of NCJWA Council Bulletin and let us know how you want to be involved. See if this New Year you can bring one new person as a new member to NCJWA.

THIS NEW YEAR'S WAKE UP CALL...

Brie Shroot **

Last week my Facebook feed, like that of many others, was filled with photo after photo of a dead child. Like so many other children and adults fleeing war torn countries, little Aylan is dead. He will not grow older, learn to read, ride a bike or just blow out four candles on a cake.

The photos that went viral have created a desire to fix the problem however we can. It hurts us terribly to see images like this and many people who previously have been unaware of the seriousness of the situation have been moved to act.

Over the last months the trickle has become a flood and families are making the hard decision to risk their lives in the hope of finding a new, safer home. A place to build new businesses, get an education, bring up children without fear. Those who can afford it will be journeying by plane, boat, car, train. Some families are walking with almost nothing.

Governments around the world are responding with varying levels of compassion and practical support. Our (Australian) government is committed to keeping the problem, and the people in crisis, away from us. We are cutting international aid, encouraging other countries to consider closing borders by force and refusing to resettle any of these families here.

As we approach the New Year many of us are turning inwards, reflecting on the ways in which we have failed to live up to the expectations we lay down for ourselves. We are looking at where we personally can make positive changes for the year to come. As a community this is our time to collectively pause and take stock of where we are.

It is also a time to look outwards, to think about what the imperative to heal the world means for Jews in 21st Century Australia. Too many times in the past we have done nothing because it is not us who are personally affected. We teach our children about the tragedy of people running for their lives, about people who had nowhere to go when borders were closed and Hitler's armies approached. It is time for us to learn how to be the generous open people we talk about.

Australia has capacity to provide a safe new home to thousands of people. We can afford to close the camps being run in our name where women and children, as well as men, are exposed to violence, fear and intimidation daily. We can afford to be generous. As Jews, we have a moral imperative to welcome, build relationships and provide support for families who have lost everything, for we have been there.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks said recently that the most important words in the Torah are "Love the stranger because you were once strangers". Those strangers – they are not so strange. Like us they want a safe place to watch the families they love grow from strength to strength, to continue in good health and to share in celebrations. This year, as we Daven together in Shul, let us focus on the stranger, and consider how we can help.

** Please see back cover for Author Details



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MEET THE NEW PRESIDENT

FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

At the recent National Conference, Rysia Rozen OAM was elected for a two year term as National President NCJWA. She was previously in this position 2007-2011.

Rysia's involvement with NCJWA goes back over 30 years. She initially joined Council in a secretarial role in support of the National President. Of course, she never dreamed that she would ever hold this position herself-let alone twice!

In NCJWA she'd found her niche and was soon doing much more than her formal responsibilities required, thoroughly enjoying meeting and inspiring women.

She was subsequently invited to join the Victorian Board in a voluntary capacity, concentrating on membership and fundraising.

Various projects followed: social, educational and fundraising, including 22 years running an annual Duplicate Bridge completion. Never shy to make phone calls, Rysia was soon seeking out sponsors, managing functions, catering and even running the Albert Park Opportunity Shop.

In 1996 Rysia was elected as president of NCJWA Victoria. For six years she capably led the Victorian Section.

Rysia's community involvement goes beyond NCJWA with involvement including Temple Beth Israel, Council of Christians and Jews as well as other organisations.

She has been an active member of the National Council of Women Victoria (NCWV) for a number of years. In 2004- 2007 Rysia was the third Jewish woman to hold the position of President NCWV.

In 2004 Rysia's contribution to the community was recognised with the awarding of an Order of Australia (OAM) Medal. Not a small achievement for a migrant girl who had to leave school early to work in an office and attended night school to further her education!



Rysia Rozen OAM

At the successful and enjoyable 30th National Conference

held in Sydney at the end of May, together we reconfirmed our pledge to the Conference theme: 'Jewish Women Unite: Be Seen, Be Heard'. It was great to meet women from other Sections around the country for this four-yearly event, including many new faces as well as good friends who have been involved for many years.

Sincere thanks to the NSW Division for hosting this inspiring Conference.

I'd like to also congratulate and thank Di Hirsh OAM for her dedication over the past four years. We also are welcoming a number of new Portfolio chairpersons, trusting that you will enjoy your involvement in NCJWA for the next four years and for many years to come. A special welcome to Sharlene Lustig, our new Hon Treasurer, I look forward to working with you. Also many thanks to Emma Lindell, who retired as Hon Treasurer, we truly appreciate all hard work you put into financials over your four years in the position. Thanks also to Victoria Section for continuing to host the NCJWA National office.

All Sections have recently held their AGMs, we thank you and salute you for your continued commitment to NCJWA, to Jewish, general community, and Israel projects. I was privileged to attend the NSW and Canberra Sections AGMs. I was so proud to hear about your achievements and plans for the future, as you strive to attract new members and promote NCJWA.

The NCJWA Directors and Executive are working hard to plan for the future. We will be using more social media to get our message across to all Jewish women committed to Tikun Olam - changing the world. Be part of our team to stand up against domestic violence, to educate women on health, community services and the many other new initiatives on the planning board. Please join our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter @ncjwaustralia

Contact us

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Deadline

Deadline for Pesach Issue 25th March 2016

NCJWA

National President: Rysia Rozen OAM
Immediate Past President Di Hirsh OAM
Vice President Sylvia Deutsch OAM
Vice President Victoria Nadel
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Wishing you and your families a wonderful 5776.

May the new year bring good health and great

opportunities for tikkun olam.



(4)





DANIELLE JONES-RESNIK

DI HIRSH OAM ANDREA COOPER

MELINDA JONES

ORDINATION OF WOMEN: MAHARATS, RABBAS & RABBIS

Elana Sztokman**

The history of women in the rabbinate has been rewritten this year as Orthodox women are joining the ranks of rabbinic clergy all around the world – including the first Australian woman to graduate as a woman rabbi, Rabba Melanie Landau. These women come from all around the world, even Eastern Europe, and are changing the realities of women in religious Judaism. Women are now starting to be employed in senior clerical positions in Orthodox synagogues, where they offer pastoral services, something that was unheard of a generation ago. Orthodoxy has thus started to catch up with its sister denominations in creating more egalitarian and feminist prayer communities. Sally Preisand, was ordained in 1972. The first woman Reconstructionist rabbi, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, was ordained in 1974. The first Conservative woman rabbi, Amy Ellberg, was ordained in 1985. The first woman rabbi in Israel, Naamah Kelman, was ordained in 1992. Three women received private

ordination from Orthodox rabbis before Yeshivat Maharat opened: Mimi Feigelson in 1994, Evelyn Goodman-Tau in 2000 and Haviva Ner-David in 2004.

From a historical perspective, then, Modern Orthodoxy has become the latest group to join the party, the most recent denomination to adapt to the notion that women can and should be rabbinical leaders. Clearly this issue has nothing to do with halakha and everything to do with entrenched ideas about gender, power and assumed social hierarchies. One day, years from now, Orthodox leaders are going to have to answer to their descendants and offspring about why they were so resistant to that radical notion that women are people. It would be nice to

that radical notion that women are people. It would be nice to see more men in positions of power take that kind of long view of history.

Indeed, the ascent of women has been slow and at times infuriating. In the Orthodox world in particular, the backlash against women's ordination can be fierce – especially in the age of blogging, when opposition spreads sometimes violently across social media. Even some self-proclaimed 'feminist' rabbis have come out vigorously against women's ordination. One of the women who was ordained in June wrote to me that she has been receiving some very painful responses to her choice to use the "Rabbi" title. One popular Orthodox woman blogger wrote a widely circulated post titled, "Here's What's Wrong With Women Becoming Orthodox Rabbis." It is particularly upsetting to see women undermine that advancement of other women that way.



Rabbot - source: Wikimedia

If I could have one wish for the New Year, it would be to see women learn how to be more supportive of one another and less undermining – especially supporting one another's feminist achievements that benefit all of us.

