



THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE / ARBETER RING Newsletter

FALL
2014

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A Message From Our New President

In 1990, when our son Sam was five, my wife Marci and I attempted to define our family's Jewish identity. I had grown up in an observant home and Marci had little formal Jewish education. We both knew we needed something different for Sam. As fate would have it, we met with the wonderful Naomi Kadar, the Workmen's Circle school director at that time, who convinced us to become one of the founding families of the Midtown Shule.

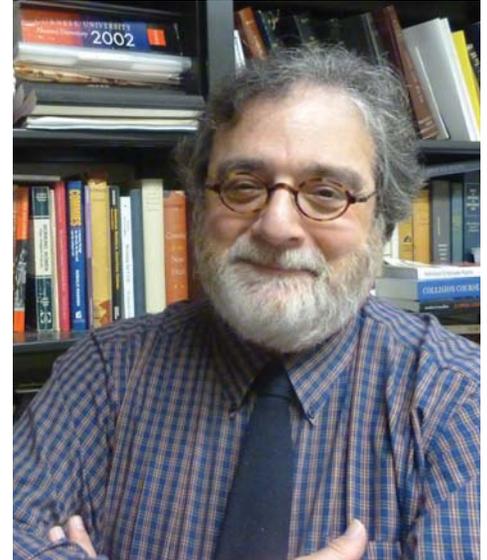
It was soon after this encounter that we realized how special the Workmen's Circle was. It was an organization with strong roots in the labor movement and founded on principles of helping members from cradle to grave, believing in justice and fairness for all, with strong progressive values. What other organization combined a love for education, progressive values and Yiddish language, all of which fostered a strong Jewish identity?

What happened next was magical for us. Sam's teacher was Kolya Borodulin, an extraordinary educator with the talent to make students love learning, and Marci and I found a community of like-minded wonderful people.

As the recent Pew study on American Jewry informs us, we are now at a unique crossroads in the American Jewish experience. In my view, this report also suggests that this moment brings an opportunity for the Workmen's Circle, as we should appeal to an ever-increasing group of families like my own, who are searching for strong Jewish identity and education.

Thanks to wonderful efforts of past president Maddy Braun, Executive Director Ann Toback, her marvelous staff, and our board, we are in a position to foster the growth of our organization. In addition to our three signature shules in Boston, Long Island and Manhattan, Camp Kinder Ring, and a new shule in Westchester, we have the prospect of starting several more learning centers in the very near future.

It is my fervent hope that many other families can have the same wonderful experience my family has had. To a *shenere un besere velt far ale*... a more beautiful and better world for all.



Peter Pepper

THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE / ARBETER RING

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From The Desk Of Ann Toback, Our Executive Director

This has been an exciting year for us at the Workmen's Circle, as we have continued to build strong ties between new and existing audiences and our Jewish cultural heritage. We have opened doors inward — connecting to new members as we have grown our network of shules, charged with carrying forward our legacy of Jewish celebrations and progressive activism. And we have also opened doors outward through the expansion of our program offerings, including our co-sponsorship of The Helix Project, a travel program that took a group of college students to Eastern Europe on a journey through Jewish history, as well as our new online Yiddish classes, which are attracting students and teachers from around the world.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 22, 2015:
The Workmen's Circle
Proudly Progressive Seder

April 15, 2015:
Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
Commemoration

Call (212) 889-6800, x821
for more information.

We have taken great steps in expanding our reach to an even larger audience. With over 100 years of experience celebrating our Eastern European roots, we knew we had the knowledge, but we also knew that we had to create different entryways for today's American Jewish community. Perhaps not surprising, Jewish food is one of the great connectors for the American population, and for many, it is the doorway to a rich Jewish cultural experience. We've had amazing success in bringing together different generations through some of our Jewish food-focused programs. This past July, over 5,000 New Yorkers came out for our first Taste of Jewish Culture Street Fair on Madison Avenue featuring Jewish music and food, and we look forward to making it an annual tradition.

