



National Council of Jewish Women

Faith in the Future. A Belief in Action.

Utah Section: Connecting Socially to Connect Responsibly

Website: <http://ncjwutah.org/>

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## September 2011 Issue



Photo credit: EH Stone



We've Got Your Back!

### Upcoming Events

**Book Club- Sunday Sept. 18, 6 PM, *A Secret Gift* by Ted Gup.** At Wilma Odell's home. Refreshments served. RSVP to Mavis Green, [mavis.green@gmail.com](mailto:mavis.green@gmail.com), 615-439-5771

**Annual Fall Paid-up Membership Brunch: So Whose Fault Is It Anyway? Sunday, Sept. 25, 9:30 AM - 12 PM** at the Wagner JCC, 2 N. Medical Drive, SLC. Panelists discuss emergency preparedness. Enjoy great company and food. Our biggest event! **Reserve your seat and renew your membership!** Contact: Kitty Kaplan, 942-5133 or [kittykaplan@msn.com](mailto:kittykaplan@msn.com)

**Annual Halloween Party for At Risk Children at the YWCA.** Shortly before Halloween on Oct. 31. **Date TBA.**

**Film *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*, Nov. 10, 7 PM at the SLC Main Library.** NCJW co-sponsors with the Wagner JCC and Utah Film Center.

**Jewish Cultural Festival, Nov. 12 eve and Nov. 13 day, at the Wagner Jewish Community Center,** Come by the NCJW table!



Photo credit: Randy Silverman

## Letter from Section President, Eileen Hallet Stone

As the new interim president, every day I see more clearly how the fundamental beliefs of NCJW are “basic to and inherent in” our daily lives. A 118-year-old grassroots organization steeped in the principles of social justice, human rights and peace, NCJW continues to challenge us to:

- help improve the well-being and status of women, children and families;
- enhance the quality of Jewish life;
- champion individual and civil rights;
- support the security and welfare of Israel and its people;
- maintain separation of religion and state;
- eliminate discrimination on the “basis of race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity;”
- embrace diversity;
- and promote mutual understanding and respect for everyone.

It’s a lot. But, throughout NCJW’s long history, this is what we have always been about. Here in Utah, I am delighted to take on the president’s role with the growing number of NCJW members committed to turning progressive ideas into action -- and along the way having some fun.



Some say, “As the West goes, so goes the rest of our nation.” Join us to help ensure the West does go – enlightened, informed, and ready to effect change.

L’shanah tovah (5772) and best wishes.

## NCJW Annual Membership Brunch To Feature Splendid Speakers

Our annual brunch is Sunday, September 25, from 9:30 AM to noon at the JCC. Our theme is: *So, Whose Fault is It Anyway?* From earthquakes, floods and fire, we’re all responsible for life on the Wasatch Front. Panelists include Judy Watanabe of the Utah Department of Public Safety, Marty Shaub of University of Utah Emergency Operations, Randy Silverman, Preservation, Marriott Library and Ellen Hartz, Community Emergency Response Team. Randy is Eileen Hallet Stone's husband and Ellen Hartz is an NCJW member. Bring your questions about home and family safety. We'll have a raffle, delicious food, and the chance to mingle with friends. Please come and bring friends, spouses and relatives. Guests pay only a \$5 fee to cover our expenses. This is our biggest annual event. Don't miss it! ***Also, we need some volunteers- to shop, prepare food, set up buffet tables, decorate tables, register attendees, clean up, and we may need some drivers to chauffeur senior members.***

## Friend Us on Facebook and Twitter!

Go to <http://www.ncjwutah.org/>. To the left of subheading Happenings, look for the words Friend Us! between  and , and click on each of these blue symbols. We want to begin interactive discussions and increase our number of friends, to as many as Snookie has!

