



# SISTERS-IN-LAW

## NEW YORK CHAPTER

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2 | JUNE 2023

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HON. MARCIA HIRSCH

Dear Sisters In Law,

I have been following all of the amazing programs, webinars, events and awards ceremonies that have taken place in our courts and bar associations recently. If your calendar looks like mine, it is filled! Congratulations to all of you who have participated, organized, moderated, been recognized, and taken part in acknowledging and educating our legal community. This newsletter is filled with photos and proof that we are the innovators and leaders in our courthouses and beyond. Thank you for all that you do!

In March, we were proud to co-sponsor with the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission and the New York City Bar, the Women's History Month Program on Judge Constance Baker Motley. Judge Shirley Troutman presented a video montage of significant events in the life of the "Civil Rights Queen," and gave voice to her impassioned writings and decisions. One hundred guests attended in person and an equal number virtually. The Williams Commission put it best: "It is our hope that this program helped keep her torch lit so that generations to come will know her name and seek to follow her trailblazing career."

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF WOMEN JUDGES  
NY CHAPTER  
NEWSLETTER

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In May, we held our Spring Retreat in Saratoga, with the theme “Women Who Wouldn’t Take ‘No’ for an Answer.” Our attendees enjoyed the lectures from our own Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, Hon. Edwina Richardson-Mendelson, Albany Law School faculty, and Skidmore College faculty. We were guests at the Court of Appeals and learned the rich history of the court, some of its judges, and the beautiful building and courtroom. We met Governor Kathy Hochul in the Blue Room of the Capitol for a group photo, and were later introduced by name into the record on the floor of the Assembly. The weather was beautiful and we all enjoyed being together, making new friends from around the state, sharing delicious meals, and relaxing. Please consider joining us next year!

May saw many events celebrated in recognition of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, as well as Law Day and Take Our Children to Work Day!

On May 22nd, the trailblazer and legendary Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin (ret.) convened the New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts for its annual meeting in New York City to discuss many of the issues and concerns that affect women in the courts including legal practitioners, judges, court staff, litigants and other stakeholders. Our work here is so important and new challenges emerge constantly.

As you know, June is LGBTQ Pride Month. We celebrate the courage and bravery of all who work to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for LGBTQ+ Americans. It saddens me that many of our NAWJ-NY members have resigned in protest over NAWJ’s decision to hold its annual conference this year in Indiana, ignoring the resolution that was passed in 2021 in large part through the advocacy of our New York chapter members. I extend a warm invitation for those members to join us, their New York sisters, in any and all of our events locally or statewide. You are a part of this organization and we cherish your participation.

Under the category of New Beginnings, I know that you join me in congratulating our new Chief Judge, Rowan Wilson, on his appointment. His focus on transparency and supporting the judges is welcome and we look forward to working with him and Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas on their initiatives.

As I said, we’ve been very busy this spring. Have a beautiful summer! Find some time to relax, enjoy time spent with family and friends, travel safe if you go away, read something fun, and take care.

Warmly,  
Hon. Marcia Hirsch,  
NAWJ-NY President

# **DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE EDWINA RICHARDSON-MENDELSON RECEIVES THE ROBERT L. HAIG AWARD**

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Edwina Richardson-Mendelson was presented with the Robert L. Haig Award by the New York State Bar Association's Commercial and Federal Litigation Section.

She was honored during the Commercial & Federal Litigation Section and Dispute Resolution Section Joint Spring Meeting in Philadelphia.



Justice Troy Webber, Appellate Division, First Department, presented the Hon. Edwina Richardson-Mendelson with the award.

# ASSOCIATION OF LAW SECRETARIES DINNER

NAWJ-NY Members Hon. Wavny Toussaint, Hon. Cheree A. Buggs, Hon. Mary Ann Brigantti, Hon. Ta-Tanisha D. James, Hon. Marsha D. Michael, Hon. Marina Cora Mundy, Hon. Lisa S. Ottley, and Hon. Lourdes M. Ventura were honored with the 2023 William Goodstein Memorial Award for dedicated service to the courts at the annual dinner of the Association of Law Secretaries on May 2, 2023.