The Pew Center survey that Peter references identifies a key demographic — American Jews who are increasingly secular but maintain a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people. In other words, a group that is tailor made for the Workmen's Circle. We have seen the case made again and again that our approach to Jewish identity, through Jewish education and social justice activism, is exactly what many people today are looking for. This leads us to our next challenge — building on our first organizing success and redefining our brand identity, so that we can connect with more people who are searching for our wonderful programs and community. We have set very ambitious goals for growing our organization, and we look forward to sharing new programs and reporting on our successes in the coming year.

Workmen's Circle Values In Action

A NEW PATH ON AN OLD ROAD

This past summer, the Workmen's Circle co-sponsored The Helix Project, a wonderful program for college and graduate school students organized by the Los Angeles-based organization Yiddishkayt. Over 10 days in July, participants visited many sites in Eastern and Central Europe to learn about the rich cultural life of Jews since the 14th century with the goal of bringing that culture to life by retracing the footsteps of significant Jewish artists, poets, and thinkers.



The Workmen's Circle Executive Director Ann Toback joined the 2014 trip and came back bursting with stories and images that inspired her and all of us (read her blog posts at <https://circle.org/search/helix>). The experience promotes a different take on cultural heritage and a new perspective on Jewish culture. For most Jews born in the 20th century, our Eastern European heritage has been primarily viewed through the terrible lens of the Holocaust, resulting in a great disconnect that has led to a diminution of Jewish identity.

Now is the time to create and renew critical connections to our Eastern European cultural past

for American Jews, especially for our youth. By rebuilding our connections to our rich, storied and progressive roots, we will be building stronger members for our future and the future of the American Jewish community. Experiences like The Helix Project provide us with a new real and informative context that inspires and enriches our work at the Workmen's Circle.

MENSCHEN, CLICK HERE

Click here to start — that's how 22 students began learning Yiddish online this fall. The Workmen's Circle offered three interactive online classes, including two intermediate classes with Yiddish teacher extraordinaire Kolya Borodulin and an advanced course with Argentinian YIVO director Abraham Lichtenbaum.

Students from as far away as Ukraine and Canada took advantage of the internet to log in to classes that previously would only have been accessible to those who live in New York. By ensuring that anyone with a computer and a web connection can participate, we've dramatically widened our circle and can more effectively spread *yiddishkeit* along with the language itself. And ongoing research shows that learning a second language is like your brain doing push ups — it can actually increase in size — so it is good for our bodies and our minds! By popular demand, Kolya will offer beginning Yiddish online this spring. Make plans to add a *bis!* Yiddish to your life — new classes will begin again in March of 2015! To register, call (212) 889-6800.



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TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The Workmen's Circle kicked off the New Year season doing what matters most to us: advocating for a better and more beautiful world. Just a few days before Rosh Hashone, on September 21st, we helped make history at the People's Climate March, the world's largest ever climate demonstration.

Over 200 Workmen's Circle members and supporters joined forces for the event, traveling from our communities across Boston, Long Island, Midtown and Westchester to call for global action against climate change. Together, we flooded the streets of Manhattan in solidarity with over 300,000 others from Jewish, social justice and environmental organizations, and more. With our Workmen's Circle Climate March t-shirts, banners and signs handmade by our shule students, you couldn't miss us!

We're so thankful to everyone who came out to show their support. We look forward to another year filled with Workmen's Circle advocacy and campaigns that reflect our proudly progressive ideals and passion for social and economic justice.



Photo credit: Owen Dodd



Photo credit: Owen Dodd



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

Support our work to promote *yiddishkeit*, 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!

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

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, thank you!

Leave a legacy gift. Be a beacon for future generations.

For more information, contact Ellen Goldstein, Director of Development: egoldstein@circle.org, (646) 291-8367.



