



WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

BIENNIAL REPORT 2008-2010

Coordinator: Maxine Pomerantz/Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

From the Editor

The Biennial Reports represent the work of Women's League for the previous two years. They are the sum of all efforts in your respective departments, and the results are impressive. For the past half year, I have worked with you, the chairs, and Rhonda Jacobs Kahn, our communications director, to assemble this project. It has been a labor of love that I enjoyed. However, my job was the easy one, to assemble all material to send to New York and to proofread. On the other hand, Rhonda had the monumental task of assembling all the written words into a unified interesting whole. The result is exceptional. I want to thank each person who submitted a report for inclusion in our Women's League archives. Please read our Biennial Reports 2008-2010, and 'kvell' over all that we have accomplished as a team.

Today rabbah,
Maxine

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE MISSION

The mission of Women's League for Conservative Judaism is to strengthen and unite synagogue women's groups, their members and individual members; support them in mutual efforts to understand and perpetuate Conservative/Masorti Judaism in the home, synagogue, and community; and reinforce their bonds with Israel and Jews worldwide. The goal is to impact on every member through successful sisterhoods and thriving regions. To that end, the organization is structured around four main areas of operation: learning, living, linking, and sharing.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Cory R. Schneider, International President (Seaboard Region)

Ann Goldman, Executive Director (through August 2010)

Sarrae Crane, Executive Director

Archives: Judith Gottesman (North Atlantic Region), Marcalynn Schechter (BQLI Region)

Budget: Lila Frost (Garden State Region)

Region Budgets: Sandra Koppell (MetroNorth Region)

Conference of Presidents Representative: Janet Tobin (BQLI Region)

Convention: Sandy Myers (Seaboard Region)

Convention Program: Faye Laveson (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Development: Idette Pfeffer (MetroNorth Region)

Kol Ishah Society: Beverly Wachtel (BQLI Region)

Financial Secretary: Heddy Belman (Garden State Region)

Israel Mission: Judith Horowitz (BQLI Region); Vice Chair: Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Keruv: Marion Mohl (Garden State Region), Vice Chair Harriet Kantrowitz (North Atlantic Region)

Movement Coordination: Judi Dickstein Kenter (MetroNorth Region)

Nominations: Gloria B. Cohen (BQLI Region)

Parliamentarian: Janet Arnowitz (Garden State Region)

Past President's Council: Gloria Cohen (BQLI Region)

Per Capita: Gloria Adelson (Southern Region)

Strategic Planning: Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region)

Tikkun Olam: Sandra Eliaser (North By Northwest Region)

Treasurer: Janet Coleman Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Liaisons

JBI: Florence Belfer (Garden State Region)

Ramah Commission: Sharon Steinberg (MetroNorth Region)

Social Justice Commission: Bernice Balter (MetroNorth Region)

United Synagogue:

Project Reconnect: Rhonda Cohn (Central Great Lakes Region)

Synagogue Standards: Toby Maser (International NortheastRegion)

Youth School International Commission: Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

The last two years have been an exciting period for Women's League. With its membership of 550 sisterhoods and 100,000 members, it continues as a vital partner in the Conservative/Masorti movement worldwide. Cory Schneider, president, has made it her personal goal to further cooperation and communication with the movement's arms, especially United Synagogue and Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs through monthly conference calls.

To promote cooperation and coordination of efforts, a retreat of lay leaders from each of the **three** organizations was held at the Perlstone Conference Center in Maryland in March of 2009. The goal of the

Movement Coordination committee was to strengthen relationships among the three organizations, share information about programs and services, and identify areas in which partnerships can be forged and duplications avoided. As a result, a steering committee was organized to identify initiatives and evaluate progress.

Initiatives have included:

- The creation of a welcoming keruv brochure and information on successful programs focused on welcoming intermarried couples and non-Jewish spouses. A webinar was also held.
- Working with GreenFaith, a three-year Sustainable Synagogues Campaign includes developing congregational resources, a fellowship program, presentations at movement events, webinars, a GreenFaith certification program for leadership, and the education and training of campaign leaders.
- Development of initiatives by and for young adults which include creating pilot communities, innovative programming and strategies for synagogues to be more welcoming to this group, the future of our movement.
- Coordination of IT and data management discussions resulted in a joint high holiday broadcast email to the more than 25,000 people.

THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

The budget, finance, affiliation, retention, and per capita chairs have integrated their portfolios into a coordinated team that is helping to establish firmer financial health. The team is in contact with sisterhoods facing fiscal difficulties and/or disaffiliation. The **financial committee** is responsible for setting the annual Women's League budget, while the **region budget committee** determines allocations to the regions.

A **development committee** was established to further enhance efforts for financial security. The committee created several online campaigns with national retailers Aerosoles Shoes and The Pampered Chef, as well as signing on with Good Search, which donates a few cents to Women's League every time someone uses its search engine. Women's League also joined with Israel Bonds as partners in its Double Mitzvah Program. Due to circumstances beyond our control, the vendor for our fulfillment campaigns was unable to continue providing services. Instead, a simple solicitation letter was sent out before the 2009 high holidays; in the winter and spring two new campaigns, by a new vendor, offered innovative premiums.

The Women's League **Kol Ishah Society**, an annual membership campaign introduced before Convention 2008, was expanded to include three levels of membership: minimum membership at \$54; Kol Ishah Plus at \$75; Kol Ishah Platinum at \$150. By joining this enhanced level of Women's League membership, Kol Ishah Society members support Women's League's goals to provide educational and training services. A campaign offering Kol Ishah membership as a Mothers Day present was introduced on the Women's League website.

Kol Ishah Membership Benefits

- Acknowledgement in CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and on the website
- Discounts at Women's League events
- Members at the \$75 or higher levels received copies of *With Strength & Splendor: Jewish Women as Agents of Change*, by Lisa Kogen

Kol Ishah Membership Numbers

- 2008-2009: 321 members (129 board members) \$18,007
- 2009-2010: 310 members (156 board members) \$21,941

INCOME FROM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

- Spring 2009 cardless campaign \$17,956
- 2009/2010 Chanukkah and Passover campaigns \$97,606
- Aerosoles \$ 620
- Pampered Chef \$ 410
- General Education Fund \$15,745
- TOTAL \$132,337**

For many years, Women's League tzedakah campaigns have benefited JBI International, Masorti Women in Israel, and the JWB (Jewish Chaplains Council). Recently, our outreach has been extended to other agencies including the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies and the Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium.

Change in policy: Women's League is no longer acting as the collection agency for these funds. Instead, we encourage affiliates to collect and send donations directly to these organizations or to any others that they choose.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Women's League struggles with demographic changes, financial constraints, and movement wide conflicts, it is more important than ever to maintain an ongoing **Strategic Planning** committee. The past two years have been particularly busy for this committee as it looked at ways to strengthen the organization by attracting, involving and serving Jewish women in creative and relevant ways. The committee focused on Women's League materials and services and their usefulness and value as perceived by members. During the summer of 2009, the committee met with a consultant to identify to whom we should provide our services and which services we should continue to offer. As a result of considerable study and reflection it was determined that Women's League would provide services primarily to groups of women or to individual women within a synagogue environment and that membership would be based on members of the sisterhoods of affiliated congregations and potential affiliates. To determine which materials and services would be available, various methods were used including an online survey, surveys of sisterhood presidents, and focus groups across the country.

