

National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section
Annual Report 2005-2006
Judy Cohen, President
Cindy Busis, Executive Director

It is with great pleasure that we present the Annual Report of the National Council of Jewish Women, Pittsburgh Section for the program and fiscal year 2005-2006. Last year, we constructed the Annual Report within the context of our 2004-2006 Strategic Plan, in order to give it meaning beyond a listing of events and accomplishments. We have completed this strategic planning cycle. **Lynne Garfinkel** will take up the mantle as president after the May 10, 2006 Annual Meeting and will guide the organization to new strategic action goals, with the support of her board, leadership team, and the strong volunteers and members of NCJW, Pittsburgh Section.

Our NCJW volunteer base, as always, is at the core of Pittsburgh Section, both organizationally and with regard to delivering our mission-based activities in community service and advocacy. They form the backbone of our “leadership, collaborations, partnerships, and success”—the theme of this year’s Annual Meeting. A list of NCJW Pittsburgh Section volunteers is attached to this report. NCJW members and staff names appear in **bold** in this report.

In a year filled with action and activity (sometimes breathless!), we took enormous pride in the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh awarding the 2005 Good Government Award to NCJW and Past President **Lynette Lederman**. The League recognized us for community service projects such as the Children’s Playrooms in the Courts and Pic A Bag, and noted our courage and foresight in presenting the series, “Election Year 2004: Civil Liberties Issues” just before the 2004 Presidential election.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We are known historically and through the present for meeting community needs through programs and projects that have an impact on women, children, and families in the region. Vice President **Christine Stone** brought another year of dedication and keen insight to these critical activities. We welcome **Jenn Finkelstein** as co-Vice President of Community Service in 2006-2007.

Children’s Playrooms in the Courts

The Children’s Playrooms in the Courts had another exceptional year, caring for over 5,000 children in the Jane B. Lobl Family/Juvenile, Criminal, and Municipal Courts while their parents or caregivers attended to court business. The county asked us to open a fourth room for the children of jurors, instrumental in helping the courts meet their goal of increasing diversity in the jurors’ pool by making it easier for parents and caregivers to serve on juries. The jurors’ children have been incorporated into the Lobl Room, to which we have added a more structured curriculum. New supervisor **Jessica Zinno** has

brought enthusiasm and creativity to the Lobl Room. The room has a “new look” with planned craft activities, story hours and organized play times.

We are again grateful to **David Pollock**, Esq. for spearheading the effort of the Family Law Section of the Allegheny County Bar Association to donate money, toys and books to the Rooms. Their generosity is greatly appreciated. We also thank Eric and Scott Wasserman Stern, Brand Delany, and Ethan and Hannah Taylor who selected the book drive as their respective tzedakah project for their B’nai Mitzvah. They collected 3,000 books. **Hilary Spatz** has done an amazing job in creating a campaign in conjunction with Beginning with Books / Read 365 to have a book drive in the courts.

The Advisory Committee, chaired by **Lynne Siegel** and **Mona Strassburger**, is busy planning their first fund raising event to be held this fall. It will highlight the Lobl Waiting Room in the Family/Juvenile court.

Volunteers are an important part of our project. This year 26 adult volunteers and 9 college student volunteers have contributed a total of 1,800 hours to the children. Thanks to the diligence of Playrooms chair **Joan Levy**, we have added two new volunteers – **Beth Frisch** and **Linda Bodell**. The project strives to provide a rewarding and constructive experience that fulfills the volunteer while engaging the children. Other than the knowledge that every volunteer is making a difference in a child’s life, we try to thank our volunteers in small ways. At the Annual Recognition Luncheon, the Rooms honored **Marian Finegold**, **Joan Minsky** and **Bobbie Tabachnick** for their five years of dedication to the children. **Sheila Cohen** was honored for her 20 years of service. **Connie Marstine** was given special recognition for her 24 years of dedication prior to her retirement from the project.

Ellen Siegel, **Lynette Lederman**, **Christine Stone**, **Judy Cohen**, and **Cindy Busis** also lent organizational expertise to the Jail Waiting Room project, an effort initiated by the Child Guidance Foundation to create a warm and welcoming environment for the families of inmates visiting their loved ones at the Allegheny County Jail.