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CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT IN WARSAW AND NEW YORK

You may have read about the October 28th opening of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews on the former site of the Warsaw Ghetto, but you may not have realized that the visionary curator of the Core Exhibition is also the honoree for our Annual Winter Reception, to be held this year on Saturday, December 13th at the Kimmel Center on NYU's campus in Greenwich Village.



Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is a renowned author and scholar in addition to her role at the Museum, and it's hard not to feel that our connection with her is *besht*. It is truly a perfect match of organization and honoree, both because of her work — which instructs and moves us — and for her commitment to the values and memories we share.

Join us on December 13th as we recognize her and honor her life's work in the study, preservation, and celebration of Jewish life and culture with an evening of food, song, and stories. In connection with the event, we will publish a special Tribute Journal that will allow us to recognize and acknowledge our benefactors and patrons. For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Philippa Crowne at events@circle.org or by phone at (212) 889-6800, x801.



On Sylvan Lake



A TRADITION 87 YEARS IN THE MAKING

At Camp Kinder Ring, 87 years' worth of Workmen's Circle summer camping can be distilled into the iconic weekly tradition known as *Shtiller Ovnt*. Each Friday, after a full week of playing, competing, learning and sharing, the Kinder Ring campers set aside their everyday activities, and, dressed completely in white, quietly make their way to the flagpole. There, longtime Workmen's Circle activists Mikhl and Ruth Baran greet our campers and lead them in a time of reflection, sharing thoughts about the Jewish values that bring the campers and the world together.

Campers consider the stories of Jewish heroes and how one person — in a bunk, or a class, or a camp — can make a difference in the world through friendship, solidarity, peace and *menschlekhkayt*.

At *Shtiller Ovnt*, campers celebrate togetherness in a way that cuts across boundaries of time and space, singing the same songs and dancing the same dances as generations have before them. Then they march together to the dining room, greeting each other with "Gut Shabbes" and ready to renew themselves with Kinder Ring spirit for the coming week. Following dinner, campers meet together with their divisions to discuss important issues of the week and work collaboratively to improve the camp community.

Shtiller Ovnt remains today an important celebration for Camp Kinder Ring campers that provides a living connection to our heritage and links generations of Kinder Ring families.



Jewish Learning For A Just World

Learning that leads to social activism starts for many of our families at the Workmen's Circle. Each of our Jewish cultural schools (Boston, Long Island, Midtown Manhattan, and Westchester) is proud of its individual culture and also shares core principles of Jewish heritage, joyful celebrations, and social justice activism. Likewise, the communities are coming together around new Workmen's Circle curricula. We are creating a network-wide system of sharing, experimenting, and collaborating on a more unified (though not at all uniform) curriculum.



Midtown shule students volunteer with the non-profit social service organization Dorot.

"Engaging Our Celebrations" brings stories, rituals, and social justice themes to life through Jewish celebrations. It provides teachers opportunities to mix and match appropriate ideas, themes, resources, and activities for seven major Jewish holidays through a cultural and social justice lens (e.g., Rosh Hashone, Hanukkah, Shabbat, Passover). It also includes lesson plans for observing secular holidays through a Jewish lens (e.g., Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Earth Day).

"Engaging Our Ancestors and Us" links ancient and contemporary ancestors through Jewish cultural values (e.g., Queen Esther and Clara Lemlich: Standing up for What is Right). We feel our ancestors' unique legacies and observe them as models who may shape our identities. As students consider the integration of these qualities into their blossoming Jewish identities, our students begin to think of themselves as Jewish activists.

"Changing the World One Step at a Time" draws on the historic values, aims, and work of the Workmen's Circle to generate authentic and meaningful Jewish social justice activism within each community and across the national network. This curricular framework embraces an action-reflection model of education and is entirely flexible to meet each community's needs, character, and social justice activism priorities.

Is your family seeking an alternative to a traditional Jewish education? Do you want to create a better and more beautiful world? Your neighborhood could be Workmen's Circle's next home! Contact Kate O'Brien, our Director of Education, at (646) 291-8371 or at kobrien@circle.org.