The Women's League **Archive** is now in its 16th year and it promises to continue as today's materials become tomorrow's historical records. The committee has identified, preserved, and catalogued the historical records of Women's League and makes them available to researchers and others interested in the scope of Women's League over the years. This past year's project has been to catalogue electronically all photographs, documents, correspondence, and other pertinent information.

The **Past President's Council** was initiated at convention 2008 when many of the presidents from our former 25 regions/branches discussed ways in which their history and contributions would not be lost. As an organization, we know that we have to build on our past to grow in the future. The council has become an important cadre of women who will ensure that past region history is not be lost.

The past presidents who are on the council receive all personal notices, meeting notices, board meeting minutes, and announcements from Women's League. They have been keeping past region archives vibrant and have been instrumental in focus groups, surveys, the Mercaz campaign, membership, the Kol Ishah Society, and training services.

ANNUAL MEETING AND MINI-SYMPOSIUMS ON THE ENVIRONMENT



Women's League returned to its tradition of holding an annual meeting outside the metropolitan New York area during a non-convention year. The October 18, 2009 meeting was held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanical Garden in conjunction with Pacific Southwest Region's annual Torah Fund Study Day. Following a shabbaton held at Temple Aliyah in Woodland Hills, California, the meeting included a vote on revised bylaws and the opportunity to study with Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. The afternoon symposium included a panel with Rabbi Ahud Sela (Sinai Temple, Los Angeles) and Arboretum staff, breakout sessions, and a tour of the gardens. Over 200 people attended.

The January 31, 2010 **Open Board Meeting** at JTS also focused on the environment. The program featured Rabbi Lawrence Troster of GreenFaith, who spoke about our Jewish responsibility to be conservators of the earth. The afternoon workshops featured activities from the newly released Yom Yarok materials, a 20 minute Tu B'Shevat seder, and a presentation on environmental activism by Sybil Sanchez, director of COEJL.



Do not say, "When I have leisure I shall study, for you many never have leisure."

Pirkei Avot 2:5

LEARNING

With its primary emphasis on Jewish learning, in 2006 Women's League combined Books, Creative Judaic Arts, Jewish Studies, Mitzvot, Program Resources, Tikkun Olam, and Youth to form the **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)**. The goal of PAC is to create programs and activities around an annual theme that encourage study in both formal and informal settings with coordinated programming, materials, and events for sisterhoods, regions, and the organization.

Programming Themes: WLCJ and Torah Fund - Shoulder to Shoulder

A successful programming innovation has been the integration of Women's League programs/activities with the Torah Fund campaign through a shared annual theme. This was done in two consecutive years with the themes:

2008/09: *Lev ve Nefesh* -- Heart and Soul

- 2009/10, *L'avdah ul'shamrah* -- To Plant and Protect

Ongoing programs offer new materials designed to complement the annual theme:

- **The Women's League Shabbat** (commemorating the founding of WLCJ)
- *Divrei Hokhmah*: 5-7 minute text study/discussion to begin sisterhood and region meetings

2008 Biennial Convention rolled out the 2008/2009 mitzvah initiative with its convention theme "Heart and Soul".



This is My Prayer -- Va'ani Tefillati JEWISH WOMEN IN PRAYER

March 1, 2009

More than 300 people participated in the ground-breaking inter-denominational conference on Jewish women's prayer sponsored by Women's League, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, Women of Reform Judaism, Abraham Joshua Heschel School, Lilith Magazine, and the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan. The keynote speaker was Dr. Aliza Lavie, editor of *A Jewish Women's Prayer Book*. Sessions featured over two dozen women whose lives are driven by women's prayer, including Dr. Chava Weissler, Dr. Vanessa Ochs and Anita Diamant; quilting workshop; panels entitled *Creating Prayer*, *Theology of Personal Prayer*, *Prayer as Healing and Halakhic Considerations in Innovating Prayers*; plus an interdenominational conversation moderated by Blu Greenberg. The closing was lead by singer/songwriter Debbie Friedman. The program was organized by Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner, of JTS, Lisa Kogen, and Blu Greenberg. Cost for the day: \$36.

Introduced almost 20 years ago, there are now almost 600 members of **Kolot biK'dushah** who lead services, read Torah and fulfill other liturgical roles in their synagogues and sisterhoods. The three categories of membership are: Kolot BiK'dushah, Nashim BiK'dushah (women who are proficient in leading all services, read

Torah, and lead birkat hamazon), and Banot BiK'dushah (for post-bat mitzvah girls who regularly participate in services).

Women's League Institutes remain busy and well attended, educating members, families and friends. At the annual *siyyum*, certificates of honor are awarded to those who have participated for three, ten and 18 years. Women's League members are enriched by this stimulating experience and the organization is enriched by a membership that demonstrates a love of *Iomdei Torah lishmah* (learning for its own sake).

Mid-Atlantic Region's

Southern New Jersey Institute

2008: 31 students (Temple Beth Shalom,
Cherry Hill, NJ)

2009: 31 students (Congregation Beth El,
Voorhees, NJ)

Mid-Atlantic Region's

**Bernice Oswald Women's League Institute
of Philadelphia**

(Har Zion Temple, Penn Valley, PA)

2008: 44 students

2009: 43 students

New York Institute

(Jewish Theological Seminary)

2008: 73 students

2009: 70 students

Florida Institute (Temple Beth Am,
Margate, FL)

2008: 57 students

2009: 53 students

Seaboard Institute

2008: 29 students

(B'nai Shalom, Olney, MD)

2009: 32 students (Chizuk Amuno,
Baltimore, MD)



LIVING

More than the Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews.

Ahad Ha'Am (Zionist thinker, 1856-1927)

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lisa Kogen, Education Director

Coordinator: Faye Laveson (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Books: Illene Rubin (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Creative Judaic Arts: Paula Coplon (Southern Region)

Jewish Studies: Sue Bengele (Florida Region)

Mitzvot: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Program Resources: Ziza Pallia (Seaboard Region)

Ways & Means: Carol Friedman (North Atlantic Region)

Youth: Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Judaica Shop: Jaclyn Stevens (Southern Region)

WLCJ Adele Ginzburg Sukkah: Victoria Friedman & Amy Schindler (MetroNorth Region)

Women's League Institutes: Lynne WeissMarshall (Garden State Region)

Women in Prayer Conference: Myra Promisel (Seaboard Region) & Barbara Spack (Garden State Region)

Liaisons:

Green Faith: Sandi Schwartz (Florida Region), Shirley Haas (Central Great Lakes Region)

Women's League has always provided its affiliated sisterhoods with extensive programming guidelines and materials. The **Program Resources** chair has asked sisterhood presidents to share information about their successful programs. At the same time, she watches the conversations on the Women's League listserves for program ideas. These programs become the core for new pages for the **Sisterhood Planner**.

ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

2008/2009 **Mitzvah Yomit** (A Mitzvah a Day) combines study and experiential activities encouraging the performance of mitzvot. The kit contains text study from Pirkei Avot; halakhic explanations (candle lighting and mezuzah); ethical behavior (*gemilut hesed, lashon ha-rah, tzedakah*) and *bal taschit* (stewardship of the earth). The material included a small brochure, which fits inside the Women's League Calendar, of *berakhot* and over a hundred possibilities of mitzvot.

2009/10 **Yom Yarok: Green Day** (A Tu B'Shevat Celebration) is designed to be used on or near Tu B'Shevat and contains inter-generational activities for sisterhood members and their families. The 20 activities include: text study materials; a short Tu B'Shevat seder; an environmental beit din; stories and poetry for all ages; crafts for all ages; a parsley planting project; and Shabbat-friendly children's games.

