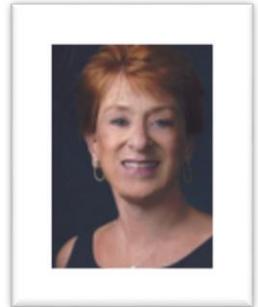




## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Dear Colleagues,**

*We are delighted to send you the 2013 edition of ICJW Links, our online publication which highlights just some of the wonderful work our members and their affiliates continue to do around the world. Nowhere can you find an organization more deeply and completely committed to our objective of tikkun olam - repairing the world. It is so often the case that we look at a local activity or project and wonder how it fits into the big picture of filling and repairing needs - surely it isn't THAT important. But if you think that for even a moment, I assure you that you are completely wrong. Your efforts and the efforts of your affiliate DO make a difference - you touch lives, you bring your passion and your commitment to bear on every situation, you speak clearly for those who cannot speak for themselves and, above all, you join people of all faiths and goodwill in supporting the State of Israel. ICJW has long believed that we Jews are not an isolated island in this world and while there surely have been (and continue to be) times when we may FEEL alone, we are not. Your work - and the work of sisters around the world makes a difference. Please enjoy this edition of Links, share it with friends and neighbors, and take a moment to feel pride in knowing that what you do - what WE do - does indeed help to "repair the world."*



Cordially,  
Sharon Gustafson,  
President, ICJW

## COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

As the Autumn/Fall leaves begin to change colour in some parts of the world, the days are getting shorter, preparations are being made for the long winter ahead. However, in our part of the world, the new green leaves are bursting forth, the blossoms with their promise of sweet fruit are emerging, and the days are getting longer. It is the cycle of life, and the women of ICJW are part of this rich tapestry. Links is a wonderful way of connecting and informing each other of how our individual affiliates make a difference to our communities within that cycle of which we are an important part.

For those of us who met in Jerusalem in May for the Executive Meeting and the Herczeg Education Seminar, our memories are filled with the strength of the silent vigil outside the Knesset and much more. Many of us will meet in Chicago for important deliberations prior to the Convention next May in Prague. In the blink of an eye the seasons will continue their endless cycle.

So the links within the ICJW sisterhood are strengthened and enable us to share the work done within our community and to make our world a better place.

We wish you a safe and healthy year 2014  
and may we go from strength to strength!

VIVIEN BRASS, President of NCJWA Victoria, Australia  
SHIRLEY PAYES QSO, National President of CJW New Zealand





## AUSTRALIA

In Victoria, the Empowering Single Jewish Women and Effective Relationship programs assist women who have become ostracized from the mainstream Jewish community and need to regain confidence in their relationship skills. Seniors clubs, computer classes, discussion groups and bridge continue to engage isolated community members. Caring Mums (also known as Mum for Mum) has expanded and is offered in two of our Sections. It offers free, in home support for up to the first twelve months of a baby's life. Volunteers support all our programs including packing and distributing cosmetics to women in need on Mitzvah Day.



In Western Australia, they participate in a community blood drive and arrange a concert in an Aged Care facility. In smaller Sections, NCJWA volunteers participate in community activities. Food baskets are distributed at Pesach, and homemade honey cakes distributed to the Aged Care facilities at Rosh Hashana. Sewing shrouds is also done by volunteers. A number of Sections support Pink Sunday, and also partake in a program called Books Out Loud which engages senior citizens in the Aged Care facilities in reading and discussion.

In New South Wales, volunteers visit the sick in Hospital and provide transport to Council members residing in the Montefiore Home.

We supported the "Stop the Traffik" campaign with postcards and support to national and international alliances for the ban on child labor and people trafficking. Our volunteers support all our programs including packing and distributing cosmetics to women in need on Mitzvah Day. In the smaller NCJWA sections, our members are involved in community work such as Jewish Care.



## AUSTRIA

Gerda Frey is the NGO representative to the UN in Vienna and hopes that an ICJW affiliate organization will be established in Vienna later in 2013 or at the beginning of 2014.

