



**PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION OF  
WOMEN'S LEAGUE for CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**

**OUR STORY  
1947 – 2023**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can't list the hundreds of women whose passion for Judaism, unceasing commitment to educating and empowering women, and hard work penned the story of PSWR. Thank you to each and every one.

Thank you to Marilyn Berkowitz, Renee Ravich, Karen Deutsch and Jennifer Malvin for their valuable editing assistance.

A special thank you goes to Cory Schneider for trusting me with this labor of love.



## INTRODUCTION

I was enjoying breakfast at the WL Convention in 2023 with my Region sisters. We were so excited and happy to be together, in person. (Probably one of the reasons I would have agreed to anything.). Cory (Past Int'l President) and Carol (Region President) came over and mentioned the new initiative for all the Region's to document their history, before they are forever forgotten.

*"People must know the past to understand the present and face the future."*

*Nellie McClung*

They asked me to suggest some people who might be suitable for this project. Those I mentioned had turned it down. So of course, they asked me. I thought about it, concerned over the time commitment. Anyone who knows Cory, knows it is impossible to say no to her.

Foolishly, I thought it would be a simple task. As I began reading the archival materials, I was drawn in, fascinated by the information. The more I unearthed, the more I wanted to know. It became a journey of discovery about fascinating, brave women challenging the status quo, and the world and social concerns shaping our direction. It became a labor of love.

It also became very difficult to decide what to include and what not. Over 77 years there are a great many stories. I chose the ones I thought best represented the character of our Region.

I sincerely apologize for omissions or inclusions that may be upsetting.

B'Shalom,  
Agnes Gold Emert  
Past Region President, Chronicler  
April, 2024



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INCEPTION & TORAH FUND.....	1 – 7
SERVICE TO SISTERHOOD AFFILIATES.....	8 – 20
SOCIAL ACTION.....	21 – 24
COVID 19.....	25 – 28
OCTOBER 7 <sup>TH</sup> .....	29 – 31
INFINITE POTENTIAL.....	32
APPENDIX	
SISTERHOOD AFFILIATES THEN AND NOW.....	33 – 37
PRESIDENTS AND THEIR ENDEAVORS, 1947 -2023.....	38 – 47



## INCEPTION AND TORAH FUND

Excerpt from “How the West Was Won (Jewish That Is)”, by Marjorie Pressman z”l, *Beauty, Brains & Brawn*, May 2004

*The first wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe began in 1880. The turn of the century greeted the rise of Jewish neighborhoods and establishment of major Jewish organizations (such as) Jewish Home for the Aged, City of Hope...The Jewish Federation. Boyle Heights and West Adams emerged as centers of Jewish Life. By 1920, the Jewish population numbered 20,000, with post WWI producing another influx, swelling the numbers to 70,000.*

*Post WWII brought another increase, when many soldiers saw California, liked it and came to settle, swelling the ranks along with 30,000 survivors, to number 150,000.*

*In the 1940's synagogue life grew from five conservative synagogues, a like number of reform and a few Orthodox to a vibrant Jewish community, now with a population of 600,000, surpassed in numbers only by New York, which seemed to fulfill the 1945 prophecy of Dr. Louis Finkelstein z”l, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who said “in the near future there will be three main foundation stones for the Jewish people: Jerusalem, New York and Los Angeles”.*

The Southern California Branch of National Women's League was founded in 1947 by Augusta Kohn z”l. As a teenager, Augusta left Germany for New York, where she later met and married renowned Rabbi Jacob Kohn z”l. While in New



York, she worked with two women – Henrietta Szold z”l, of Hadassah and Mathilde Schechter z”l, both of whom were to become leaders in their own right, and pioneers in organizing the Sisterhoods of the Conservative Movements.

In 1931, the Kohns moved to Los Angeles where Rabbi Kohn became Rabbi of Sinai Temple. Mrs. Kohn and a group of Sinai women organized five Sisterhoods in the area and started the Southern California Branch. Eve Wechsberg z”l, Past Branch President, (*Silver Anniversary Conference Booklet*, 1972) characterized her as “*our beloved founder...brought to this new Branch her love for Torah, her brilliance, and an understanding heart...shaped attitudes for future leadership and set guidelines for a significant organization*”.

The University of Judaism also came into existence in 1947. As the west coast branch of The Jewish Theological Seminary, it borrowed facilities from the old Sinai Temple with Rabbi Jacob Pressman z”l serving as Registrar. These spaces provided meeting rooms, offices and classes and became the ‘heart and soul’ of the

Conservative Movement on the west coast. With a firm partnership of faculty and supportive lay organization such as the Southern California Branch of National Women's League, this strong relationship continues to the present day.

One of the Sinai women active in Sisterhood was Marjorie Pressman z"l, wife of Rabbi Jacob Pressman z"l. She immediately volunteered to become the West Coast Torah Fund chairwomen, holding the very first Torah Fund event in 1947 with 200 women representing 11 Sisterhoods, and raising \$ 2,000.

