



# THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE / ARBETER RING

## Newsletter

SPRING  
2014

### CONTENTS

From The Desk Of Our  
Executive Director  
Ann Toback  
1

Workmen's Circle  
In The News  
1

Learning And  
Teaching  
2

On Sylvan Lake  
3

All In The Workmen's  
Circle Family  
4

Workmen's Circle  
Values in Action  
5

Workmen's Circle  
At Work And At Play  
6

**THE WORKMEN'S  
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ARBETER RING**  
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## From The Desk Of Our Executive Director Ann Toback

For us at the Workmen's Circle, there is no better opportunity to share in community celebration, learning, and activism than the Passover holiday. At our Seders this year, we considered the modern plague of income inequality — the disparity between the haves and have-nots in our society — where more than 50 million Americans live below the poverty line, and over 4 million are defined as "working poor".

We're unique at the Workmen's Circle in that we can find inspiration for activism from both our past and our future. From our organization's earliest days, our members coalesced through a shared passion for fighting for social and economic justice through safe and fair employment. Today, we continue our social justice legacy by teaching collective action focused on these same values that were so important to our founders.



At our national Seder in New York City this year, we added an empty seder plate to every table to remind us of the many unmet needs of so many people in our world. We also participated in an activist campaign lead by the students from our Midtown shule, where, since the fall, these students have been working to advance the Campaign for Fair Food. The campaign calls for food service companies to sign Fair Food Agreements protecting the rights of farm workers who are providing their produce. One fast-food company, Wendy's, has refused to sign, and our Midtown students have been calling Wendy's every week to push them to

enter into an agreement. At our Seder this year, we joined our students in their campaign.

The problem of income inequality is too big for any single solution. However, pathways are being developed to meet the many needs of our brothers and sisters living below the poverty line. We at the Workmen's Circle are proud to continue our legacy of activism by committing time and resources throughout the year to fight our modern day plagues and to build a *shenere un besere velt far ale...* "a better and more beautiful world for all".

## Workmen's Circle In The News

### WORKMEN'S CIRCLE TAKES CENTER STAGE AT LIMMUD NY

Ann Toback, the Executive Director of the Workmen's Circle, participated in a very successful panel discussion at Limmud NY, an annual retreat celebrating the richness of Jewish life held in Stamford, Connecticut this past President's Day weekend. More than 150 people filled the room as Ann was joined by Sam Norich, President and Publisher of *The Jewish Daily Forward* and Professor Steven M. Cohen of Hebrew Union College-JIR in a discussion moderated by Cheryl Cook, the COO of Hazon on the recent Pew Research Center study, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans".

The study, which reports that American Jews overwhelmingly say they are proud to be Jewish and have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people, suggests that Jewish identity is changing in America, where one in five Jews (22%) now describe themselves as having no religion. In fact, most American Jews, when asked, indicated that ancestry, culture, and values are their primary connections to their Jewish identity. The panel's discussion focused on how the organized Jewish community can take the Pew findings and develop meaningful connections with American Jews today and in the future. Ann elicited applause from the assembled crowd with her impassioned presentation on the Workmen's Circle's history of service to Jews seeking a richly cultural and largely secular "Jewish home", and talked about our work expanding our services to new generations of Jewish children and families.



**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

**“Knish Me Once Again”  
Book Talk & Recipe Swap  
Thursday, June 26th, 6PM  
Workmen’s Circle  
247 West 37th Street  
5th Floor  
New York City**

...

**Trip to Yiddishland  
July 3rd — July 12th  
Call 212-889-6800 x822  
for more information.**

The program was recorded for Shalom TV and is available to be seen in its entirety on YouTube under the title of “Limmud Conference: The Pew Study”.



## Learning And Teaching

### PUTTING LESSONS INTO ACTION

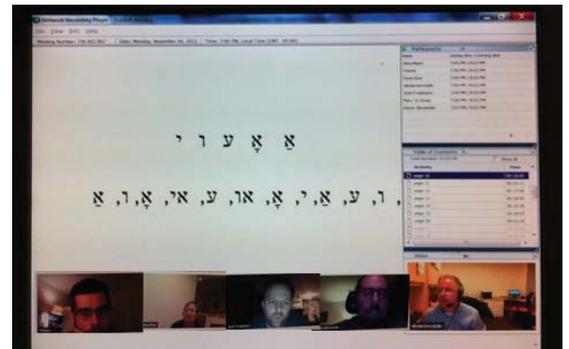
The snow has finally melted from our parkas and toes and spring is in the air. There is nothing better than fresh breezes in our schools permeating the buildings and the minds of our students. This spring, each of the learning communities — Boston, Long Island, Midtown Manhattan, and Westchester — are celebrating Peysakh, the festival of liberation from the bitterness of slavery. Each community in its own way took on historical and modern forms of bondage that hold men, women, and children back from claiming their humanity. They also worked together to imagine new ways of being free by implementing individual and communal acts of social justice activism. Our schools in Boston and Long Island both held extraordinary community Seders that brought the best of the Workmen’s Circle values to the table. At the annual Proudly Progressive Seder in New York, the Midtown and Westchester children made a joyful (and very energetic!) noise, brought the story of the plagues to life, and engaged in learning before and during the festivities. The Long Island community plans to take one of these critical