## Noted with Sadness and with Pleasure

We mourn the recent death of member Muriel Abrams. This spirited lady, still spry well into her eighties, attended many NCJW events, loved dance and film, and loved to remind folks of the old days. We also note members who have left: Barbara and Maxine Durst, who resettled in Chicago; Jodi Israel, who moved to Birmingham, AL, Dixie Schafir, now in Reno, NV and Sally Sabin, who returned to Colorado.

We welcome our newest members, Missy Dawson, Executive Director of the Utah Film Center (formerly the SLC Film Center) and Sherri Shilcrat. We salute other recent members Erin Eastland, Rebekah Freed, Trudy Gerber, Lynn Gershan, Cheryl Grossberg, Miriam Hyde, Laurene Joseph, Lynn Paul, Sharon Sonnenreich and Kiki Temkin, and newest life members Benita Jackson and Annabel Sheinberg.

## Shalom-Salaam Tikkun Olam Project Wins Award at National NCJW Convention!

NCJW members Kitty Kaplan, Deborah Milan-Niler and Rochelle Kaplan traveled to Dallas for the national convention. Full of invaluable workshops on NCJW campaigns and innovative and informative presentations of projects by various state sections, the conference featured talks by leaders from the political and social justice worlds such as Hannah O'Neill of NOW, Rep. Deborah Wasserman-Schultz, Minority House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her filmmaker daughter, Alexandra Pelosi, American World Jewish Service President Ruth Messinger and Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism at the State Department. **The icing on the cake came when the Utah Section was awarded a Showcase Vision for America Award for our Shalom-Salaam Tikkun Olam Project.** In addition to a plaque and kudos from NCJW members nationwide, were given a free registration, including lodging, to the Leaders' Summit in NJ in March 2012. Coincidentally, we met Tracy Morgan Weingarten of NJ whose grandparents were Jerome and Fanny Pepper of Salt Lake City!

We got tips for section leaders on engaging members, leadership succession, fundraising and making NCJW the choice for women's volunteer time. We received suggested section bylaws and procedures. Nancy Kaufman, new CEO, announced she's "out as a progressive woman" and noted victories like passage of the Lily Ledbetter Act, repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, two woman Supreme Court justices, and the end of federal enforcement of DOMA. Kaufman and Nancy Pelosi used Queen Esther as an example of what one woman can do. Kaufman urged members to reach out to their adult children, relatives and friends to grow the NCJW. We ask you to do the same!

Some sobering statistics she cited: in 2008, 36.5 million live in poverty in the US, 21 million of them women. Women lose 8 million earned days of income in the US due to domestic violence. Similar bad numbers exist in Israel. Title X and Planned Parenthood were defunded by Congress. Ms. Kaufman called this "an assault on women's health". So NCJW has launched an emergency campaign, *Voices for Reproductive Choices*. Ms. Kaufman announced that the NCJW is one of 21 organizations in the recently formed *Jewish Social Justice Roundtable*.

Kitty, Rochelle and Deborah each attended different sessions, when concurrent sessions were held, to maximize what we could bring back to Utah. One session was on Benchmark, the fair judiciary campaign. We now have a judicial emergency at the federal level- with President Obama behind on nominating judges (12% of district courts have vacancies) and Congress recalcitrant about holding confirmation hearings. The NCJW is the first Jewish organization in the US to have an infrastructure for a judicial campaign. Texas speakers noted how "Teavangelists" attack reproductive rights, women's health, gay marriage and civil unions, separation of church and state, and free public education. What starts in Texas, doesn't stay in Texas (or, we might add, Utah). Social justice concerns get trampled first at the state level and work their way up to the federal level. NCJW

must remain vigilant and work with like-minded groups for a progressive and fairer agenda. NCJW sections can hold candidate forums for prospective and current senators and ask, "What kind of judicial nominee are you looking for?" Of course, that doesn't guarantee fidelity to a stance publicly taken. Chief Justice Roberts said he would abide by precedent in his confirmation hearings, but ignored a century of judicial decisions in the Citizens' United Case.