*'Preserving, promoting and perpetuating'* Conservative/Masorti Judaism is the cornerstone of Women's League. To this end, the Torah Fund Campaign was established in 1942 to provide financial support for institutes of higher education by creating a scholarship fund for the students at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. With the establishment of the University of Judaism as a satellite, the Torah Fund Campaign also became of primary importance to the women of Southern California Branch. The funds raised supported the programs and students on both coasts, such as building both the Mathilde Schechter Residence Halls at JTS and a Residence Hall at AJU, and gave an avenue for women to be directly involved in the education of future generations of Conservative Jewish leaders, scholars and lay people. The Campaign also provided our women with leadership and educational opportunities, as well as a great deal of pride and 'nachas'. As Sonny Raffle z"l, Past Branch President, *Torah Fund Lunch Program 1979*, said:

*"Through our Torah Fund-Residence Halls Campaign, we experience tremendous satisfaction and accomplishment for we share in the continuing growth and excellence of Judaic educational opportunities emanating from...the JTS, the UJ...and we take great pride in the knowledge that TF has made these dormitories a reality in our time."*

Los Angeles is home to a multitude of Jewish cultural, artistic and educational luminaries. Our close relationship with UJ allowed us to call upon the many renowned scholars and rabbis.

The first Torah Fund event began a custom of culminating the year's campaign with a Torah Fund Luncheon honoring a prominent figure in the Jewish community. Notably, it was also a forum to express our collective gratitude of the hardworking women of our affiliates who continued to make Pacific Southwest

Branch the highest grossing fundraiser for Torah Fund. By the early 1950's, Southern California Branch became known as Pacific Southwest Branch.

In 1955, the two-day event was held at the famous Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel. Over 1100 women from 28 Sisterhoods were in attendance. The honoree was Cecil B. DeMille, who had just produced the now legendary film, "The Ten Commandments". Mr. DeMille was honored for his contribution to communication through the medium of motion picture, bringing the past alive.



*Charleston Heston accepting the Torah Fund Award on behalf of Cecil B. DeMille in 1955. Dr. Rabbi Jacob Kohn of UJ on the left and PSW President Selma Crow.*

These are just a few of the Torah Fund honorees throughout the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's: Cecil B. DeMille, Monty Hall, Zubin Mehta, Michael Tilson Thomas, LA Mayor Tom Bradley and San Francisco Mayor Diane Feinstein.

*We planned the TF Residence Hall lunch at the Century Plaza Hotel honoring Rabbi Jacob Pressman of Temple Beth Am with the Mitzvah Award. From left: Mrs. David (Frances) Kuris, Nat'l Co-ordinator; Mrs. Jacob (Marjorie) Pressman, Nat'l VP; Mrs. Bernard (Eve) Wechsberg, Branch President, Mrs. Elmer Brown TF VP, PSW*



More than 1,000 synagogue women dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish learning will attend the 24th annual Torah Fund-Residence Hall Luncheon of the Pacific Southwest Branch, National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America, Thursday, Feb. 18, at 11 a.m. in the Los Angeles Ballroom of the Century Plaza Hotel, announced Mrs. Bernard Wechsberg, branch president. Participating in this event will be representatives from the 53 sisterhoods comprising the Pacific

Southwest Branch in Southern California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. The Branch is a section of the National Women's League which is made up of 800 sisterhoods in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Israel.

Seeking to inculcate into the home and life of its sisterhood members the religious ideals of Judaism through education, the Torah Fund and Mathilde Schechter Residence Hall Campaign.

Mrs. Elmer Brown of VJCC, Torah Fund vice president and chairman of the luncheon noted that the Branch's Mitzvah Award will be presented this year to Rabbi Jacob Pressman, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Am, for his many years of outstanding dedication on behalf of Torah Fund and the Jewish community.

1971

*"The historic motion to amend Article I of the By-Laws to change the name was carried unanimously. Mrs. Henkind then made a motion that this organization henceforth be known as: 1. Women's League for Conservative Judaism..."* Henrietta Adler, WL Outlook, 1972

Women's League growth in reach, expansion in geographic region, and the advisability to highlight their international profile informed the name change.

In 1975, construction began on the new UJ campus at the site it occupies today. Mitzi Goodis, PSW President was part of the ground breaking ceremony, an honor in recognition of our women's work for the University.

*"Our women are recognized for the share they have had in the development of this great center of learning not only through fund-raising but through their participation at all levels. Women sit on the Board of Directors."* By Marian E. Wail, The Embodiment of an Idea, *Women's League Outlook*, 1978

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1979, PSW moved into their new offices in the administrative complex of UJ, the only Region to have its own dedicated space, where they have stayed until the end of 2023.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1980, the Torah Fund luncheon was held at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, where Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley was honored with the Women's League Humanitarian Award. Note that somewhere between 1971 and 1980, women began being referred to by their given names, recognized as individuals in their own right rather than an extension of their husbands.

