

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

BIENNIAL REPORT 2006-2008

Coordinator: Eve Gold/Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

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

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

Awards Committee: Myra Shapiro (Pacific Southwest Region)

CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism

Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

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

Convention: Carol Simon (Florida Region)

Budget: Lila Frost (Garden State Region)

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

Keruv: Marion Mohl (Garden State Region)

Nominations: Jessica Waxman (North Atlantic Region)

Parliamentarian: Janet Arnowitz (Garden State Region)

Per Capita: Gloria Adelson (Southern Region)

Strategic Planning: Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region)

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

Liaisons:

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

Ramah Commission: Sharon Steinberg (MetroNorth Region)

Project Reconnect: Rhonda Cohn (Central Great Lakes Region)

The last two years have been an exciting period for Women's League with many changes in the structure and function of the international organization. With its membership of 600 sisterhoods and 100,000 members, it is a vital component of the Conservative/Masorti movement worldwide.

One of the most apparent changes has been the arrival of **Ann Goldman** as the new executive director replacing Bernice Balter who retired after 30 years of service. Ann came to Women's League with a great deal of experience in the Jewish communal world and a clear understanding of organizational accountability, fiscal responsibility and programming priorities. She was director of planning and allocations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Monmouth County in New Jersey, and the director of professional development and school services for the Commission on Jewish Education of Palm Beach County, Florida.

Of equal impact was the publication of the final issue of Women's League Outlook Magazine after 75 years, and the introduction of **CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism**, a joint effort of Women's

League, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs. The mission of the magazine is to help members of the Conservative movement live lives increasingly filled with Jewish learning and commitment to klal Yisrael. By combining magazines, the three lay organizations have created a unified and stronger Conservative Jewish world. CJ is a quarterly that is mailed to over 260,000 homes.

Also of note: in an era of increasing costs and diminishing resources, the budget, finance, affiliation, retention and per capita chairs have integrated their portfolios into a coordinated team that is helping to establish firmer financial footing. The team is also in direct 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.

Another innovation of the last two years was the establishment of the **Kol Ishah Society**, an annual membership campaign. The multi-valued term Kol Ishah refers both to women's literal words and to the perspectives and sensibilities that women bring to any endeavor or undertaking. The irony is that the same words once served as the justification for exempting women from participation in public Jewish ritual, a notion that thankfully no longer applies: members of Women's League are Jewishly educated and skilled women who lead services, read Torah, teach, and serve their communities; hundreds of women rabbis, cantors, educators, and scholars use their voices as Jewish professionals.

So it is very apt that the new membership category has been named the Kol Ishah Society. It is the voices of our women that will ensure the future of our organization and that will enable women of every age to continue to flourish. By becoming a member of the Kol Ishah Society our voices will be heard well beyond our local communities.

Membership rate: \$54

Benefits:

- A beautiful bookmark (for 2008 inaugural members)
- Acknowledgement in CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and on the website
- Discounts at Women's League events

Members in 2008: 300

The Women's League **Archive** is now in its fifteenth 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.

LEARNING



Do not say, "When I have leisure I shall study, for you many never have leisure." - Pirket Avot 2:5

With its primary emphasis on Jewish learning, Women's League has combined several activities to form the **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)**. The goal of PAC is to encourage study in both formal and informal settings with coordinated programming, materials, and events for sisterhoods, regions, and the organization. The theme for 2006-2007 was "Praise Her for Her Works" and for 2007-2008 it was "*Kol Ishah - A Woman's Voice.*" Divrei Hokhmah - succinct mini-study guides - and the Women's League Sisterhood Anniversary Shabbat, as well as the Torah Fund pins, illustrated and expanded on these themes.

Begun in 2004 with extensive learning and programmatic materials created by experts in their fields, we completed our study of the five megillot for the **International Day of Study** with Song of Songs (2007) and Eikhah (2008). Each year more and more sisterhoods participate in these dynamic self-guided classes; the materials for Eikhah were utilized in several congregations' observance of Tishah B'Av. Psalms will be the focus of the 2009 Day of Study.