The **Creative Judaic Arts** committee provides activities that are authentically Jewish, artistically attractive, and that easily can be replicated in sisterhoods. Toward that end, we offer a variety of activities using different

artistic media. The committee has been scanning and reformatting the past 20+ years of CJA projects to be available on the Women's League website.

The **Judaica Shop** chair is a much appreciated resource for sisterhoods that manage shops. *The Judaica Shop Suppliers Directory*, which is available online, is being updated for 2010. New this year: an online discussion group of 95 Judaica shop chairs moderated by Jacki Stevens.

Some of the program suggestions sent by the **Tikkun Olam** chair to sisterhoods include:

- Jewish Coalition for Literacy: tutoring and helping children learn to read-www.njcl.net
- Preparing and sending holiday gifts to shut-ins and the elderly
- Planning monthly and holiday programs for the elderly
- Visiting assisted living residences and planning programs for the residents

Convention 2010: Books for Baltimore-Creating Community One Child at a Time



To demonstrate our tangible commitment to the 2010 convention theme of Kehillah Kedoshah: Celebrating Community Woman to Woman, Women's League will present a new reading book to every third grader and pre-kindergartener in Baltimore City Public Schools (approximately 12,000 books). This project was greatly enhanced by the generosity of the Rona Jaffe Foundation.

The youth of the Conservative movement are our hope for the future. The Women's League **Youth** activities chair is a regular participant in meetings of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Youth Commission where she networks with others committed to enriching the Jewish lives of our children. Her requests for volunteer staffing, housing and chaperoning for USY events across the country have always been answered positively.

A COMMUNITY OF BOOK LOVERS

Women's League recognizes the importance of books and book clubs in building community among our members. Therefore, the **Books** committee is constantly enhancing resource materials and its newest publication, **BookMarks**, was received with much enthusiasm. The inaugural issue included interviews with authors Maggie Anton, Karen Tintori and Lisa Kogen, as well as fiction, non-fiction, and children's book lists. The second issue highlighted food, with interviews with JTS librarian Professor David Kraemer (*Jewish Eating and Identity through the Ages*) and lists of kosher cookbooks. It also included an interview with author Dara Horn (*All Other Nights*) and more booklists.

Underwriters of BookMarks

Illene Rubin

Friends of Deena Gordon, in memory of Rabbi Bill Gordon, z''l

As part of a new initiative, a distance workshop (entitled Book-Kit!) provided all the information necessary to start and maintain a sisterhood book club. The hour-long workshop was attended via conference call by over 50 women from all over the country. A companion Powerpoint presentation was emailed to all registrants. Conference calls with region books chairs enabled us to share ideas with counterparts all over the country.

Orpah's List Book Selection (Review guides for Jewish Book Month)

- 2008 *The Faith Club* (Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner)
- 2009 *People of the Book* (Geraldine Brooks)
- 2010 *Pictures at an Exhibitions* (Sarah Houghteling)



The concept of *chiddur mitzvah* continues each year when area volunteers beautify the **Adele Ginzberg Sukkah** at the Jewish Theological Seminary and members of Pacific Southwest Region decorate the **Francis Kuris Sukkah** at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. Both sukkot are used by faculty, students and visitors. A tradition begun in 2007 at JTS continues as children from local schools, camps and nursery schools added their work to the overflowing and colorful decorations.

REACHING OUT TO HELP OTHERS

Continuing to extend our involvement with the goals of Sharsheret, a national organization dedicated to addressing the needs of young Jewish women living with breast cancer, Women's League hosted a webinar produced by Sharsheret, in October 2010, national breast cancer awareness month.

The **Keruv** committee, which is part of the Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism Keruv Commission, promotes outreach to the intermarried in sisterhoods by creating a warm and welcoming environment for non-Jewish women. The commission has produced the following, which are available on the website:

- *Shalom/Welcome* brochure that includes our principles of outreach and highlights the fact that the Conservative Movement is welcoming. The brochure may be modified to show pictures from your sisterhood and personalized contact information may be added.
- *Tools for Building a Culture of Keruv* offers specific programs for use in sisterhoods and synagogues
- August 18, 2010 movement-wide webinar on keruv

Keruv materials from Women's League:

- Distance Learning Workshop, January 27, 2010. The minutes are posted on the WLCJ website.
- Presentations by Harriet Kantrowitz and Marion Mohl, Lisa Kogen, WLCJ education director

The Women's Conference on Keruv, at the Jewish Outreach Institute, was attended by Marion Mohl, Harriet Kantrowitz, and Rhonda Kahn, WLCJ communications director. The focus was on how women's organizations can be more welcoming.

SERVICING WOMEN'S LEAGUE MEMBERS, SISTERHOODS AND REGIONS

SERVICES TO SISTERHOODS & REGIONS

Leadership Institute Administrator: Sally Abbey (North Atlantic Region)

Leadership Institute Lead Trainer: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Organization & Management Institute: Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region)

Region Presidents Conference: Terry Winston (International Northeast Region)

Region Services and Conferences: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Sisterhood Presidents Chat Group (PrezNet) Moderator: Carol Gopman (Central Great Lakes Region)

Training Services: Carol Simon (Florida Region)

Training Services Help Line: Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region)

Training Services Personnel: Barbara Safer (Florida Region)

The **Training Services** committee continues to help sisterhoods develop leadership and grow in strength by providing support, guidance, consulting, and essential resources, enabling them to reach their goals. In addition to traditional on-site group training, telephone/email mentoring and coaching provide sisterhood presidents with immediate assistance on specific issues or for ongoing guidance.

The committee has reevaluated the training services program and structure and made recommendations to serve sisterhoods more effectively. Training modules have been reviewed and updated. The most current modules are available to trainers online. Conference calls keep trainers up-to-date about Women's League materials and programs. Activity chairs have been invited to share their expertise on these conference calls. As of August 2010, there will be three categories of trainers: onsite trainer, mentor/coach, and trainer specialist.

After eight years, the semi-annual Women's League **Leadership Institutes** have become a mainstay of efforts to identify, train and integrate new leadership into sisterhoods, regions and the international organization. Designed to enhance personal growth, reinforce a commitment to Conservative Judaism, and strengthen leadership capabilities, the institutes welcome new, potential, and developing leaders. Participants study with rabbis and educators, and define their own leadership styles in dynamic interactive workshops. More than 450 women have returned to their communities with a renewed purpose and vision and many have become leaders in their regions.

Underwriters of upcoming Leadership Institutes:

Cheryl and Mitchell Patt

In response to requests, a new program will focus on the Women's League organizational structure and services as well as on helping participants become successful within that structure. It is designed for women currently in leadership positions in their volunteer or professional lives who are committed to expanding their leadership roles, within both sisterhood and Women's League. The pilot program for this **Organization & Management Institute** will be held in October 2010 in New York City.



WOMEN'S LEAGUE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES

- January 2009: Houston, Texas
- July 2009: Northbrook, Illinois
- January 2010: Las Vegas, Nevada
- July 2010: New York, New York

Organization & Management Institute Pilot Program: October 2010: New York, New York



Distance Workshops were a new addition in 2009 to the array of services offered to members. Women's League recognizes that no matter how good its training services, it isn't always convenient to attend training sessions. The innovative Distance Workshops use the technology of conference calls and online services to bring our advice, tips and tricks, and first-hand experience directly to members. We are now on our second rotation of courses offered

every month to six weeks. Sessions have been presented using conference calls and webinar formats, led by activity chairs and professional directors. To date, more than 300 women have participated.