Another session addressed immigration issues; speakers noted that the federal policy has been enforcement driven since 9/11, with Obama deporting more aliens than Pres. Bush. There are efforts underway to naturalize those legal immigrants who haven't yet obtained citizenship and to increase voter registration and turnout among new citizens.



Kitty with Janet Neuenschwander, SPA Co-Coordinator



Deborah explains our Showcase Project. Photos: R. Kaplan

Hannah Rosenthal's key message was that phobia against Islam or Judaism, and fear of the other are similar, even universal, and must be challenged in unconventional ways, using unconventional messengers. Hannah, who grew up with Deborah Milan-Niler, said, "We must be the voice for the least, the lost and the last." She also reminded us that "marching is praying with your feet." NCJW, she commented, stands for feminism, altruism, Judaism and the pursuit of justice. Interestingly, several national leaders disclosed that they had had abortions, post Roe vs. Wade.

Shari Eshet gave an Israeli update and reminded us that the Old Testament says, "Treat your strangers kindly, because you once were strangers." (Note that an article in this newsletter has a Shari Eshet update.) Ruth Messinger spoke of her activist mother and noted the lack of equal access for women, in the Jewish community and globally. In the world, women are 80% of the farmers, but have title to only 5% of the land. Of children age 5-14 not in school, 65% are female. Too many die in childbirth and gender-based violence continues, with rape used as a weapon of war. Ruth quoted Hannah Solomon, NCJW founder, "A women's sphere is the whole wide world." Elissa Barrett of the Progressive Jewish Alliance discussed linking media strategy and grassroots advocacy and gave an example from Los Angeles of a Passover Food Desert Seder Plate action that garnered much press. Kudos to Deborah Milan-Niler and Eileen Hallet Stone and Kitty Kaplan for working on the winning Showcase Award application!



Rochelle, Deborah and Kitty with Award



Kitty, Deborah, Rep. Wasserman Schultz, Rochelle

## Utah Collaborates with NCJW National

Sammi Moshenberg, director of NCJW Washington operations, asked Rochelle Kaplan to become the State Public Affairs Chair (SPA) for NCJW in Utah. Fifteen states have such chairs. The SPA works on issues critical to NCJW, monitoring state legislatures and federal policy and strengthening partnerships which advance the NCJW agenda. Rochelle seeks interested members to serve with her on a committee that need not meet except online or by phone! National asked Eileen Hallet Stone to join the 18 member NCJW Section Advisory Council to help build stronger communication bridges between local sections and the national board.

## NCJW Hosts Israeli Speaker Ifat Zamir of WePower

Life Member Elaine Miller hosted an event on August 25 featuring Ifat Zamir, Executive Director of WePower. WePower is a nonprofit, nonpartisan Israeli NGO formed in 2000 which focuses on advancing women to public leadership positions by providing training and support for those who wish to enter local and national politics. In the last municipal election, WePower trained 300 women to run for election. In the next election, the goal is to raise the number of women on municipal councils from 350 to 1,000 out of 2,700 such positions, and WePower wants to double the number of women, currently 22, in the 120-member Knesset. WePower works with all women: Bedouin, Druze, Arab Muslim, Christian, Orthodox, and secular women. The organization would like to see women in all parties elected everywhere. Thanks to Annabel Sheinberg and Pam Silberman for hosting Ifat to a lovely dinner.



Jill Sheinberg, Drora Oren, Cynthia Melenson, Ifat Zamir, Elaine Miller, Susan Way, Helen Barr, Rakella Richardson, Orly Ardon  
Photo credit: Joel Miller

## NCJW Sponsors Two Civil Rights Presentations

On June 28, NCJW Utah partnered with the Wagner Jewish Community Center, Planned Parenthood, Congregation Kol Ami and Temple Har Shalom, Equality Utah, PFLAG, Jewish Family Service, Salt Lake Film Center, the Pride Center, the Inclusion Center and the King's English Bookstore to lead a discussion: Teens and Sexuality: Opening Up the Dialogue at Home. Among those featured were two University of Utah professors, David Huebner and Lisa Diamond. Annabel Sheinberg, former NCJW UT president and Life Member, moderated and showed excerpts of the locally made film, *Lead with Love*. Michelle Oelsner of the JCC, another NCJW Life Member, graciously welcomed all who came. About fifty folks of various ages listened raptly, asked questions and made comments.