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF STUDY Esther, Kohelet, Ruth, Song of Songs, Eikhah

The Women's League book club took on a new name—**Orpah's List**—and chose its first non-fiction book for the 2008 selection, *The Faith Club*, by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner. The 2007 selection was *Disobedience* by Naomi Alderman. Additionally, the **books** chair has maintained a list of suggested readings on the website, where she has also collected titles of sisterhood cookbooks.

Introduced almost 20 years ago, almost 600 members of **Kolot biK'dushah** lead services, read Torah and fulfill other liturgical roles in their synagogues and sisterhoods. This year, 23 women were accepted into *Kolot BiK'dushah*, 22 into *Banot BiK'dushah* for post-bat mitzvah girls, and 11 into *Nashim biK'dushah* for women who regularly use their outstanding skills to lead services, read Torah, and lead Birkat haMazon at Women's League and region events.

Women's League Institutes remain busy and well attended, educating members, families and friends. Thirty-eight women studied with members of the faculty at the Jewish Theological Seminary in the New York City institute. Additional Institutes took place in Southern New Jersey (17 students), Florida (30 students), Seaboard (22 students), Philadelphia (23 students), as well as at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. At the annual *siyyum*, certificates of honor were awarded to those who had 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).

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 Bengel (Florida Region)

Mitzvot: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Program Resources: Ziza Pallia (Seaboard Region)

Tikkun Olam: Susan Lefelstein (North By Northwest Region)

Ways & Means: Carol Friedman (North Atlantic Region)

Youth: Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Judaica Shop: Colette Segal (Pacific Southwest Region)

Kolot BiK'dushah: Cantor Rena Shapiro (MetroNorth Region)

Kol Ishah Concert: Susan Lodish (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Vashti's Banquet: Penny Leifer (Garden State Region)

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

LIVING

More than the Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews.
- Ahad Ha'am (Zionist thinker, 1856-1927)

Women's League has always provided its affiliated sisterhoods with extensive programming guidelines and materials. For the first time, the **program resources** chair has looked to the sisterhoods themselves for ideas to share with the rest of Women's League. She maintained contact with the sisterhoods and scanned congregational bulletins and sisterhood mailings for programs to add to the **Sisterhood Planner** or to publicize on the website.



The **Creative Judaic Arts** committee encourages members to create contemporary and authentic Judaica to fulfill the concept of *hiddur mitzvah* (enhancement of a mitzvah). The committee provides activities that are traditional, attractive and easily replicated. This year's project for convention illustrated the theme of *Lev V'Nefesh* (heart & soul) while fulfilling the religious dictum to repair the world. Hundreds of women used the work of their hands to create hats, gloves and scarves to be donated to the poor of the convention host city, Detroit. In addition, convention will introduce some very old techniques in a very modern vein: Jewish origami and henna design.

To enhance its commitment to the world in which we live, the Women's League board of directors authorized the expansion of its annual **Tikkun Olam** appeal. In addition to its longstanding collection on behalf of JBI (Jewish Braille International), Women's League is asking affiliated sisterhoods to donate to the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Services and the Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium.

The youth of the Conservative movement, who are our hope for the future, benefit from the Women's League **youth** activities chair. She 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. She has put out requests for volunteer staffing, housing and chaperoning for USY events across the country that have always been answered positively.

MITZVAH YOMIT and BAALOT MITZVAH AWARDS

The **Mitzvah Yomit** initiative is designed to reinforce the concept of mitzvah in our lives. It will be a two-year long project in which sisterhoods and individual members will be encouraged to think about how the performance of mitzvot enriches us individually and communally.

In keeping with the convention 2008 theme of Heart and Soul, and to mark the kick-off of the initiative, a **Baalat Mitzvah** award will be given to 14 women who have distinguished themselves in specific areas of mitzvot: *hinukh* (education), *tefillot* (prayer), *tzedakah* (fundraising), *advocacy*, *hesed* (communal acts of kindness), *Israel*, and *hiddur mitzvah* (creative handcrafts).