The vitriolic opposition to women's advancement is perhaps a reality of feminist life. When the head of the Israeli yeshivah that ordained two women as Orthodox rabbis in June described this momentous event as 'post-feminist', some feminists were rightfully offended. Post-feminism implies that feminism is dead and irrelevant. Even though it is comforting and in many ways amazing that the yeshivah is doing this act of ordaining women, it would be even better if the yeshivah would acknowledge feminism as the vital partner in reaching this point, rather than effectively declaring feminism to be passe. This is a terribly painful aspect of the feminist movement – that is, the ease with which some people feel the need to disassociate from feminism even while advancing a feminist agenda. Even some feminist women justify this, agreeing to be put down or pushed aside while non-feminists or even anti-feminists take credit for feminist achievements. This is politics, some feminists argue, and all is well as long as the final goal is achieved. I understand the argument, but I'm not at all convinced.

In any case, the achievements of the new cadre of Orthodox women rabbis, rabbas and maharats should certainly be celebrated and welcomed. The struggle is far from over – with high-status positions still male-dominated, and issues of equal pay, work-life balance, LGBTI inclusion and others still painfully unresolved. The realities outside of synagogue life remains one in which men continue to dominate boards, conference panels and op-ed pages. The fact that women have gained these titles is extremely significant. Titles are a vital step to being seen, heard and respected, which are vital for women to be included as leaders.

The struggle for Orthodox women's role in clergy has focused a lot on the titles. That Rabbi Avi Weiss' attempt to use 'Rabba' nearly got him kicked out of the RCA, and when he switched to 'Maharat' everyone was okay, well this should tell us how touchy this is. Some people respond by saying it's no big deal. Why should women be so insistent on the title? Well, think of it this way: what would we think if a medical school decided to give only its male graduates the title "Doctor"? What would we think if we were going to see a doctor who was not allowed to use the name because of his or her, um, gender? Who would tolerate such a thing? It is an insult to the person who studied for years to achieve knowledge, and it is an insult to the entire population group

Continued page 4.

ICJW REPORTING FOR DUTY

Robyn Lenn OAM - President ICJW



International Council of Jewish Women maintains its work all through the year, adhering to its platform - Promoting a Just Society based on Human Rights and Jewish Values. Each of ICJW's affiliate organisations selects its own programs and projects as does NCJWA, according to particular needs within its own community. At the same time ICJW encourages affiliates to pursue our global objectives within their own country and region.

ICJW comprises affiliate organisations in thirty-five countries around the world, but my recent search into the body of affiliates such as the German Jewish Women's Federation which comprises 38 organisations and the Swiss Union of

Jewish Women's Organisations with 21 organisations illustrates that there are many more Jewish women within ICJW's umbrella.

ICJW pursues its objectives through representatives at the UN and UNESCO, working to progress the human rights and safety of women and girls around the world, to protect the environment for a sustainable future, to build relationships with people of other cultures and faiths based on mutual understanding and respect. Through every aspect of ICJW's work runs the thread of Jewish values and support for Israel.

2015 has been an important year for women's rights globally, twenty years after the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set out to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women. Currently UN work worldwide is focussing on accelerating the implementation of these aims which, we all are aware, have not been successfully implemented. The UN Commission on the Status of Women 2015 which I attended in New York last March introduced the slogan Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality, encouraging us all to work towards this important goal over the next fifteen years.

My wish for 5776 is for womankind to accelerate its difficult climb toward gender equality and empowerment.

Wishing all NCJWA members and families a happy and healthy 5776.

ORDINATION - continued

who is excluded from higher echelons on authority and status despite their learning and credentials.

Plus, there is an important practical issue: only rabbis can get jobs as rabbis. In Israel in particular, where municipal, taxpayersupported rabbinical jobs are in high demand, it is quite significant that women are excluded. Even when non-rabbinical jobs in Israel list job qualifications as "Must be a graduate of a yeshiva of higher learning", the implication is that the job is only available to rabbis, meaning men. The title counts, not only on an esoteric level but on a real practical level. The idea of depriving men of their earned rabbi titles would be considered preposterous. If only women were equally valued that way. We have a long way to go still in our feminist strugale.

I believe that women's presence in the sanctuary changes the entire culture of the synagogue community. It fosters an atmosphere of inclusion, flexibility and openness, and lets congregants know that women are equally valued in society. That is a vital message to send to men and women, and especially children. Just having a woman rabbi around alters perceptions of what is possible for women and for Jewish society. That is an invaluable step towards making long-term, systemic social change for women.

SHARING ROSH HASHANAH AT THE GOLDEN AGE CLUB

Rvsia Rozen OAM - President NCJWA



The NCJWA Victoria was established about 12 years ago by Rysia Rozen and Rimma Sverdlin. This is our outreach program for the elderly Russian Jews, residents of Housing Commission flats in St Kilda, Prahran and South Melbourne.

We organise celebrations of all Hagim and aim to integrate the elderly Russian Jews into Jewish society. There is no other organisation that does as much for them as we do, except for Jewish Care. We form partnerships with other ethnic groups; share and celebrate each other's cultural and religious events.

This year we celebrated Rosh Hashanah at South Melbourne with an Indian women's group. Rabbi Shlomo Nathanson told the story of Rosh Hashanah and blew a shofar; Dr Sunila Shrivastava, President of Sankat Mochan Samiti group, talked about the Indian festival of Divali, festival of lights.

We shared Jewish and Indian traditional food. There was much singing and dancing of Hebrew, Yiddish and Indian songs. Our guest included Bill Appleby and other representatives from Jewish Care, who support us. Nellie Khoroshina did an outstanding job in organising this event, together with many NCJWA Vic volunteers.

NEWS FROM ILAN - THE WONDERS YOU MAKE POSSIBLE

Silvina Freund - Director Ilan Tel Aviv



FIRST OF ALL, I MUST SAY THAT I HAD FUN ON THIS TRIP.
OUR GROUP WAS IN DIZENGOFF CENTER.
IN THE BEGINNING WE WERE IN DIZENGOFF CENTER
MALL. THEN WE PROCEEDED TO THE FAMOUS DIZENGOFF
FOUNTAIN AND STUDIED WHO BUILT THE FOUNTAIN AND
ITS HISTORY.

WE LISTENED TO A VIOLIN MUSICIAN WHO WAS PLAYING AT THE DIZENGOFF SQUARE, IT WAS A VERY NICE AND HE PLAYED AMAZING.

THEN WE WENT TO THE LATE ESTHER THEATER THAT TURNED INTO A BOUTIQUE HOTEL, WE SAW ALL SORTS OF OLD FILM CAMERAS, AND EVEN RECEIVED A SOUVENIR – A CARDBOARD POPCORN WITH IMAGES FROM THE PAST OF THE PLACE, THEN WE STARTED HEADING BACK AND HAD SOME ICE CREAM.

WHEN WE GOT TO THE MEETING PLACE AT THE PARK, WE ATE FALAFEL AND ICE CREAM AGAIN.

LATER ON, I SANG WITH ANOTHER FRIEND THE BEAUTIFUL

SONG CALLED JASMINE.
IN SHORT, I'M WAITING FOR ANOTHER SUCH FUN DAYS
OUT, BECAUSE IT'S VERY FUN TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL,
OUT OF THE EVERYDAY ROUTINE.

WE WAIT FOR ANOTHER DAY LIKE THIS ONE. WE ENJOYED VERY MUCH.



Bulldozers are working hard these days at the construction site of the new Day Care Centre in Tel Aviv. The digging process is complete and construction will begin in a few weeks. Hopefully we will be able to open the new facility by 2017. Thank you NCJWA for your ongoing support. Prepare your luggage - we hope to see you all at the grand opening!!!!.

Boccia is a
Paralympic sport
specially adapted for
the most complex
physical disabilities.
We recently
competed in a
Boccia competition
and won the second
place. Guidi Musai,



who has attended Ilan Tel Aviv's Day Care Center for young adults with physical disabilities since 2009, received a special distinction for helping to spread the Boccia sport in Israel.

We are particularly proud of Guidi, as he is also the coach of the Day Care Center' Boccia team – so is now both an attendee and employee. We aim to help all our people become as independent as possible and Guidi is a great role model.

By: Tal Ashkenazy (member of the Day Care Center).