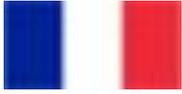


## CANADA

The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada held its Triennial Convention in Winnipeg, October 4-6, 2013, at the Fort Garry Hotel. Delegates from Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver gathered to support policies on organ donation and vote against human trafficking, as well as reviewing and amending NCJWC by-laws. They took a walking tour of the nearly finished Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

The New Board of Directors was installed, and is shown here (l-r): Debbie Altow, Secretary (Vancouver), Paula Frisch, Vice-President (Toronto), Ronnee Alter, Vice-President, (London), Marni Besser, President, (Calgary via SKYPE), Debbie Wasserman, Treasurer (Toronto), Dianne Glass, Immediate Past President (Winnipeg).





## FRANCE

The French affiliate Cooperation Feminine has been very active in its cultural and social activities, and has organized some special events during 2013.

In April, the Fundraising for Israel Committee organized its annual lunch in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Yossi Gal, the Israeli Ambassador. This 45th annual event was hosted by Monique Katz, president of the committee, and Evelyne Berdugo, president of the Cooperation Feminine, and sponsored by Bulgari, Dior, Longchamp and other well-known brands. The guest of honor was Professor Rene Frydman, a legend in French medicine and "father" of Amandine, the first baby born by in vitro fertilization, who is now 30 years old.

The Cooperation Feminine celebrated the 20th anniversary of the ESAT, a social center for handicapped men and women (Jewish or not), which provides work and salaries for 67 persons, giving them hope and security in their day-to-day life. The CF also organized its usual summer vacations resort for handicapped young people in a lovely environment.

Before the summer holidays, the Cooperation Feminine organized its annual party for its clubs. After a theatrical presentation by 11 amateur actors, all the participants gathered around a delicious buffet.

Other activities deserve to be mentioned such as an unforgettable trip to the South Western United States, and a trip to Israel, which took the participants from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Eilat, Haifa and Petra.

Projects for the end of 2013 include a Modern Hebrew course by an Israeli professor, a Midrash course given by Janine Elkouby, a very well read professor, a sophrology course and a theater workshop. The CF is also planning an important meeting for March 2014 to look at the situation of Jewish women in France, Europe and Israel, to allow them to speak out about their specific problems.



## SOUTH AFRICA

Barbara Rosenstein from Cape Town explains that there are currently 8 functioning groups in CT, including one group of young women who all work full time, one group of women aged over 80 years old, who still contribute as much as they can, 2 part-time groups, and 4 very active groups which achieve an enormous amount. With help from the UJW Executive Committee, they run a wide range of events and activities.

Every 2 years the branch runs a telethon fundraiser for the Jewish Community Fund. They run the SAM project for people with chronic psychiatric conditions living in the community, and the Malacha Fund an confidential emergency fund for immediate one-off support for community members in need. They host weekly adult education talks on a variety of topics and a monthly Friendship Club providing lunches every month and on Jewish festivals. Their Yad Sarah project provides assistive and mobility equipment for those in need.

They run a pre-school and day-care center for 100 children from an underprivileged local area, providing meals and snacks and employing 12 members of staff. They host a monthly Bingo event for seniors from the townships. They run counselling sessions and organize an annual "Spoil Your Domestic Worker" day, as well as a Bobba's Trip to visit loved ones far away. Their calendar project funds a Hospice Nurse. There is a library and a book and study fund, and they provide comfort care kits for rape victims.

The Groups are involved in a variety of different community projects and events, including 6 childcare centers, 2 safe houses for vulnerable newborns and babies, 2 Kangaroo Baby clinics for pre-term

babies and their mothers, 4 centers for disabled children, 2 senior centers, and Oranje - the residential home for vulnerable Jewish children. The Cape Town branch marks Mandela Day annually by dedicating 67 Minutes or items to do good – for example, distributing donated blankets, toys clothes and food. The bake and sell cookies each year for One to One - a fun day for the intellectually disabled and their carers, and they assist children at Jewish schools with their end of year dance outfits. Donations are made and items collected on a monthly basis for Tikvah, which provides meals for poor Jewish families - any extra food is given to the broader community. They also assisted one family with funeral costs.

Over the Xmas period, they hand out food and drinks to emergency workers. They provide snacks and knit teddies to be given to children waiting to testify in court appearances at abuse hearings. They provide assistance for patients at the Valkenberg psychiatric hospital, the Glendale home for the intellectually disadvantaged, and the Astra sheltered employment center and home, and at the soup kitchen for over 100 children. They also equip comfort rooms for victims of rape at police stations. Ever Saturday they provide a Brocha tea after shul at the Highlands House old age home, and host a tea party every month for up to 12 residents. All this is achieved by volunteers and goodwill.