The Hon. Wavny Toussaint

The Hon. Wavny Toussaint, Hon. Cheree A. Buggs, and Hon. Lourdes M. Ventura with their awards



# ASSOCIATION OF LAW SECRETARIES DINNER



The Hon. Lisa S. Ottley with  
Principal Law Clerk Lola  
Waterman

Jasmine Valle, Principal Law  
Clerk to Associate Justice  
Lourdes Ventura; Associate  
Justice Lourdes Ventura;  
Associate Justice Marina Cora  
Mundy with daughter Cora Lynn  
Mundy



# SISTERS IN LAW SPRING RETREAT

**"WOMEN WHO WOULDN'T TAKE 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER"**  
**MAY 7-9, 2023**



Sisters-in-Law during the spring retreat

Sisters-in-Law in the Court of Appeals Courtroom



# SISTERS IN LAW SPRING RETREAT



NAWJ-NY during the Court of Appeals tour

Hope Engel speaking during the Court of Appeals tour





NAWJ- NY leadership & National Secretary Judge Carmen Velasquez



The NAWJ-NY being honored at the floor of the NY Assembly

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### The Queens, NY Judges

R-L: National- Secretary Judge Carmen Velasquez ( Civil Term Supreme), Judge Lancman ( Civil Supreme) Judge Anna Culley ( Civil Supreme) Judge Marcia Hirsch ( Criminal Term - Treatment Court) Judge Lourdes Ventura (Appellate Term) Judge Enedina Sánchez (Housing) Maureen Heightner (Court of Claims)



In the Blue Room, NAWJ-NY Chapter  
with NY Governor Kathy Hochul

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NAWJ-NY meeting with NY Governor Kathy Hochul



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At the legislative Stairs NAWJ-NY Judges Carmen Velasquez and President Judge Marcia Hirsch with Assembly Member Catalina Cruz along who requested our presence and asked the Assembly's recognition.



NAWJ-NY President Hon. Marcia P. Hirsch (center) with Vice President for the First Department Hon. Llinét M. Rosado (right) and Vice President for the Second Department Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones (left).



LJA Members Hon. Wilma Guzman, Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones, Hon. Lourdes M. Ventura, Hon. Llinét M. Rosado, and Hon. Enedina Pilar Sanchez at the NAWJ-NY Spring retreat

Hon. Llinét M. Rosado, Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones, and Hon. Lourdes M. Ventura sporting their NAWJ-NY fusion jackets at the Association's 2023 Spring Retreat in Saratoga Springs.





Members at Boca Bistro



Enjoying dinner at Boca Bistro

# ALBANY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S COURT OF APPEALS DINNER

The evening's honorees include: the Hon. Shirley Troutman, Associate Judge of the NYS Court of Appeals as the Featured Speaker; the Albany County Bar Association Distinguished Service Award will be awarded to Hon. Mae A. D'Agostino, United States District Judge for the Northern District of NY and the Albany County Bar Association President's Award will be awarded to Hon. Christina L. Ryba, Justice of the Supreme Court of NYS.



Hon. Christina L. Ryba, Hon. Shirley Troutman, and Hon. Teneka Frost

Attendees of the Court of Appeals Dinner



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# ALBANY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S COURT OF APPEALS DINNER



The honorees: the Hon. Christina L. Ryba, the  
Hon. Shirley Troutman, and the Hon. Mae A.  
D'Agostino

# 2023 COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN CONFERENCE

On March 6, 2023, the Hon. Kathy King represented NAWJ as a panelist at the 2023 Commission on the Status of Women conference held at the United Nations on March 6, 2023.

The panel entitled "Let Girls & Women Have Access to Education," was hosted by Salwar Kader, NAWJ member and President of the Int'l Federation For Peace and Sustainable Development, and included Judge King, Judge Rona Sabawoon, Aslia Wardak and Zarifa Adiba.

Judge Rona and the other panelists spoke about their experiences as women in Afghanistan and about their personal journeys to the USA.

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Let girls & women have access to education

6-17 March 2023 **INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE**  
**CSW67** EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN Progress toward gender equality

The International Federation for Peace and Sustainable development invites to attend the high-level side event session at the CSW67.

SAVE THE DATE  
March 6th  
11:30 am to 12:45 pm  
Conference Room A  
United Nations Headquarters

IFPSD NAWJ United Nations Sierra Leone

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# Let women and girls have access to education

High-level side event at CSW67 - March 6th at 11:30

## Mediated by: Her Excellency Ms. Salwa Kader

Activist, Philanthropist, and Humanitarian, Sally (Salwa) Shatila Kader is the founder and president of the International Federation for Peace and Sustainable Development (IFPSD). The organization is in consultative status with ECOSOC and is associated with the DPI at the United Nations. Under President Kader, the IFPSD has established a global network and she has been recognized by world leaders and organizations for her contributions toward peace. The IFPSD's major pillars of focus include Women Empowerment, Interfaith Dialogue, Youth Leadership, Human Rights, and Human Trafficking, centered on the mission of building bridges across peoples and communities to connect continents for peace.