GETT REFUSAL AS FAMILY VIOLENCE

Talya Faigenbaum**

Gett refusal is not the latest device in digital warfare, but its destructive potential to the lives of Jewish women is comparable to any tangible weaponry.

Igun, or the status of being chained, has classically been applied to a woman whose husband's whereabouts had become unknown, thereby restricting her from remarrying. However, in the age of interconnectedness and global citizenry, the 21st Century Agunah faces a new challenge. She knows where her husband is, she can even track his movements on Facebook. But she is paralysed, trapped by the enduring grip of a lifeless marriage.

Relationship breakdown and divorce can be an overwhelming experience for many women. Financial uncertainty, new living arrangements and fears of personal insecurity or for the safety of children expose women to potential exploitation and abuse by a former spouse. Incidents of family violence often peak at this time.

In addition to navigating a myriad of emotional, financial and legal issues, Jewish women may also find themselves overwhelmed by Jewish divorce proceedings. And while many divorces in the Jewish community are resolved amicably, with the Gett ceremony being a mere procedural formality, there are a growing number in which exploitation, manipulation and abuse are becoming a lived experience.

Anecdotally it has been said that both husbands and wives are equally culpable when it comes to sabotaging Gett proceedings for material advantage. Such sentiments however, overlook the underlying power imbalances that are often present in Gett negotiations. These inequalities may be subtle or overt. They may be an extension of power structures that formed during the marriage or result from a misapplication of halachic provisions or processes. Yet almost without exception, the balance of power is held firmly by the husband.

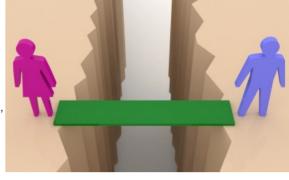
There is a notable shift in the discourse surrounding Gett refusal that is taking place around the world. This new dialogue spotlights the abusive nature of the behaviour and

gives visibility to the feelings of helplessness, vulnerability and despair experienced by many women.

In Australia, the use of power and control tactics to victimise a domestic partner is known as 'family violence'. Victorian legislation recognises that family violence takes on different forms. In addition to physical and sexual assault, the definition includes acts that are psychologically and

emotionally abusive, economically oppressive or behaviour that is designed to be threatening and coercive.

For some women Gett refusal is the final act of violation at the conclusion of an abusive



relationship. For others it is a manipulation of power at a time of intense emotional strain and heightened vulnerability, motivated by a desire to hurt, humiliate or control.

After trying and failing in the more traditional routes to obtain a Gett, some women are seeking the assistance of Australian Courts. In a recent and unprecedented case, a Victorian Magistrate held that a husband's refusal to release his wife from a violent marriage constituted the 'ultimate exercise of dominance and control' and amounted to psychological and emotional abuse.

Arguably, Jewish law never intended for the Gett to be wielded as a weapon by husbands to torment their wives. And while not every case of Gett-refusal is an instance of family violence, its presence, and prevalence, in our communities is undeniable. It is incumbent on all of us to educate our families, our colleagues and ourselves that such behaviour is abhorrent and unacceptable in our communities.

CHALLENGING ONLINE HATRED OF WOMEN

Sunny Gold, Co-Chair Antisemitism Portfolio, NCJWA



Challenging Online Hatred of WomenOnline abuse is not limited to minority groups such as multicultural communities. Women also are the targets of expressions of prejudice and belittlement on the internet.

The Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) is one Australian organisation playing its part by campaigning against the intimidation of and the threats made against women on the internet. OHPI endeavours to address many types of abuse, for example, rape jokes, sexual slurs and the sexual objectification of women.

On its website, OHPI cites two cases of debasement of women.

One case was a complaint this year to Facebook over the group 'Its Not Rape If You Holler Surprise'. Facebook rejected the complaint and refused to remove the group from Facebook.

A more alarming case is the revelation concerning a speech made in March on International Women's Day by feminist campaigner, Caitlin Roper, who shared her experiences of online misogyny.

She had been subjected to victimisation and many attacks online perpetrated by men. Caitlin joined Collective Shout, a grassroots organisation which campaigns against the objectification and sexualisation of girls and women in the media, in advertisements and in general culture. As a result of her participation, she faced a barrage of hostility, sexist slurs, and rape and death threats. Caitlin felt that this harassment was designed to force her to resign from this network.

Organisations, such as OPHI, Collective Shout and others, that are committed to fighting online hostility aimed at women, contribute to the attempts to raise awareness of the degradation of women on the internet and the exposure of the real trauma that they suffer from online hatred.

SEEING BONNA ON THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM

Rabbi Dr Haviva Ner-David**

We mark the passing of Bonna Devorah Haberman who played a very significant role in bringing feminism to Judaism. Bonna was a long standing member of ICJW & contributed free online courses about women and Judaism which are available still on the ICJW website. It was our privilege in the Pesach edition of the bulletin to publish Bonna's thoughts on trafficking women and The Book of Esther. She will be greatly missed. (Ed)



BONNA DEVORAH HABERMAN

Last week, I spent three days in Jerusalem with my life partner, Jacob, celebrating our 25th anniversary at the Jerusalem Sacred Music Festival. This was the first time I had been in Jerusalem-except for a brief few hours visiting the Women Wage Peace tent in early Julysince the funeral of my dear friend and colleague Bonna Devorah Haberman. Everywhere I went I saw Bonna.

As Jacob and I rode our tandem bicycle down Hebron St towards the Old City for a concert at the Tower of David, I remembered walking that same road with Bonna after celebrating Women of the Wall's 25th anniversary at a lavish gala dinner overlooking the Old City. We walked all the way back, with Bonna walking her bicycle so we could talk. Despite the celebration, there was a serious split in the group. Some members were in favor of joining the government committee to plan a third section at the Western Wall that would not be under the auspices of the "Kotel rabbi" and would be open to all groups to pray as they wished, as long as they respected the rights of others. Others, like Bonna, were against it.

Bonna was distraught at the idea that WOW [Women of the wall] would join this committee, because it meant giving up on the dream of justice at the already existing Kotel Plaza. She was committed to continuing to fight for the original vision of WOW- which she founded- for a group of women to be able to pray freely in the Women's section of the traditional Kotel Plaza with the 'three T's': Torah Scroll, Tallit and Tefillin. And with voices raised in song.

I was torn on the issue. The idea of creating an alternative Kotel that would be true to the vision of what we all felt the Kotel Plaza should be, was tempting. Bonna did not convince me that night, although I cannot say I was convinced the other way either. I decided to sleep on it. But the fact that I was not convinced was not because Bonna was anything but relentless in her argument.

That was Bonna. She was planning her next moves, unwilling to give up the fight. She was heartbroken that anyone else was willing to do so. Bonna's life's work was fixing the world and her tool was religious feminism. She kept waking up and doing her job until the day she died.

After the concert, Jacob and I attended a roof-top Sufi zicker in the Musim Quarter of the Old City. I could imagine Bonna there, chanting and twirling with the rest of us. I could hear her describing it as "so cool!", as we walked home through the abandoned and locked-up Arab souk at midnight. Bonna was a treasure trove of superlatives and bubbling excitement when it came to experiencing life. She took life very seriously, but she also loved to have fun. And if she could do both at the same time, all the better.

The next morning, I went to swim in the German Colony, the neighborhood where Bonna lived. When I was still living in Jerusalem, before I moved to the Galilee six years ago, every first Saturday night of the Jewish month, we held our Kiddush Levana prayer groups in her lovely Seven-Species garden. The group had started as an all-women's group, encouraging women to recite this prayer that women were traditionally discouraged from reciting because of its redemptive feminist suggestions about the moon one day becoming equal to the sun. Bonna and I decided this was all the more reason for women to say it.

It was Bonna who then convinced me to open the group to men as well. After all, she argued, feminism will not fix the world unless men and women partner in the cause. The idea is not for women to become men, but for feminism to transform our vision of, and the way we look at, the world all together. This is a message I have taken with me on my journey from Orthodox feminism to radical interspiritual post-denominationalism. Thank you, Bonna, for that gift.