Boston Workmen's Circle students and parents enjoy a camping trip in Plymouth, MA.



Kindergarten students at the Boston Workmen's Circle celebrate Sukes.



JEWISH CURRENTS

ACTIVIST POLITICS & ART

Jewish Currents is now offering a free annual subscription to Workmen's Circle members and friends. Just send your name and address to editor@jewishcurrents.org. Don't delay — only the first 150 people to email can take advantage of this great offer.

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, or apply with cover letter and resume to Jackie Kazantzis, jkazantzis@circle.org.

APPLICATION PERIODS

January 1 — January 31, 2015
 May 1 — May 31, 2015
 September 1 — September 30, 2015

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

February 17 — April 9, 2015
 June 9 — July 30, 2015
 October 13 — December 17, 2015



All In The Workmen's Circle Family

The Workmen's Circle family is growing! This summer, our national office gave a warm welcome to four new staff members.

Sara Koenig, our new Communications and Marketing manager, is helping to bring even greater visibility to Workmen's Circle initiatives.

In the Education Department, Elizabeth Marrow is directing our Westchester shule, consultant Wendy Grinberg is developing new curricula for each of our shule classrooms, and Outreach Coordinator Sandy Cheiten is expanding the Workmen's Circle shule network across the country. We're thrilled to have them all on board!



Sara Koenig



Wendy Grinberg



Elizabeth Marrow



Sandy Cheiten

• For more information on our Signature Shules:

Midtown Manhattan:
www.midtownschool.org

Boston:
www.circleboston.org

Long Island:
www.arbeterring.org

Westchester County:
(212) 889-6800



NEWS FROM BOSTON

This fall, we gave a huge thank you and a bittersweet farewell to Lisa Gallatin, the Boston Workmen's Circle's outgoing Executive Director.

In her 15 years of service, Lisa worked with the Boston leadership to build a thriving multigenerational community with cultural, educational and advocacy programs for more than 400 members and thousands of supporters.

On October 27th, we honored Lisa and celebrated her many achievements, which include founding *A Besere Velt*, the Yiddish Chorus that has performed throughout the East Coast; cultivating the next generation of young professionals who will lead the Boston community; and organizing social justice campaigns with local labor leaders.

We wish Lisa all the best as she starts her next chapter — as Chief of Staff at the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. Congratulations, Lisa!



Workmen's Circle At Work And Play

Throughout 2014, new courses, concerts, and plays attracted hundreds across the Workmen's Circle communities.

Branch 1054 in Northern California offered their very first "Summer Yiddish Start-Up" for beginners, which was co-sponsored by KlezCalifornia. It was such a success that they paired up with KlezCalifornia again for the November Yiddish Cultural Festival and YiddishLand, the first Sonoma County Yiddish Cultural Festival. And, down the coast, the spotlight was on Terry Baum, the star of "Hick," a play about the relationship between Lorena Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt, which was produced by the Workmen's Circle of Southern California.



Ashkenaz Festival artists (Photo credit: David Kaufman)

Canada's largest festival of global Jewish music and culture, the annual Ashkenaz Festival, was even larger this year thanks to support from the Workmen's Circle in Toronto. Along with the UJA Federation Committee for Yiddish and the United People's Order, the Toronto community presented a special tribute to the legendary Chana Mlotek. The program included songs, stories and reflections by Zalmen Mlotek and family, which

some 400 guests enjoyed.

At the annual Workmen's Circle Yiddish Concert in Cleveland, experimental Klezmer artist Josh Dolgin (aka "Socalled") and clarinetist Michael Winograd took the stage, drawing close to 1,000 revelers to the city's Cain Park. On the



Irene Failenbogen

East Coast, just in time for the Thanksgiving season, the Long Island Branch 1075 hosted "A Dank: Appreciating Jewish Music Together," featuring Irene Failenbogen, a singer, songwriter and Cantor who has performed in operas, musical comedies, and theater.