The **Women's League Sisterhood Planner** made its debut at Convention 2006. It includes simple directions on how to plan and execute programs, resources, criteria for selecting a program to suit your sisterhood's needs, specific programs, and installation and trigger scripts. Additional pages were added this year with program ideas from the Jewish Women's Archive. Each year, new pages will be sent to every sisterhood president to be incorporated into the planner.

VASHTI'S BANQUET

March 9, 2008 saw the first ever celebration of the woman many consider to be the real hero of the Purim story, Queen Vashti, whose refusal to accede to her husband's lecherous demands paved the way for Esther's arrival on the scene. Janet Geldzahler successfully recreated the atmosphere of a harem at Congregation Ansche Chesed in New York City. Over 200 women-only of all ages enjoyed Middle Eastern music, food and entertainment. Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner and Dr. Ruth Westheimer spoke, as did JT Waldman, creator of a comic book version of Megillat Esther. This program was replicated in several sisterhoods and regions.

Where There Is Hope Conference

In October of 2007, Women's League was one of several sponsors (including JTS, Hebrew Union College, Auburn Theological Seminary, and Hadassah) of a conference in memory of Tikva Kensky Frymer, one of the foremost feminist Bible scholars. The conference "Where There Is Hope" (tikva=hope) featured a number of study sessions lead by Frymer-Kensky's colleagues from universities throughout the United States and Israel. Hundreds of people attended the event which was truly a celebration of scholarship and Jewish humanism, concluding with a concert by Debbie Friedman.

KOL ISHAH: A WOMAN'S VOICE

A Concert in Celebration of 20 Years of Women Cantors

Sunday, December 16, 2007: Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

Sunday, January 13, 2008: Pasadena Jewish Temple Center, Pasadena, California

A joint effort of Women's League, Cantors Assembly, and JTS, this event brought together 34 women cantors from around the country to perform solos, duets, trios, and ensembles. A specially commissioned Sheheheyanu, underwritten by an anonymous donor, was composed by Hazzan Joanna Selznick Dulkan and sung, majestically, by the entire group.

The funds from the program journal, coordinated by Lynne WeissMarshall, will be used for the Women's League Kol Ishah Scholarship to be presented to a female cantorial student at graduation.

Special thanks to Hazzan Alisa Pomerantz-Boro, who organized the concert.

Close to 500 people attended the California concert, the proceeds of which went to the Western Division of the Assembly of Women Cantors, the Torah Fund Scholarship Fund, and the H. L. Miller Cantorial School at JTS.

The concept of *hiddur mitzvah* continues each year when a committee of volunteers gathers prior to Sukkot to beautify the **Adele Ginzberg Sukkah** at the Jewish Theological Seminary for use by faculty, students and visitors. A new tradition began in 2007, as children from local schools, camps and nursery schools added their work to the overflowing and colorful decorations.



SERVICES TO SISTERHOODS & REGIONS

Leadership Institute Administrator: Sally Abbey (North Atlantic Region)

Leadership Institute Lead Trainer: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Region Presidents Conference: Judie Blumeno (Central Great Lakes Region)

Region Services and Conferences: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Sisterhood Presidents Chat Group (PrezNet) Moderator: Marion Mohl (Garden State Region)

Training Services: Sandy Myers (Seaboard Region)

Training Services Help Line: Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region)

Training Services Personnel: Barbara Safer (Florida Region)

The success of an organization such as Women's League is dependent upon its ability to meet the needs of its constituency quickly and responsively. Through an extensive, multi-faceted training program, the Women's League and Region **Training Services** department of 60 professionally trained volunteer personnel, goes directly into sisterhoods and regions. The goal is to help sisterhoods grow in strength and numbers, develop leadership, and to support them in fulfilling the Women's League mission. Trainers offer vital workshops on: communications, goal setting/strategic planning, leadership development, membership, organization, problem solving, sisterhood/synagogue relations, and sisterhood image. Specialized seminars can be combined to meet the unique circumstances of nominating committees and presidential presidia.

