

Bulletin

A FAITH IN THE FUTURE

®

A BELIEF IN ACTION

February, 2022

127 YEARS OF POWERFUL JEWISH WOMEN

NCJW confronts today's most urgent social and economic challenges facing women, children and families. Powered by the Jewish imperative to ensure dignity for all, we impact policy, advocate for justice, and support the community. Your voice has never been more essential and our voices together make a meaningful difference in the world.

Become A Member

Call us at
215-302-3586

Visit us at
ncjwphiladelphia.org

NCJW GREATER PHILADELPHIA SECTION STANDS TALL FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

This past October, our NCJW SECTION joined with Catholics for Choice and other faith-based organizations in filing an amicus brief in a lawsuit, Allegheny Reproductive Health Center vs. Pa. Department of Human Services. The suit challenges the Pennsylvania law that bans abortion coverage for women insured through the Pennsylvania Medicaid Program. The faith-based amicus curiae asserted their “continued support of the principle that decisions before the point of viability about whether to take a pregnancy to term should belong to the women.”

STAY TUNED!!!

In this Bulletin:

- The December 30, 2021 article “Jewish Leaders Take Stance On Abortion” in the *Jewish Exponent* includes an interview with Liz Downing, our Section’s Vice President of Advocacy.
- The Women’s Health Protection Act now awaiting a U.S. Senate vote.



PENNSYLVANIA VOTING RIGHTS IN PERIL WITH THE BLOCKING OF VOTING RIGHTS LEGISLATION

District voting maps drawn and voted on by our bi-partisan Election Commission may not reach fruition. Despite public hearings and public input on those maps that resulted in fairer voter representation, our Pennsylvania Senate has rejected the proposed maps in favor of their assuming control of their own “mapmaking” without obligation to show their maps to the public. The failure of adopting new, reformed redistricting means a continuation of the existing gerrymandered maps. Meanwhile the state Senate has mounted efforts to pass a Pa. Constitutional Amendment to effect their control which must pass the state’s two legislatures twice to be adopted. Therefore, this amendment could become a reality next year. Other restraints on voting:

- Elimination of voter drop boxes
- Curtailment of early ballot counting
- More hurdles to securing mail-in ballots



See inside flyer for a Zoom discussion by our member, Diane Steinbrink, on the life and poetry of Amanda Gorman, the youngest poet to present at a presidential inauguration.



Can you find Joyce’s giraffes in our new
Getting To Know More About You
feature?

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Philadelphia Section

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022 – 7:30 pm –EVENING ZOOM EVENT

Please join us for our program entitled
**“The Life and Poetry of Amanda Gorman” presented by Diane
Steinbrink**



At this event, one of our Section and Board members, Diane Steinbrink will discuss Amanda Gorman’s role in President Biden’s Inauguration. Amanda Gorman is the youngest poet in our country’s history to have such an honor. We will learn about her family background and her relationships, as well as her education. Diane will read Amanda Gorman’s Inaugural poem – “The Hill We Climb” along with the poem Amanda Gorman presented at the 2021 Super Bowl.

RSVP REQUIRED BY FEBRUARY 20, 2022 TO JOIN US

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

If the above link does not work for you, copy and paste the following into the URL section of your browser:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWL8M5YLotk2TPCYQ5d7-DkvF11n_DJZpa2mNYIomPSosrZw/viewform

AND IF YOU WANT TO INVITE A GUEST TO THIS PROGRAM, YOU CAN SHARE THIS FLYER WITH THEM BY SENDING THEM THIS LINK:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mcWkb3UvcUV97DX3m4PZTRjY_E7LTyiA/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117143772030201255046&rtpof=true&sd=true

Questions? Call Char Kurland (215) 805-3006 or Patti First (215)-470-1560

Jewish Leaders Take Stance on Abortion

By **Sasha Rogelberg** -

December 30, 2021

If a Jewish person was asked to vote for one of two candidates in an election — one who advocated for abortion on demand or one who banned abortion entirely — medical ethics expert Dr. Daniel Eisenberg said that halachically, Jews should vote for the candidate who allowed abortions on demand.