issues head on in The Walk to End Genocide (April 27th, 10:00am-2:00pm at Eisenhower Park). In partnership with Jewish World Watch, JCRC-LI, and The Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center, the Workmen’s Circle students will educate participants and advocate against genocide and human rights abuses using many media and hands-on demonstrations. In these ways and so many others, parents, students, and Workmen’s Circle members are reporting more than ever before that they feel a part of something greater than themselves. This reality is what the Workmen’s Circle is striving and hoping for as our education communities continue to grow.

### LEARNING YIDDISH GOES ONLINE

The Workmen’s Circle is already the largest provider of Yiddish language instruction for adult learners outside of academic institutions and now we’re expanding into cyberspace as well! Utilizing Webex, an online meeting and videoconferencing application, students of every age, stage of life, and geographical location can take Yiddish class remotely from our Master Teacher, Kolya Borodulin. Now in its fourth “semester”, this new technology has opened our classes to students in places like Washington DC, Boston, Vermont and Denver.

Options include a basic Yiddish literacy course, a special multi-generational class for B’nei Mitsve students and their parents, and our newest offering — a group opportunity to read and discuss *The Yiddish Forverts* online!



## Internship Opportunities At The Workmen’s Circle

The Workmen’s Circle is pleased to offer three 8 to 10 week internship programs throughout the year to 10 to 12 undergraduates and recent college graduates. Our interns are introduced to a professional work environment by providing a broad overview of the day-to-day operations of a not-for-profit organization while also having a focus on specific projects. They learn while working alongside staff members and rotate among our various departments. Please visit our website, [www.circle.org](http://www.circle.org), for more information or apply with cover letter and resume to [jkazantzis@circle.org](mailto:jkazantzis@circle.org).

### APPLICATION PERIODS

- May 1 — May 30, 2014
- September 1 — September 30, 2014
- January 1 — January 30, 2015

### INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

- June 10 — July 31, 2014
- October 14 — December 18, 2014
- February 17 — April 9, 2015

# On Sylvan Lake

## CAMP KINDER RING HAPPENINGS

Over the past several months it has been difficult to believe that there would ever be an end to the bitter cold, the snow and hearing terms like “polar vortex”! Since last August, through all the cold and up to the present, the administration of Camp Kinder Ring has been working day and night to build on the positive energy felt during the summer of 2013 and continue significant enhancements to both the physical plant and programming at camp. With less than three months to go until campers begin entering the gates to be with their Kinder Ring Family, there is so much happening on Sylvan Lake. In August, with the support of the Workmen’s Circle Board, Camp Kinder Ring completed a major and most necessary renovation of its magnificent pool complex. In January of the current year — with the assistance of a number of generous donors, the camp Board of Directors gave the go ahead to upgrade the Cultural Center (Indoor Gymnasium.) This work is underway and will include an upgrade of the roof of that facility, resurfacing the court, upgrading the bathrooms and enhancing our weight room and creating a new training/endurance room. The work will also include upgrades to the bathrooms and the interior and exterior walls of the facility. Other work also underway at camp includes an upgrade of the Health Center, creation of a new Welcome Center, as well as several other incredible improvements.

While all of this work has been planned and implemented, the Kinder Ring leadership has also laid out an extremely positive foundation for significant enhancements and adjustments to the overall camp program. Of most significance has been the modification of camp’s daily schedule to allow for increased choice and specialization for campers, all while maintaining the overall traditional nature of

camp. An extremely impressive line-up of new and returning staff will ultimately create the atmosphere necessary for all campers to have one of the best summers of their lives.

Camp Kinder Ring continually strives to provide an extraordinary residential camp experience to all who enter its gates, and also furthering the mission of the Workmen’s Circle by providing outstanding cultural Jewish programming. While campers inherently grow and develop so many skills that will assist them throughout their lives, most importantly, our campers are developing lifelong memories each and every day. Special introductory programming and rates are available for all. There is limited availability for our KRJR (3 nights, 4 days) introductory camp program, as well as our one-day Rookie Day program. We are also presently booking tours for prospective camper during this summer, so make sure to book these dates early. We look forward to hearing from you and having the opportunity to welcome you to the Kinder Ring Family. Visit us on the web at [www.campkr.com](http://www.campkr.com) and contact us at (845) 221-2771 or via email at [office@campkr.com](mailto:office@campkr.com).