Sisterhoods not yet ready for face-to-face training or those that have ongoing needs can benefit from individual or group training via conference calls. Mentors can also be requested to work with presidents and sisterhoods over an extended period of time. The goal is to service a sisterhood in whatever way works best at a specific time. Any sisterhood president who could not attend her region conference received individual, one-on-one president's training via phone from the **region services** chair.

Trainers were instrumental in the realignment of the Women's League regions from 25 to 13. They worked with groups, both large and small, on transition teams, and with the new nominating committees.

TRAINING SERVICES HELP LINE

Are you having difficulty finding new leaders?
Do you have a committee that's not functioning?
Do you have a sudden mid-term vacancy in an office?
Do you have trouble accessing sisterhood funds?
Do you have any other ticklish questions, unsolvable problems, difficult situations?

Connect to the Women's League [Help Line](http://help@wlcj.org) at [800.628.5083](tel:800.628.5083) or help@wlcj.org, Monday through Thursday, 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Standard Time). A qualified and experienced trainer will respond within 48 hours, not including Shabbat.

After seven 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. They return to their communities with a renewed purpose and vision.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES

January 2007: Tampa, Florida
August 2007: Farmington Hills, Michigan
January 2008: New York, New York
August 2008: San Leandro, California



Another key service provided by Women's League is training directed to specific groups. All the region presidents and area and Torah Fund vice presidents spent four days in New York in June 2008 for an orientation that included leadership development, study, and team-building, as well as grounding in the nuts-and-bolts of their roles. The new position of region services chair has become instrumental in the smooth transition to 13 regions by providing direct contact, mentoring, and assistance. Region financial teams and membership teams participated in training for their portfolios via conference calls, which provided the same intensive preparation without the additional expense.

Also on-line, **PrezNet**, the moderated sisterhood presidents chat group, provides a unique opportunity for sisterhood presidents to 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.

LINKING

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



WORLD AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Ann Goldman, Executive Director

Ba'Olam—In the World

Editor: Sue Press (MetroNorth Region)

Production: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)

Canadian Public Affairs: Leona Eligberg (International Northeast Region)

COEJL Representative: Alisa Abrams (Seaboard Region)

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

Israel: Sylvia M. Lubliner (Florida 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: Joy Perla, Laurie Brosky (BQLI Region)

Washington Liaison: Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region)

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. Programming ideas for celebrating Israel @ 60 were developed and shared through mailings and the website. Work is underway to create a hands-on project to concretize relationships between the members of Women's League and their Israeli sisters.

Masorti Women International continues as a vital outgrowth of our commitment to enhance our direct 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. Over 400 Israeli women study in five different languages (Hebrew, English, Russian, Spanish, Amharic) at the Masorti Women's Study Day each year sponsored by Women's League, the Masorti Movement, and Schechter Institute.

On the 2007 Women's League Mission to Israel, delegates met with members of several of the *kehillot*, visited Neve Hanna, a children's village in Kiryat Gat where the movement has responsibility for religious life and education; and sponsored a joint program with Masorti women from across Israel. As a result of these efforts, 110 Israeli women have joined our ranks along with others from the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

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, and identifies the public policy issues for which Women's League adopts resolutions. 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 become the basis for organizational positions. The committee is in the process of making the entire history of Women's League resolutions available on its website.

To help sisterhoods activate their members for the 2008 US elections, a **Voter Guide** was created and distributed to sisterhoods and posted on the website.

As an active participant in the Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism (LCCJ), Women's League has played influential roles 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. She also was one of several Jewish leaders who met with the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee to discuss a broad array of issues. In addition to a reception at the Israeli Embassy to kick off the Israel at 60 celebrations, she attended briefings, events, and briefings with representatives of various national Jewish agencies.