Topics have included:

- Creating a Budget and Sticking to It
- Book Clubs: Making reading groups fun, easy, rewarding
- Mitzvah Yomit—A Mitzvah a Day
- Keeping mitzvot front and center in your life
- The How, What and Why of Public Advocacy: Using Women's League resolutions to engage and activate your membership
- Image Is Everything: Branding for today's women
- Keruv: Welcoming Non-Jews into the community
- Program Planning: Crafting a full year of programs, campaigns, classes, and events
- Creative Judaic Arts as a programming essential
- Ways to the Means: Fundraising in the new economy
- Z'havah: Bring Younger Women In
- Israel: Programs, Advocacy, Education
- Membership: Grow Your Sisterhood

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

Affiliation: Eve Gold (North Atlantic Region)

Individual Membership: Sherry Lynn Rubin (IntraContinental Region)

Membership: Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region)

Retention: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Z'havah: Robin Rogel-Goldstein (North By Northwest Region)

To maintain as well as to increase **Membership** in both sisterhoods and Women's League, several chairs have been revamping goals and campaigns. The membership chair revised the Blueprint for Membership, a

comprehensive program for sisterhoods, and produced several helpful guides such as a yearly membership planner and a membership appreciation campaign. All region membership vice presidents received training so that they can become advocates for their sisterhoods. The goal is to recruit and reclaim as many women as possible for our sisterhoods while meeting the needs and expectations of current members.

As of 2006, women have been able to join Women's League as individual members. Individual membership is open to women who do not have an affiliated sisterhood in their communities but who want to enhance their Jewish growth, network with other Conservative/Masorti Jewish women, and to make a difference in the world by adding their voices to Women's League. Individual members enjoy 24/7 access to the Women's League website, CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism, Women's League publications, self-guided study materials, creative Judaic arts projects, Orpah's Book List, among other benefits. We have had limited success reaching women in the military or military spouses despite considerable effort on the part of the committee.



After 12 years, **Z'havah** is a fully engaged project directed to younger women in Women's League congregations. The goal over the past two years has been to engage and attract Z'havah-aged women and to inspire region chairs to work with sisterhoods to recruit younger members. To that end, programs and materials, successful events, mutual concerns and issues, problem solving and support are shared across the regions. The Z'havah Planner, unveiled at Convention 2008, continues to be updated with techniques and tools for success as well as proven tried-and-true programs.

New publication from Z'havah: a brochure to help sisterhoods and synagogue early childhood programs work together. This was a collaborative effort between Z'havah Chair Robin Rogel-Goldstein and Maxine Handelman, consultant for early childhood education at United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

On an institutional level, by reaching out to potential new affiliates, Women's League itself benefits. An affiliation team diligently pursues leads about new synagogues, not-yet affiliated women's groups, and those sisterhoods that might be interested in re-affiliating with Women's League after an absence. Every newly affiliated sisterhood receives a customized training services seminar and individualized attention.

NEW WOMEN'S LEAGUE AFFILIATES 2008-2010

BQLI REGION: Hollis Hills Jewish Center, Flushing, New York; Manetto Jewish Center, Plainview, New York

CENTRAL GREAT LAKES REGION: Beth Abraham, Dayton, Ohio

FLORIDA REGION: Congregation Shaarei Kodesh, Boca Raton, Florida; Temple Beth Israel, Sunrise, Florida

MID-ATLANTIC REGION: B'nai Tikvah-Beth Israel, Sewell, New Jersey

NORTH ATLANTIC REGION: Tifereth Israel Congregation, New Bedford, Massachusetts

NORTH BY NORTHWEST REGION: Congregation Kol Emeth, Palo Alto, California

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION: Kehillat Ma'arav, Santa Monica, California; Temple Ami Shalom, West Covina, California

SEABOARD REGION: Beth El, Durham, North Carolina

Unfortunately, sisterhoods occasionally feel they must leave our ranks, usually due to demographic changes. The **retention** committee offers sisterhoods experiencing declining membership and decreasing participation innovative approaches to re-activation or stabilization. The retention chair works hand-in-hand with the Women's League financial secretary and executive director to ascertain the needs of these sisterhoods, offering

customized solutions. The team also has been contacting every sisterhood to help keep them active and vital in their communities and in Women's League, suggesting training, mentoring, or specialized assistance as needed.



LINKING

*All Jews are responsible for one another
Babylonian Talmud, Shevuot 39a*

WORLD AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Sarrae Crane, Executive Director

American Mothers of Olim: Susan Marcus (Garden State Region)

Ba'Olam—In the World

Editor: Sue Press (MetroNorth Region)

Production: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)

Canadian Public Affairs: Randy Schwartz (IntraContinental Region)

COEJL Representative: Alisa Abrams (Seaboard Region)

Israel: Sandy Blumenthal (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Israel Commission of USCJ Representative: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

Israel Liaison: Diane Friedgut (Israel)

JCPA Representative: Penny Leifer (Garden State Region), Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region)

Masorti Women International: Janet Tobin (BQLI Region)

Public Policy: Dr. Rita C. Altman (Mid-Atlantic Region)

United Nations NGO: Gloria Fischel (BQLI Region)

United Nations NGO Alternate: Laurie Brofsky (BQLI Region)

USCJ Commission on Israel: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

USCJ Commission on Social Justice Representative: Bernice Balter (MetroNorth Region)

Washington Liaison: Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region)

ISRAEL & WOMEN'S LEAGUE: A VITAL CONNECTION

An essential element of the Women's League mission is to reinforce bonds with Israel and Jews worldwide. To that end, the **Israel** department promotes the Six-Point Program for Israel: Zionist philosophy; support of the Conservative/Masorti movement in Israel, its synagogues and women's groups; tourism; aliyah; religious pluralism; and social action. With frequent action alerts, articles in Ba'Olam and contact with sisterhood and region chairs, Women's League strives to nurture a real sense of *ahavat Zion* (love of Israel) among its members. We continue to strive to strengthen relationships between Women's League members and our sisters in Israel

and have provided sisterhoods with information about Books 4 Israel as well as updates about religious pluralism and equality in Israel.

American Mothers of Olim is an online discussion group for members who have family and friends in Israel to meet, discuss, and support each other (am-mothers-of-olim@googlegroups.com). It now numbers 33.

Masorti Women International continues as a vital outgrowth of our commitment to enhance our connection to the movement's Israeli kehillot (communities). Women's League has relationships with 45 congregations and supports special projects in those communities with donations from our sisterhoods.

The Israel Liaison supports a multitude of efforts to maintain these connections in addition to raising awareness of women's issues in Israel, working with other women's groups, expanding awareness of Women's League in Israel, and building a network of Masorti women. She distributes CJ magazines and Women's League calendar diaries to the kehillot, administers Masorti Women International, which now has 120 members, organizes the annual study days (see below), and is a liaison for Women's League visitors to Israel.

Women's League Mission to Israel 2009: Three Countries, Two continents, One Women's League Family

The 40 people on the 2009 Israel mission came from across North America. In Italy (country & continent #1), the group visited the ancient port of Ostia, with one of the oldest excavated synagogues in the world, and the Jewish museum in Rome where they met with the chief rabbi at the Grand Synagogue.