The groups hold fundraisers that they choose, organise and run. This past year they have run children's movie screenings, raffles, and talks by Paralympian gold medalists, flower arranging demonstration, breakfast and tea parties, a bridge afternoon, a talk on abuse in Jewish institutions, and a Township Tour. They have also sold stickers in lieu of going home presents for birthday parties and matchboxes in lieu of Shabbat gifts,



The Durban branch of the Union of Jewish Women was proud to associate with the CKNJ's initiative to collect food for the Issy Geshen Lamontville Home, especially since the Union was involved with this home for some years after its establishment. They received a huge collection of colouring books, crayons and other items, donated by students from the Umhlanga Jewish Day School, which they plan to deliver to the Durban Children's Home. They also received a large donation of clothing, which committee members sorted and repacked for distribution to several outreach projects of the UJW and other communal organizations.



During the hospitalization of Nelson Mandela, our Immediate past Exec Chair – Natalie Baitz initiated committee members wearing heart badges whenever possible when "on duty". In Durban, as a symbolic gesture of our commitment to keeping former president Nelson Mandela's legacy alive, a group of people decided to put "legacy lock" padlocks on a fence in the city, which became known as the "Legacy Fence". Members of the Union of Jewish Women placed padlocks with their heart badge symbol on the Legacy Fence and in so doing became the first organization to associate with this project.



## U.S.A.

One of the most exciting new projects that the **St. Louis, Missouri, USA Section** of the National Council of Jewish Women has started is the Healing Hearts Bank. This project came out of the High Ground national campaign, which works to end domestic violence by improving women's economic status. The St. Louis Section took this advocacy and education campaign and created a community service program that gives small loans (under \$500) to victims of domestic violence. The women receiving the loans cannot usually get loans from traditional banking because they have no credit rating of their own, or because their spouse has ruined their rating. Options for loans for these women are usually payday loans, which, as we all know, can lead to excessive interest rates.

Originating from a grant of \$5,000 from the Incarnate Wood Foundation, a Catholic organization, NCJW partnered with one of the St. Louis local domestic providers organizations, Lydia's House, to set up a "bank". The bankers consist of a mix of NCJW volunteers, staff from the domestic violence agency, and the women receiving the loans. These bankers set the criteria for the loans, the interest rates, and the payback schedule. The women who are approved for the loans are required to take financial literacy courses. Healing Hearts Bank has made over 20 loans and only two defaulted.

The St. Louis Section has currently grown the Healing Hearts Bank to three branches, partnering with Safe Connections and Redevelopment Opportunities for Women. The project has an advisory board that consists of state legislators, professional bankers, NCJW volunteers, and finance professionals.

NCJW is hoping to expand the Healing Hearts Bank to serve a broader population, including not only victims of domestic violence but other underserved women. They are also looking into opening a branch at the YWCA.

## CALENDAR EVENTS

May 2, 2014	ICJW Executive Meeting in Prague
May 4-7, 2014	ICJW Quadrennial Convention, Prague
May 8, 2014	ICJW Executive Meeting in Prague

## ICJW QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

The 22nd ICJW Quadrennial Convention will take place in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, from May 4-7, 2014, and all are invited to attend.

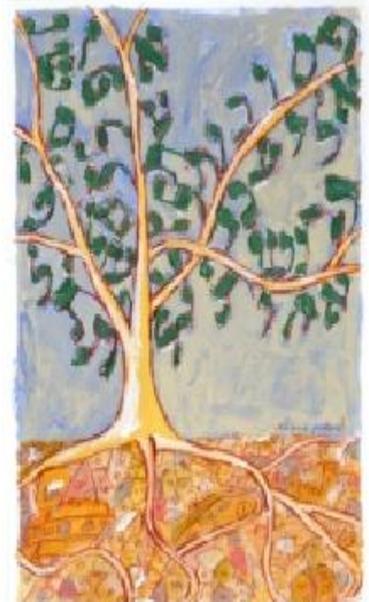
At the official opening Cocktail Reception at the Prague Old Town Hall, the guest speaker will be Dana Berova, Former Czech Minister of Informatics, who will introduce the Convention theme: "From Roots to Fruits: Jewish Women of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

Other speakers will include Peter Brod & Ivo Mozný, two sociologists from the Czech Republic, addressing "What has Happened to the Mishpacha?", and Rabbi

Joshua Spinner, President of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, who will be joined by directors of the Lauder School. The screening of the movie "Nicky's Family", about Nicholas Winton, an Englishman who organized the rescue of 669 Czech and Slovak children just before the outbreak of World War II, will be followed by discussion with film-maker Matej Minac.