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** and alternate are advocates on behalf of Israel and other Jewish issues that have plagued that international forum. One of the few successes of the Jewish NGOs was the establishment of the Holocaust remembrance program and a permanent Holocaust exhibit. The Women's League NGO has delivered Purim mishloah manot and Passover packages to various members of the UN staff. Sisterhoods are invited to tour the UN and to meet with members of the Israeli delegation through the NGO.

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**, now available online, provides news from around the world to interested women, sisterhood presidents, and the Women's League board of directors. Together with 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 has also become 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.

SHARING

Raise your voice with power. - Isaiah 40:9



COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Rhonda Jacobs Kahn, Communications Director
Internal Publicity: Carrie Zeidman (North By Northwest Region)
Internet Services: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)
Publications: Debbi Goldich (Mid-Atlantic Region)
Website Editor: Carol Gopman (Central Great Lakes Region)
Website Associate Editors: Cheryl Patt (International Northeast Region), Barbara Schreiber (MetroNorth Region)
WLCJNet Moderator: Maxine Pomerantz (IntraContinental Region)

Women's League has entered the electronic age, incorporating various on-line and virtual tools to expand communications with members. Celebrating its twelfth year, **WLCJNet** is the Women's League Sisterhood Without Walls. The almost 600 women from around the world have participated in the annual virtual Hanukkah candle lighting, recited Psalms for peace and the safe return of all combatants, kept a mishaberach list, and publicized Women's League activities. Other popular features are weekly Washington updates, Shabbat and holiday ponderings, recommendations for books, scripts, fundraising, programs and other information. WLCJNet promotes camaraderie and connects Jewish women in different parts of the world. Women's League activity chairs frequently step in to answer questions, promote new projects, and suggest appropriate Women's League materials. The **Internet Services** chair provided assistance to the region websites, as needed, and supervised various aspects of the Women's League internet services.

The newest tool in the Women's League communications arsenal is its website, www.wlcj.org, launched in early 2007. A team of staff and volunteers reviewed options, targeted the information and determined the appropriate formats, designed content, and integrated both the data-based members-only pages and the public information pages. This on-going project keeps members up-to-date on world events, new Women's League materials, holiday study/projects throughout the year, contact information, sisterhood locations across the United States and Canada, and more. Some of its features include: online registration; opportunities to donate to Women's League and purchase materials online with a secure connection; updated resources and publications; Women's League resolutions, reports, *mitzvot* opportunities and community projects; contact information for staff, officers and chairs; links to outside organizations, Judaic shop suppliers; Torah Fund campaign materials. The website also will be linked to the new website, conservativejudaism.org, a gateway to the entire movement.

A tradition dear to generations of Jewish women is the publication of the annual Women's League **Calendar Diary** which in 5768/2007-2008 featured the art created by the 25 Women's League regions to illustrate the Eishet Hayil quilt for convention 2006. In a dynamic change of direction, the 5768/2008-2009 calendar described and illustrated the many aspects of Women's League, making it a creative publicity tool, as well. The calendar diary continues to generate substantial income to Women's League.

WITH STRENGTH & SPLENDOR **Jewish Women as Agents of Change**

by Lisa Kogen, Education Director
Foreword by Senator Dianne Feinstein
Chair: Marjorie Saulson
Distribution Chairs: Eve Gold, Janet Reagen

With great appreciation for major underwriting from the Rona Jaffe Foundation and support from Diane Wohl

Sponsors: Cory Schneider, Janet & Alan Arnowitz, Evelyn & Rube Auerbach, Evelyn Berger, Rina & Burt Lerner, Rosalie & Dr. Lawrence Berman, Barbara Braunstein, Gloria B. Cohen, Judi & Rabbi Barry Kenter, Susan Lodish, Blanche Meisel, Marjorie Dobin Sivin Miller, Marjorie Shuman Saulson, Evelyn Seelig, Lois & Michael Silverman, Carol Simon, Anna Tractenberg, Rita & Barry Wertlieb

With Strength and Splendor: Jewish Women as Agents of Change, published by Women's League in 2008, highlights extraordinary North American Jewish women from the past two centuries. Underwritten by the Rona Jaffe Foundation, with a generous contribution from Diane Wohl and from several sponsors, the sale of the volume will benefit the ongoing programs of Women's League.