Shabbat in Israel (country & continent #2) was spent in Jerusalem at Moreshet Israel. The group studied at United Synagogue's Fuchsberg Center and visited the Schechter Center and Neve Tzedek with Rabbi Roberto Arbib and Prof. David Golinkin. They toured Neve Hanna Children's Village in Kiryat Gat, saw the safe haven children's center in Sderot, and enjoyed the spa at the Dead a Sea. After a trip to Eilat they continued to Petra, Jordan (country #3).

But the purpose of the trip, as is true of all Women's League Israel Missions, was to reinforce connections with the Masorti community, and the group met with representatives from congregations from every part of the country. Israel liaison Diane Friedgut arranged a program at Kehillat Sinai with female rabbis and Schechter Institute faculty, as well as with other Masorti women.

Masorti Women's Study Days



Janet Tobin, Rita Wertlieb, Evelyn Seelig, Cory Schneider at the Masorti Women's Study Day in Jerusalem.

Each year four study days are run throughout Israel by Women's League together with the Schechter Institute and the cooperation of the Masorti movement, three regional (each February) and one national (each June) at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem in June. This year, more than 440 people participated in a range of courses taught in Hebrew, English, Spanish, and Russian. A highlight of the session held at Kibbutz Hanaton was the attendance of 23 young women — new immigrants from the former Soviet Union — who integrated themselves comfortably with the record-breaking crowd of 160 women, ages 17-85.

PUBLIC POLICY & WORLD AFFAIRS

On the domestic scene, the **Public Policy** committee provides timely information on issues that impact the Jewish community in general and Jewish women in particular. Women's League works in concert with other Jewish organizations to establish policy and is active with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Historically, Women's League has supported a broad array of positions to enhance the democratic, pluralistic society in which we live. These include, among others, reproductive choice, gun control, health care issues, protecting the environment, political campaign finance reform, civil liberties, and human rights. Every two years, at its biennial convention, Women's League adopts the resolutions crafted by the committee that then permit Women's League to articulate and promote positions, either alone, as individual sisterhoods, and together with other organizations. The entire body of Women's League resolutions is available on the website, by subject.

The **action alert** system has been integrated into the Women's League updated data and communications systems so that alerts can be sent out with very little lead time.

Publications

- Guide to Writing Advocacy Letters
- Guide to Writing Public Policy Resolutions
- Giving Tzedakah with Thought

As an active participant in the **Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism (LCCJ)**, which has been chaired by the Women's League president for the last two years, Women's League has played an influential role in establishing the Commission on Social Justice for the Conservative movement. The LCCJ has also committed to bringing environmental issues to the forefront of movement activities. Women's League joined forces with the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs to market soy-based eco-Shabbat candles through our Judaica shops.

Women's League's **Washington Liaison** attends meetings, events and rallies in Washington D.C. As a member of the Council of Governors, she represented Women's League at the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The **Canadian Public Policy** chair alerts Canadian affiliates about current issues, develops programs to educate, stimulate and motivate action, and informs the entire membership about issues in Canada. Columns in Ba'Olam and other mailings provide information and analysis.

The Women's League **United Nations NGO** (non-governmental observer) and alternate attend UN-relevant briefings, programs, workshops and conferences, as well as support the work of the Holocaust and United Nations Outreach Programme. They network with other NGOs and maintain a Jewish presence at the United Nations, advocating on behalf of Israel and other Jewish issues. Through the distribution of packages before holidays, they educate UN staff members about Jews and Jewish life. They also arrange for sisterhoods to tour the UN and meet with members of the Israeli delegation.

Women's League joined with the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists and other NGOs as a co-sponsor of two conferences, on the premises of Fordham University Law School:

- April 2009: Durban II, "Counter-Conference": Addressing the Issues of Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, Gender Discrimination, Religious Discrimination and Genocide
- April 2010: The UN's Goldstone Report: Lawfare, the Defamation of Israel and the Threat to American National Security in the Age of Terrorism

From One Generation to the Next: What Can We Learn from the Holocaust? Women's League NGO Gloria Fischel helped launch this community initiative by screening the educational film "Footprints: Discovering the Holocaust through Historical Artifacts" with fifth-graders and leading a discussion on the dangers of hatred and racism today (www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/Generations.shtml). The NGOs hope to train sisterhoods to utilize this program in their own communities.

Celebration of World Autism Awareness Day was the impetus for a BQLI Region program to educate members about autism and to emphasize early detection of autism.

Because Jewish tradition demands that we be active members of our communities and our world with an understanding of the times in which we live, the monthly publication **Ba'Olam** provides news from around the world to interested women, sisterhood presidents, and the board of directors. Occasionally articles may be controversial and represent positions not endorsed by Women's League.

Over the past two years, we have redesigned Ba'Olam as an electronic publication that organizes articles by geography. A brief summary of each article has a link to the original article allowing readers to go into depth if they choose. Hardcopies of Ba'Olam are available for a subscription fee.



Contributors to Ba'Olam

Public Policy & Advocacy Chair
Rita Altman
Israel Chair Sandy Blumenthal
United Nations NGO Gloria
Fischel

Executive Director Ann Goldman/Sarrae Crane

Design & production: Internet Services Chair Lois Silverman

Underwriters of Ba'Olam

August 2008: Marilyn Braverman

February 2010: Evelyn Auerbach (in celebration of Rube & Evelyn's 61st anniversary) and Carol Simon in honor of her grandchildren, Jordan & Cameron Simon and Sophia & Sage Stanley

March 2010: Lila Frost in honor of Judi Kenter and all she does for WLCJ and in memory of Ethel W. Schwartz for her long standing dedication to Women's League

July 2010: Janet Kirschner in celebration of her anniversary

August 2010: Gloria Cohen in celebration of her anniversary and Eve and Julius Gold in honor of their anniversary

Thanks to Ba'Olam, action alerts, support for victims of natural and other disasters, calls-to-action on pending legislation, and resolutions adopted at biennial conventions, Women's League is *the* voice of Conservative Jewish women.

Women's League is a partner in **Project Reconnect**, reaching out to anyone who participated in youth programs of the Conservative movement--USY, KOACH, Ramah camps, etc.--to bring them back in touch with the richness of today's Conservative movement. Project Reconnect is asking former USYers and Camp Ramahniks to sign up for its data base. It fixes up college students and those who are away from home with families for sederim.



Raise your voice with power
Isaiah 40:9

SHARING

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Rhonda Jacobs Kahn, Communications Director

CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism

Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

Women's League representatives to the CJ editorial committee: Janet Arnowitz (Garden State Region), Renee Brezniak Glazier (North Atlantic Region), Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region), Roz Goldstine (Pacific Southwest Region), Diane Wohl (BQLI Region)

Internal Publicity: Karen Kaufman (Central Great Lakes Region)

Internet Services: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)

Publications 2009: Debbi Goldich (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Website Editor: Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region)

WLCJNet Moderator: Maxine Pomerantz (IntraContinental Region)



CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism, a joint effort of Women's League, United Synagogue, and the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, is now in its fourth year. The mission of the magazine, which is mailed to over 260,000 homes quarterly, is to help members of the Conservative movement live lives increasingly filled with Jewish learning and commitment to Klal Yisrael. Women's League's allotted pages highlight unique features of the organization and include WomenSpeak, written by Education Director Lisa Kogen. Women's League committee members are instrumental in finding appropriate and compelling articles and authors.

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS ARE HERE!