*From L to R: Dr. David Lieber, UJ President; Actor Steve Allen; Sylvia Bernstein, Program VP; Sonny Raffle, President; \*  
*onoree Mayor Tom Bradley;*  
*Myra Shapiro TF VP; 1980*



THE LINE-UP — Posing before the annual Torah Fund Luncheon of Women's League are Dr. Lieber; Steve Allen who introduced the honoree; Sylvia Bernstein, program vice president; Sonny Raffle, president of the

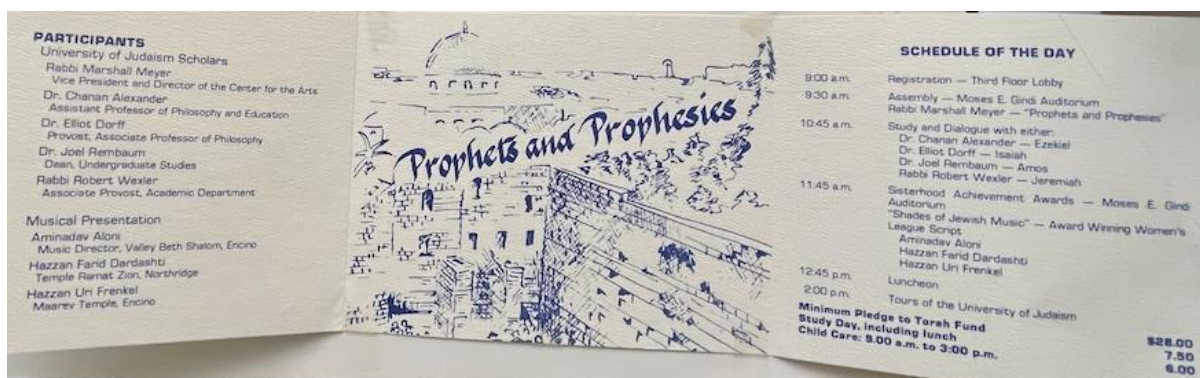
Pacific Southwest Region; honoree Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles and Myra Shapiro, Torah Fund Vice President.

By this time *"our... forward-thinking women felt it was time to re- invigorate the program with enhanced content and learning. Luncheons... likely were not what younger women wanted"*, per Alice Greenfield, Past Branch President. As such, the first Torah Fund Study Day was held at the University in 1983. It was a huge success with 450 in attendance from approximately 49 affiliates across southern California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. The day featured a keynote speaker on a topic



based on that year's Torah Fund theme with breakout workshops led by scholars and rabbis from the University.

These study days allowed our women to learn with inspiring leaders such as Dr. David Lieber, Rabbi Elliot Dorff and Dr. Rabbi Robert Wexler, to name a few. Our women personally experienced the benefits of supporting our schools of higher education as their own studies advanced. Torah Fund Study Day became a yearly event and continues to the present day.




*'Prophets & Prophecies' was the topic for 1985 Torah Fund Study Day. Study and dialogue with Dr. Chanan Alexander, Dr. Elliott Dorff, Dr. Joel Rembaum, Rabbi Marshall Meyer and Rabbi Robert Wexler.*

The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies opened in 1996 becoming the first independent rabbinical school in the Western United States. Until then, those planning to study for the rabbinate enrolled in the Graduate School of Judaica at the UJ in preparation for transfer to JTS in New York.

Rabbi Dr. Bradley Shavit Artson came to the UJ in 1999 and subsequently became the Dean of Ziegler. Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, Associate Dean, joined the staff in 2001. From that time forward, Rabbi Artson, Rabbi Peretz and PSW have forged a supportive and much valued relationship. Our Region President sits on the Boards of both UJ and Ziegler. An individual appointed by WLCJ serves as liaison between the Region and Ziegler. The Rabbis provide much valued guidance, information and support for our programs as well as education and inspiration at our events, and they rarely say no to our requests.

At our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Torah Fund Special Gifts Gala in 1997, WLCJ and PSW honored Marjorie Pressman z"l for her 50 years of unceasing work for Torah Fund

and the Jewish Community. Monty Hall was the master of ceremonies for the poignant evening at a packed Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles. Edie Nitzberg, President of PSW, Evelyn Seelig, z"l President of WLCJ and Dr. Robert Wexler, President of UJ expressed their personal tribute to Marjorie.



### SHARING A VISION CELEBRATING A SPIRIT

*The poor Robert Browning may not have known it, but when he declared: "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a heaven for?" he was describing the essential spirit that has propelled the human dynamo we know as Marjorie Pressman.*

*A Past President of the Pacific Southwest Branch of Women's League for Conservative Judaism, and the founder of our spectacularly successful Torah Fund campaign which benefits the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the University of Judaism, Marjorie has been a motivating force and a guiding light behind a myriad of projects and events that have lit up the West Coast and helped our Jewish community come of age.*

*In 1947 both Marjorie and our Branch were very young, bursting with the optimism of youth and eager to have a positive impact on Jews and Judaism. Marjorie brought the Torah Fund project to our Branch, worked its roots with her energy and enthusiasm, created it from a tiny seedling to its full flowering and continues her loving care to this day.*

*Marjorie married Jacob Pressman 54 years ago, and during the 35 years he served as Rabbi of Temple Beth Am, she was Rabbinian Extraordinaire, creating and coordinating dozens of successful synagogue and city-wide events: Israel Expo Week, the first ever West Coast Israel Fair with an attendance of 50,000 people, the Beth Am Celebrity Concerts, Art Shows, Yearbook Dinners, L.A. Bicentennial Celebration, just to name a few. In the community she has been a President, Vice-President, Chairman and Advisor for Hadsah, Israel Bonds, Friends of Hadassah Medical Center, the Beverly Hills Theatre Guild, and the Coordinator of the Israel Philharmonic's Hollywood Bowl Victory Concert in the summer of 1967.*