Beauty, Brains and Brawn: The New World Balabuste - the convention 2004 exhibit commemorating the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Jews in America - was expanded and given a new title. *With Strength and Splendor* reflects how Jewish women disassembled old gender roles, shattered boundaries, and expanded their options. The exclusion of Jewish women from historical narratives is nothing new. *With Strength and Splendor* redresses this imbalance by introducing some extraordinary women into the historical account. According to author Lisa Kogen, the lives of Jewish women had been dictated by external political restrictions and internal cultural and religious considerations. In the new world, they have been freed to explore new frontiers in science, the arts, politics, religion, and even competitive sports.

The stories are all different, the women are all distinct but each is truly an agent of social change. This collection also serves to educate and inspire young Jewish women fighting similar and disparate battles every day that their potential for success is no longer confined by social norms and expectations.

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

Affiliation: Eve Gold (North Atlantic Region)
Individual Membership: June Schwartz (Southern Region)
Membership: 2007-Toby Rosenberg (Pacific Southwest Region); 2008-Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region)
Retention: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)
Z'havah: Robin Rogel-Goldstein (North By Northwest Region)

To both maintain and to grow membership in sisterhoods and in 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.

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.

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.

NEW WOMEN'S LEAGUE AFFILIATES 2006-2008

BQLI Region: Temple Beth Israel, Port Washington, New York

Central Great Lakes Region: Beth Israel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Florida Region: B'nai Abraham, Wellington, Florida,

Temple Beth Sholom, Palm Court, Florida

Garden State Region: Temple Emanuel, Passaic, New Jersey

Temple Beth Sholom, Fair Lawn, New Jersey

International Northeast Region: Ahavath Achim, Colchester, Connecticut

IntraContinental Region: Or Ami, Houston, Texas

MetroNorth Region: Sutton Place, New York, New York

Pacific Southwest Region: Ohr Shalom, San Diego, California

Surfside Synagogue, Huntington, California

Tikvat Jacob, Manhattan Beach, California

As of Convention 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. A special membership rate is available to women in the military.

After ten years, **Z'havah** has come into its own as a fully engaged project directed to younger women in Women's League congregations. The goal over the past two years was to expand Z'havah's profile and to support region personnel in forming a vital Z'havah network. 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 will be unveiled at Convention 2008, featuring techniques and tools for success as well as proven tried-and-true programs.

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2006-2008

International President: Cory Schneider

International Vice Presidents: Leona Eligberg, Eve Gold, Faye Laveson, Susan Lefelstein, Sandy Myers, Idette Pfeffer, Maxine Pomerantz, Sue Press, Colette Segel, Lynn Weiss Marshall, Rita Wertlieb, Lauren Wishnew

Recording Secretary: Judi Kenter

Financial Secretary: Heddy Belman

Treasurer: Sandra Koppell

Nominated for 2008-2010

International President: Cory Schneider

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Nominating Committee: Bernice Balter, Marion Mohl, Maxine Pomerantz, Barbara Safer, Randy Schwartz, Colette Segal, Marcia Toppall, Jessica Waxman

WOMEN'S LEAGUE REGIONS

At Convention 2006, the delegates approved new bylaws for Women's League that would realign the 25 existing regions (formerly branches) into nine new entities plus four regions that were continuing almost as they had been in order to better serve the needs of the sisterhoods and our members. This was an intensive, but rewarding process that took almost 12 months, under the direction of the **strategic planning committee**. The region presidents reviewed geography, transition and function and came up with a redrawn map of Women's League. The board of directors approved the recommendations in June 2007 and the transition became totally effective with the election of new region officers and boards of directors in June 2008.

In the interim period between Convention 2006 and the conferences in June 2008, regions continued to offer a wide array of programming: weekend retreats, Torah Fund events, study and learning, social action projects, training and leadership development.

