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 **THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE**  
Jewish culture for a just world



# WINTER-SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

## From The Desk of Ann Toback, Our Executive Director



Today, the Workmen's Circle proudly continues our activist tradition. And, as has been the case for over a century, our mission is our guiding principle every day. It's why today we operate the largest Yiddish language program in the world; celebrate our Jewish cultural heritage year round with our Taste of Jewish Culture series; and resource a network of eight children's schools and Camp Kinder Ring. And it's why our new teen social justice program now includes four Workmen's Circle teen and college clubs, all committed to continuing the work started by our founders more than a century ago.

Economic justice for all remains a driving value for us. And one of the most effective ways to close the growing economic divide in our country is through well-resourced public education available for all. We were proud this past year to highlight our longtime commitment to education activism by honoring Randi Weingarten, a labor leader who has spent her lifetime fighting for teachers, students, and workers everywhere.

In 2018, we are growing our community in new and exciting ways. We hope as you read this newsletter, you will be as excited as we are by our growth, and that you will consider supporting our critical work with a contribution.

In solidarity,

Ann Toback

## Women's March 2018

### Featured Speaker: Ann Toback

Workmen's Circle members participated in Women's March actions across the country on January 20, 2018. In New York City, where more than 200,000 people gathered, the Workmen's Circle organized a Jewish contingent of over a dozen different organizations, bringing together hundreds of people to stand and march. We were honored that our Executive Director, Ann Toback, was invited to address the crowd at the NYC March's Kickoff, as a featured speaker. Ann exhorted the crowd to stand united and fight every form of bigotry confronting our movement. She urged everyone to take on the fight for a clean DREAM Act and to continue advocating for immigrant and worker rights, imploring all to create a world of equality and fairness for all, where human rights and dignities are protected.



## Standing with Immokalee Workers

### Students Participate in Weeklong NYC Actions

The Workmen's Circle has a long history of support for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in Florida, who for years have been organizing farmworkers in the tomato fields and have succeeded in getting nearly every major fast food chain to sign on to their Fair Food Program, pledging to only buy CIW-picked tomatoes. The one notable exception is Wendy's which has shifted its purchasing to Mexico.

As part of its campaign against Wendy's, CIW had a week of actions in NYC in March, aimed at the offices of Nelson Peltz, Wendy's Board Chair. Immokalee workers traveled from Florida to NYC with 35 of their community's children, and the Workmen's Circle welcomed them by hosting a "kids event", with children and recent graduates from our Midtown Workmen's Circle School, our new Workmen's Circle youth clubs, and other Jewish organizations.

Attended by more than 100 students, it was moving to hear the teenagers from Immokalee explaining the history of their struggles. The short program was followed by informal mingling where the kids met each other, made protest signs for the week's activities, and consumed more pizza than you can imagine!



## Boston Workmen's Circle

The Workmen's Circle congratulates the Boston Workmen's Circle on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their reinvigorated community, including the revival of their wonderful Sunday School! A huge *mazel tov* as well on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *A Besere Velt* – Boston's outstanding Yiddish chorus!

On Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> Boston will be celebrating these special anniversaries with a festival and concert. All are invited to attend and *shepn nakhes!* Tickets for the concert can be purchased at [circleboston.org](http://circleboston.org).



## Yiddish Schmooze

### A *Peysekh* Cooking Demo

Who says eating unleavened during *Peysekh* can't be delicious? On March 11, 2018, we continued our monthly Yiddish Schmooze series with Eve Jochowitz, chef and host of the YouTube series: *Est gezunterheyt!* As Eve demonstrated and talked about the recipes entirely in Yiddish, guests learned how to prepare and then tasted old world Sorrel Soup and Cheese Pancakes (made with matzah meal). All proclaimed the night inspiring and *geshmak* (delicious)!



**Save the Date: June 24, 2018**  
**KRJR: July 27-29, 2018**

## Calling All Grandparents (And Parents) | The Gift of Summer Camp

What would Summer be without camp? Swimming, boating, fireside chats by the lake (dare we mention s'mores?), sports and more, all connected by Jewish values and the ethos of making the world a better place for all. Registration for Camp Kinder Ring's 92<sup>nd</sup> season is in full swing and with more than 300 campers every year, your grandchild (or child) will make friendships and memories to last a lifetime. For tykes we offer KRJR, a special fun-filled weekend providing a taste of the activities, spirit and excitement of the overnight camp experience. Contact Marc Rauch, our Camp Director, at 845-221-2771 to learn more about Camp Kinder Ring.