*Suffused with energy and the ability to do several things at one time, Marjorie's volunteer work flourished alongside many professional responsibilities. Her creativity and desire to be innovative are hallmarks of her endeavors: just say "it's never been done that way", and you have given her an insurmountable challenge. Her starting her vision, for nothing is so easy as create a spirit and realize our dream - for all she says, it and will yet be - we gratefully honor our indefatigable and selfless Marjorie Pressman. As the song says:*

*"When all is said and done, there is really only one. Marjorie, oh Marjorie, it's You!"*

Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
Pacific Southwest Branch  
invites you to the

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY TORAH FUND SPECIAL GIFTS GALA

honoring

### MARJORIE PRESSMAN

Sunday, the Sixteenth of March  
Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Seven  
Temple Beth Am  
1039 So. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles  
7:00 PM  
Program featuring Monty Hall as Master of Ceremonies  
Dessert Reception following

Minimum Gift to Torah Fund - \$150      Couvert - \$25 per person

A very special Torah Fund event was held in 2008. We honored 'twenty years of women being invested as Cantors in the Conservative Movement' by putting on a concert of women Cantors. The Torah Fund theme of *Kol Ishah*, a woman's voice, was particularly fitting. Thirteen magnificent Cantors captivated the audience of over 500.

### *Kol Ishah* "A Woman's Voice"

*Kol Ishah, a woman's voice, is the theme of this year's 51<sup>st</sup> Torah Fund Campaign. The special pin, with the silhouette of a woman, has created to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the investment of female cantors in the Conservative Movement.*

*We are so thankful that all of you have made your voice heard in your support of Torah Fund! Your donations help provide for the future of Conservative Judaism by supporting students at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies and the Seminario Rabbinico Latinoamericano. Money raised from the concert today will go towards the Torah Fund Flux Giving Scholarship campaign and also to the Cantors Assembly Western Region in appreciation of all the cantors who are participating in today's program.*

*Our Pacific Southwest Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism is proud to have worked with the Cantors Assembly Western Region to produce "A Concert of Women Cantors: An Afternoon of Study and Song." We want to thank all of our participants and especially Cantor Marcia Tilchin and Hazzan Judy Sofer for helping us to create this wonderful program. We also want to thank the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center for hosting the event and their Sisterhood for generously providing our dessert reception.*

*We welcome you to our program and thank you for your strong support of Torah Fund which keeps our Pacific Southwest Region the leader in Women's League's Torah Fund campaign.*

*Todah Rabah,*

Marilyn Berkowitz  
Region Torah Fund Vice-President

Iris Lasky  
Region President

### Program


Welcomes..... Iris Lasky, President  
Pacific Southwest Region  
Torah Fund Update..... Marilyn Berkowitz, Vice-President  
Torah Fund Campaign  
Welcome..... Rabbi Joshua Levine-Crester  
Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center  
Engage Update..... Rabbi Aaron Alexander, Assistant Dean  
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies  
Greetings..... Gloria Cohen, Immediate Past President  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

### *Kol Ishah*

*Yisroel Schuler*  
Hazzan Faith Distoverder..... Cantorial Coach and Instructor of Hazzan at the H.L. Miller Cantor School  
at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, NY, and, representative of  
Second Mount at Hebrew Union College, New York  
Including..... Hazzan Judy Dahl Aronoff..... Adat An El Valley Village, CA  
Hazzan Aryeh Ben-Zvi..... Congregation B'nai Israel, Albuquerque, NM  
Hazzan Cecilia Bronberg..... Sinai Temple, Los Angeles, CA  
Hazzan Ariana Brumberg..... Congregation B'nai Tikvah, Walnut Creek, CA  
Hazzan Jennie Brumberg..... Heritage Point Senior Residence, Mission Viejo, CA  
Hazzan Miriam Hershkorn..... Temple Beth David, Temple City, CA  
Hazzan Shana Leon..... Congregation Shaarei Torah, Arcadia, CA  
Hazzan Linda Rich..... Temple Ner Maavir, Encino, CA  
Hazzan Eve Robbins..... Congregation N'way Shalom, Los Angeles, CA  
Hazzan Beth Rosenfeld..... Congregation Beth Shalom, Santa Clarita, CA  
Hazzan Rhonda Singer..... Temple Aliyah, Woodland Hills, CA  
Hazzan Judy Sofer..... Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center, Pasadena, CA  
Hazzan Marcia Tilchin..... Congregation B'nai Israel, Tustin, CA  
Tova Marcus..... Piano

Our PSW Reach Revelers  
Dessert Reception

As the following show, both the Jewish education and the personal growth of Conservative Jewish women became the focus and the appeal of Torah Fund Study Days.