American Jews are not being asked to make this black-and-white decision, but the U.S. Supreme Court is heavily weighing the question of allowing abortion in the United States. In July, the court will convene to decide whether to uphold Mississippi's 2018 law banning abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy and potentially to strike the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which granted federal protection to women seeking abortions.

Republicans and Christian establishments have led the movement to restrict abortion access, but they are not the only ones with voices on the matter. Many area Jewish leaders would agree with Eisenberg's ethical argument.

"We feel very strongly, as most of the Jewish community does, about the importance of women's reproductive freedom," said Elizabeth (Liz) Downing, the vice president of advocacy for the Greater Philadelphia section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

The Greater Philadelphia NCJW signed on to an amicus brief for the case of Allegheny Reproductive Health Center et al v. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services being heard before the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in 2019. The case argued that the abortion coverage ban violates the Equal Rights Amendment and the equal protection provisions of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Members of the Greater Philadelphia NCJW participated in the Philadelphia Bans Off Our Bodies March on Oct. 2.

"The mother should have the freedom to decide what medical procedures will work best for her," Downing said. "Every woman should be able to decide that for herself."



Liz Downing

Downing has advocated for greater abortion access since before the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision occurred.

"I have many friends who had back-alley abortions when I was in college before *Roe v. Wade*, and many of them were never able to have children after that," Downing said. "I don't want to go back there, and I don't want the young people today to ever have to know what that feels like to not have those services available if and when they need them."

Local politicians have also made their thoughts on abortion known. If *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, decisions around abortion access would return to the local level, putting an obligation on state politicians to have these conversations.

"Abortion, sadly, has become a lightning rod that's used as a political sword to weaponize the political sphere and gain political points rather than being treated as thoughtful policy," said Democratic state Rep. Jared G. Solomon, who represents the 202nd Legislative District, which includes Philadelphia County.

Like Downing, Solomon emphasizes the gestational parent's right to choose whether to have an abortion.

According to Ben Waxman, the Democratic state representative candidate for the 182nd House District seat, which represents Center City, there's "a lot of stigma about [something that] is a medical procedure."

Community members have been eager to discuss the topic of abortion with Waxman.

Waxman's potential constituency and Solomon's constituency are both heavily Democratic and Jewish, yet the politicians emphasized the importance of reaching out across the aisle to discuss the contentious topic.

"The most revolutionary thing you can do is have a conversation with someone with different beliefs than you," Waxman said.

The lack of conversation around abortion in political spaces has made it a polarizing and stigmatized topic. Solomon believes these conversations are difficult but necessary to craft laws that are realistic and driven by values, not political power grabs.

"We're going to disagree, but we need to be able to have that discussion and a reasonable debate," Solomon said.

The arguments against abortion have been monopolized by some Christians arguing that life begins at conception, according to Rabbi Abi Weber of Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel. She said that this view has caused Jewish spiritual leaders to be clear in their ideas about abortion.

"What you're seeing much more are rabbis, particularly American rabbis, feeling a need to really assert some of these very old Jewish ideas that are different from Christian ideas," Weber said.

Jewish leaders have emphasized that although the political obligation of Jews to advocate for abortion access is clear, the personal decision to have an abortion is delicate and complicated.

According to Eisenberg, "A fetus is considered to be a human being minus epsilon," meaning being the closest to, without actually being considered, a born human being.

Because of this consideration, the life of the person carrying the fetus takes precedence over the fetus itself. Therefore, an abortion is permissible if the gestational parent's health is in danger.

Weber believes that individuals need to consider mental health needs as part of the gestational parent's overall health. Therefore, if the gestational parent is suicidal, or factors from the pregnancy place a severe strain on the person's mental health, abortion would also be permissible.