Many thanks to director **Ellen Siegel** and her staff – **Jessica Zinno**, **Zoya Semenova**, **Danita Hicks**, recipient of the 2006 Ruth Garfinkel Staff Excellence Award, **Judy Ehrenwerth**, **Jacy Eastland**, **Liesl Meyers** and **Rose Pian**.

Pic A Bag

Pic A Bag remained busy throughout the year. We continued to supply the Allegheny County Department of Children and Youth Services with bags for children removed from their homes to foster or medical care and expanded in this area by forging a relationship with Judge Jill Rangos, based on a connection made by past president, **Lynette Lederman**. Thanks to a grant by the United Jewish Federation, we were able to reach out to new recipients, including the Westmoreland County Intermediate Unit and the Intermediate Unit serving Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties. This was in addition to the homeless and women’s shelters served by the Allegheny County

Intermediate Unit. We also worked closely with the Homeless Children's Education Fund to support its Pack-to-School backpack program, and are delighted that HCEF founder Joseph Lagana, Ph.D., will speak at our Annual Meeting on May 10. We were thrilled to have college student **Wendy Doernberg** assist us in organizing and expanding our Pic A Bag outreach.

The Pittsburgh Project requested bags for the Hurricane Katrina relocation effort, and we were glad to supply them—along with sheet sets from Thriftique. NCJW was the first agency called upon to assist last September. We also supplied Pic A Bag inventory for the mitvah project associated with UJF's young adult Mission Atidim to Karmiel/Misgav, Israel, in which **Lynne Garfinkel, Jenn Finkelstein, Dana Himmel, and Amy Himmel** participated.

We also saw renewed interest in volunteer leadership for the program, as people stepped forward to assume the chairman role and to contact schools and other organizations for donations and to participate in "stuffing parties." NCJW invited volunteers from UJF's 2005 Mitzvah Day project for a "stuffing party" for Pic A Bag at Anathan House, with **Jenn Finkelstein, Dana Himmel, Lynn Farber, Lynne Garfinkel, Christine Stone, and Melanie Weisbord** working on the program. So many families came that 200 bags were stuffed in just over two hours. We held another "stuffing party" on April 2, 2006. **Melanie Weisbord** was instrumental and invaluable in procuring inventory and organizing stuffings. We look forward to **Cynthia Abrams** taking the reins as chair of the project in 2006-2007.

Book Drive

What an exciting year for Book Drive, with chair **Hilary Spatz** conceiving, organizing, and carrying out a major program with **Laurie Moser** and Read 365! Hilary, as they say, "took it and ran with it", putting together a concurrent Book Drive for the first time in the Allegheny Courts, simultaneously with pre-schools around the city, to celebrate the Month of the Young Child in April. **Hilary** also contacted judges, lawyers, and court administrators for donations of books and funds and to help implement and "talk up" the Book Drive. **Bernita Buncher** stepped forward to offer assistance in collecting books from the sites when needed. **Jenn Finkelstein** and **Dana Himmel** led efforts to "sort and sticker" all of the books before sending them down to the Children's Playrooms at the Courts for distribution. Thanks to all!

Student Scholarship

The year was busy for our Student Scholarship program, as we worked to tighten policies and procedures and finalize criteria for our own NCJW Post-Secondary Scholarship Fund (formerly known as the NCJW Anniversary Fund), to include:

- 3.0 or equivalent
- Female student at any post-secondary level
- Profile reflects missions and values of NCJW

- Financial need

Altogether, NCJW distributed \$10,621 worth of scholarships to twenty-two (22) students for this academic year, while continuing to phase out our loan business. Chairs **Nancy Israel** and **Dana Himmel** worked closely with Central Scholarship Service of the Jewish Family and Children's Services and ably led the NCJW committee. Committee members included president **Judy Cohen**, **Gertrude Caplan**, **Roberta Feldman**, **Elaine Krasik**, **Estelle Kruman**, **Sally Libson**, **Claralyn Phillips**, **Madelain Tauberg**, **Frommie Whitman**, **Laurie Moser**, **Lynette Lederman**, **Karen Ross**, and **Paula Zunder**. Many thanks to NCJW executive assistant **Lisa Boehmke** for expertly staffing this project.

