



**March 2011: Sisterhood Membership**  
**and Z-NOTES: A Few Words About General Sisterhood Membership**  
**& Z'havah in the Seaboard Region**

Shalom Sisters! Spring is coming soon. We are almost done with those gray winter days! In just a couple of weeks, (March 19-20th!) we will celebrate Purim, the holiday about the strength of our people to survive against the tyranny of an evil empire, and it also celebrates the courage of women, Esther (Hadassah) and the mistreated Vashti.

There is a new ritual for the reading of the megillah that could be a fun program for your Sisterhoods: **creating Esther/Vashti flags** to wave when their names are sounded. You can buy inexpensive wooden dowels and fabric that you can draw a picture of Vashti on one side and Esther on the other, or simply the names of each. A deeper meaning of this project is from the website [www.RitualWell.org](http://www.RitualWell.org). Tamara Cohen describes:

"With the new ritual of waving Esther/Vashti Purim flags, we encourage our communities to celebrate and more deeply explore both of Purim's stories. The primary purpose of the Purim flag is to call attention to Esther and Vashti and make it fun to listen for their names. But the Purim flag offers us an opportunity to do more than balance our attention to men's names with attention to women's names; it does more than allow us an opportunity for some feminist fun. When we wave our flags at the mention of Vashti and Esther's names we begin to shift the focus of Purim.

No longer do we need to accept that the opposition of "blessed Mordecai" and "cursed Haman" encompasses the story of Purim or the story of Jewish experience. By focusing on Vashti and Esther, as well as Haman and Mordecai, we open up the possibility of telling a more complete and complex Purim story, a story that includes the experiences of women and a story that honors the possibility of potential alliances between Jews and non-Jews.

It is time for us to make room in our myths and in our communities for more than one model of leadership. It is time for us to learn from both Esther and Vashti, from both the Jewish women in our texts and the non-Jewish women (and men). And, with humor and deep conviction, it is time for us to take the holiday of Purim and, through new ritual, use it to tell our community a new story about who we are, what we value, and what we need to do to build a better world."

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Spread the word! Seaboard Region Spring Conference is coming:

May 22-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 at Olam Tikvah and the Fairview Park Marriott in Fairfax, Virginia. Attached is the registration form. This 2-day event promises to RE-vitalize your sisterhoods, RE-fresh your skills for Membership, Z'havah, Leadership, Learning, and, of course, networking, Time For You, a FUN "PJ Party," delicious food and more!! Attached is the REGISTRATION FORM to share with your membership.

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Each Sisterhood is a satellite, connected to the International Women's League of Conservative Judaism. WLCJ is there to support each Sisterhood with resources, training, program ideas, and your Seaboard Region representatives are here to help **you**, the leaders of your Sisterhoods. The updated websites of [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org) and [www.wlcj.net/seaboard](http://www.wlcj.net/seaboard) are filled with almost anything you might need, and if you cannot find it there, contact me! I am available for consultation if you want to invite me to your Sisterhood event or just ask me a quick question. **Check us out on FACEBOOK too, including the new WLCJ International Z'havah page.**

With warmest regards,

**Dr. Marcie M. Lerner**

Seaboard Region Membership Vice President

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P.S. I just wanted to clarify some issues about the relationship of Z'havah to the greater Sisterhood Membership. **Z'havah women are, first and foremost, sisterhood members.** They are also part of Women's League and your region. Encourage them to attend every sisterhood, area, region and Women's League meeting, event and program. Hopefully, they'll be prepared for leadership positions in sisterhood when they're ready. The goal is a smooth and seamless transition from Z'havah to sisterhood.

Z'havah women meet, plan and present programs for themselves and other younger women in the congregation. Their having a sense of ownership in Z'havah is critical. A wise sisterhood board always makes Z'havah women feel welcomed and valued. The sisterhood president or a liaison should be in regular touch with the Z'havah chair to offer her assistance, support, encouragement, and resources. Open communication is vital. Help everyone share in this relationship."