Women's League has incorporated various on-line and virtual tools to expand communications with members overseen by Internet Services chair Lois Silverman who long has championed the use of computers and the internet in Women's League, its regions, sisterhoods, and members. As internet services have expanded, she:

- Provides computer and internet assistance to any chair or member.
- Designs electronic layout of BaOlam
- Assists region web masters
- Maintains domain of region web sites and administers @wlcj.org domain
- Established and maintains Judaica Shop Chairs and Mothers of Olim discussion
- Edits annual Hanukkah candlelighting on WLCJNet

A greatly enhanced version of the Women's League **Website** - www.wlci.org - came online in March 2010. The new features include drop down menus, easy login with member's email address, ability to change personal information, welcoming photographs, and direct links to region presidents and Women's League officers and activity chairs. Sisterhood and member information is taken directly from the new Women's League database ensuring that it is the most current. Information and material from the previous website were given a fresh new look. An online shopping center and donation function are the latest additions to the site.

The website is the information portal for all Women's League events and projects including convention, leadership institutes, and distance learning workshops. Registration for events and donations to Women's League can be entered securely. **WLCJ for YOU**, password protected just for members of Women's League, contains materials that can be downloaded directly. It is organized into key areas for easy access to the materials sisterhoods need and want. The website will be kept current with Women's League international, region, and sisterhood news and projects.

Website Committee: Karen Kaufman, Sheila Kaufman, Robin Rogel-Goldstein, and Lisa Schneider, Lois Silverman, and Communications Director Rhonda Kahn

Celebrating its 14th year, **WLCJNet**, the 600-member strong Sisterhood without Walls, is a resource of information about Women's League as well as a successful means of communication. Participants have posted virtual candle lightings for Chanukkah, weekly Washington updates, holiday ponderings, recommended books, craft projects, programs, scripts, and fundraisers. We answer questions and offer suggestions of appropriate Women's League materials. Net women recite Psalms for those who are ill and a mishaberach list is kept for those in need of healing. We share happy and sad occasions and are a source of comfort and support for one another. Most importantly the WLCJNet keeps us connected with our sisters around the world.

Also on-line, **PrezNet**, the moderated sisterhood presidents chat group, provides a unique opportunity for sisterhood presidents to ask questions, share problems and programs, and to assist one another. Discussions have centered on holiday preparations, ways and means projects, Judaica shop administration, synagogue relations, and leadership development. Announcing news and updates from activity chairs, Action Alerts, educational initiatives, Israel mission opportunities, and leadership institutes increases utilization of Women's League resources and attendance at functions. At the same time, the PrezNet has been a successful venue for requesting essential information and input from the presidents.

Discussions on the PrezNet resulted in the creation of online discussion groups for Torah Fund and Judaica shop chairs. In response to posted messages the moderator connects the sisterhood president with the appropriate Women's League personnel.

COMMUNICATING THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

Internal Communications focuses on helping sisterhoods market themselves to their members and communities. The new publication, **Image Plus**, a comprehensive publicity handbook that features extensive information on social networking, was distributed to all sisterhoods and is available online.

Distance Workshop: Image Is Everything--Branding for Today's Women

A tradition dear to generations of Jewish women is the publication of the annual Women's League **Calendar Diary**. Since 2009 the calendar has illustrated the many aspects of Women's League, making it a creative

publicity tool, with information about ordering materials and joining Women's League. The calendar diary continues to generate substantial income to Women's League.

New Publications for 2008-2010

- **Hebrew Word Guide**, featuring frequently used Hebrew words, definitions, pronunciations, transliterations, helpful phrases for year-round use, holiday terminology, biblical books, numbers, calendar information (\$10.00)
- **Count Your Blessings**, a compilation of the most frequently recited berakhot in Hebrew, English and transliteration (\$10.00)

NOMINATIONS

Officers nominated for 2010-2012



President: Rita Wertlieb (Seaboard Region)

Vice Presidents: Gloria Adelson (Southern Region), Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region), Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region), Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region), Judi Dickstein Kenter (MetroNorth Region), Iris Lasky (Pacific Southwest Region), Toby Maser (International Northeast Region), Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region), Margie Miller (BQLI Region), Robin Rogel-Goldstein (North by Northwest Region), Randy Schwartz (IntraContinental Region), Joyce Berlin Weingarten (Central Great Lakes Region)

Recording Secretary: Cheryl Patt (International Northeast Region)

Financial Secretary: Myra R. Promisel (Seaboard Region)

Treasurer: Janet Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Nominating Committee: Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region), Tobie Rosenberg (Pacific Southwest Region), Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region), Mimi Pollack (MidAtlantic Region), Carol Gopman (Central Great Lakes Region), Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region), Terry Winston (International Northeast Region), Gloria B. Cohen (BQLI Region)

2008-1010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

International President: Cory Schneider (Seaboard Region)

International Vice Presidents: Sandra Eliaser (North by Northwest Region), Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region), Carol Gopman (Central Great Lakes Region), Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region), Sandy Myers (Seaboard Region), Sue Press (MetroNorth Region), Tobie Rosenberg (Pacific Southwest Region), Sherry Lynn Rubin (IntraContinental Region), Randy Schwartz (IntraContinental Region), Jaclyn Stevens (Southern Region), Lynne WeissMarshall, Lauren Wishnew (BQLI Region)

Recording Secretary: Cheryl Patt (International Northeast Region)

Financial Secretary: Heddy Belman (Garden State Region)

Treasurer: Janet Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Nominating Committee: Bernice Balter (MetroNorth Region), Marion Mohl (Garden State Region), Maxine Pomerantz (IntraContinental Region), Barbara Safer (Florida Region), Colette K, Segal (Pacific Southwest Region), Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region), Jessica Waxman (NorthAtlantic Region)

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruth Aach	Leona Eligberg	Renee Kaplan
Sally Abbey	Agnes Emert	Karen Kaufman
Lorie Abernethy	Barbara Ezring	Sheila Kaufman
Alisa Abrams	Ava Feldman	E. Temma Kingsley
Gloria Adelson	Jackie Fine	Sandra Kirsh
Dr. Rita C. Altman	Donna S. Finkelstein	Ilisia Kissner
Gaye Altman	Gail Finkelstein	Sandra Koppell
Janet Arnowitz	Gloria Fischel	Martha Kreisel
Elana Artson	Marsha Fish	Deena Lafazan
Evelyn Auerbach	Judith S. Fisher	Iris Lasky
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Bernice Balter	Diane Friedgut	Susan Lefkowitz
Sharon Barkauskas	Carole Friedman	Penny Leifer
Nance Bass	Naomi Joy Friedman	Sandy Lepelstat
Lucy Becker	Victoria Friedman	Dr. Marcie M. Lerner
Florence Belfer	Marjie Frimkess	Dr. Adriane Leveen
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Sharon Benveneste	Marjorie Fuhrmann	Linda L. Levine
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Evelyn E. Berger	Dr. Reva Gershen Lowy	Phyllis Levy
Roberta S. Berger	Renee B. Glazier	Lynne Lichtig
Maxine Berke	Aliza Goland	Maxine Liebowitz
Marilyn Berkowitz	Eve Gold	Susan F. Lodish
Genie Green Blaher	Linda Goldberg	Ruth Loewenstein
Rivy Blass,	Gail Goldfarb	Karen Lukin
Annette Blitzer *	Debbi Goldich	Ilene Kirschner Madwed
Karen Block	Shelly Goldin	Carol Maller
Nancy J. Bloom	Roz Goldstine	Toby Maser
Gerri Blum	Gertrude Golub	Cookie Matez
Judie Blumeno	Judith S. Gottesman	Karen M. Mazal
Sandy Blumenthal	Ann W. Gould	Blanche Meisel
Phyllis Ruth Brody	Carol J. Green	Margie Miller
Laurie Stone Brofsky	Anne Greenbaum	Nina B. Mintzer
Frances Caine	Jessica Gribetz	Marion Mohl
Gloria Canter	Penny Grossman	Bea Muroff
Molly Chernofsky	Phyllis Haas	Deborah Napoleon
Audrey Citak	Corinne Hammerschlag	Meryl G. Nason, Ph.D.
Gloria B. Cohen	Jewell S. Hirschorn	Gail Neiman
Marsha Cohen	Toby B. Holtzman	Donna E. Neubauer
Rhonda Cohn	Judith Mary Horowitz	Anne Nicolson
Paula Coplon	Amy Hymes	Jo-Anne Novik
Susan Coren	Diane Jackson	Ziza Pallia
Laurie B. Davis	Francine Jacobson	Marlyn Perry
Fay DeHaas	Lela Beren Jacoby	Ruth Magil Perry
Estelle W. Dobrow	Anne M. Jess	Idette Pfeffer
Beth Eichenholtz	Beverly Jones	Wanda Pitzele
Tina M. Eisenman	Harriet Kantrowitz	Mimi Pollack