**Renee Ravich**  
Region  
President

**Agnes Emert**  
Region  
Torah Fund  
Vice President

The Pacific Southwest Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism

*Invites You and Your Friends to a Thoughtful and Experiential*

**Torah Fund Study Day**

*Hiddur Mitzvah – Enhancing Mitzvah*

**Sunday, January 22, 2012**  
9:15 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

American Jewish University  
15600 Mulholland Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90077

**Classes and Lunch**  
\$28 Payable to Women's League Torah Fund  
Please bring a Can/ Package/ Item for SOVA

**Pre-Registration for Classes Mandatory**  
(class size limited, register early)

For Details and to Register **PRINT OUT** the page below

---

**Enhancing Mitzvot: In Your Community, Synagogue, Home and for Your Self**

Explore

Personal beliefs and values - how these can find expression in **COMMUNITY** activity: Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) is in fact Tikkun Atzmi (repairing oneself)

**"Do not separate yourself from the community"** - Pirke Avot 2:5  
Dr. Margaret Avineri, Senior Director, Support Services, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles

Talking to God, Talking to Your Neighbors, Talking to Your self:  
Experiencing Prayer in **SYNAGOGUE**  
Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, Associate Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies

Unexpected Ways to Make A Jewish Home:  
Does a Kosher **HOME** Make You Jewish? Is a Kiddush Cup and a Mezuzah Enough?  
What It Takes to Infuse Your Home With Judaism  
Rabbi Sherre Hirsch

Healing Waters: The Power of Jewish Ritual for your **SELF** - the Mikvah  
Suzanne Rosenthal, The Mikvah Chick, American Jewish University

*In 2012, 'Enhancing Mitzvot: In Your Community, Synagogue, Home and for your Self'. Learn with Dr. Margaret Avined, Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, Rabbi Sherre Hirsch and Suzanne Rosenthal.*

*Our last TFSD prior to Covid-19, 2019:*  
*Empowering Women for a Bright Future:*  
*Using Our Voices to Make a Difference.*  
*Cantor Linda Rich, Melissa Balaban of IKAR, Ariella Schusterman of ADL, Dr. Jeffrey Herbst of AJU, Rabbi Artson and Rabbi Peretz of Ziegler, and Margie Miller of WLCJ.*

*Pacific Southwest Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism presents*

***"Empowering Women for a Bright Future:  
Using Our Voices to Make a Difference"***



**Cantor Linda Rich**  
First Female Conservative Cantor



**Melissa Balaban**  
Founder & Executive Director, IKAR



**Ariella Schusterman**  
Deputy Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League





**Dr. Jeffrey Herbst**  
President, American Jewish University



**Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson**  
Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Frankel College



**Rabbi Cheryl Peretz**  
Assoc. Dean, Ziegler School



**Margie Miller**  
International President WLCJ

**Sunday, January 23, 2019 9:15am - 2:30pm**  
**at the American Jewish University**

For on-line registration, click [www.wlcregion.org/pacsw/events/our-bright-future-tf-study-day](http://www.wlcregion.org/pacsw/events/our-bright-future-tf-study-day)  
Contact Roberta Spaccia, Torah Fund VP, with questions (818) 782-1051

Return this form with your check no later than January 3, 2019 to:  
PSW/WLCJ/American Jewish University 15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90077

Name  Sisterhood   
Email  Phone

☐ Number of Attendees (\$40 per person includes luncheon)  
☐ Donation to Sponsor Rabbinical Students  
☐ Total (Make checks payable to PSW-WLCJ)  
☐ Please list the home and Sisterhood to which you wish to donate





## SERVICE TO OUR SISTERHOOD AFFILIATES

*"The self-education of the conservative Jewish women" .... This mission, mandated over a hundred years ago, remains, unabated, the principle focus of Women's League for Conservative Judaism into the third decade of the twenty first century." Lisa Kogen, 'Women's League Publications: A Vision One Hundred Years Strong, 2023*

From its inception, the enrichment and empowerment of its membership by *"...providing a mutually supportive community that promotes social connection, wellness, religious commitment and spiritual wellbeing..."* by Shuly Rubin Schwartz, current Chancellor of JTS, WLCJ website 2022, was the essential focus of PSW and continues to the present day. Through publications, workshops, adult education classes, programs and leadership training, sisterhood affiliates have the tools and support to thrive.

Sometime between the late 1940's and early 1950's the following pamphlet became available to promote Sisterhood membership.