Jewish thoughts on abortion have changed over time. After the Holocaust, Jews took a much more conservative stance on abortion due to interest in Jewish futurity, Weber said.

However, Waxman, who considers himself a progressive, said that Jewish experiences with authoritarian powers in the past have made some Jews more cautious of government restrictions, including for abortion.

Like most considerations in Judaism, although clear halachic guidelines to follow exist, each scenario for an abortion must be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any government restrictions on abortion, Weber and Eisenberg said, would deny this process to take place — a process which is personal, painful and profoundly complicated.

"I know the experience of having potential life grow in my body, and there's no doubt that it's sacred, beautiful and special and can be such a wonderful experience for so many people," Weber said. "And having been through that experience, I'm all the more aware of the toll that it can take on people. As a society, we need to be focusing on the person carrying the child."

srogelberg@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0741

Our thanks to Faye Benshetler and Nancy Cox for Chairing the Goodies for the Good Guys project in the Montgomery County area, with credit to Faye's husband, Eric, who assisted in assembling the gift packages.

T **TEMPLE HEALTH**
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
JEANES CAMPUS

December 15, 2021

Fay Benshetler, Montgomery County Area Event Chair
Nancy Cox, Montgomery County Area Event Co-Chair
National Council of Jewish Women
501 Ironwood Way
Dresher, PA 19025

Dear Fay Benshetler and Nancy Cox and members of the National Council of Jewish Women/Greater Philadelphia Section

On behalf of the entire staff at Temple University Hospital – Jeanes Campus, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your generous and thoughtful donation of food to our medical staff.

This is a critical and stressful time for the local medical community and the entire nation. Staff members here at the Jeanes Campus are working around the clock to ensure that we are prepared to handle whatever comes our way, including patients who are seriously ill due to COVID-19.

Jeanes was founded nearly 100 years ago with a mission to care for patients in need and be a healing presence in the community. Supporters like you are helping us live out that mission.

Thank you again for your donation and for your support of the Jeanes Campus and our staff. Together, we will emerge from this crisis stronger.

Sincerely,



Marc Hurowitz, DO, MBA, FAAFP
Executive Director
Temple University Hospital – Jeanes Campus

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - JEANES CAMPUS
7600 Central Avenue, Philadelphia PA, 19111
T: 215-728-2000
TempleHealth.org 800-TEMPLE-MED



Urge your lawmakers to support the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA)

- **The issue:** Since 2011, state lawmakers have passed nearly 500 abortion bans and restrictions. These oppressive laws most harm women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color); those working to make ends meet; members of the LGBTQI+ community; immigrants; young people; those living in rural communities; and people with disabilities.
- **The good news:** The Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA) would create a new tool for safeguarding access to high-quality care and securing constitutional rights by protecting patients and providers from this dangerous political interference. The bill passed the House in a historic vote on September 24, and now awaits Senate approval.
- **Our task:** Urge your senators to pass WHPA. Even though the bill may not pass this year, it's important to get our lawmakers on the record about supporting access to abortion.

As Jews, we believe in the power of compassion to build a just and fair society. A compassionate nation ensures equal access to quality, timely health care for everyone. Equal access to abortion nationwide will allow individuals to achieve their social and economic goals, and promote reproductive and moral autonomy and the right to determine our own lives. WHPA passed the House in a historic vote on September 24, 2021, and must pass the Senate to become law. This will not be an easy task, as it has been many years since the Senate voted on abortion legislation, let alone passed a bill to protect and advance abortion access. As a community, we must call on the Senate to pass WHPA to protect access to abortion and to help us build a society where all women, children, and families can thrive in our communities with dignity.

Write or call:

Senator Pat Toomey
455 Dirksen Senate
Office Building
Washington, D.C 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4254

Senator Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202)224-6324



**Abington
Jefferson Health.**

Abington Hospital
1200 Old York Road
Abington, PA 19001

December 16, 2021

Faye Benshetler
NCJW/Montco Area Event Chair
501 Ironwood Way
Dresher, PA 19025

Dear Ms. Benshetler,

On behalf of all of the staff of Jefferson Abington Hospital's Emergency Trauma Center, we would like to thank you for the trays of goodies that you delivered to us today. As always, it was truly an act of kindness and we appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness.