The last concert of the Sacred Music Festival was also at the Tower of David. For the last number, Matisyahu, Shaanan street (of HaDag Nahash), and Freez, a Palestinian rapper, all got on stage and sang together a rendition of Matiyahu's international hit, "One Day," whose hopeful message of peace and love against the backdrop of Jerusalem's Old City was a moment I knew Bonna would have appreciated. Not only because it evoked for me the redemptive message of Kiddush Levana, when justice and peace will prevail, but because another aspect of Bona's feminist work was her Palestinian-Israeli theater troupe. Bonna believed in the power of art to bring even warring populations together.

Before we left Jerusalem to head back to the Galilee, I bumped into a friend with whom I had lost touch for a couple of years. She told me her husband had passed away a few months before. I did not want to ask for more details than she was offering. So I hugged her and we parted. Later, I discovered that her husband had been diagnosed with cancer, and within a year his body succumbed. But not without a valiant fight, a mutual friend told me. Just like Bonna, I thought. And then I remembered something that was said about Bonna at her funeral: She taught us how to fight with all of her might when that was what was called for. And when it was time to surrender, she taught us how to die with dignity and beauty.

That is yet another thing I hope to learn from Bonna when my time comes.

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WOMEN OF THE WALL: SINNERS & HERETICS OR JEWISH HEROES?

Shira Pruce **

You may have seen the headlines in the news: "Women Arrested at the Kotel, Women Smuggle a Torah into the Kotel." Perhaps you have heard some of the terms hurled at Women of the Wall by the ultra-Orthodox rabbis and members of the Knesset: 'provocateurs', 'Reform' or 'not-Jewish' (both intended as insults) and the latest, 'hate-crime perpetrators, no better than those who burn churches'

If you speak to those who pray with Women of the Wall (WOW), you will get a very different account. We are a prayer group that includes women from all Jewish denominations: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and others. Rabbi Barry Leff, male supporter of WOW and father of Devorah who had her bat mitzvah with WOW at the Kotel in 2014, speaks of his daughter's involvement in WOW, "I am very proud. She is taking on the spirit of activism. This is something that should be for everyone. The Kotel is the holiest site in Judaism for all Jews. It is time for a change."

So, which one is it?

The Western Wall is a public holy site, funded by the Government of Israel, a democracy that, according to the Declaration of Independence, "Will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex." In 2013, Prime Minister Netanyahu assured the world's Jews, "I'm committed to making sure all Jews feel at home at our holiest site."

Women of the Wall have been praying at the Kotel for nearly 27 years, a prayer group composed of women from all across the Jewish spectrum. The feminist organization's mission is simple: to pray our loud as a group, with tallitot (prayer shawls) and a Torah scroll at the Western Wall, free of persecution and harassment. WOW's prayer does not violate Jewish law. In fact, at the first prayer service in 1988 then Rabbi of the Western Wall

Rabbi Yehuda Getz came down to the plaza, saw the women's prayer with a Torah scroll and ordered that they be allowed to finish the prayer.

Yet since that first gathering, women have had to struggle to pray freely. This is because over the years, since it was liberated for the Jewish people in 1967, the Western Wall has been slowly turned into an ultra-Orthodox synagogue, with ultra-Orthodox-led authority of the holy site dictating women's dress, silencing women's prayer and limiting access to all Jewish ritual items- including shofars and Chanukah menorahs. Since we know that these discriminatory practices are not in place in the name of Jewish law, we must recognize their true origin: sexism and an extreme need to confine women to limited gender norms of the ultra-Orthodox community. This trend can be seen all over Israel today, but it is felt strongest at the Kotel.





Women of the Wall is a leader in this fight for women's freedoms in Israel and in 2013, after over 50 detentions and arrests of women at the Kotel, WOW won an influential court case ensuring their full rights to pray freely in the public space. In the face of harassment, threats and violence, women continue to gather monthly at the Kotel for Rosh Hodesh (New Month) prayers. Today, the struggle continues as Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, Authority of the Western Wall and Holy Places, actively prohibits access to Torah scroll by women while there are 100 Torah scrolls held for "public use" on the men's side. Likewise, Rabinowitz runs a lucrative system of Bar Mitzvah ceremonies at the Kotel where boys are celebrated as their grandmothers and mother stand on chairs in the women's section and strain to witness this mitzvah. Girls, on the other hand, are offered no ceremony, no fanfare for their Jewish coming- of- age. Women of the Wall offers Bat Mitzvah ceremonies for girls and women, and struggle each month to get a Torah in to the Kotel for this purpose.

Over the years it has been the voices of Women of the Wall's supporters - women and men from all over the world - that has had the greatest impact in creating a positive change for the status of women and girls at the Kotel. NCJW as always stood with Women of the Wall in this important fight and for this Women of the Wall is eternally grateful. You can join the struggle by joining us at the Western Wall next time you are in Israel and also by "Liking" us on Facebook ("Women of the Wall") and visiting our website to see what you can do from home to support our work: www.womenofthewall.org.il.

Photo credit: Daniel Shitrit

BMI Investments proudly supports NCJWA

WOMEN WAGE PEACE

Zelda Harris - Founding Member

People over here in Israel are grumbling about the long hot summer, temperatures climbing above 40C. Most are no longer thinking about the heat and smell of war, which permeated Israel in the summer of 2014.

However in Jerusalem, right next to the home of the Prime Minister women sit everyday in a makeshift tent whose awning hardly keeps out the scorching rays of the demanding sun. For 50 days they will fast and maintain a vigil to mark the 50 days of bloody warfare with Gaza last summer.

The Women Wage Peace movement (in Hebrew Nashim Ossot Shalom) came into being following the conflict of 2014, which ended with the blowing up of tunnels which had burrowed into kibbutzim on the border and through which terrorists could entered and engaged in a terror attack.

A handful of women decided that "the cycle of war has to be broken so that Israel's citizens can enjoy a sane and normal existence". Their battle cry was 'Enough!' Within weeks the movement attracted thousands of women from every ethnic and religious group and every walk of life.

Women Wage Peace is not politically aligned and its aim is to pressure the leadership to re start the negotiations with the Palestinians and together to seek an agreement which will be suitable to both sides. WWP are united by a mutual will to change the direction from one of confrontation and violence to that of peace.

Any day in the 'tent' you will find an array of fascinating women, mostly mothers, from all walks of life. The tent is an oasis of peace where Jews and Arabs can sit together joined by the media, politicians, tourists, aid workers and musicians, who raise the spirits of those who fast from 25 to 50 hours each time.

At the same time WWP are to be found at the intersections around the country and attending all meetings where the issue of a just and lasting peace is discussed.

Our first major event in November 2014 involved 1000 women from Nahariya in Northern Israel to Sderot on the Gaza border for a national Conference to discuss the aftermath of the war. There we publicly presented our charter.

Today the movement comprises 6000 active members and 10,000 followers on Facebook. Since the movement is active on the ground with organized groups and activities everywhere, public enlightenment is evident and there is every reason to believe that it will continue to grow.



REFUGEES AND THE UN

Julie Nathan - Co-Chair Antisemitism Portfolio, NCJWA

There are two UN refugee agencies: the UN Relief and Works Agency For Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which is only for Arab refugees from Mandate-era Palestine, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is for all other refugees in the world.

The UNHCR defines a refugee as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable... or... unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

UNRWA defines a refugee as someone "whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab–Israeli conflict".

The definition itself does not cover their descendants. Yet UNRWA, uniquely, treats the descendants of Palestinian refugees from the 1940's, ad infinitum, as if they too are refugees, even if they are natives and/or citizens of other countries. International law does not treat the descendants of any other refugee group in this way. Further, the UNRWA definition only applies to Arabs; Jewish refugees from Mandate-era Palestine are excluded.

UNHCR was established "to lead and coordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems." UNRWA was established "to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees." It is not aimed at solving their problems.

UNRWA had 5.1 million registered refugees at the end of 2014, nearly all of whom are not in fact refugees because they have never fled from anywhere. They are the descendants of refugees, nearly half of whom are citizens of other countries. Some 2 million of these Palestinians are citizens of Jordan, and another 2 million live under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and in Gaza. An unspecified number are citizens of other countries. Of the original 650,000 refugees in 1948, there are estimated to be less than 50,000 still alive after 67 years. UNWRA employs a total of 30,000 people.