Maxine Pomerantz
Kathryn Porges
Myra R. Promisel
Renee Ravich
Janet Reagan
Lorraine Reid
Bea Reynolds*
Lisa Riseman
Robin Rogel-Goldstein
Ronna H. Ross
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Illene Rubin
Barbara Safer
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Mary Sanders
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Madelyn Saul
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Marci Seltzer
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Myra Shapiro
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Amanda Siegel
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Carol Shayman Simon
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Gloria Spitz
Mary E. Starkman
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Sharon Steinberg
Meryl Stern
Sara Nathan Stern
Harrian Stern, Ph.D.
Lisa Tesser
Janet Tobin
Carolyn Topol
Marcia Toppall
Anna Tractenberg
Phyllis Traub

Joan C. Vegin
Beverly Wachtel
Sherry Wachtel
Linda M. Warner
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Eve Wechsberg
Doris J. Wegman
Joyce Berlin Weingarten
Rhoda Weinstein
Selma Weintraub
Rita Wertlieb
Lara Werwa
Debra Weston
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Karen Winer
Terry Winston
Miriam E. Witkin
Diane Wohl
Florence G. Wolpoff
Judith Young
Iris Zackheim
Susan Zauderer

*Honorary Members of the
Board

THE 13 REGIONS OF WOMEN'S LEAGUE

BQLI

President: Sharon Shorten
Bulletin: Kol Ishah

Central Great Lakes

President: Laurie B. Davis
Bulletin: The Wave

Florida

President: Genie Green Blaher
Bulletin: Reaching Out

Garden State

President: Meryl Balaban
Bulletin: Garden State
Newsletter

International Northeast

President: Iris Zackheim
Bulletin: Chai Lines

IntraContinental

President: Karen Lukin
Bulletin: ICR

MetroNorth

President: Dr. Reva Gershen-Lowy
Bulletin: MetroNorth Express

Mid-Atlantic

President: Debbi Goldich
Bulletin: Mid-Atlantic
Happenings

North Atlantic

Co-Presidents: Sally Abbey,
Karen Block, Renee Brezniak
Glazier, Harriet Merkowitz
Bulletin: North Atlantic Region
Newsletter

North By Northwest

President: Lorie Abernethy
Bulletin: The NorWester

Pacific Southwest

President: Marilyn Berkowitz
Bulletin: Chai Lites

Seaboard

President: Lynne Lichtig
Bulletin: Medidot

Southern

President: Barbara Ezring
Bulletin: Kol HaDarom

REGION PERSONNEL

Region Services: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Conferences: Terry Winston (International Northeast Region)

Presidents Conference: Renee Glazier (North Atlantic Region)

The primary mission of the regions is to support, and provide resources to, each sisterhood in the region. To better satisfy that mission, before convention 2008 Women's League created 13 new geographic regions by merging and reorganizing the previous 25.



Many of the region presidents have been sending weekly Shabbat messages to the women of their region. These messages also highlight region and sisterhood programs, as well as provide current information and materials from Women's League. This vehicle has worked very well to keep members informed and connected.

President Cory Schneider has spent an enormous amount of time traveling throughout North America. During these road trips, she and region presidents have visited 150 sisterhoods, bringing the Women's League message directly to the sisterhoods. This direct outreach, combined with mailings, conference calls, region conferences, and area parlor meetings, has been successful in linking sisterhood leadership and members with the International organization.

Although the demographics of our regions is ever changing and challenging, the region's mission remains the same. **Region Services** assists the regions by providing direct support to their leadership in their efforts to serve every sisterhood and sisterhood member. Networking, staying connected, meeting the needs of our members,

and providing resources -- one sisterhood at a time, one member at a time--will insure our success as an organization.

The **Region Conferences** chair helped the regions to plan and facilitate their spring conferences, showcasing Women's League services, region personnel, and new Women's League publications and materials, as well as by providing training and support to sisterhood presidents and members.

Spring conferences or meetings were held in 2009 in all 13 regions. In 2010, regions could opt for other formats. Spring conferences, Shabbatonim, meetings and/or events were held in 10 of the regions, all of whom benefited from Women's League personnel who conducted presidents' sessions and performed/assisted with various tasks at each event.

As in the past, spring 2009 saw the **Region Presidents, Membership and Torah Fund Conference**, a biennial training session for incoming region leadership. It prepared presidents and membership and Torah Fund vice presidents for their vital roles in their regions over their two-year terms. Region teams created joint visions and game plans through the use of brainstorming and problem solving, group and individual projects, and group discussions. This conference emphasized increased delegate participation and employed team teaching and rotated teams and groups. Delegates were encouraged to meet together without any designated format.

May 31-June 3, 2009 PRESIDENTS, MEMBERSHIP & TORAH FUND CONFERENCE

New York, New York

Chair: Renée Brezniak Glazier

President: Cory Schneider

Membership Chair: Harriet Merkwowitz, WLCJ

Region Services Chair: Margie Miller

Torah Fund Chair: Rita Wertlieb

The realigned regions spent the last two years defining their roles and expanding their ability to meet the needs of their sisterhoods. This was easier in some regions than in others. Some regions--such as IntraContinental that reaches from Mexico to Canada--cover vast geographic areas and can only meet as a region once a year. They take advantage of the region area structure that encourages clusters of sisterhoods to interact regularly. Another challenge is melding distinctly different cultures into one vibrant region. Florida Region begins each year with cluster meetings held in three different areas of the state focusing on Torah Fund, membership/Z'havah, presidents, and mitzvah projects. Other regions, like Garden State, have scheduled programs somewhere in the middle of their geographic area.

Many regions have integrated traditions from one of the merged regions into the new entity. Midwest Region's popular tradition of a white elephant auction helped break the ice at a region party and is now tradition for the newly merged IntraContinental Region, as is the Fun and Games night at Southern's region conferences. Mid-Atlantic Region continues the Philadelphia Region annual Founders Day celebration of Torah Fund, which in 2009 had over 200 women who were addressed by JTS chancellor Dr. Arnold Eisen. In 2010, JTS faculty member Dr. Stephanie Siegmund spoke. Mid-Atlantic continues to join with the five other Jewish women's organizations in Philadelphia for the annual Woman of Honor dinner sponsored by Israel Bonds. In 2009 Anna Tractenberg was

the honoree, in 2010, Mimi Pollak (first president of the new region). For over 30 years members of Seaboard Region have gotten together in “sistership” at a joint dinner and program.