## FAMILY VACATION, WITH A SIDE OF MEANING

What could be better on the last weekend of a long, hot summer than a relaxing and Jewish culture-filled family getaway at Camp Kinder Ring? Nothing, of course! For the first time, the Workmen’s Circle Education Department and the leadership at Camp Kinder Ring are planning an integrated four-day event from August 24-28. Families will come together to discover Camp Kinder Ring and join together in Jewish cultural activities and exploration. Set on the shore of gorgeous Sylvan Lake, kids and families will enjoy sports, swimming, acres of space and amazing food, while learning about Jewish music and cultural heritage. The vacation will be professionally staffed by the Camp Kinder Ring team and the expert educators of Workmen’s Circle learning communities. Families will have the chance to get know each other both within and across their schools from Boston, Long Island, Midtown, New Jersey, and Westchester. Register now for this amazing opportunity! The cost per family (regardless of the number of children) is \$900 inclusive of all meals, events, private guest rooms, activities and facilities. Don’t be left out! Please contact Maida Feingold at 212-889-6800 x822 or [mfeingold@circle.org](mailto:mfeingold@circle.org) to reserve your spot today with a \$300 deposit or to find out more. You will not find a more affordable and meaningful vacation at the end of this summer anywhere else!



- **HAVE YOU CONSIDERED LIFE MEMBERSHIP IN THE WORKMEN’S CIRCLE?**

**Support our work to promote Yiddishkayt, social justice, and a better world for all while securing your membership and benefits for life. One less bill...one less worry. Call Kathy or Maberliz in our Membership Department at 646-291-8365 with questions or to sign up today!**





**INTRODUCING ROB CAENERS, GENERAL MANAGER OF CIRCLE LODGE**

We are thrilled to welcome Rob to the Workmen's Circle community. Rob joins us with over twenty years of management experience in the hospitality industry with expertise in customer service, business and facility management, and employee training. We think he is going to be a great asset to the Camp community.

**A RETURN TRIP TO YIDDISHLAND**

Always a seasonal highlight, Workmen's Circle Trip to Yiddishland at Circle Lodge will actually offer three options this summer. Starting on July 1, our Master Teacher Kolya Borodulin will lead two fantastic "trips" plus a pre-trip extension with a team of beloved professors at the beautiful retreat center on Sylvan Lake in Hopewell Junction, New York. Daytime activities incorporate Yiddish language instruction with music, theater, arts, and games with evenings filled with Yiddish poetry, films, cabaret, campfires, and dancing.

This year, we are pleased to offer scholarships for up to ten participants (age 35 and under). Visit [www.circle.org](http://www.circle.org) for more program and application information. For more information or to sign up, contact Maida Feingold at 212-889-6800 x822 or [mfeingold@circle.org](mailto:mfeingold@circle.org).

*Last year's scholarship awardees*



**All In The Workmen's Circle Family**

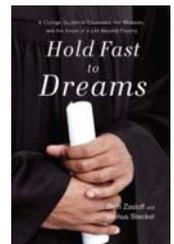
**FIGHTING BACK AGAINST HATRED**

In early February, we were appalled to learn of the senseless acts of vandalism that had defaced the beautiful mural on the Los Angeles Workmen's Circle building. We felt both sorrow and anger at these criminal acts and the damage they did to a beautiful commemoration of our 114-year commitment to making the world a better place. We were comforted only by the knowledge that, while these destructive acts harmed a precious piece of art, they can never diminish the even more precious legacy — our history, our values, and our determination to move forward in defiance of haters-- that the mural represented to our Workmen's Circle community. The Board of National Workmen's Circle leapt into action and, with their generous support, the mural has since been restored to its original condition.