Suit Yourself

The Suit Yourself project is closely aligned with Thriftique. We are able to offer organizations that assist women, men, and families in programs of re-entry, self-improvement, and job readiness vouchers to purchase clothes at the store. This past year, vouchers again were distributed to community help organizations such as the Career & Workforce Development Center, Touching Families, Turtle Creek Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center, Jubilee Kitchen, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Jewish Family and Children's Services, Braddock Health Center, and Jewish Family Assistance Fund. We continued strong partnerships with POWER, located across the street from Thriftique, and the Women's Center and Shelter. We are grateful to Oakmont merchant **Carol Kinkela**, owner of Carabella for her donations to Designer Days and her expertise on retail matters. We are seeking funding opportunities since our grant from Kaufmann's was discontinued due to the restructuring of Federated Department Stores. **Joan Ettinger** and Retail Director/Membership Coordinator **Bonnie Rubin** are also putting together a proposal to take to female-owned businesses to support SUIT YOURSELF. Contact them if you have any ideas or "contacts."

Oral History

Past presidents **Marcia Frummerman** and **Gene Dickman** continued their work on the Oral History project. Last year's effort to bring out a curriculum based on the Oral History project has evolved to augmenting the curriculum (drafted by Carol Congedo for a course by CMU's Academy of Lifelong Learning in fall 2005) with more audio and visual pieces to better illustrate how being Jewish affected the lives of many prominent Pittsburghers and how their lives affected the community and beyond. **Betty Berger**, librarian and NCJW abstractor, continued to work to transfer all of the taped interviews from 1993-2000. She also has assisted in cataloguing the continuing archive of NCJW organizational materials housed at the University of Pittsburgh Archive Library Center.

Services to the Elderly

The Services to the Elderly committee, chaired by **Dr. Barbara Shore and Marion Damick**, worked throughout the year. The committee continued the "resident profiling" project, which involves interviewing seniors to provide information on their doors to

would-be visitors and caregivers at Charles Morris and Weinberg Terrace. In collaboration with AgeWell, NCJW, through the Services to the Elderly committee, hosted a major presentation on October 31st on Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs. The speaker was Francesca Chervenak, managing attorney for the Pennsylvania Health Law Project. The program drew an overflow audience to the JCC's Levinson Hall. **Maxine Horn** continued the writing and submission of educational pieces on aging/needs of the elderly for each Bulletin. This committee continues the legacy of service to the elderly that has long been a part of NCJW Pittsburgh Section. This dedicated committee also includes **Bobbie Kramer, Bernice Herzog, Ricki Moskowitz, Joan Reich, Sharyn Rubin, Joan Glickstein, and Fran Caplan.**

Children's Literacy Project

Chair **Jan Engelberg** and her group of volunteer tutors continued their efforts this year to provide supplemental learning services to children and teachers at Linden School. Although a small program, it is self-sufficient and brings an important enrichment to the school, as well as continued visibility for NCJW in the public education sector. The volunteer tutors include **Jan, Marian Finegold, and Elizabeth Gordon** at Linden School, and Gary Geller at Colfax School. Thank you all so much!

SOCIAL ACTION & EDUCATION

Where to begin to describe an extraordinary year of advocacy and education . . . how about with the 2005 Opening Program? We were fortunate to welcome speakers Esther Barazzone, Ph.D., President of Chatham College and home of the Regional Women's Initiative, and Leslie Stiles, Executive Director of the PA Commission for Women. The topic for the evening was "Where Do We Stand: The Status of Women in Pennsylvania and the Region." Aably led by co-vice presidents **Karen Egorin** and **Joan Weinbaum**, the Opening Program committee of **Lynne Garfinkel, Lynnette Lederman, Laurie Gottlieb, Dana Himmel, Dena Chottiner, Susan Jordan, Karen Friedman, Robin Elson, Twyla Sable, and Judy Cohen** presented a substantive event that also was fun—preceded for the first time by a "boutique" of vendors' tables, which Dana organized, featuring wonderful, wearable, and usable items for purchase. These vendors graciously contributed 20% of their revenues for the evening, which NCJW turned over to Hurricane Katrina relief organized by UJF.