Panelists Max Green, Kathy Godwin of PFLAG, Jude McNeil of Pride Center, Lisa Diamond & David Huebner of the U. Photo: R. Kaplan

That same evening, NCJW co-sponsored with the Salt Lake Film Center, a showing of the documentary film, *Neshoba*, at the Main Library. A packed auditorium watched this stirring and disturbing film about the civil rights era murder of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner and more recent attempts to bring to justice those in Neshoba County, Mississippi guilty of orchestrating the heinous crime. We thank NCJW life member and cineaste Wilma Odell for bringing the film and filmmaker Micki Dickoff to Salt Lake City.

### **NCJW Tours UMFA Helen Levitt Photographic Exhibit**

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, several NCJW ladies and friends viewed the fabulous photographs of Helen Levitt, and heard charming stories from Helen's niece, Cassie Dippo, a long-time NCJW member, and UMFA docent and NCJW Life Member Elaine Miller. The photographer's brother and Cassie's father was Bill Levitt, the long-time mayor of Alta. The photographs were largely of NYC, where both Bill and Helen were raised and where the photographer lived a frugal life in a fourth-floor walk-up until she died, at age ninety-five. Cassie told us that her aunt displayed none of her photos in her apartment. As Helen later told an NPR interviewer, "I know what they look like; I don't want to look at them all the time."



Missy Dawson, Rosalie Winard, Sue Prottas, Helene Jaffe  
Photos: R. Kaplan



Missy, Gail Ciacci, Wilma Odell, Muriel Abrams, Elaine Miller, Cassie Dippo

### **Team NCJW/Hadassah Places Tenth in Fundraising at Race for Cure**

On May Day, we partnered with Hadassah to Race for the Cure as part of the Komen SLC effort, raising \$1428 in the battle against breast cancer. Pet dogs, spouses and friends joined our effort as we walked around Sugar House Park. Thanks to Life Member and former president Cathy Collins for organizing the event. Most of the participants are pictured below.



Eileen Hallet Stone, Randy Silverman, Jeannie Golberg, Barbara Goldstein, Wilma Odell, Ron & Toba Essig, Judy Dahlquist, Cathy Collins, Gwen Campbell and granddaughter, Rochelle Kaplan, Robyn Rogin, Mark Bennett, Annabel Ben & Sophie Sheinberg, Rip Collins, Rachel Benator, Gina Dalton, Kitty Kaplan, Susan Schulman, Sheila Gelman, Neil Kaplan, Bonnie Rokeach

## **Yom HaShoah Commemorated**

Life member Noemi Mattis and her husband Dan sponsored a wonderfully informative exhibit, curated by their historian daughter, at the Marriott Library. The exhibit chronicled the story of Portuguese diplomat, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who issued 30,000 visas to Jews and other persecuted minorities, though it cost him his career in 1941. De Sousa Mendes died in poverty and disgrace in 1954. Decades of efforts eventually resulted in the clearing of his name and restoration of diplomatic honors. His family, however, was left in penury, lost their estate and was dispersed throughout the world. A grandson who lives in Salt Lake City also spoke. Noemi Mattis spoke about Mendes at the Yom HaShoah commemoration at the Capitol. Many NCJW members and their families attended both events. We thank Elaine Miller, our representative on the committee organizing the remembrance. We also wish to thank Eileen Hallet Stone and her husband Randy Silverman for their help during the evening event.