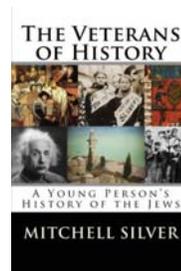


**FOR OUR BOOKSHELF**

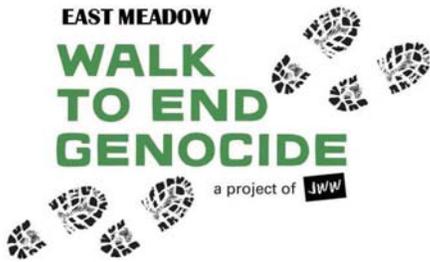
A huge mazel tov to our Midtown Shule Director Beth Zasloff and her husband Josh Steckel on the publication of their book, *Hold Fast to Dreams: A College Counselor, His Students, and the Vision of a Life Beyond Poverty*. The book is a powerful demonstration of what it takes to bridge the opportunity divide and use education to transform lives. Josh's perseverance as the first ever college guidance counselor at a Brooklyn public high school resulted in college acceptances for every one of the hundreds of graduates he has counseled. The book is a fascinating glimpse into the American educational landscape as it follows ten students through the successes and challenges of college application and education. On March 26, Josh was a guest along with two of his students on The Leonard Lopate Show — visit [www.wnyc.org](http://www.wnyc.org) to listen.



Another hearty mazel tov is due to Mitch Silver of the Boston Workmen's Circle on the publication of *The Veterans of History: A Young Person's History of the Jews*. Mitch is the longtime education director of Boston's Shule, and a professor of philosophy at the University of Massachusetts. His book is a wonderful resource for Workmen's Circle children and families. Told from a cultural perspective, the book provides a fascinating narrative spanning from Biblical times to the present day. A must read for all of us — young and old!



## Workmen's Circle Values In Action



### TAKE ONE STEP CLOSER TO A WORLD WITHOUT GENOCIDE

In partnership with Jewish World Watch, The Workmen's Circle East Meadow Shule is hosting The Walk to End Genocide at Eisenhower Park on Sunday, April 27. We are walking to let our local community and the world know that we will not stand idly by while human rights violations continue to impact the lives of innocent men, women, and children. This year, proceeds from the walk will fund the Solar Cooker Project of Jewish World Watch, which provides much needed protection to refugee women and girls in Darfur. Be

sure to visit [www.jewishworldwatch.org](http://www.jewishworldwatch.org) to sponsor our walkers and find out more about the East Meadow Walk to End Genocide.

### WE ARE ALL WORKERS

On March 25, the Workmen's Circle, in partnership with the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, commemorated the 103rd anniversary of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Fire which took the lives of 146 young workers. Hundreds of New Yorkers including our Executive Director, Ann Toback and Rita Margules, the daughter of labor activist Clara Lemlich, gathered to honor and remember the victims of the fire and to take a stand for safe and fair employment for all!



Rita Margules and Ann Toback at the 103rd Anniversary Commemoration of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire



- For more information on our Signature Shules:
  - Midtown Manhattan: [www.midtownschool.org](http://www.midtownschool.org)
  - Boston: [www.circleboston.org](http://www.circleboston.org)
  - Long Island: [www.arbeterring.org](http://www.arbeterring.org)
  - Westchester County: 212-889-6800

### PHILANTHROPY WITH A SMILE

If you are shopping on Amazon, you can donate to the Workmen's Circle without spending an extra penny! Go to the Amazon website and designate "The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, Inc" as your official charity and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the cost of every purchase you make on their website to the Workmen's Circle through its AmazonSmile program.





## Workmen's Circle At Work And Play

### COOKING + HERITAGE = FUN AT WORKMEN'S CIRCLE

Over the past several months, we've developed a bit of a reputation (in the best way!) for our classes in pickling and chutney-making, including a plug in the online version of the New York Times. Led by members of our staff and our own members, including Jeanne Stellman and Executive Director Ann Toback, we've done the hands-on cooking — at our headquarters on 37th Street, at Camp Kinder Ring, and at our Long Island shule — as well as learning the history of the recipes we used and talking about our own experiences in the kitchens of parents and grandparents. A small committee is forming this spring to begin talking about expanding our culinary adventures, so watch your inbox and mailbox for announcements of new classes in the coming seasons.

### OUR SEDER REALLY IS PROUDLY PROGRESSIVE

The national Workmen's Circle Proudly Progressive Seder was held this year on Sunday, April 6 at the headquarters of SEIU 1199 in New York City. As you'll read elsewhere in this newsletter, it was a wonderful event, suffused with meaning and ringing with music and the voices of children. Like the community events held across the country (some of which are pictured here), the full range of our values was celebrated by a wonderfully diverse group of Workmen's Circle members and supporters of every age and stage of life. The menu was highlighted by a Moroccan-style chicken dish very similar to the main course served at the Obama's White House seder this year, and our students made their parents (and all of us) very proud. There



was a strong focus on income inequality, and the students from our Midtown shule galvanized support for a campaign to bring the Wendy's fast food restaurant chain into compliance



with the Fair Food Program, a two-decades-long human rights effort on behalf of farmworkers lead by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

The pictures here give only a slice of the story — next year, you should be at a Workmen's Circle Seder too!