## The Workmen's Circle Goes to DC

### Students Lead March for Our Lives

On Saturday, March 24th, the Workmen's Circle was proud to send two busloads of more than 100 activists to Washington, DC to participate in the March for Our Lives rally for gun reform. This student-led rally was an inspiring day of activism for all, and our contingent matched the demographic on the stage and in the streets, with the majority of our marchers being teens and young adults. Our participants included students from our four youth clubs, our Midtown and Brooklyn Workmen's Circle Schools, as well as longtime activists and leaders. Ella, an 8th grader in our group summed up the day, "An empowering experience surrounded by empowering people!"

Once in DC, we connected with staff and campers from Camp Kinder Ring, along with Workmen's Circle leader and activist, Bob Kaplan, who generously underwrote the buses. Kaplan, a longtime gun control activist, has led WC contingents before, but this time he was accompanied by three generations of his family. "The students are amazing and this could very well be the sea-change needed now, almost 20 years post the Columbine shooting massacre. Today, seeing my own granddaughters so

Your estate plan represents your beliefs, your activism, and your legacy. Including the Workmen's Circle in your estate plan is a simple, yet powerful, way to invest in the next generation. If you are remembering the Workmen's Circle in your will, trust, life insurance policy, and/or other planned gift, please let us know -- and thank you! Leave a legacy gift. Be a beacon for future generations. For more information, contact Shelley Emmer, Development Officer: [semmer@circle.org](mailto:semmer@circle.org), 646-291-8368.



anxious to be part of this historic movement made me feel great. Their WC upbringing and values are shining through."

The Workmen's Circle also thanks American Income Life for the generous donation of Metro cards for our group, enabling a fast transfer from RFK Stadium to the National Mall.

## Atran Foundation

We are deeply grateful for the Atran Foundation's ongoing and generous support of the Workmen's Circle. From our Jewish cultural offerings to our social justice efforts, our children's supplementary schools and Camp Kinder Ring to our Yiddish programming, the Atran Foundation has resourced our work with critical funding. Our deepest thanks to Judah Fischer and the entire Board.

# Annual Meeting Update and Election Results

The Annual Members' Meeting of 2017 took place in October, when President Peter Pepper welcomed three new Board Directors, David Kazansky, Irena Klepfisz, and Frank London, and one returning Board Director, Richard Rumelt. Our sincerest thanks to the outgoing Directors, who have provided guidance and support over the last three years: Ed Ott, Josh Skolnick and Jeanne Stellman.

## Board of Directors of the Workmen's Circle 2017-2018

Peter Pepper, President  
Jay Sackman, Vice President, Development  
Eva Zasloff, Vice President, Strategy  
Richard Rumelt, Treasurer  
Robert Kaplan, Secretary  
Richard Brook  
Steven M. Cohen  
Michael Kaminer  
David Kazansky  
Irena Klepfisz  
Frank London  
Brad Pearlman  
Edgar Romney  
Bernice Siegal

Many thanks to the members of the Board of Directors for their dedication and commitment to guiding the Workmen's Circle in the years ahead.



### David Kazansky

*I grew up in the heart of the Borscht Belt where my father and grandfather represented hotel and restaurant workers. This opportunity to build on my family's traditions and follow in the footsteps of Albert Shanker as a member of the Board of the Workmen's Circle is an honor and a privilege.*



### Irena Klepfisz

*I am a graduate of the Bronx Arbeter Ring Shul #3 and Arbeter Ring Mitlshul (in Manhattan) and am delighted to participate now in an institution that played such an important role in shaping my Jewish identity and my political consciousness. I very much look forward to engaging with a new generation of Workmen's Circle members.*



### Frank London

*It is an honor to join the board of the Arbeter Ring /Workmen's Circle, an organization with a great yikhes and a unique vision of how social justice and Yiddishkayt can inform and enrich each other.*



### Richard Rumelt

*There is no other organization that covers the range of Jewish concerns: From Yiddish culture, to education, to social justice and labor rights, the Workmen's Circle plays a leading role. It is an honor to return to the Board.*



## Your Mameloshn in Hudson Valley

### Trip to Yiddishland

A weeklong summer experience into all things Yiddish awaits this August! In its eleventh year, Trip to Yiddishland features four levels of Yiddish classes, dance and klezmer instruction, theater and music workshops, concerts and entertainment at Circle Lodge, our summer retreat center in Hopewell Junction, NY. Led by our own Kolya Borodulin, during this seven-day, six-night *Yiddishkayt* immersion, you will enjoy Yiddish water polo and bingo, nightly *kave hoyz*, tennis, and boating on beautiful Sylvan Lake.