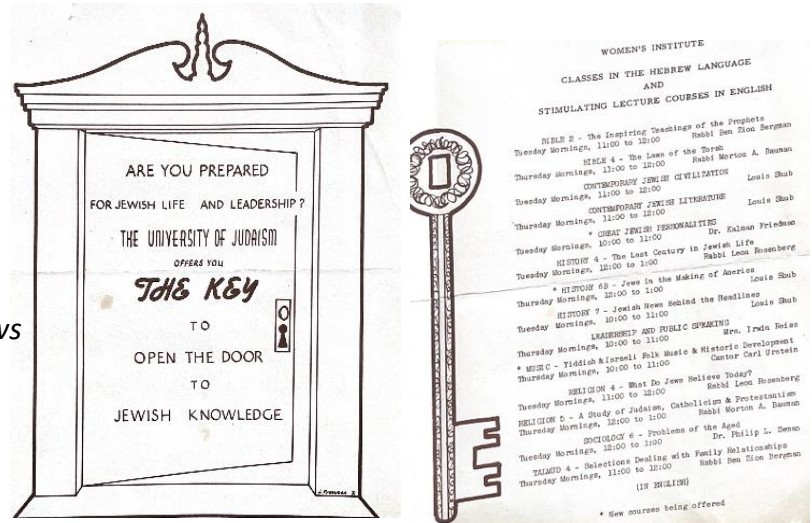


At the 1950 conference, the theme was Portrait of the Sisterhood Woman, presenting *"the vital role played by synagogue sisterhoods in the educational and cultural program of the community, as well as within the religious sphere..."* The California Jewish Voice, 1950.



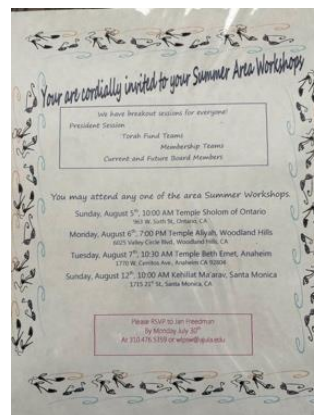
*Sessions included Sisterhood Presidents sharing and brainstorming; home observance and Synagogue attendance; and formal education which Introduced the PSW sponsored Women's Institute program at the University of Judaism.*

*The 1953 classes offered at the UJ Included such topics as The Laws Of the Torah, Contemporary Jewish Civilizations, Jewish News Behind the Headlines, Leadership and Public Speaking, Problems of the Aged.*



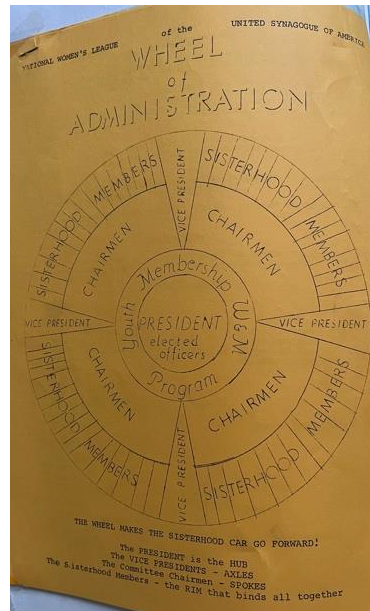
By 1951, the first series of Leadership Training workshops was launched in the summer for the officers, chairwomen and board members of the then 20 Affiliates. Held at the UJ, these focused on organization, ways & means, membership and speaker techniques. By the late 1950's and 60's, summer orientation sessions for the incoming board along with series of workshops for Sisterhood chairwomen were well established.

*Sisterhood Area workshops from 2012.*





As the Branch was growing, a new position was created, the Administrative Vice President, designed to assist and alleviate many of the Presidents' administrative duties. At the same time, the 'wheel of administration' was established.



*"The Wheel Makes the Sisterhood Car Go Forward"*

*The PRESIDENT is the HUB*

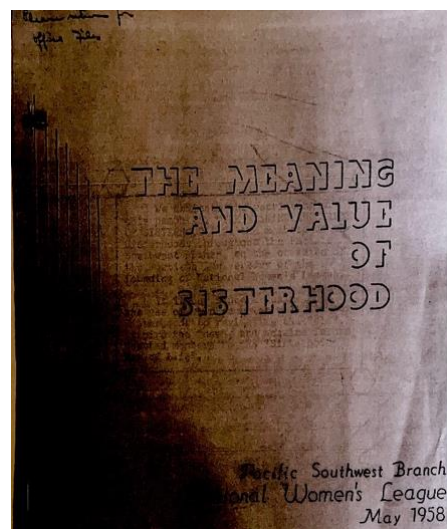
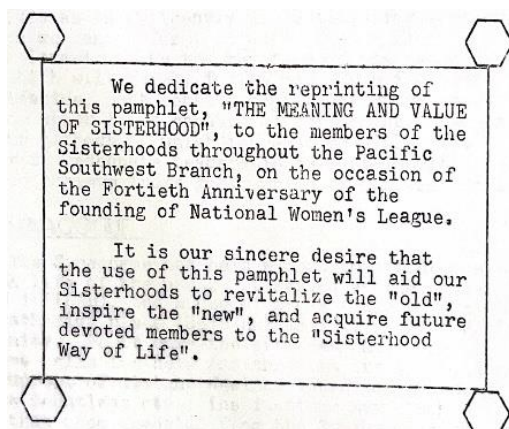
*The VICE PRESIDENTS – AXLES*

*The Committee Chairmen – SPOKES*

*Sisterhood Members – the RIM*

*that binds all together"*

Printed pamphlets, newsletters, directories, publications from WLCJ and our self-published bulletin *Chai-Lites*, provided the primary means of communication and education between the Branch and Sisterhood Affiliates until e-mail replaced 'slow' mail.