We received national recognition for responding to our NCJW Washington, DC office, and DC Office Director **Sammie Moshenberg**, to identify and organize a coalition of like-minded organizations to oppose the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court and advocate for a fair and independent judiciary. Chaired by life member **Barbara Weschler**, local groups representing advocates for women's rights, reproductive rights, disability rights, gay and lesbian rights, disadvantaged and minority rights, the environment, and labor unions came together and met at Anathan House in early January. **Sammie** and state public affairs chair **Eleanor Levie** facilitated the meeting, part of an NCJW, Inc. effort funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation for NCJW's BenchMark campaign to save Roe. Over 60 organizations eventually joined the

coalition. We held two press conferences, a rally at the City-County building, and organized speakers before City Council. Although Mr. Alito was confirmed, we were successful in persuading City Council to send a resolution to the United States Senate opposing his nomination.

Christine Stone and **Cindy Busis** heeded the call by the Women's Law Project and met with State Rep. Tom Stevenson in March, to ask that he remove his sponsorship and not support a proposed amendment to the Pennsylvania constitution which would define marriage as between one man and one woman and prohibiting the recognition of any marital status identical or substantially equivalent to marriage. Aside from the fact that the proposed amendment is targeted against a particular group (and is unnecessary as same sex marriage already is prohibited in Pennsylvania), the proposed amendment could take away existing legal protection, under local laws, for committed long-term couples and their children, such as hospital visitation rights, inheritance rights, pension benefits and health insurance coverage and could eliminate the ability of those who are living with but not married to a significant other from obtaining protection from abuse orders.

On April 4, we joined women from around Pennsylvania in a Statewide Women's Lobby Day. **Christine Stone**, **Bonnie Rubin**, and **Cindy Busis** traveled to Harrisburg to learn more about, and advocate on, issues of critical importance, including emergency contraception for rape victims, ending pharmacist refusal to fill birth control prescriptions, voting rights, preventing insurance discrimination against victims of domestic violence, and more. Under the leadership of **Karen Egorin**, NCJW also joined the Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition to bring awareness of and ask for the United States to take action on the state supported ethnic cleansing taking place in that area of Sudan. NCJW continues to sit on the UJF sponsored Community Public Affairs Council, helping to ensure active participation by the Jewish community in matters of social justice and public policy.

Many, many thanks to Co-Vice Presidents **Karen Egorin** and **Joan Weinbaum** for extraordinary leadership and hands-on service in social action and education.

Silent Witness Initiative

The Silent Witness Initiative (SWI), chaired by **Twyla Sable**, continued to work actively both as a discrete program and in active coalition throughout the region. Once again, we chaired Domestic Violence Day during the October YWCA *A Week Without Violence*. The entire Executive Committee participated in the annual Post-It Day on February 14, during which we canvassed the area and persuaded business owners and others to put up over 1000 domestic abuse resource posters. Volunteers placed posters in restrooms, employee lounges, bulletin boards, and store front windows throughout Allegheny County and surrounding suburbs.

SWI worked with the Jewish Domestic Violence Task Force, the Women's Center and Shelter, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (SAVE walk), the YWCA *A Week Without Violence*, and the Alle-Kiski Hope Center on various projects and programs. Chaired by

Twyla Sable with assistance from **Karen Egorin** and **Dena Chottiner**, NCJW hosted a most successful shopping event with Chico's of Shadyside, during which the store, closed for regular business (though we had much traffic "off the street"), offered nibbles to invitees and returned 10% of the evening's sales to the Silent Witness Initiative. This event was so successful that **Susan Nitzberg** and **Liz Murphy** organized a similar "Women Helping Women" shopping, food, and fun event among the merchants in the Sewickley shopping district in early May. Our Silent Witness Initiative volunteers also participated in such community-wide events as "Take Back the Night" at Penn State McKeesport and the annual Women's Center and Shelter's "Spring Clothes Out" fundraiser. A number of schools, firms, and organizations requested our life-sized witnesses for programs on domestic violence, and this spring, we inaugurated a program on teen dating violence at Ellis School, led by **Dr. Jamie Stern**. **Karen Egorin** and **Cindy Busis** were part of a live radio broadcast on domestic abuse, sponsored by WAMO. We were grateful for another avenue to spread our message: "domestic abuse... there's no excuse!"

Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers responsible for the ongoing success of our Silent Witness Initiative: **Susan Tanzer**, **Dena Chottiner**, **Fran Darling**, **Karen Friedman**, **Ruth Garfinkel**, **Joan Levy**, **Lynette Lederman**, **Liz Murphy**, **Susan Nitzberg**, **Ellen Siegel**, and **Mona Strassburger**.

State Public Affairs Network

Pittsburgh Section continued to be a mainstay of the State Public Affairs Network, chaired by NCJW Inc. Board member **Eleanor Levie**. The core group of vice presidents **Karen Egorin** and **Joan Weinbaum**, with **Marion Damick**, **Christine Stone**, and **Cindy Busis**, participated in the mostly monthly calls that update the state NCJW network on critical public policy issues for education and advocacy. **Karen** throughout the year sent out action alerts to our expanding email list.

RETAIL OPERATIONS

Retail Operations have gone through many changes in 2005-2006, culminating in positive results. The store is clean and well-maintained and more efficiently processes donations. More importantly, sales have increased! Despite a slight decrease in Designer Days sales, we are above projections for all retail and will present net revenues greater than those of last year. We signed a new three-year lease for the Swissvale site and look forward to continued success there.

Thanks to our core group of wonderful and dedicated shop volunteers, including **Lenore Schwartz**, **Joan Reich**, **Marlene Litman**, **Marsha Stern**, **Rita Tauberg** and newest member **Robin Rosen**, the Designer merchandise is always marked quickly, and fresh stock goes into the boutique weekly. **Robin** keeps the book department in order and **Marsha** was always available for volunteer night when nobody else could make it.

The tireless effort of long-time shop chair **Nancy Recht** helps not just with Designer, but provides an always ready hand to help “woman” the shop. She fills in at the front desk, marks almost the entire Designer accessory department single handedly and keeps the “dealers” honest with pricing furniture and collectables. Thank you, **Nancy!**

Our staff is dedicated and has become quite flexible in responding to all of the new ways of doing business. Changes in policy, procedure, processing and pricing have been implemented and embraced. Kudos to **Debbie Teese, Liz Jones, Brandon Hampton, Mary Anne Karabinos, Agnes Morgan, Kira Kobets, Eartha Grimmitt, Lloyd Bundy, Pam Wakefield and Luana Hollingshead** for all their triumphant efforts to make our thrift shop the premier shop in Pittsburgh. There are more good things to come in 2006-2007!

This year we had our first staff professional development seminar in a series that will be developed over the next year. It focused on relationships and customer service. The facilitator asked the staff to come up with a “dream project”, if there were no barriers. **Brandon Hampton** from the shop spoke about helping those who are extremely poor and from that came our new “shop project.” The staff has identified 9 agencies with clients that have the greatest need and once a month we are inviting one of these agencies to participate in a “Free Shopping Spree”. The agency may bring 10-12 of their neediest clients. They will learn about what we do, we will learn about the agency and after introductions, each client will receive a shopping bag that they can fill with free clothing from the thrift shop. The first group had a great time and really appreciated the “gift” from NCJW.

Designer Days is never far off, so we are planning early this year. **Roxanne Wolk** is incoming Vice President of Retail and DD Chair. Along with **Bonnie, Roxanne** will spearhead the changes necessary for Designer Days to move from “flat” to increased sales. **Cathy Cohen** continues to be a mainstay force in all aspects of the event, giving invaluable guidance with her many years of experience in retail and the event itself. With the Retail Advisory committee, **Roxanne, Cathy,** and **Bonnie** will develop a plan to re-create and revitalize this well branded fundraising event so that it continues to provide the revenues for our non-sectarian community service projects.

The Alliance of Nonprofit Stores (ANS), of which we were a founding member, continues to make progress developing a business and marketing plan to become a local and eventually a national membership organization. The coalition is meeting with Kate Dewey of Dewey & Kaye in developing a plan to achieve the goal of educating the public about responsible donating and shopping practices. Promotional materials were developed, including a thirty second spot that ran the week of May 17th on KQV radio at prime travel times. This organization will help NCJW leverage many opportunities for sharing our projects to a large audience.