**Noemi Mattis reads to crowd**



Photos credit: R. Kaplan

The NCJW also co-sponsored, with the Salt Lake Film Center, a showing of *A Film Unfinished*. This unsettling film was compiled from propaganda made by Nazis of the Warsaw Ghetto. Many NCJW members attended and were deeply affected by the screening at the Main Library.

### **Passover Senior Seder A Rousing Success**

Congregation Kol Ami's new rabbi, Ilana Schwartzman, wowed the crowd of seniors and NCJW volunteers at the NCJW/JCC co-sponsored Seder, with her sing-along Pesach songs such as *Had Gadya* and high spirits, substituting shtick for stick and performing Groucho and George Burns' jokes. The special gefilte fish, home-made horseradish, chicken soup, salmon and vegetable kugel, and many desserts left folks sated. Carla Cantor wrote, "Bruce Kallister attended the NCJW Passover Seder on April 12. He called me a few days ago and didn't know whom to contact, but asked me if I could let those involved know how much he enjoyed the Seder. He said the service was nice, the food was terrific (he said that several times) and it was presented beautifully. He just wanted everyone to know how appreciative he was." We thank our many volunteers organized by Karen Gladstone, the JCC staff, and a special shout-out to NCJW member Sally Padawer, who donated the salmon and gorgeous fruit platter, did most of the cooking, and enlisted her lovely daughter Raine to help.



Volunteers Ann Bernstein, Freida Sweitzer, Raine & Sally Padawer

Photos: R. Kaplan

### **Alta Ski Day Proves There's No Business Like Snow Business**

In March, NCJW skiers met at Alta to spend a day in powder heaven and to remember past NCJW co-president Amy Dishell, an avid skier who began the Ski Day tradition years ago. Sunny weather on top of fresh pow-pow and terrific company made the day special.



Judy Horwitz, Rochelle Kaplan, Annabel Sheinberg, Gina Dalton, Jill Sheinberg

**We wish to thank Lavine Shapiro for leading a February tour of the Utah Food Bank** to fellow NCJW members, among them Sandi Kahn, Benita Jackson, Freida Sweitzer, Wilma Odell and Kitty Kaplan. **NCJW also co-sponsored a March talk by Utah Supreme Court Chief Justice Christine Durham**, on the contributions of women to American law.

### **Bookworms Request Additional Book Lovers for Club**

Mavis Green, our wonderful book club chair, announced that at the September 18 meeting, we'll choose books to read for the coming year. Please bring your suggestions. We will, as a group, decide which books we'd like to read and schedule dates for each book, and select a person to facilitate each discussion. If you can't make this meeting, email or call Mavis with your suggestions.

In the past year, the book club has read and discussed, among others: *The History of Love*, *Messages from My Father*, *The Ministry of Special Cases* and *Humboldt's Gift*.

### **From NCJW Section Advisory Committee Member, Eileen Hallet Stone**

NCJW's Section Advisory Committee (SAC), comprised of 14 representatives from different sections throughout the United States, was established to create ongoing communication and dialogue with NCJW National (Inc.) and local sections, review effectiveness of existing systems (i.e., what works, what doesn't work), and provide feedback and suggestions.

Our first assignment was a review of the commissioner system. Ideally, each section has a commissioner, who acts as an advisor or mentor to troubleshoot any issues that arise. After interviewing section presidents about their commissioner/president relationship, we compiled and reviewed our findings.

Partnering with Susan Pittelman (Milwaukee, WI), Amy Straus (L.A., CA), Toni Scherzer (Cleveland, OH) and Teri Sackin (Shawnee Mission, KS), we synthesized these findings on "how the commissioner system can be enhanced."

Working with other NCJW SAC members was an eye-opening experience. Told to think "outside the box," this congenial group of "strangers" debated, questioned, and arrived at consensus. Our summaries were then sent to NCJW's National Boards' Commissioner work group. The results hopefully will lead to a productive, three-way communication among sections, commissioners and Inc. – and be of help to us.

By the bye, we haven't a commissioner to date – but it is on their agenda.