In 1963, it was decided to group Sisterhoods by areas to foster an atmosphere of close harmony and to better address the unique challenges of each area. Branch Coordinators were appointed to act as liaisons. November 25<sup>th</sup> was

to be 'Sisterhood Area Reciprocity Day'. Instead, it was devoted to a memorial service as the country mourned the death of President Kennedy.

The Area Seminars did take place later in three widely diverse geographic locations: Van Nuys, West Los Angeles and Lakewood. This proved to be a very successful experiment and thus the decision was made that for the coming term three of the VP's would be elected specifically to act as Area Coordinators, and to hold at least one such group of area meetings a year.

*"I had the unique opportunity to meet and work closely together with most of our Sisterhood presidents at our area meetings. There was dialogue and an exchange of ideas and experiences. Each Sisterhood has reaped dividends from our National mailings and our Branch directives to help project positive programs so that they will be supportive of their Synagogues and in the renewal of Jewish family life."* Mrs. Joseph (Mitzi) Goodis, President, *Chai-Lites*, 1974

Our Branch Board meetings were an important venue for our women as it enabled members to come together and exchange concepts and develop plans. In addition, it was an opportunity to learn about relevant current events and concerns. At the April 1961 meeting, Mrs. Yaakov Nash, wife of the Israel Consul was the guest speaker in honor of the bar mitzvah year of the State of Israel. 'The Jewish Woman, changing values, images and self-expectation' was the topic in November of 1983.

*"All of our sisterhood members are invited to explore...the historical expectations of women's roles and relationships in family and society, which have combined with cultural and other opportunities to cause conflict and ambivalence for many contemporary women."* Alice Greenfield, Program VP 1983, *Chai Lites*

In 1971, our Branch (*southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Nevada*) hosted the very first National Board Meeting on the west coast. Representatives from three other Branches – Northern California, (*Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Northern Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming*), Southwest (*Oklahoma, Texas, Mexico*) and Pacific Northwest (*British Columbia, Alberta*) also attended. This parley was a unique occasion for the women to explore strategies, to share ideas and to actively engage with women from far away.

20-B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER — Friday, December 3, 1971

## Conservative Women Leaders Here For Three Day Parley

*From left, Mrs. Jacob Pressman,  
National VP and Mrs. Henry  
Rapaport, National President, 1971*



Over the span of three days, our members enjoyed an art lecture at the UJ, a day at the Music Center where Zubin Mehta was honored for 'outstanding contribution and devotion to Judaism and the state of Israel' and an afternoon of Torah study with Rabbi Jacob Pressman on the position of the Jewish women. There was a Conference on 'recruit, activate and retain' where the newest techniques on how to attract, involve and keep members interested and active were discussed.

*"This conference will focus on expanding sisterhood membership by offering in-depth religious, educational and social directives to meet the changing needs of every member: the young women, newly married, the working woman, and the golden ager," according to Mrs. Rapaport z"l, National President, B'nai B'rith Messenger, 1971*

The National Board meeting was a *"thrill for us to get an inside view into the workings of our National organization and to be able to actually take part in person"* wrote Eve Wechsberg z"l, Presidents Report, 1972. Ten years later, in 1981, we hosted the second Women's League for Conservative Judaism Board meeting and Conference, focusing on the role of volunteers and the changing needs of the family in today's society.

**"To serve the cause of Judaism..."**  
*Matthilde Schechter, 1911*

Our Silver Anniversary is a time for celebration — a time for reflection — a time for evaluation — and a time for rededication.

Our Pacific Southwest Branch of National Women's League was organized in 1947 with 7 Sisterhoods. Our beloved founder, Augusta Kohn, of blessed memory, wife of the late revered Rabbi Jacob Kohn, brought to this new Branch her love for Torah, her brilliance, and an "understanding heart." It was our founder who shaped attitudes for future leadership, and set guidelines for a significant organization. Augusta Kohn is lovingly remembered by many, and especially by Mrs. Sidney Carow and Mrs. Jacob Pressman, members of the founding group. Our own Mrs. David Aronson, a National Vice-President at that time, travelled from Minneapolis to help organize our Branch.

During these 25 years we have been blessed with Branch Presidents, Officers, and Activity Chairmen, who give unstintingly of their time, creative abilities and unique talents to further the goals of Women's League. At Branch meetings, workshops, Sisterhood Board Orientations and Annual Conferences, we have implemented the League's multi-faceted program for education and service — featuring Adult Education, Jewish Family Living, Social Action, Israel Affairs, Youth Activities, Braille and related services. We serve Veterans Hospitals, participate in United Jewish Welfare Fund Campaigns, and cooperate with community organizations.

This past year an historic "first" took place! Our Branch hosted the first National Board Meeting held on the West Coast. Mrs. Henry Rapaport, National President of Women's League, presided. Mrs. Rapaport, and other visiting National leaders, conducted a full day Membership Seminar which was well attended by representatives from Pacific Northwest, Northern California, Southwest and Pacific Southwest Branches. A magnificent "Day at the Music Center" for Torah Fund Benefactors culminated this 3 day Conference.

Our Torah Fund — Residence Hall Campaign has reached new heights each year, and our Branch has received much acclaim from the Jewish Theological Seminary and the University of Judaism. Our Sisterhood women are justifiably proud of their role in helping to maintain our schools of higher Jewish learning that train our Rabbis, Cantors, Teachers, and knowledgeable lay leaders — the vital links in a living, vibrant Judaism.