The treats were shared with all of the emergency room staff working today. Our staff truly does strive to meet the highest expectations in medical expertise and patient care. They were very pleased to be recognized for their efforts, as we continue to keep our patients, colleagues, and community members safe.

We wish all of the members of the National Council for Jewish Women and all of their families a safe and healthy holiday season and very Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Steven Fisher, MD
Chairman, Department of Emergency Medicine

Michael Rogozinski, MSN, RN-BC
Director, Emergency and Observational Services

*Happy
Holidays*



Getting To Know More About You



From NCJW Greater Philadelphia Section member, world traveler and photographer, Joyce Eveloff's Collection.



Giraffes!!! This was taken in Botswana. I waited until the giraffes walked together & crossed in front of each other. In the background of the photo is an elephant which I didn't see until the photo was developed. Giraffes are my favorite animal!!!

Some of Joyce's photographs have been on exhibit at Gratz College, McNally's and Bruno's restaurants, and can be seen at the Woodmere Museum and Art Center, Chestnut Hill.



Three Myanmar women wearing brass neck rings. Years ago the rings were regarded as protection from lions, who were thought to lunge toward one's neck.

I encountered these women while on a 3-week private tour in the back roads and villages of Myanmar.

Elephants gathered at a watering hole in an elephant camp in South Africa. This photo was taken from a bathroom window wall.



If you are interested in sharing your creative interests with our members, please contact Harriet Gran, Editor.
hgranncjw@gmail.com 215-206-1026



Evening Book club met in the Sukkah last year at Nancy Fagan's House.

Left to right: Charlotte Schwartz, Barbara Auerbach, Joan Sax, Nancy Fagan, and Evelyn Goldhammer.



The Nominating Committee is now accepting names for leadership positions on our 2022-23 Board of Directors. If you are interested in or have recommendations, please contact Barbara Nussbaum, Nominating Committee Chair at barban@aol.com.

Are you playing WORDLE?

There's a delightful new game on the internet which has gone from hundreds of players to thousands in the last few months.

Players have to guess a five-letter word in a similar manner as the guess-the-color game Mastermind. After guessing a five-letter word, the game tells you whether any of your letters are in the secret word and whether they are in the correct place. A yellow block tells you that the letter is correct but in the wrong place. If the block is green, you have the right letter in the right place. You have six tries to get it right.

The link is <https://www.powerlanguage.co.uk/wordle/>



Condolences

To Amy Beitman on the loss of her brother, Jan Gabin.

To Joanne Stoloff on the loss of her husband, Jerome (Jerry).

Center City Book Group

Wednesday, February 9 at 7 p.m. on Zoom
News of the World by Paulette Giles
Leader: Michelle Rose

Interested in a book group?
Contact Audrey Block
215-688-0094. ablock1919@comcast.net

Evening Book Club

Tuesday, February 1 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom
The Glass Hotel by Emily St. John Mandel

Thank you to Faith Edelman for leading our January meeting discussion.

For more information about the Evening Book Club contact Joan Sax at 215-740-7349 or joansax@comcast.net

Afternoon Book Club

Thursday, February 24
The Song of the Jade Lily by Kirsty Manning
Moderator: Ellen Newman

Thursday, March 24
The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell by Robert Dugoni
Moderator: Eileen Davis

Thursday, April 28
The Mother-in-Law by Sally Hepworth
Moderator: Patti First



Thank you to Anita Shomer for moderating our December book club review of *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver.

All of our upcoming book events in 2022 will be at 1:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month.

For more information, contact Susan Brooks at 215-542-0712 or seamcrazy@verizon.net.