Returning DD chairs for this year include: **Phyllis Cohen**, food; **Sandy Chernew**, set up; **Ruth Garfinkel and Cheryl Braver**, front line; **Laurie Gottlieb**, marketing; **Nancy Recht**, boutique; **Nancy Difiore**, furs; **Dana Himmel**, volunteers; and **Judy Cohen**,

backroom. New chairs include **Joan Ettinger**, new donations; and **Rita Tauberg**, volunteers. We are still looking for chairs of special events and public relations (to work with **Laurie**). Please contact **Bonnie** if you want to chair or work on a committee.

MEMBERSHIP

Many thanks to Co-Vice Presidents **Phyllis Cohen** (ongoing) and **Dana Himmel** (outgoing), and we welcome new co-Vice President **Lynn Farber**. Under their leadership, **Bonnie Rubin**, as Membership Coordinator, will develop a strategic membership plan for the coming year. This plan will encompass three phases over the next five years that includes outreach and programming for the purpose of growing the organization and providing leadership for the future.

The goal of the membership plan is to increase membership and participation through education and engagement, as well as to retain and re-involve new and existing members to revitalize projects and provide for leadership succession. The initial phase will focus on bringing NCJW to the suburbs, selecting first a location in which we will develop a membership recruitment and engagement model. As we modify the model to meet the needs of each selected community, we will identify potential members, educate and engage them through programming and one-on-one contact, and then follow up with interested parties to initiate involvement and mentoring in a menu of projects and activities to meet their interests and time constraints.

We hope that all who attended our Annual Meeting on May 10th enjoyed the program, as we installed a new slate of officers, including president **Lynne Garfinkel**, and honored special individuals who represent the best of NCJW. These included **Dana Himmel**, Emerging Leader Award; **Phyllis Cohen**, Ruth and Jerome Lieber Leadership ; **Lynette Lederman**, Presidential Award; and our “unsung heroes”, **Nancy Recht**, **Mindy Recht**, **Joan Levy**, **Marsha Stern**, **Barbara Siegel**, **Sandy Chernen**, and **Dorothy Grinberg**. Kudos to all!! We also honored Children’s Playrooms at the Courts coordinator **Danita Hicks** with the **Ruth Garfinkel** Staff Excellence Award and heard first hand about how our projects touch lives, from Thriftique staffer and POWER graduate **Pam Wakefield**, and Dr. Joseph Lagana, founder of the Homeless Children’s Education Fund. We thank **Phyllis Cohen and Dana Himmel**, who chaired the Annual Meeting, and **Shari Zatman**, who provided inspired decorations.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Outgoing Vice President **Barb Siegel** led another successful Stay At Home Ball campaign, with enthusiastic and able assistance from intergenerational co-chairs **Gert Caplan**, **Susie Gross**, and **Melanie Weisbord**. We exceeded our budgeted goal! We look forward to continued success with incoming Vice President **Cathy Cohen**—and many thanks to **Barb** for continuing her service as a special appointment to the Board for the Stay at Home Ball annual campaign.

Lynne Jacobson took up the mantle to kick-off Phase II of the *Campaign for Anathan House: A Celebration of Continuity, Community, and Commitment*. Phase II focuses on the renovation of the first floor, Anathan Club, which will remain a tenant in a five-year lease with the Jewish Association on Aging, and the stairwell. Many thanks now—and in advance—to the wonderful Anathan House Campaign Steering Committee for their efforts in this important project: **Gert Caplan, Elyse Eichner, Sue Berman, Joan Weinbaum, Melanie Weisbord, Cathy Cohen, and Lynne Garfinkel**. Join us on June 1, 4-6 p.m., to see the plans for the first floor and celebrate our projects!

ANATHAN HOUSE AND ADMINISTRATION

The continuing leadership of Vice President **Amy Himmel** steered us to increased strength and stability in our operations and administration of Anathan House.

Our “big” news this year was the agreement with the Jewish Association on Aging to enter into a long-term (five year) lease as we collaborate to undertake the renovation of Anathan House’s first floor, home of Anathan Club, as well as our stairwell. This also kicks off the second phase of the Anathan House Campaign, chaired by **Lynne Jacobson**. **Liz Murphy** will lend her interior design talent to ensure the beauty and functionality of the renovation. We will feature the Phase I renovations of the third floor and our offices on the second floor, as well as share the architecture and design plans for the first floor, at an open house from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. on June 1. Many thanks in advance to co-chairs **Elyse Eichner** and **Ruth Garfinkel** for planning and carrying out this event, and to our architect Dan Rothschild, Doug Till of Keane Construction, and Anathan Club director **Zehava Waltzer** for being on hand to show us what will be!