### OUR GUEST SPEAKERS



## The Honorable Judge Kathy J. King

Kathy J. King is the Justice of Kings County Supreme court. Committed to ensuring diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, she is a lifetime member of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). She is presently a District Director representing the states of New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, and co-chair of NAWJ's membership committee. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Barnabas High School, an all-girls high school in Bronx County, and presently serves as the Board's secretary.



## The Honorable Judge Rona Sabawoon

On August 15, 2021, when the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed, Rona Sabawoon lost her job as a judge as the Taliban took control of the capital city and began to oppress and prosecute female judges. Therefore, she and other Afghan female judges were then forced to flee with their families. Judge Rona, along with her spouse and child, entered the United States on September 2021 to start a new life in peace. Currently, she is working as court analyst in Queens county criminal court.



## Her Excellency Ms. Asila Wardak

Former Afghan Diplomat Ms. Wardak is a Human rights and Women's rights Activist and Board member of the Women Forums on Afghanistan. She works as Independent Human Rights Commissioner at the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and is committed to protecting human and women's rights as well as civil society empowerment. Ms. Asila Wardak has served as Minister Counselor at the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations; she was one of the Afghan delegates at the Doha/Qatar Peace Talks in 2019 and represented Afghan Government during the Peace Negotiations and talks with the Taliban.



## Zarifa Adiba

Zarifa is a 24-year-old woman from Kabul, Afghanistan. She graduated from the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, the only music education entity in the country, and became the conductor of its first-ever all-female orchestra. On top of speaking at many prestigious conferences and panels, Zarifa also wrote a book of her story which was published in 5 languages and will soon be available in English by the title of "Playing for Freedom - The Journey of a Young Afghan Girl"



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR PEACE  
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Conference Panelists, Judge Rona Sabawoon, Aslia Wardak and Zarifa Adiba



Judge Rona Sabawoon, Salwa Kader, President, International Federation for Peace and Sustainable Development, Hon. Kathy J. King, Hon. Carmen Velasquez, Hon. Leslie A. Stroth

# NOTEWORTHY NEWS

## First Department:

- Congratulations to Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Hon. **Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson**, who was presented with the prestigious Doris S. Hoffman Medal on June 2, 2023 at the annual convention of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY).
- Congratulations to **Hon. Sherri L. Eisenpress**, who was presented with the Judith S. Kaye Access to Justice Award on June 2, 2023 at the annual convention of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY).
- Congratulations to **Hon. Karen B. Wolff**, who was presented with the Joan L. Ellenbogen Founders Award on June 2, 2023 at the annual convention of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY).
- Congratulations to **Hon. Sylvia Hinds-Radix**, Corporation Counsel, who was presented with the Betty Weinberg Ellerin Mentoring Award on June 2, 2023 at the annual convention of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY).

## Second Department:

- Congratulations to **Hon. Patria Frias-Colón** who was recognized as a "Woman of Impact" at the United Nations Ramadan Iftar celebration on April 13, 2023.
- Congratulations to all the members of the Appellate Term, First and Second Departments, including NAWJ-NY Members **Hon. Wavny Toussaint; Hon. Cheree A. Buggs; Hon. Mary Ann Brigantti; Hon. Tanisha D. James; Hon. Marsha D. Michael; Hon. Marina Cora Mundy; Hon. Lisa S. Ottley;** and **Hon Lourdes M. Ventura**, who were honored with the 2023 William Goodstein Memorial Award for dedicated service to the courts at the annual dinner of the Association of Law Secretaries on May 2, 2023.
- Congratulations to **Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones** who was honored with the Lynn Terrelonge Bridge to Diversity Award at the annual meeting of the Brooklyn Bar Association on May 10, 2023.
- Congratulations to **Hon. Lisa Lewis** and **Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones** who were both honored with the "Contemporary Giant" Award on May 27, 2023 at the 6th Annual Ladies Brunch - Power Broker Edition sponsored by 500 Men Making a Difference. The annual event honors "40 Amazing Women" in four categories: "Greatness in the Making"; "Ones to Watch"; "Contemporary Giant"; and "Living Legend."
- Congratulations to **Hon. Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson** who served as Commencement Speaker and was presented with the St. Thomas More Award "in recognition of her outstanding moral leadership" at the 2023 Commencement Ceremony of St. John's School of Law on May 21, 2023.
- On March 23, 2023 the Suffolk County Women in the Courts Committee, in conjunction with District Administrative Judge Andrew Crecca, celebrated Women's History Month in a special program at the Marquette Floyd Supreme Courthouse in Central Islip. In keeping with this year's theme, "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories", Suffolk honored Second Department Associate **Justice Helen Voutsinas**, who shared her struggles as a little girl who entered school on Long Island speaking only Spanish.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Ludmila Molina, Esq., Sepa Mujer staff attorney, Hon Andrew Crecca, Hon Maureen Liccione, and Juana Torres, Esq., Sepa Mujer director of legal services and staff attorney