All of the regions are grappling with deciding what are the appropriate chairmanships, vice presidents, and committees, etc. that will meet the needs of their affiliates. Some are sticking to the original blueprint laid out by Women’s League while others are tweaking and fine-tuning the recommendations. Where women are working together to meet the challenges, the outcomes have been exceptional. To increase the likelihood of this happening, North by Northwest Region opened up its presidents’ session to all members during its Rocky Mountain Chai: Taking Your Sisterhood to New Heights conference, calling it a leadership session instead. The leadership of the Southern Region always insists that every program answers the question, how does this benefit our sisterhoods? One way they find out is by visiting each and every sisterhood--24 sisterhoods over about 3,000 miles. Southern also ran focus groups to determine the needs of its members.

Both Garden State and Pacific Southwest Regions took advantage of the summer lull to increase training in their sisterhoods: Summer Camp was a hit for training Garden State and the leadership of Pacific Southwest traveled around the region offering mini-workshops as needed.

Most of the region presidents have made better communications and constant contact with their presidents a priority of their administrations. They use phone calls, conference calls, emails, weekly pre-Shabbat messages, face-to-face meetings, conferences, and parlor meetings to expand their contact. Vice presidents and area directors are urged to be in frequent touch with their counterparts. Regions also use websites (hosted by Women’s League) and emailed bulletins to engage their members. Pacific Southwest utilizes an expanded sisterhood profile to create lists of parallel chairs to ease communication from the board.

Regions shared programming ideas and topics with a few appearing in several regions:

- To Plant and To Preserve/environment (Florida, International Northeast, North Atlantic)
- Authors (Garden State, Mid-Atlantic, MetroNorth, Seaboard)
- Chanukah programs (International Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, BQLI)
- Wellness/spa: (Mid-Atlantic, Southern at Camp Ramah Darom)

Other programming ideas included information on Masorti Olami and the Masorti movement in Israel, Heart & Soul, and From Generation to Generation.

SOME REGION HIGHLIGHTS ACROSS THE CONTINENT

IntraContinental Region sells kippot with the Women’s League logo and “A League of Our Own” as a fundraiser to provide scholarships for women who have never attended a conference.

Mid-Atlantic Region joined with the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs for a keruv program.

Seaboard, Florida and Pacific Southwest Regions participated in pilot programs with the local United Synagogue and Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs that will encourage future cooperation and mutual benefit among the three lay organizations of the Conservative movement.



Rabbi Marc Rosenstein spoke about Conservative Judaism at a Southern Region event.

North Atlantic Region introduced Women of Distinction, a new award for women nominated by their sisterhoods.

Seaboard Region held its first 24-hour overnight leadership retreat.

Southern Region hosted a shaliach for Mercaz when Rabbi Marc Rosenstein spoke about Conservative Judaism in Israel.

Pacific Southwest Region introduced Speed Programming.

As a result of a Women's League resolution BQLI presented a conference on autism for the entire BQLI community with a panel of experts and workshops focusing on early childhood through bar/bat mitzvah.



BQLI Region Mitzvah Yomit with Education Director Lisa Kogen



At the 2009 Central Great Lakes Region conference, scholarships were awarded for the Women's League Leadership Institute



2009 Road Trips: President Cory Schneider in Southern Region.



TORAH FUND

TORAH FUND DEPARTMENT

Carolyn Baron, Executive Director

Torah Fund Chair: Rita Wertlieb (Seaboard Region)

Campaign Development: Lauren Wishnew (BQLI Region)

Treasurer: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

Patrons: USA - Lisa Schlesinger (BQLI Region); Canada – Corinne Hammerschlag (International Northeast Region)

Associate Patrons: Lorraine Reid (BQLI Region)

Keter Kavod: Blanche Meisel (Pacific Southwest Region)

Special Gifts: Phyllis Haas (Mid-Atlantic Region) and Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region), Lela Jacoby and Bea Reynolds (Pacific Southwest Region)

General Solicitation: Idette Pfeffer (BQLI Region)

Planned Giving: Evelyn Berger (Mid-Atlantic and Central Great Lakes), Ruth Aach (Garden State Region), Mimi Pollack (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Campaign Materials: Ruth Loewenstein (BQLI Region)

Broadcast Email Coordinator: Barbara Schreiber (Metro-North) Region

Strategic Planning: Francine Jacobson (North Atlantic Region)

eBay: Marjorie Fuhrmann (Seaboard Region)

Student Liaisons: Diane Wohl (BQLI Region) and Tobie Rosenberg (Pacific Southwest Region)

Canadian Liaison: Trudie Sassoon (International Northeast Region)

The Torah Fund mission is to give every woman an opportunity to participate in preserving, promoting and perpetuating Conservative/Masorti Judaism through active giving to the Torah Fund Campaign of Women's League for Conservative Judaism in support of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, and Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano.

Over the past two years we have raised over five million dollars. Over our 66-year history we have raised in excess of 83 million dollars!

Online

The Torah Fund website, www.jtsa.edu/torahfund.xml contains all the Torah Fund resources and is updated regularly. It is possible to pay a pledge, make a donation, send special memorial and in honor cards online at www.jtsa.edu/torahfund/giving. Online payments will be automatically credited to the donor's sisterhood.

We are now on Facebook, where information on Torah Fund and happenings in the movement are regularly added to our page.

Support Torah Fund on eBay

Sell something on eBay and donate a percentage (10 to 100%) of the sale directly to Torah Fund through eBay's giving works. eBay will keep track of your sale; will notify the Torah Fund office of your donation and will issue you a tax receipt.

Cards

Two new greeting cards are now available – memorial and get well. Check them out on the website.

Scholarship Project

This ongoing project benefits students attending JTS, Ziegler, Schechter Institute, and Semanario Rabinico in Buenos Aires by providing tuition relief. We have raised almost \$700,000 since its inception.

Speakers and Tours

The Torah Fund office arranged speakers and tours for sisterhoods from BQLI, Florida, Garden State, Intra-Continental, Metro North, Mid-Atlantic, and North Atlantic Regions. The tours brought more than 200 individuals to JTS, where they saw first-hand the importance of their support and hard work.

Torah Fund Chair Rita Wertlieb spoke at special events at Pacific Southwest (twice), Mid-Atlantic, Seaboard (twice), Metro-North (twice), North Atlantic, Central Great Lakes, and Florida Regions.

Special Events

The Torah Fund Conference prepares region vice presidents for the exciting and challenging position of raising funds for Torah Fund. They met with JTS and Ziegler administration, faculty and students; studied Torah, participated in workshops and solicitation training; enjoyed tours of the campus, library and residence halls and tefillot in the Women's League Seminary Synagogue.

Torah Fund at Convention

A Torah Fund luncheon will be held for all delegates to convention. JTS Chancellor Arnold M. Eisen will open convention and Ziegler Dean Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson will address the Torah Fund plenum.

Major Gifts

- Keter Kavod (Crown of Honor), unencumbered minimum annual gift of \$5,000
- Scholarships to secure our future: \$2,500+ plus giving in any amount to include all TF donors.
- Women's League Seminary Synagogue
- Mathilde Schechter Residence Hall
- Goldsmith Hall
- JTS Quad
- Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies garden
- Library Bookshelves
- Residence Hall at the American Jewish University



5770 Pin
Le'avdah ul-shamrah,
To plant and preserve



5771 Pin
Kehillah Kedoshah: Celebrating
community woman to woman