All of our endeavors, but especially administration of Anathan House and the NCJW office, are supported by office manager **Cheryl Devecka**. Cheryl is involved in the support of nearly everything we do at NCJW, and we thank her so much for another year of devoted service. We also thank **Jeff Palatino**, who so ably takes care of custodial and maintenance services for Anathan House, always with a smile, and who is ready and willing to pitch in with whatever is needed! Continued thanks as well to executive assistant **Lisa Boehmke**, who designed and maintains our website, www.ncjwpgh.org, as well as manages personnel, scholarship, the board, and so much more—and to her husband, **Scott**, who manages technology for us.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Human Resources

In 2005-06, a Human Resources committee, made up of section members with vast and varied backgrounds in Human Resources (including **Susie Jordan, Lisa Tannenbaum, Joan Weinbaum, Jacki Mirowitz, Paula Garret, Cathy Cohen, Amy Himmel, Lynne Garfinkel, and staffed by Bonnie and Cindy**), was convened to look at all of our personnel policies. The group’s first order of business was to examine the current time-off policies; the committee is in the process of making recommendations about some

policy changes. These changes will go hand-in-hand with modifications to some other benefits; the primary purpose of the changes is to maximize equality and professionalism amongst the staff policies.

In 2006-07, under incoming Vice President's **Paula Garret's** leadership, the revised personnel policies will be completed and implemented. We will continue to evolve our performance management practices and processes, by modifying the current forms and protocols as necessary, and finding ways to make a more deliberate link between pay and performance.

Section Leadership Development

Building on the groundwork set by Michael Kumer's training session last May, a leadership development task force was convened (including **Ruth Garfinkel, Dana Himmel, Eileen Lane, Judy Vernick, Judy Cohen, Lynne Garfinkel, Karen Friedman, Lynette Lederman, Susie Jordan, and Susan Nitzberg**). The group focused on defining succession in our Section – in other words, how does someone become a leader in our organization today, and do we want to formalize that process at all? After some tongue-in-cheek joking around about how we turn all new volunteers into Vice Presidents, the group got serious about how we develop leaders in our Section. The discussion also involved looking at our board structure, and considering what is working and not working. Two primary outcomes are currently being pursued. First, the group determined the need for an Executive Vice President position, to be elected the second year of the current president's term, to serve primarily in an apprentice role. This change to the by-laws has been approved by National. Second, the group determined the need to pursue a formal leadership development program. Plans are just getting underway, but **Judy Cohen** has agreed to lead the effort to organize this program. A separate task force will be convened to work on this project in the coming fiscal year.

As the current strategic plan is wrapped up, we will reflect on what has been achieved (and we have really used our plan to guide Section's work over the past three years!), as we embark on development of a new plan. **Paula Garret**, as incoming VP of ODP, will lead the effort to develop a new plan, aligned with National's new strategic goals, and build upon the work currently being done in Section.

FINANCE

Vice President **Robin Elson** and her outstanding committee of professionals and experts, including **Cheryl Braver** (treasurer), **Cathy Cohen** (retail advisor), **Paula Garret**, **Eileen Lane**, **Randi Shaw** (assistant corresponding secretary), **Sharon Weisberg** (assistant treasurer), and **Judy Vernick** (national liaison) guided our organization to new excellence in financial management and control. In 2005, we completed the consolidation of investment accounts and selected **Fern Schwartz** of The Schwartz Group as our investment counselor. We already have seen very positive results, and we will be meeting with her and her team quarterly to review our accounts. In this process, we also revised our investment and asset allocation policies. In 2005, we also engaged a

new audit firm, R.D. Hoag and Associates, who reported back an excellent management letter and noted to our committee that NCJW is one of the soundest and most stable of all non-profits with which they have worked. Work on updating financial statements, such as the monthly Treasurer's Report, to make them clearer and more informational, continued. Thanks to our Bookminders bookkeeper, Cindy McCormick, who at this point is part of the NCJW staff family!

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Stay tuned for another outstanding year of action, projects, service, vitality, and community leadership as we look toward program year 2006-2007!

Best,

Judy and Cindy