A record number of Workmen's Circle families also came together to usher in the New Year. More than 300 members filled the Musician Union Hall of Hollywood for Southern California's Kolnidre, where a chorus of 21 voices sang in Yiddish, Hebrew, Arabic and English alongside a quintet of professional musicians. Readings from activist and inspirational texts, lively group discussions, and songs in Yiddish and English were among the highlights of Rosh Hashone in Northern California. Over in New York, thanks to popular demand, Branch 1075 relocated their High Holiday celebration from their cultural center to a nearby movie theater to accommodate their growing communities. Singing, candle lightings, readings and delicious food made every Workmen's Circle celebration memorable.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE & ELECTION RESULTS

On October 19th, we held our Annual Membership Meeting to both elect a new President and Directors and to reflect upon a year full of successes and welcome challenges. Members voted either in person or via proxy to elect Peter Pepper for a two-year term as President and four new Directors — Steven M. Cohen, Ed Ott, Josh Skolnick and Jeanne Stellman. The new Directors, who all begin three-year terms, join fellow Directors Denise Bowyer, Madelon Braun (Past-President), Allen Breslow, Mike Felsen, David Goldstein, Mirm Kriegel, Martin Krupnick, Franklin Moss, Peter Pepper, Richard Rumelt, Gary Strauss, Eva Zasloff and Barnett Zumoff. Together, their guidance and tireless commitment to our mission will be integral to our growth in the coming year. We are so grateful to our outgoing Directors Richard Bock, Jack Jacobs, Robert Kaplan and Mike Katz for their vision, dedication and hard work over the past six years.

Under the leadership of our new President, Peter Pepper, the Executive Committee for 2014-2015 includes Allen Breslow, Vice President for Development; Steven M. Cohen, Vice President for Strategy/Mission; David Goldstein, Secretary; and Richard Rumelt, Treasurer. These seasoned Directors bring both enthusiasm and continuity to the Executive Committee. We look forward to an exciting and fruitful year and extend our congratulations and thanks to all!



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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 Amazon Smile program.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Pickles, bialys, and smoked fish, oh my! Over 5,000 people attended the July 27th Workmen's Circle Taste of Jewish Culture street fair, noshing their way along Madison Avenue and bopping to the music of Howard Leshaw's Yiddish Swing Band, Paul Shapiro's Ribs & Brisket Revue and the talented Rebecca Skolnick. Food vendors (or should we say guilty pleasure providers?) included Mile End, Breads Bakery, Taim, Shelsky's Smoked Fish, Scharf & Zoyer, Baz Bagel & Restaurant, Peck's Homemade, Brooklyn Seltzer Boys, Dassara Ramen, Kossar's Bialys, The Pickle Guys, Knish Nosh, and Brooklyn Sesame. Revelers also perused tables with non-caloric co-exhibitors *The Forward*, *Beyond Bubbie*, and *Pop-up Shabbat*, as well as stopping by the Workmen's Circle table to meet our staff and learn more about our programs.

Just in time for Rosh Hashone, the "Taste of Jewish Culture" event series continued with a fabulous experience in the hands of master baker Uri Scheft. More than a dozen participants came out for a challah making class in the Breads Bakery kitchen in Union Square. Participants came ready to bake, flour and roll their way to festive and delicious round holiday challahs, focaccia, and babkas...and left with arms full of their delectable results!

Rounding out the series for this season, we sponsored a fascinating walking tour of Jewish restaurants, bakeries and food markets in Rego



Park, Queens, led by Joe DiStefano of the food blog, *Chopsticks + Marrow*. A select group discovered the remarkable array of Jewish foods from many cultures, from the exotic — specialties from the former Soviet republic of Georgia — to the more familiar classic deli selections at Ben's Best. It was a delicious and satisfying way of getting to know a diverse neighborhood while walking off any unwanted calories.

Stay tuned for more adventures with food in 2015!