Judge Liccione, co-chair of the Women's History Month celebration committee, displaying the gift to Judge Voutsinas, a replica of the china used at suffrage events in the early 1900's. The writing says "Votes for Women" which was a subtle method for changing hearts and minds.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones pictured with BBA Diversity Committee Chair Joy A. Thompson, Esq. and Vice-Chair Kwok Kei Ng, Esq.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Dean Michael Simons and Hon. Edwina Richardson-Mendelson

Tawanna M. St. Louis, Esq., Hon. Lorna McAllister, Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones and Hon. Cheryl J. Gonzales at the Annual Gala Dance of the New York Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers held on May 6, 2023.



## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Hon. Gina Lopez-Summa, Hon. Maureen Liccione, Attorney General Letisha (Tish) James and Hon. Andrea Schiavoni at the dinner celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote sponsored by the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association on March 2, 2023.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Congratulations to Hon. Patria Frías-Colón who was recognized at El Diario's "Mujeres Destacadas 2023" celebration on April 21, 2023.



## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Members of the Judiciary and law students at the Southern District of New York Courthouse for the Reenactment of *Mendez v Westminster* sponsored by the Latino Judges Association on March 23, 2023.



NAWJ-NY members Hon. Verna L. Saunders, Hon. Robin K. Sheares, Hon. Cheryl J. Gonzales, and Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones with Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson at the 2023 Law Day Ceremony of Kings County Supreme Court held on May 10, 2023.



Congratulations to Hon. Lisa Lewis and Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones who were both honored with the "Contemporary Giant" Award on May 27, 2023 at the 6th Annual Ladies Brunch

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Judge Quiñones with members of  
Camp Quiñones

Judge Quiñones with her "Contemporary  
Giant" Award



## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Judge Lewis with her "Contemporary Giant" Award

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)

### **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES (NAWJ) - NEW YORK IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BRONX WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION**