HAMEC welcomes volunteers to help in the museum anytime you have a little extra time. Docent Training is an exciting opportunity for anyone interested.

HAMEC is located in Elkins Park at Congregation Keneseth Israel.

Please call:

Dr. Ruth Almay

Director of Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center

(215) 464-4701

Judy Fried, Chair

215-266-0465



Community Service Update: Dawn's Place/Mitzvah Circle

Dear Friends,

Both Dawn's Place and Mitzvah Circle really appreciate all we have collected/donated for them. We want to continue while ensuring that this activity will be easy and convenient for all. As you probably know, we called off the January collection and we will skip February as well.

The next collection for Dawn's Place is now scheduled for **Thursday March 3 - noon to 1** (weather permitting) at Wegmans in Warrington.

In regard to Mitzvah Circle, their warehouse has moved to Norristown. It is thus not nearly as convenient for folks in the northern suburbs.

If we want to continue donating to them, we will need some volunteers who are willing to rotate the job and take the items from the collection point to the warehouse. It is no longer practical for Sherry K. to have this responsibility every month.

Based on the volume of items collected the past 3 months, which filled Sherry's car to overflowing, I believe we would need to continue collecting monthly. Section members have lots to give away!! So, if a different person volunteers to drive each time, it will indeed be a mitzvah and will keep this project going. If you are willing to drive to Mitzvah Circle from Bucks occasionally, let me know.

I'd appreciate hearing from you by February 5, so the Community Service Team will have time to consider our plan for going forward.

Thanks

Lynne Jacobs

ljacobs816@gmail.com

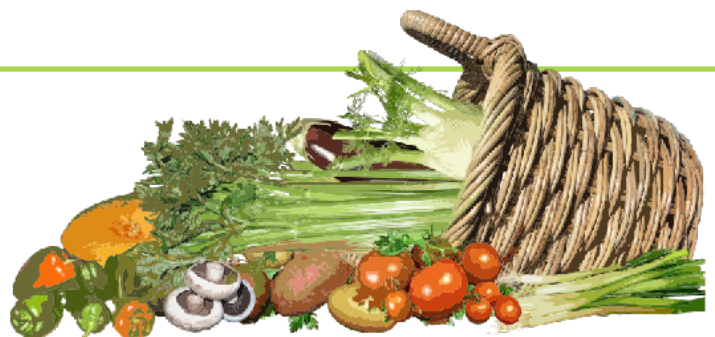
UPDATE FROM THE GRANTS COMMITTEE

Dear Members,

Our Section's Grants Committee awards small grants, not to exceed \$500, to organizations that assist, through their programs and initiatives, the needs of women, children and families. We are pleased to announce that during this past fiscal year we have provided grants to the Mitzvah Circle Foundation, Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Academy, National Giving Alliance and SOWN.

Please take a moment and think of organizations that you support or are familiar with and ask them to submit a grant request. They must qualify as a IRC 501(c) (3) organization.

Feel free to contact Wendy Rader, Grants Committee Chairperson, at wrbarbiegirl50@gmail.com or 215 692-0245 with any questions.



WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As Membership Vice-President, I welcome our new members to call with any questions.

Please contact Ellen Mirbach
semirbach@gmail.com 215-771-5311

I will be delighted to send out membership packets.

Membership Dues: Annual \$45 (Be an Angel \$55 🙇)*

Please LIKE us on our Facebook page.

Search our full name "National Council Of Jewish Women Greater Philadelphia Section."

*For an additional \$10, you can achieve "angel" 🙇 status which increases the number of people we can assist.

A Spotlight On Our NCJW Section

Membership

While the pandemic does not allow us to have face-to-face events, we are still continuing our commitment to our membership by:

- Zoom programs for entire membership
- Ongoing Advocacy
- Board Meetings
- Book Club discussions by Zoom
- Monthly Bulletins to keep everyone informed
- Grants to organizations which help those suffering financial insecurity and the lack of other basic needs

- Donations to Dawn's Place helping sex trafficked survivors and abused women
- Donations of warm winter clothing to our adopted Ben Franklin Elementary School
- Donations to help the Ronald McDonald House
- Goodies for the Good Guys delivered to frontline workers

Please check out our website ncjwphiladelphia.org for our Bulletins, past and present, for program information and registration.