Special activities for the under-30 set and a children's program will be available for families. Register by May 15 for the Early Bird Special. Please contact Barry Newman, at 212-889-6800, ext. 817 for more information.

**Save the Date: August 13-19, 2018**

# Annual Winter Benefit

## Randi Weingarten Honored

The Workmen's Circle honored its historic partnership with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and its President, Randi Weingarten, at its Annual Winter Benefit this past November.

In his program remarks, Workmen's Circle President, Peter Pepper, noted the longstanding relationship between the Workmen's Circle and AFT, "The two organizations are and have been natural allies. Both have a strong desire to achieve social and economic justice and firmly believe that this may only be achieved by the strength of a passionate community."



# The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Memorial

## Ann Toback Honored

On March 15, 2018, Ann Toback was honored with the Clara Lemlich Public Service Award at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Memorial's (TSFFM) 17th Annual Scholarship Memorial Fundraiser. Named after the 1911 factory fire, where corporate greed resulted in the tragic death of 146 workers, the TSFFM was established to memorialize the Fire, to educate the general public regarding workplace safety, and to establish a scholarship for children of injured workers. The award's namesake, Clara Lemlich, was a Ukrainian-born Jewish immigrant worker, who became an activist and union organizer in the male-dominated labor movement. Lemlich's fiery Yiddish speech in 1909 at a gathering of thousands of immigrant women workers in Cooper Union sparked a strike of more than 20,000 garment workers, known as the Uprising of the 20,000. Ann's career before and during her time with the Workmen's Circle upholds that tradition, and just like Lemlich's, Ann's speech ended with a passage spoken in Yiddish and English: "*If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may my hand wither from the arm I now raise!*" Mazel tov to Ann from the entire Workmen's Circle Board and staff!



## The Workmen's Circle 2017 Employer of the Year

The Workmen's Circle is honored to have been selected as OPEIU Local 153's 2017 Employer of the Year. For over a century, we have fought for and lived our values: good wages, fairness, and respect for all workers.

### Pay Online

Did you know we now offer an online payment option for your annual membership dues? Go to [www.circle.org/dues](http://www.circle.org/dues) to make your payment today.

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## Workmen's Circle Activism

### Be a Part of the Jewish Resistance Movement

In our Fall Newsletter we reported on the Workmen's Circle's leadership and presence at more than 20 actions, work which advances our social justice mission. We have continued on that path with more than 12 actions since last Fall and many more expected throughout 2018. Some of you have joined in and we welcome you to take action with us whenever you can. When you receive our email announcing the next march or rally, come out and stand with our activist community!

- Immigrant Rights Are Labor Rights: Labor Day Parade | 9/9/17
- March for Spectrum Striking Workers, Brooklyn Bridge | 9/18/17
- Rally for a Fair Contract for Striking Spectrum Workers, Times Square | 10/30/17
- March against the Muslim Ban, Tax Scam, and for a Clean DREAM Act Now! | 12/7/17
- #NotTheWhiteHouseChanukahParty | 12/13/17
- Rally for a Clean DREAM Act | 1/9/18
- Women's March 2018 with lead speaker Ann Toback | 1/20/18
- Rally Demanding No Muslim Ban Ever | 1/26/18
- Jewish Coalition for DACA Rally | 2/7/18
- You Can't Deport a Movement Immigrant Rights Rally | 2/10/18
- Working People's Day of Action | 2/24/18
- Immokalee Farm Workers "Time's Up Wendy's March" | 3/15/18

**The Workmen's Circle powers progressive Jewish identity through Jewish cultural engagement, Yiddish language learning, multigenerational education, and social justice activism. For over a century, we have provided this 360-degree approach to Jewish identity-building. Through contemporary cultural traditions, joyful holiday celebrations, timely social justice campaigns, vibrant *Yiddishkayt*, interactive educational programs and more, we connect Jewish adults, children and families of all affiliations with their cultural heritage, working to build a better and more beautiful world for all.**