UNHCR had 14.4 million registered refugees from the rest of the world at the end of 2014. They are all genuine refugees. UNHCR employs 5,000 people. Since its foundation, the UNHCR has helped to resettle approximately 50 million people.

SEX, VIOLENCE AND THE EFFECTS OF WAR IN GAZA

Shani Áloni - Director of Haifa Rape Crisis Center

In 2014 I hosted, along with a group of local social leaders, a professional delegation of social leaders from Boston, USA. A few members of the Bostonian group were women working in crisis centers for women who suffered Domestic Violence [DV] and Sexual Violence [SV]. One of the most powerful insights I got of this visit was made by one member of this group. She said that after traveling near the Gaza Strip and in Jerusalem Eastern and Western sides, she realized that the lives of women in Israel and Palestine who were traumatized by SV or DV are basically, as she defined it, "Moving between different circles of trauma". This visit took place in early 2014, just 6 months before the bloody summer of 2014.

The 'phenomenology' of SV and DV in wartime in Israel is quite an enigma. It is hard to say for certain whether or not there are more violent incidents during wartime of less. Some suggest that the tension in violent homes rises when the tension outside is pressing, and thus more DV acts happen during that time. Regarding SV, I do not know any liable research that shows solid evidences of sex crimes during wartime in Israel.

A lot can be said about the phenomenology of women and men seeking help during wartime. At HRCC we saw fewer calls to out Hotline during the war (approximately, 25%-30% decrease during July and August 2014). But the calls we got were made by women who were in severe emotional distress. The personal is indeed very political, but the political is extremely personal.

Why is it that fewer women and men call our Hotline during war time? Because in the Israeli public mind, national trauma always comes before the personal trauma. "When the cannons are heard, the muses are silent". Women are told in unspoken messages, that it's not the right time to think about yourself when people are hiding in shelters from missiles. So they bury their pain even deeper. They feel it not the right timing to be open about their old or new wounds.

We know that in trauma, any trauma, "practice does not make perfection" (and please excuse my sarcasm). After being traumatized one does not become immune to future traumas. In fact every reoccurring trauma is more excruciating than the one before. Which is why my colleagues from Boston were right, the women who called us during the summer of 2014 were emotionally devastated. The national trauma triggered their old, unresolved sexual traumas. They felt this was all just too much to handle and they turned to us for emotional support.

There is another reason why a national trauma triggers personal trauma. Trauma, especially ongoing abuse in early childhood, damages the ability for emotional self-regulation. The abused child learns that her (or his) wellbeing and emotional state can be shattered at any moment by an abusive parent of relative, and no other adult in her life is there to see and repair the damage. She is living in a constant state of fear and anxiety. When we meet survivors in their adulthood, they feel that anything can be a threat. An angry boss, a fight with a partner, a medical problem, or just a bad day are perceived as a challenge too great to handle. They feel insecure and unsafe every day of the year.

You can see now, that while a war, siren alerts, dreadful news running 24/7 in every media channel can be challenging for most people, this is almost impossible for survivors of sexual abuse to bear.



The war is difficult for Crisis Support organizations too: Donations and resources were taken from social causes such as violence against women to support areas in Israel that suffered the most from the armed conflict. Some of our volunteers asked to take a temporary leave during the war because their children or grandchildren were serving in the IDF, so they felt that they cannot be emotionally available for others. The emotional state of the callers burned-out the volunteers who stayed. On a more local note, Haifa is a multi-cultural city and HRCC sits in the offices of the Haifa Women Coalition with four both Jewish and Arab organizations. Maintaining daily partnerships with our colleagues at the Coalition was a challenge we are still facing to this day.

NCJWA PROUDLY SUPPORTS THE HAIFA RAPE CRISIS CENTER - THANKS EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

Since its foundation, UNRWA has not settled any refugees.

UNHCR's budget in 2012 was US\$4.3 billion. UNRWA's budget for the 2012-2013 financial year was US\$1.9 billion. UNRWA refugees have more UN funding per capita than other refugees. For example, in 2012, the UN spent six times more on every Palestinian refugee compared to any other refugee.

UNRWA describes the difference between UNRWA and UNHCR: "UNRWA deals specifically with Palestine refugees... Its role encompasses assistance, protection and global advocacy for Palestine refugees" while "UNHCR's mandate is to provide international protection to refugees worldwide whenever political conditions allow."

It is unclear why one national group of refugees has been treated differently to, and in many respects privileged over, every other national group of refugees, by the UN. Nor is it clear why Palestinians are the only refugees who count their descendants as refugees too, ad infinitum. What is clear is that the UNHCR, despite its disadvantages, is much more effective in resolving the plight of refugees than is UNRWA.

This is an extract from Julie Nathan: Refugee Week - Who Cares for Refugees? J-Wire 25th June 2015

AN OUTSTANDING WOMAN: ZARA YOUNG OAM

On 14 June, at the annual NSW JCA (Jewish Communal Appeal) Gala, NCJWA's Zara Young OAM was awarded the JCA Hal Goldstein Lifetime Award for Outstanding Service to the Jewish Community of NSW/ACT. This award recognises her more than 70 years of Jewish communal service.

Zara Young was born in 1926 and has been a member of NCJWA since she was fifteen years old. She is an Honorary Life Vice President of NCJWA. She held the position of NCJWA NSW President twice, in 1976-1979 and 1988-1989, as well as a number of other senior positions on both the NCJWA NSW

and National Boards. During 1999-2003, she represented Australia as a Vice President of ICJW.

In 2006, Zara was awarded an OAM in recognition of her lifetime commitment of service to the Jewish community and, in particular, NCJWA. She is even NCJWA NSW's 'national treasure'. It is her energy, intelligence and unfailing good humour which have made her an outstanding contributor throughout her long life.

IN MEMORIAM: AIMÉE MAZZA

It is with great sadness that we mourn Aimée Mazza's passing. Aimée was a warm and loving person, who also happened to be my predecessor as Editor of the Bulletin.

Her involvement in NCJWA spanned almost 40 years, much of this time as editor of the Bulletin. Aimée's long term contribution to NCJWA was recognised in 2007 when she was made a Life Member.



In 2011 she was also awarded the National President's Honour Badge. Aimée Mazza was the Glen Eira Council Volunteer of the Year in 2006.

Aimée was born in Cairo, Egypt and moved to Melbourne in 1956. She taught French and was very involved with the Sephardi community. She wrote fiction and poetry and published a number of books and short stories. A well-respected editor, Aimée shared her love of writing on the radio and with NCJWA members through a writing group which operated for a number of years. More important, though, was that Aimee was highly regarded for her kindness, her warmth, her dedication and her intelligence. May her memory be a blessing.

INSIGHTS INTO THE ESSENTIALS OF GOOD HEALTH

Mavis Rudd - Chair Women's Health Portfolio NCJWA

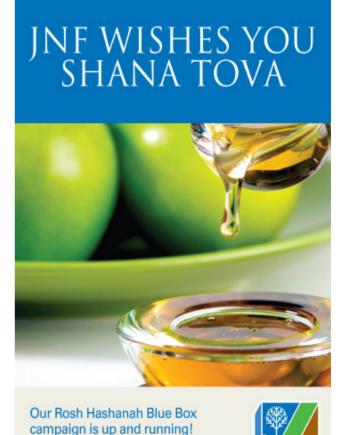
There is a saying in the Apocrypha of Ben Sira, 30:16: "There is no wealth like health". What could be more valuable than feeling healthy and happy? While health is relevant to your own situation the basics are the same for all. What is the secret of remaining healthy?

In The Wisdom of the Talmud, Ben Zion Bokser says "The Talmud abounds in rules of health, some of which will continue to interest the modern reader. The rabbis cautioned against overeating: "Restrain yourself from the meal you especially enjoy, and do not delay answering nature's call." They urged sufficient sleep, which will do its best however only at night; late morning sleep was regarded as injurious. Above all they urged general moderation in living."