## From NCJW UT State Public Affairs Chair, Rochelle Kaplan

I am honored to represent the NCJW as State Public Affairs Chair. Long involved in political and social justice issues, I relish the expanded opportunity to work with others in taking action on issues important to NCJW. In that capacity, ***I'd like to form an SPA committee (as suggested by national) of interested section members to assist with advocacy, and identify and prioritize issues that will resonate with NCJW UT members.*** We will monitor state legislation and policy priority issues and join relevant coalitions with like-minded organizations addressing priority issues of concern to NCJW. I will serve as the Utah contact for the NCJW Washington office on federal legislative and policy issues, represent NCJW in communications with state and federal legislatures on behalf of members in Utah, attend national SPA trainings and the Washington Institute. So if you are policy minded, and concerned about NCJW campaigns like Benchmark (judicial nominations), Plan A (contraceptive access), Promote the Vote/Protect the Vote, Higher Ground (combating domestic violence) or Voices for Reproductive Choices, or NCJW work in Israel, or ***if you*** care deeply about our core principles and ***wish to be more involved, I hope you'll contact me.***

One recent example of partnership was asking NCJW members to sign a League of Women Voters' coalition petition urging legislators to adopt fair redistricting maps. **Voice your support for a principled redistricting plan by going to [www.speakuputah.org](http://www.speakuputah.org).** Speak Up Utah is a petition drive sponsored by a coalition of advocacy groups, including the League of Women Voters of Utah, joining together to ensure that redistricting in Utah is fair and sensible, and that communities and neighborhoods are not divided. Please take a moment to sign and submit the petition.

## NCJW Welcomes Renewed Jobs Effort, Urges Immediate Action

September 9, 2011, Washington, DC — The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) today welcomed the renewed effort by President Obama to improve the nation's employment figures. NCJW President Linda Slucker and NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement, urging Congress to act immediately:

"President Obama's plan to increase much-needed infrastructure spending and direct aid to state and local governments is a welcome development for an economy whose recovery appears to have stalled. Economists generally agree the country faces a crisis of demand – people have too little money to spend and too little confidence to spend it. The President's proposals to invest in infrastructure, extend unemployment benefits, ban discrimination against unemployed workers, and facilitate work-sharing will put money back in the pockets of working families and communities. Passage of the President's American Jobs Act would be significant in the effort to avoid a so-called 'double-dip' — a relapse in economic activity.

"Since the recession officially ended, women have continued to lose jobs as men's employment has improved. NCJW is pleased that the President's proposal includes provisions that help women get back to work – not the least of which is his investment in education to help prevent up to 280,000 teacher layoffs. We urge Congress to act on these measures that will help women and families survive and begin to make progress toward stability. Further, any action taken by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction must protect the interests of poor and vulnerable families.

"Any new initiatives must be enacted while safety net programs are maintained. NCJW looks forward to working with the President and Congress to enact job creation legislation forthwith. Too many are suffering the pain of prolonged unemployment, and the longer high unemployment persists, the greater the impact for generations to come."

## **NCJW Marks Tenth Anniversary of 2001 Attacks**

Sept. 9, 2011, Washington, DC — The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) today remembered 9/11 by calling for a renewed commitment to the values we espouse as Jews and as Americans. NCJW President Linda Slucker and NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement:

“The horrific events of September 11, 2001, will never be forgotten for the destruction, carnage, and heartbreak they caused. NCJW grieves with the families who lost love ones that day and salutes the heroism of so many who died trying to rescue others.

“As a nation we must rededicate ourselves to their memory without succumbing to suspicion or blind hatred of those who simply share a religion, ethnicity, or nationality with the attackers. We must always carefully weigh our responses to the outrage of that day and refuse to accept an expedient compromise of our basic values in the name of security. The greatest tribute to those who died is to uphold our commitment to the principles of our country’s founding documents — principles of fairness and justice for all.