**Present**

a Sisters in Law Program

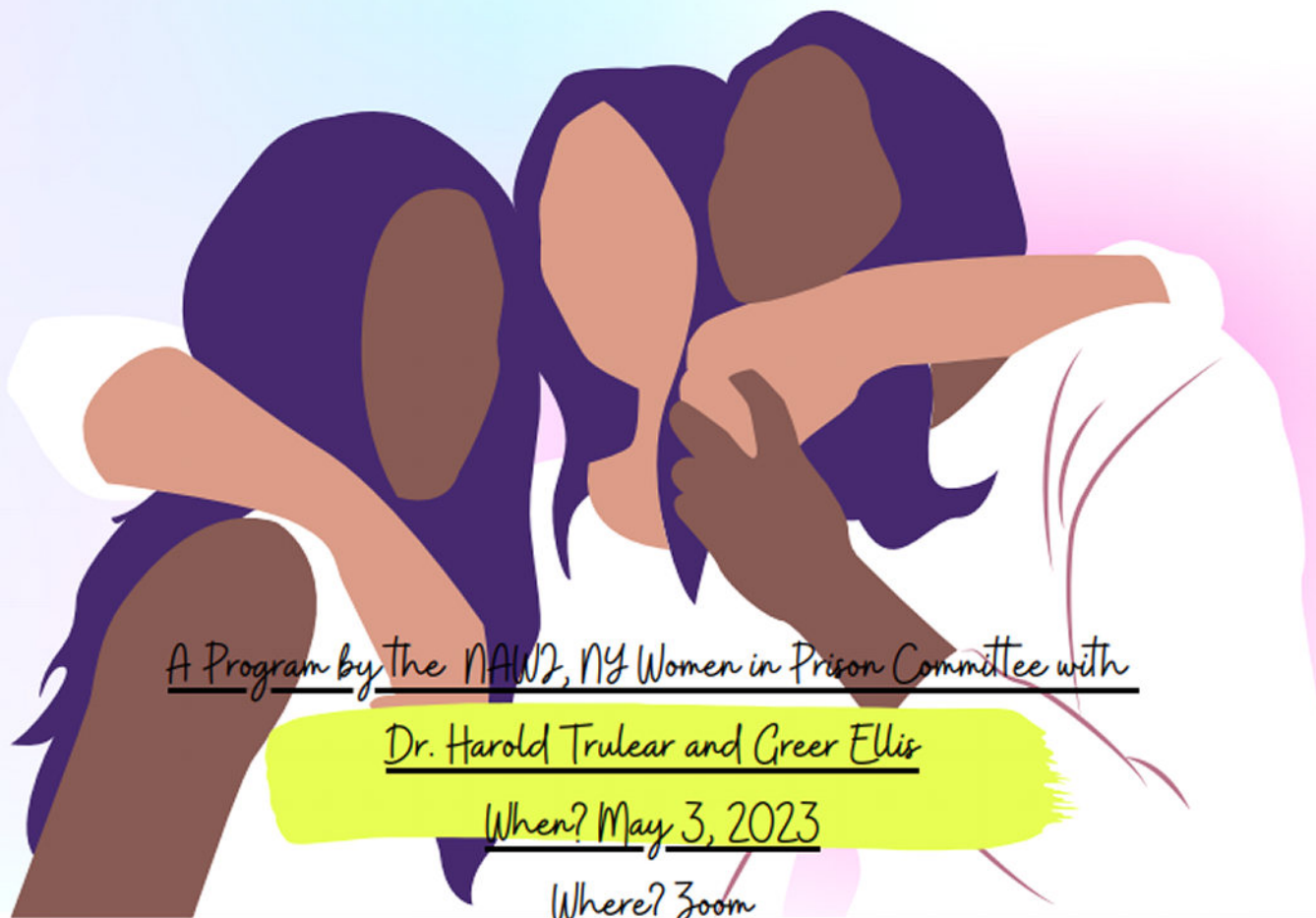
Law Day with the Future Lawyers Club of Preston High School



NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)

Language and Labels in the Criminal Justice System:

I am a Person With a Name



A Program by the NAWJ, NY Women in Prison Committee with

Dr. Harold Trulear and Greer Ellis

When? May 3, 2023

Where? Zoom

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)

### **Fourth Department:**

- On June 7, 2023 the NYS Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts - 8th JD Gender Fairness Committee honored 11 outstanding women in the law. Honorees include Kelly A. Buckley, Paula A. Campbell, Colleen Gibbons, Antonia Gillison, Lee Ann Lazarony, Mary Jane Nevins, Michelle Parker, Jamie Summers, Ayoka Tucker, Laura Wagner, Jennifer Wilkinson and Helen Z.M. Rodgers (posthumously).
- On June 2, 2023, the **Hon. Karen Luupuloff**, **Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden**, **Hon. Grace Hanlon**, and **Hon. Joanne Winslow** participated in the Richard C Failla LGBTQ Commission's Judge Paul G. Feinman Award Ceremony.



Co-Chairs of the 8th JD Gender Fairness Committee, Hon. Stephanie Saunders, Kristy Holland Angie Davis-Leveritte and Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres, pictured in the front row along with outgoing committee chair, Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden and 8th JD Administrative Judge Kevin Carter.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS (CONTINUED)



Hon. Grace Hanlon speaking at the Feinman Award Ceremony



Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres, Tashia Moore, Andrea Conjerti, Hon. Grace Hanlon, and Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden at the Feinman Award Ceremony



Brittany Jones, Principal Law Clerk to the Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden, Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden, and Hon. Stephanie Saunders at the Feinman Award Ceremony

# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Sisters In Law,

I hope this message finds you well! As always, thank you all for your contributions to this newsletter. It is apparent that we are participating and assisting in wonderful programs. I am also glad to see the bonding and love shared during our spring retreat. Please continue to send newsworthy items my way so that we can ensure that they make this quarterly newsletter.

Enjoy the beautiful summer!

With gratitude,  
Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden,  
NAWJ-NY Co-editor