Let us look at this using a modern analogy. When you invest in a new car, you follow the manufacture's instructions to ensure the car lasts long as possible and gives you a trouble free run. You fill the tank with the correct fuel, you take it in for maintenance, you wash it, and generally take good care of it to maximize its life. Yet many people today take better care if their car then themselves. If you consume poor quality, nutrition deprived food you can not expect to keep healthy and happy. During my 20 years as a health practitioner I have repeatedly seen the results of this.

Louis Jacobs, in The Book of Jewish Belief writes: "According to rabbinic teaching, it is utterly wrong for a person to argue that his health concerns only himself, and if he wishes to eat harmful food what business is it of anyone else? The human body is given to a person in trust by G-d. People can serve G-d adequately only by being healthy and consequently it is forbidden to eat anything that many damage health. Food that can endanger health, declare the rabbis, is to be avoided even more than food forbidden by religious law." This is not to say Kosher is unimportant, it is.

While it may seem obvious, it is important to reflect upon the basics for good nutrition. Eating a balanced diet of clean nutritious food, drinking enough water, exercising regularly and getting enough good quality sleep is essential to meet your body's basic needs. In the wise words of Benjamin Franklin: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."



Please donate at www.jnf.org.au

or by calling 1300 563 563.

JEWISH WOMEN WERE UNITED TO BE SEEN AND HEARD!

Di Hirsh OAM -Immediate Past President NCJWA

The NCJWA 30th National Conference was held in Sydney from 31 May to 3 June, with 52 registrations from around

Australia and New Zealand, and many remarkable women as keynote speakers. At the Opening Cocktail event we heard from the Israel Trade Commissioner Ethy Levy. The NCJWA Woman of Achievement Award was presented to Jillian Segal AM for her outstanding work in both the Jewish and wider communities.

Jane Counsel, former Head of Diversity and Flexibility at Westpac, was keynote speaker in the first session, speaking on the importance of women in modern workplaces, Westpac's focus on Women in Leadership and the benefits that have ensued. Westpac's Ruby Connection were the major sponsor of the National Conference.

In a session on Women's Contributions Across Cultures we heard three fascinating presentations by inspirational women: Widyan Fares, Community Engagement Coordinator at Multicultural NSW and former SBS journalist; Councillor Dai Le, Fairfield City Council; and Dr Shanti Raman, paediatrician and senior lecturer. All three women spoke of their migration experiences, the first two as refugees, and overcomin hardships to make real achievements in their new lives in Australia.



Viki, Miri & speakers

In a session entitled 'Confronting the Hidden' we heard from the Head of Stop the Traffik in Australia, Carolyn Kitto, on current progress and challenges in combating trafficking of women and children. We also heard from Susie Ivany on the current situation with regard to agunot and gett refusal in Australia and worldwide, including efforts to resolve this issue.

Workshops were held on Family Violence and ways NCJWA can contribute; evaluating women's evolving roles in Israeli society; and planning for the future of NCJWA and setting our priorities. Conference participants resolved to continue support for our Israel projects: ILAN, Haifa Rape Crisis Centre and the Haifa University Ethiopian Women's Fund (in memory of Dr Geulah Solomon OAM z"l). Participants also resolved to support a new JNF project to help disadvantaged schoolchildren in the Negev.

The community were invited to an entertaining Gala Debate on Jewish Australia in 2030, tackling issues such as the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora, Holocaust remembrance, what the community will look like and generational differences.

Constitutional amendments were passed just prior to Conference, changing the term of office to two years and reducing the number of Directors to nine, including the Honorary Treasurer. At the end of Conference Di Hirsh OAM stepped down after four years as National President and Rysia Rozen OAM was elected as the new National President for the next two years.

Conference concluded with a Closing Dinner, where Dr Eman Sharobeem, Director of the NSW Immigrant Women's Health Service, gave a very moving address on her own experiences and her work campaigning for women's rights, especially in immigrant communities. Di Hirsh presented the following awards:



Rysia Rozen, Viki Nadel Front - Sylvia Lenny, Eman Sharobeem



Jillian Green, Jane Counsel (Westpac), Shelley

Honour Badges

Brisbane - Gail Paratz Canberra – Janet Frommer NSW - Barbara Shotland Victoria - Vivien Brass Western Australia - Valerie Frank

National President's Award - Shirley Glance

for service to the National Office and National President over the past four years Hon Life Member of National Board -Susie Ivany

for many years of outstanding service to NCJWA at the national level

Hon Life Vice President - Carolyn **Goldsmith OAM**

for enduring and outstanding service to NCJWA in a leadership capacity



Jillian Segal, Zara, Nadene & Zara's daughter Lesley



Robyn, Carolyn Kitto & Di

News from the Sections

Brisbane



Visit to the PCYC

Our Section continues to hold a number of interesting meetings. In May we headed off in a mini bus for a tour of the PCYC (Police and Citizens Youth Club) located in Underwood. We learnt about the activities at the Centre and were also taken on a tour. Our thanks to Trevor Bryant and his team for hosting us.

In June we listened to a speaker from the Gold Coast based 'Assist a Sista' organisation. This is a group of community volunteers who work together to help survivors of domestic violence to rebuild and repair by bringing hope and restoring faith.

In July at our AGM we welcomed two new committee members, Penny Neaubauer and Lillian Cisneros. The AGM was also an opportunity to present a Dr Fanny Reading Honour certificate to Mira Myler for the work she has put in to making our yearly raffle quilt for MICHA.



Mira Myler presented with a Fanny Reading Certificate of Honour at our AGM

The speaker at our August meeting was Lisa O'Hara who spoke about her work as an immigration lawyer.

I would like to congratulate Gail Paratz for her award, presented at our recent National Conference, of a Dr Fanny Reading Honour Badge.

Wishing everyone a healthy and successful year Carolyn Goldsmith OAM- President NCJWA Brisbane

Canberra

There are many highlights from Canberra to record in this issue of Bulletin. This is our first Bulletin Section Report since our dear friend and colleague Sylvia Deutsch OAM began her move from Canberra to Sydney, a big wrench for her and us. She was our 'reporter and photographer' for over 30 years.

In April on the night before Yom Hashoah we welcomed Richard Rozen OAM, when we hosted a community viewing of his film of the play that depicted his story as a child survivor. The next day Richard was the keynote speaker at the ACT Jewish Community annual Yom Hashoah Commemoration.

On the 17 May we celebrated the 60th Anniversary NCJWA Canberra Section with a cocktail party in the Dr Fanny Reading Auditorium at the National Jewish Memorial Centre. It was a most appropriate venue as Dr Fanny Reading was the founder of NCJWA. Then National NCJWA President Di Hirsh was the keynote speaker.

Sylvia Deutsch presented the history of Canberra Section and handed over a facsimile of the first Minute Book of the Section for safe keeping. Yvette Goode then presented Sylvia Deutsch with a Life Membership Award to Canberra Section for recognition of her 31 years exceptional service to Council and the Community. Canberra's new Rabbi Alon Meltzer blessed the Canberra Section for this special anniversary. Donations were made to the ILAN young adult day care project in Tel Aviv.

In late May, Sylvia Deutsch, Anita Shroot and Yvette Goode attended the NCJWA Conference in Sydney, Canberra Section was awarded the inaugural Young OAM /Stewart-Kahn OAM Israel Project Shield for raising the most money per capita for Israel projects. We expect to display the shield in the Dr Fanny Reading auditorium. Janet Frommer was also awarded (in absentia) the NCJWA Honour Badge 2015.

On a delightful June winter's afternoon ladies gathered to enjoy our popular annual 'Show and Tell' function. While it may be a challenge to think of something suitable to bring to such an event, the range of presentations is

always fascinating as are the stories that accompany the demonstrations. Our cover charge income was earmarked for the Haifa Rape Crisis Centre.

On a cold July night each year the brave souls come out of hibernation to attend Council's winter supper and movie night. The movie this time was The Matchmaker, which was very well received. The proceeds from donations on the evening are earmarked for the Ethiopian Women's Fund, Haifa University.