To ease the transition from 25 to 13 regions, and to strengthen the functioning of each, several new positions and concepts were introduced. The region services chair helped create a master transition plan and worked closely with each region in its implementation. A region advisor was assigned to assist in the transition, structure and functions of each new region. Every region is subdivided into geographic clusters called areas, with an area director for each and a region area vice president responsible for all. The goal is to have more women assuming responsibility for direct contact with sisterhood members and leaders. The leadership in each region received newly devised training, either in person in June, or via conference calls.

THE 13 NEW REGIONS *with the names of the aligned regions*

BQLI (Eastern Long Island, North Shore Long Island, South Shore Long Island/Brooklyn)

President: Sharon Shorten

Advisor: Sally Abbey

Central Great Lakes (Michigan, KIPOT, Central)

President: Laurie B. Davis

Advisor: Jessica Waxman

Florida

President: Genie Green Blaher

Advisor: Paula Coplon

Garden State (Northern New Jersey, Central New Jersey)

President: Meryl Balaban

Advisor: Harriet Merkwitz

International Northeast (New York State, Canadian Seaway, Montreal Women's League)

President: Iris Zackheim

Advisor: Marion Mohl

IntraContinental (Southwest, Midwest)

President: Karen Lukin

Advisor: Terry Winston

MetroNorth (Hudson Valley, Metropolitan)

President: Dr. Reva Gershen-Lowy

Advisor: Evelyn Seelig

Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia, Southern New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania)

President: Mimi Pollack

Advisor: Gloria Cohen

North Atlantic (Connecticut Valley, New England)

President: Diane Jackson

Advisor: Linda Levine

North By Northwest (Northern California, Pacific Northwest)

President: Anne M. Jess

Advisor: Carol Maller

Pacific Southwest

President: Marilyn Berkowitz

Advisor: Marjorie Saulson

Seaboard

President: Gloria Canter

Advisor: Janet Arnowitz

Southern

President: Barbara Ezring

Advisor: Toby Maser

TORAH FUND

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the best of all your income. - Mishlei 3:9

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)

Keter Kavod: Blanche Meisel (Pacific Southwest Region)

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

General Solicitation: Idette Pfeffer (BQLI Region)

Planned Giving: Evelyn Berger (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Campaign Materials: Helene Ainbinder (BQLI Region)

Broadcast Email Coordinator: Barbara Schreiber (MetroNorth Region)

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

Canadian Liaison: Joyce Binstock (International Northeast Region)

Torah Fund's 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 (New York), Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies (Los Angeles), Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem), and Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano (Buenos Aires).

Over the past two years we have raised over five million dollars; over its 66-year history, Torah Fund has raised more than 83 million dollars.

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

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

Cards: The new Purim card raised \$4,865 over the past two years.

Scholarship Project: The ongoing scholarship project provides tuition relief to students at all the schools.

Speakers and Tours: During the past two years, 72 speakers—students, alumni, faculty - have gone to sisterhood and region events in 21 regions, in Alabama, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

The Torah Fund office arranged JTS tours for 15 sisterhoods from 10 regions, bringing more than 200 people to witness first-hand the importance of their support and hard work.

Special Events: The Torah Fund Conference (JTS, June 2008) prepared 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. We also offered a course in computer skills on how to create a power point for TF campaigns.

At Convention: My Heart Belongs to Torah Fund: For the first time, the convention Torah Fund luncheon will be for all delegates, and will honor the current Torah Fund Cabinet, and those contributing at the patron level and above. Chancellor Arnold M. Eisen will be the guest speaker.

TORAH FUND MAJOR GIFTS

- Scholarship to secure our future: \$10,000+ payable over four years; plus giving in any amount to include all TF donors.
- Keter Kavod (Crown of Honor), unencumbered minimum annual gift of \$5,000
- 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 University of Judaism

5768 Pin
Kol Ishah
A Women's Voice



5769 Pin
Lev va Nefesh
Heart & Soul



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