If you haven't done so, please consider paying your annual dues, \$45 or Angel 🙇 \$55, enabling us to continue our important work.

Click here to join or renew online. If you would like a dues envelope, email Ellen Mirbach at semirbach@gmail.com or remit your check to Harriet Winokur, 732 Johns Lane, Ambler, PA 19002

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN PICTURES?

When you are at an event, send a picture to Harriet (hgranncjw@gmail.com) who will publish it in the Bulletin.



REMEMBER.... THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE.

INCLUDE NCJW Greater Philadelphia Section in your estate planning.

You can help its important work continue for years to come.

Celebrating a *simcha* or have one you would like NCJW to recognize?

We will make a note of it. An acknowledgement to you and the recipient is our pleasure.

What a great way to share by making a donation to our Greater Philadelphia Section.

For information, call 215-302-3586 and leave a message for Pearl Tragash, Treasurer.



Sponsoring an event for a minimum of \$100.00 in honor of a special event or person in your life, or in memory of an important person is a great way to do a double mitzvah! Don't forget, you can sponsor an event or program as well. You are honoring the person or event and helping NCJW. You can share this sponsorship between friends. Your name or (names) will be on the invitation flyer. This is a lovely and meaningful way to support our NCJW section!

Please consider sponsoring an upcoming event.

Just call Ann Pollock 215-806-4068, and tell us what event you'd like to sponsor.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



Join our wonderful NCJW group of volunteer tutors at our adopted Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, now in our sixth year. Until safety issues relevant to the pandemic are resolved we will pursue other means to support students as we await a safe return to school.

Please call Harriet Gran at 215-206-1026 or email hgranncjw@gmail.com.

We look forward to the time when we resume all of our volunteer activities.

This beautiful Tribute card is available in packages of 6 cards for \$25. Use for many occasions such as graduation, Get Well, In Memory, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or Just Thinking of You. Your donation will help support NCJW in many ways. I would be happy to meet you and deliver your cards. You can also call me to send a card for you at a cost of \$5.00.

Ann Pollock
VP Fundraising 215-806-4068



Our website is the place to check what's coming up on the calendar, read the monthly Bulletin, pay Section dues, see what actions you can take locally, read important breaking news from the National website and so much more.

We welcome your ideas to broaden our content!

Questions or suggestions?

Contact Mal Gran at hgranncjw@gmail.com

If you have changed your address, phone number and/or email, or if you hear of a member's passing, please contact Harriet Winokur harrietwinokur@gmail.com

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Diane Plotnick	

Harriet Gran, Bulletin Editor.
hgranncjw@gmail.com

Mal Gran, Website Manager
Ellen Toplin, Technical Advisor

Past Presidents

Barbara Nussbaum, Cindi Pasceri

Thank you to those members whose help with the publication of the Bulletin is so appreciated:

Harriet and Mal Gran, Carol Stein, Judy Fried, Char Kurland, Ellen Toplin and Liz Downing.

National Council of Jewish Women is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children and families and by safeguarding individual rights.

We are a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization. Our National web site is www.NCJW.org



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jane@barrhorstman.com
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Face masks are available now.
The mask is double layers and is washable.
The cost is only \$11.
Support NCJW
We can either meet or I can mail them to you plus postage.

We have a limited supply.

Ann Pollock 215-806-4068 or
apollock1229@yahoo.com

FEBRUARY

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

		1 Evening Book Club	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Board Meeting 1:00 p.m.	9 Center City Book Club	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Zoom Program "The Life and Poetry of Amanda Gorman" 7:30 p.m.		24 Afternoon Book Club	25	26
27	28					