Our AGM was held on 9 August at the home of Committee member Yael Cass. We were delighted to have National President, Rysia Rozen present at the meeting with a full, enthusiastic reminder of all the activities and causes that Council is engaged in. Sadly our income for 2014-15 was down on the previous year. This was because our dear friend and hardworkering fundraiser Pam Fein, is no longer with us. We are continuing with our ten member steering committee. At the conclusion of the AGM four young Jewish female professionals who are currently working in Canberra, Tammy Sanderson, Samantha Goston, Angie Glance and Shifra Joseph generously shared their life experiences from study to work and their goals for the future.



Our four panel speakers at the Canberra AGM. Photo by: Janet Frommer

As we prepare this Section Report we are looking forward to our September Annual Short and Sweet Poetry Afternoon - This eagerly anticipated function will raise funds



Steering Committee with Di Hirsh and senior members at Canberra Section 60th Anniversary Cocktail Party.

News from the Sections

for Breast Cancer Network Australia.

Canberra Section wishes all NCJWA members and friends well over the fast and a healthy, happy, prosperous year.

Fiona Sweet Formiatti and Janet Frommer

Gold Coast



L-R Rabbi James Kennard, Jason Steinberg, Barbra Stewart-Kahn, Marcia Pinskier

It has been a busy time for our Section.

A Joint communal Yom Hashoah event was held on April 12, with guest speaker Vic Alhadeff, CEO NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. His address was a touching account of his own story beginning in Greece – to the family escaping to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). He also spoke on how close we are to heading down the same devastating path. We also enjoyed meeting his wife Nadene, who is Coordinator for NCJWA NSW Mum for Mum program.

On the 30 May we hosted a communal evening 'Governance, Transparency & Accountability – In the Wake of the Royal Commission on Child Sexual Abuse'. Our Panel was moderated by Jason Steinberg, President of Qld Jewish Board of Deputies. Panellists were Rabbi James Kennard, Principal Mount Scopus College in Melbourne and Marcia Pinskier GAICD, M.A. Jewish Communal Service & Leadership. The evening was well supported by the community. Discussions were mainly on moving forward, supporting victims and of course most importantly developing policy structure.

In June we were addressed by Sydney Jewish Museum Development Director Rob Schneider. He talked about intolerance, persecution and bigotry. In these times where we are seeing an unfortunate rise in antisemitism and racism, the museum is becoming ever more relevant as a centre for promoting Human Rights, mutual understanding and respect amongst all people

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 5 July. A well-attended event welcomed new members Ashley Lewis and Coral Fuchs.

Elections:

President: Barbara Stewart-Kann OAM

Vice President: Felicia Godwin Secretary: Karen Webel Treasurer: Elaine Watson

News Editor: Tammy Raanan-Ota Catering/Functions: Rayna Lewis

A week later on 12 July we were again at work with another very successful fundraiser at Bunnings in Ashmore. Many thanks to a great team: Rayna & Scott Lewis, Gary Kann, Felica Godwin, Karen Webel and Elaine Watson.

Wishing all members of NCJWA L' Shona Tova

Tammy Raanan-Ota, NCJWA Gold Coast News Editor

New South Wales

We were proud to be the hosts of the Quadrennial National Conference.

Conference social events included a cocktail event at Tibby Orden's home, with guest speaker Ethy Levy, the Israel Trade Commissioner. The interesting and informative conference culminated in the NCJWA formal dinner where we thanked Di Hirsh for her four years of dedicated service and welcomed Rysia Rozen as the new National President.

At our AGM Victoria Nadel stepped down as our President. Over 80 people attended including the State Attorney General and local member, the Hon Gabrielle Upton. A new Steering Committee of Miri Orden, Anne Reid and Victoria Nadel was elected.

Recent months have been full of events with a particular focus on the issue of domestic violence. Our Status of Women Committee, Liane Froneman, Dr Yoke Berry and Nadene Alhadeff, organised a series of events centred on the screening of 'Brave Miss World'.

At the first of these events the CEO of Domestic Violence Services Australia, Karen Willis OAM was guest speaker and addressed a full house. Funds raised were shared between DVSA and the Haifa Rape Crisis Centre.

On a glorious winter's morning a beautifully appointed morning tea was held at Vaucluse House Tea Rooms. This was in aid of Breast Cancer Network Australia and the Cancer Council. Organised by Mandi Chonowitz-Jacobson and Isabelle Shapiro OAM. Guest speakers were Merle Finkel and Susanne Gervay who spoke about their own experiences dealing with cancer.

As we write this we look forward to our Transcultural Birthing Kit packing morning on August 27th. We are proud to have raised funds to purchase materials to pack 800 birthing kits as part of the program's theme "Women helping Women". In recent months we have been thrilled to be able to add to our Rebbetzin Jana Gottshall Memorial Library with the generous donation of over 100 books from Rabbi Dr Jeffrey Cohen.

This is our board.
Steering Committee:
Miri Orden, Anne Reid OAM,
Victoria Nadel (Immediate Past President)
Honorary Treasurer: Barbara Shotland
Elected Board Members:
Mandi Chonowitz-Jacobson, Sunny Gold,
Josephine Holland, Miriam Levy, Janet
Merkur, Ruth Osen, Isabelle Shapiro OAM.

Wishing you all Shana Tova and well over the fast.

Miri Orden, Anne Reid OAM, Viki Nadel (IPP), NCJWA NSW Steering Committee,



The Status of Women Brave Miss World event, L-R Gal Avioz, Tzipi Avioz, Mimi Kind



Northsiders Group with award won and presented at our AGM. L-R Front: Stella Alexander, Sunny Gold, Susan Levy, Eva Robey, Janet Merkur, Zina Conway OAM. Back: L-R Liane Froneman, Dee Hart, Robyn Lenn OAM

News from the Sections

Victoria

We continue to run a busy and diverse program of activities. However, no doubt a highlight that will be remembered for some time was our 2015 Autumn Brunch, held at the Brighton International with a crowd of 400 women and two men!

Our guests of honour were Rosie Batty, Australian of the Year in conversation with Fiona McCormack, CEO Domestic Violence Victoria. Our eminent speakers helped us raise awareness of the damaging effects of family violence.

Guests were asked to donate to the Luke Batty Foundation and NCJWA (Vic). We were extremely pleased that over \$21,000 was raised. A contribution to Domestic Violence Victoria was also made. We will continue to seek opportunities where we can assist and support vulnerable women and work towards the prevention of family violence. We would like to acknowledge brunch sponsors Fella Hamilton and Scott Winton Insurance Brokers.

Another significant recent event was the annual Mina Fink Memorial Lecture. This year Ramona Koval, well known Melbourne writer, journalist and broadcaster spoke on 'From Broadcaster to Bloodhound, My Journey.' The large audience of 120, was enthralled with her stories and anecdotes about her career in journalism and her search for her biological father.

Also speaking was Debbie Golvan (representing mother Freda Freiberg) about her grandmother Mina Fink. Mina had a passion for education, issues affecting women on both a local and international scale and Israel. She had a strong influence in shaping NCJWA. Mina also assisted in the establishment of the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre. Through her dynamic personality she was able to recruit and inspire volunteers, persuade people to work together, foster talent and place protégés in positions of leadership.

Our newest program is a sheer delight, bringing many smiles and much pleasure. Called 'Monday Munchkins', this is a playgroup that meets weekly and is coordinated by Shari Beckman. The playgroup enables new mums to connect with



each other, share experiences and learn along the way. A sponsorship by Ron and Sarah Tatarka of Scott Winton Insurance Brokers has enabled us to purchase toys, play mats, a change table and will also contribute towards any speaker costs. One of the most active features of our calendar is the monthly BrainFood series.

Recent talks have included; the book launch of 'Sharing Puglia', co-authored by Vivienne Polak & Luca Lorusso, Suzy Zail (Holocaust author), Julie Szego (Age journalist, author of 'The Tainted Trial of Farah Jama') and a wine tasting with Dr Leon Chapman. Still to come are Shelley Cohney speaking on The 11th Commandment: 'Thou Shalt Eat Honey Cake on Rosh Hashanah' and Adina Bankier Karp on Organ Donation: Fact, Jewish fiction and the tale of a grateful recipient.

