

National Council of Jewish Women
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NCJW EXPLORES WOODY GUTHRIE'S JEWISH CONNECTION

TEANECK -- National Council of Jewish Women will delve into little known facts about singer-songwriter Woody Guthrie at its November General meeting. Woody Guthrie's daughter, Nora Guthrie, will talk about his Jewish mother-in-law, Yiddish poet Aliza Greenblatt, and the tremendous influence Aliza and Jewish music had on Guthrie's music. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at 12:30 pm at Temple Emeth, 1666 Windsor Road, Teaneck.

Ms. Guthrie's presentation is called *Holy Ground* and it includes photographs, music excerpts, writings and artwork that illustrate their personal creative relationship.

Woody lived in Coney Island, across the street from his mother-in-law, and they shared their dreams and their art, their neighborhood and family. Woody, the Oklahoma troubadour, and Greenblatt, the Jewish wordsmith, often discussed their artistic projects and critiqued each other's work, finding common ground — they shared love of culture and social justice, despite their very different backgrounds. Their collaboration flourished in 1940s Brooklyn where Jewish culture was interwoven with music, modern dance, poetry and anti-fascist, pro-labor activism.

Woody's Jewish lyrics came as a surprise to Nora Guthrie, director of the Woody Guthrie Archives. She became aware of his connection with Judaism in a chance encounter with the Klezmatics and Itzhak Perlman following a concert at Tanglewood. Unbeknownst to Nora, Perlman and the band had performed some of Guthrie's Yiddish songs. Itzhak asked Nora how she enjoyed his version of Aliza's songs; she was shocked because she didn't know that her grandmother wrote the lyrics. The revelation about her grandmother's history encouraged Nora Guthrie to bring her father's songs to light.

Nora Guthrie graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts in 1971. Following a successful career as a modern dancer, Nora began working on her father's music in 1992.

"It will be fascinating to learn about Woody's relationship with his Jewish family and the inspiration it had on his music," said Marilyn Sirulnick, NCJW's Chair of the Guthrie presentation." The program is free for members and \$10 for non-members, applicable toward membership if you join that day.

NCJW BCS provides educational and stimulating programs throughout the year, including six general meetings and a myriad of speakers, book groups and trips. For more information on this meeting or NCJW BCS and its upcoming programs, please contact office@ncjwbc.org, call 201-385-4847 or visit www.ncjwbc.org.

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.

Photo caption:

Nora Guthrie, daughter of singer-songwriter Woody Guthrie, will speak about his relationship with his Jewish mother-in-law and the effect it had on his music, on November 13 at Temple Emeth in Teaneck.

Photo credit: Tina Tschirch