On the second day, there will be a panel discussion entitled "Women, Girls and Europe Today", followed by break-out discussion groups on Changing Women's Roles, the Work of ICJW, Jewish Gender Equality, Anti-Semitism, and Human Trafficking (led by a representative from Czech Ministry of the Interior).

There will be optional tours of the Terezin Stadt Museum, or Prague's Hagibor Senior Care Home and Lauder School. An escorted walking tour



of Prague's Jewish District will be introduced by Leo Pavlat, the Director of the Jewish Museum, and by American artist Dr. Mark Podwal, who has immortalized Jewish Prague in his paintings.

At the celebratory dinner for Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day), the guest speaker will be Dr. Bonna Devora Haberman, author of the ICJW Bea Zucker Online Bible Course and a founder of Israel's Women of the Wall group.

The Quadrennial Convention will be combined with the biannual meeting of the ICJW Executive, and the new ICJW President will be inducted at the Gala Closing Dinner.

[For more information and to download the Prague Convention Registration Form, please click here.](#)

## ICJW WEBSITE



### Online Bible Study Course Completed

The last (54th) unit of the new ICJW Bea Zucker Online Bible Study Program course was uploaded in time for the traditional recommencement of the annual Torah reading cycle on Simchat Torah, completing a 4.5 year project to compile an interactive feminist commentary on the entire Torah. Entitled "The Five Books of Moses: Contemporary Issues and Classic Perspectives", ICJW has created a unique and free Jewish educational resource that is accessible to all.

The course material was written by Dr. Bonna Devora Haberman, founder and former director of the Mistabra Institute for Jewish Textual Activism at the Women's Studies Research Center of Brandeis University.

The complete [Bea Zucker Online Bible Study Course](#) is available online in English and Spanish, and can be downloaded free of charge. Thousands of people download these educational resources each month, and many participate in joint study sessions with other women and correspond with Dr. Haberman about the course. The project is sponsored by the Zucker family of Zurich, dedicated to the memory of Bea Zucker, who was European President and a Life Member of ICJW. ICJW offers 4 other online study programs about Biblical Women, Jewish Festivals, and Women's Life Cycle Events on its website ([www.icjw.org/education-training.aspx](http://www.icjw.org/education-training.aspx)), including materials in Russian and Spanish.

## ICJW NEWS

### Jerusalem Vigil

Representatives of ICJW from around the world held a silent vigil outside the Israeli Parliament in Jerusalem on Sunday May 5, 2013, representing Jewish women from around the world and their fight for greater equality. 32 members of the ICJW's international executive gathered to demand equal rights for women in the Jewish community, equality in marriage, and freedom of expression at the Western Wall and other public spaces.

ICJW President Sharon Gustafson, who led the vigil outside the Knesset, explained that Jerusalem was the obvious place for the women of ICJW to raise their concerns, because the Executive was holding its biannual meeting at the focal point of the Jewish world at a time when women's rights were high on both local and international agendas. ICJW represents Jewish women's organizations around the world, but its campaign for women's equality in each of these communities resonates most strongly in Israel.

## **Herczeg Jerusalem Education Seminar**

The 2013 Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education in May 2013 brought together 100 women from all over the world to learn about "Judaism as a Universal Language - Jewish Perspectives on Contemporary Issues". The seminar explored both the eternal relevance of Judaism and the relevance of Jewish ideas to many of the issues of today. Speakers addressed topics relating to the status and rights of women; social justice—especially Judaism's attitude to the "other" and the stranger; interfaith dialogue; and the environment and sustainability.

**To download transcripts of the sessions, [click here.](#)**

**To see photos of the Seminar, [click here.](#)**