NCJWA Victoria has recently joined with Hatzolah to host a free life cycle series for women 'From Babes to Boobas'. Topics have included Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, What To Expect after Expecting: Navigating Motherhood – a rollercoaster of emotions. Coming up is Recharging for the New Year: Nutrition and Healthy Habits to Stress Less.

We have also recently combined with the Community Security Group, Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence, and WIZO Chavera in hosting two workshops aimed at keeping women, girls and seniors safer on the streets and in their homes. Both workshops were given by members of the Proactive Policing Unit.

Wishing everyone Shana Tova Shirley Glance, President NCJWA Victoria



Western Australia

In May we had a very successful Mothers Day event. Our guest speaker was Laurelle Mellet, originally from South Africa. One of Laurelle's children is better known as Troye Sivan. He is an international teen idol, who was recently named Time magazine's second-most influential teenager in the world. He happens to have 'only' more than 3 million YouTube followers! Laurelle stated that each child is unique, and when that uniqueness is embraced, it becomes their strength.

On the same day some of us also attended the 'Symphony of Peace', where our member Joanie Romick read some Jewish prayers for Peace.

At the end of May, Jill Green, Noreen Sher, Shelley London and myself flew to Sydney to attend the NCJWA Conference. This was a great experience for us all. Jill chairing the start of the Conference, Shelley giving an excellent report as Fanny Reading Scholar, Noreen representing us in the Israel Project session and myself with the Interfaith Panel. I was touched and surprised, when Di Hirsh mentioned a letter about my work from the President of UNAAWA, from the President of West African Women and from Rabbi Freilich. It was very special to receive the Miriam Stein Award promoting interfaith relations.



L-R Sue levy, Dulcie Trobe, Valerie Frank, Ester Steingiesser

Shelley London, our Fanny Reading Scholar has recently organised three Health Talks; Stay on Your Feet, Asthma and Hearing Loss Innovations with Professor Marcus Atlas.

This year's AGM was successful with our guest speaker Steve Lieblich, the Public Affairs Director at the Jewish Community Council of WA.

He spoke mainly about BDS and the Jewish students' situation being experienced at the Universities. Valerie Frank was very touched for receiving her Honour Badge. So was her mum, Dulcie Trobe OAM.

Preparations are in place for this year's International Peace Day, which is between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on Sunday 20 September at St George Cathedral in Perth.

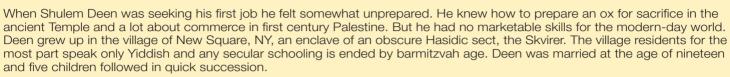
Ester Steingiesser, President - NCJWA WA Section



Monday Munchkins

BOOK CLUB PRESENTS:

By Sandra Gillis



The story begins with his inevitable expulsion from New Square by the community Beth Din. He then unfolds the slow disintegration of his beliefs and his estrangement from God and the Skvirer community. The tone is one of acceptance, some sorrow and even a little humour, although depression and anger were to follow.

There is plenty of fuel for resentment in a story such as this but the author speaks of the beauty of many aspects of hasidic life and with understanding and compassion for his fellow hasidim.

His eventual introduction to the radio and discovery of the forbidden internet opened up the outside world, allowing him to learn computer programming; after so many years of Talmud study he enjoyed the similar logical processes. He notes wryly that the Rebbe's regular pronouncements against the internet could only indicate that he was not the only one of the Skvirer who had been similarly enticed.

Deen's wife is presented as quite an understanding person, considering the strain she was under, keeping her husband's secrets. The one anguish that the author continues to suffer is the estrangement from his children; inevitably they have not been allowed to communicate with their father, the "heretic"

This memoir is written in a touching and accessible style, giving an insight into a highly secretive community that shuns publicity. All Who Go Do Not Return is the latest in the "ex-frum" memoir genre, which includes titles such as Unorthodox by Deborah Feldman. Shulem Deen's website, UnPious, offers a literary outlet for others who have left the Hasidic fold.

It is a brave story, exposing a great deal of pain and loss but ultimately the author's peace with his decision.





P&B Law and **Lindsay Kotzman** wishes **NCJWA** continued success in their wonderful work.

We are proud to be a sponsor of NCJWA.

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Please feel free to call Lindsay Kotzman at any time **9692 9888** Website: www.propertylaw.com.au



Major Contributors - Rosh Hashanah

Page 1: **Brie Shroot** is a CEO of Babywearing Education Australia, A social enterprise that supports caregivers in Australia and beyond to care for their children. Her current focus is on providing carriers for families seeking asylum in Australia. In her spare time she parents her four children with plans to have them grow up to be menchen.

Page 3: **Dr. Elana Maryles Sztokman** is the Executive Director of JOFA, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, and the author of The Men's Section: Orthodox Jewish Men in an Egalitarian World, (Hadassah Brandeis Institute) winner of the 2012 Jewish Book Council Award in women's studies. Her next book, The War on Women in Israel, is set to be released (Sourcebooks) in October 2013.

Page 5: **Talya Faigenbaum** is a lawyer working exclusively in the areas of Family Law and Family Violence. In addition to running her legal practice, Talya actively assists Agunot in their pursuits of a Jewish divorce. Earlier this year, Talya spearheaded a ground breaking Magistrates' Court case in which a husband's Gett-refusing behaviour was characterised as family violence. Talya is passionate about this issue and has presented lectures and workshops to both Rabbinical leaders and the community in an effort to increase awareness and education.

Page 6: **Rabbi Dr. Haviva Ner-David** is the rabbinic director of Shmaya: A Mikveh for Mind, Body and Soul, on Kibbutz Hannaton. She is an activist for women's rights and human rights in Israel. A writer, she. is the author of two memoirs: Life on the Fringes: A Feminist Journey Towards Traditional Rabbinic Ordination, and Chanah's Voice: A Feminist Rabbi Wrestles with Gender, Commandment, and the Women's' Rituals of Baking, Bathing and Brightening. (Both are available in paper back or Kindle format from Ben Yehudah Press and on Amazon.com). She lives on Kibbutz Hannaton in the Galilee with her life partner of 25 years and their seven children, and she is currently working on a novel and a book preparing couples for their wedding and for marriage.

Page 7: **Shira Pruce** is Director of Public Relations, Women of the Wall. She has worked to advance social change in Israel at MASLAN- the Negev's Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Support Center, the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance, MEET and the World Union for Progressive Judaism. She received her BA in Women and Gender Studies at Rutgers University in New Jersey before making aliyah in 2004.











Upcoming Events and Activities

Brisbane

Late October - Special morning tea in honour our long term senior NCJWA members.

Tuesday 3 November - Melbourne Cup Day lunch.

Other: celebrations of 150 years for the Queensland Jewish Community. Functions will include Gala dinner, Festival and a historical project.

Canberra

Comming Soon: supper/movie night and a Founder's Day function.

New South Wales

October: Pink Sunday to further fundraise for BCNA.

November 29: our annual "Celebrating Israel"

Next Year: co-hosting Transcultural event at Council House - with the Zakynthian Association of Sydney.

Victoria

Where: Hatzolah Forums In conjunction with NCJWA (Vic All Forums at Hatzolah - 320 Orrong Road Caulfield North

Wednesday 30 September: Staying Strong and Fit: Menopause and Beyond

Monday 26 October: Girls' Night In: Women's cancers, the role of genetics and a personal journey

Monday 16 November: 'Im Ein Ani Li, Mi Li?': Empowered women - a legacy for our community

Wednesday 18 November: Brain Food Series

Organ Donation: Fact, Jewish fiction and the tale of a grateful recipient with Adina Bankier- Karp 7.30 pm; Please contact office:

Phone 9523 0535 for venue details

Thursday 10 December 7.15 pm.– Human Rights & Founders Day - Ms Jeanette Debney-Joyce will speak to us on Dr Fanny Reading MBE - 'Dear Ones...'

Sunday 13 December: ILAN Concert

Caulfield Park Pavilion 10.30-12.30 pm

Western Australia Sunday 25 October – Pink Sunday

Sunday 13 December – Music Afternoon – Jewish Music for Chanukah

Wednesday 27 January 2016 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day

For further information on any of these Events, or Contacts in any other NCJWA Sections please look online at www.ncjwa.org.au or phone our National office 03 9523 0537

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