“Much has been justified in the name of 9/11 — some of it unjustifiable. What must remain with us from ten years ago is the sense of community and commonality we realized in the face of horror. This is a project that has no end. We must continually seek to renew this bond of community and common purpose as we tell the story of this day for decades to come.”

## **News from NCJW National and in Israel**

### **NCJW Wishes You a Happy Rosh Hashanah!**

Let the *shofar* call us all again to action and renewal as we look to the new year later this month. *L'shanah tovah* and best wishes to you and your families for a joyful, peaceful, and meaningful new year.

### **Mobilizing for 2012 – NCJW Joins HERVotes Coalition**

NCJW is joining with a coalition of women's organizations, representing millions of women, to counter the attacks on women's economic and health security through a new multi-organization effort, HERvotes. The goal is to mobilize women voters in 2012 around preserving women’s Health and Economic Rights (HER rights). Top priorities of HERvotes are to educate and engage more women to use their voices and their votes to urge lawmakers who seek to represent them to:

- > Stop the attacks on historic advances for women;
- > Preserve successful policies, such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act;
- > Respect women's contribution to the economy; and
- > Act on jobs at livable wages and equal pay for our families' economic security.

The stakes for women in 2012 are incredibly high, and women must recognize that their votes and their voices matter immensely. To learn more about HERVotes, go to: <http://www.hervotes.us/>

## **Express Our Solidarity with Israel**

NCJW has signed on to a letter from the Conference of Presidents to Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Peres to express our solidarity with the people of Israel, in particular the residents of the south who are under constant threat of attack.

We urge you to sign on to this letter and to circulate it to section members, coalition partners, and others. You need only to [sign on to the letter electronically](#) and your name will be added.

**From Shari Eshet of NCJW in Israel, posted Sept. 7, 2011**

### **"Dear Mr. Prime Minister, We Are the New Israelis"**

I will never forget where I was when JFK was killed. Where I was when PM Yitzak Rabin was shot. And where I was when the words that an entire generation was waiting to hear rang out from the podium in Tel Aviv last Saturday night: Dear Mr. Prime Minister, We are the new Israelis!

Now, there is no turning back when 450,000 Israelis turned out all over Israel to protest the injustices of Israeli society to the poor, the working middle class, the mothers, the doctors, and the rest of the backbone of Israeli society.

There is no turning back after Daphni Leef, a 25-year-old student at Tel Aviv University, transformed her personal plight of homelessness into a national movement. With this movement — which knows neither Right nor Left, secular nor religious, Jew nor Arab — we, the New Israelis, have found our voice.

Daphni became the leader of a leaderless protest, with no budget, no professional advisers, no personal motives — just a desire to follow her heart and do good. She turned an entire generation that, until now, had only envisioned a future of wars and hopelessness into a generation of aspirations and hope for a better life, despite the fragile security issues of Israel. Daphni awakened our activism: to march, to volunteer, to delight in being part of a historical movement. Free from any political parties, any religious affiliation, any ethnic or gender difference, a new movement has been born.

With the tents now folding, we begin the second phase of Israel's protests. The Prime Minister has heard the cry of hundreds of thousands and has established a committee to bring recommendations to the government within six weeks. But "another committee" is no longer good enough for Daphni Leef. She believes in action — now! Perhaps she is naïve. Perhaps she is right. Only time will tell, but in the meantime, there is a general consensus that the scene has shifted out of the streets and into the halls of power.

NCJW has been supporting women's empowerment for years and continues to support Israeli women who understand that in order to correct the problems, you need to be part of the solution, and the solution is in the public sphere. I look forward to seeing the blossoming of the New Israelis, whether as members of Knesset, as Prime Ministers, as local school board officials, as city councilwomen, or as activists who speak up on behalf of thousands.

Yasher Koach to Daphni and to all of us who have protested and who have become the voice of the New Israelis.

To learn more about NCJW, visit: <http://www.ncjw.org/>

To learn more about NCJW Utah and pay dues online, visit: <http://www.ncjwutah.org>