Today, our Branch numbers 8000 members in 53 constituent Sisterhoods. Let us, 8000 Jewish women, rededicate ourselves to the ideals and goals of our founders, and start our 26th year with the words of a recent National Past President, Mrs. Albert Fried, who wrote, "As we look to the tasks before us, we see that our mandate is to deepen our own personal commitment to Jewish life — our own personal commitment, not anyone's else. And if asked where to begin, the answer in the words of Professor Abraham Heschel, when asked the very same question, is, "You start from where you are."

*Our Silver Anniversary Conference following National's visit, was a time to take stock of our accomplishments and challenges, to give thanks for being blessed with dedicated, determined and inspired women, and for "us, 8000 Jewish women, rededicate ourselves to the ideas and goals of our founders..."*, Eve Wechsberg, President, 1972



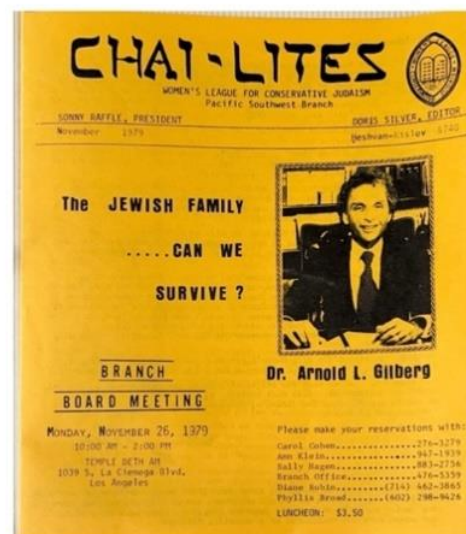
The very first open board meeting outside of California was held in 1981 in Tucson, Arizona. This two-day session included nineteen Branch Board members and representatives of seventeen Sisterhoods from all four states. Workshops, group dynamics and discussions provided valuable training. More importantly, attendees learned from each other and formed friendships. Visiting our sisterhood affiliates outside of California became a yearly event and continues to the present day.

A significant policy change made at this time was the creation of a full Board of Directors, including all the chairmen with portfolios, and inviting them to alternate Executive Committee meetings. This facilitated the board to work as a unit, encouraging and developing future leadership.

During an interview in 1978, Sonny Raffle z'l, said *"If I had to sum up our most important goals as an organization they would be to work closely with the Sisterhoods through programming and the providing of educational opportunities. We work to promote a sense of Jewish identity and to further the involvement of our women in the Jewish community."*

These goals were achieved through myriad of events and activities during the 1980's and 1990's. The summer area workshops for Sisterhood management and leadership training provided much needed support. Our quarterly bulletin, *Chai-Lites*, promoted the relevant programs scheduled for the open branch meetings held at various synagogues. Some of these courses were Dynamics of Television News, Quests for Women's Spirituality, and Jewish Family Violence - Breaking the Silence and the Cycle.

*"The JEWISH FAMILY...CAN WE SURVIVE?" Dr. Arnold L. Gilberg, Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst, 1979 He has often taught and lectured for the Board of Rabbis of So Ca and also for the Rabbinical Assembly.*



*"The Board of Directors and Affiliate Presidents of the PSW Branch have worked together to forge a strong bond of support and commitment to Jewish life. Our priorities have been to provide information and inspiration, and to encourage the involvement of our young working women faced with the challenges and choices of the 1980's."* Alice Greenfield, President, WLCJ Biennial Convention, 1986

Our year end conferences provided intensive training for all portfolios and for future leadership. They addressed the challenges impacting sisterhood affiliates and promoted brainstorming for plans to meet them. Notably, the women built networks for support and fostered friendships with others sharing their values and love of Judaism. And, they had fun.

*Our infamous Off-Keys, open to all, and only allowed to perform at last conference meal. From left: Naomi Friedman, Marilyn Berkowitz, Renee Glazer, Judy Fisher, Anne Dater, Maxine Silverberg, Agnes Emert, Gina Seeman, Edie Nitzberg, Gail Neiman.*



*"First and foremost...for me, there was absolutely nothing that could-or-can-top the lasting, treasure of Branch friendships – the understanding of true Sisterhood while working together for common goals and love of Judaism, caring about each other and our families."* Lela Jacoby, Past President, The Fruit of Our Hands, 2017.

<b>MONDAY, MAY 8, 1995</b>	
7:30 AM 8:45 AM	<b>EXHIBIT</b> Coordinator: Eve Wechsberg Past Branch President Member, Rejoice Bik' Shoshan
	<b>Debate:</b> Lela Jacoby Past Branch President
	<b>Memorial:</b> Sony Ruffin Past Branch President
8:45 AM to 10:00 AM	<b>SUPPER BREAKFAST (NETWORKING)</b> Sirkat: Anneli Horvitz Branch Financial Secretary
10:15 AM to 12:15 PM	<b>MEMBERSHIP ADVISORY</b> Presenting: Karen Rosenzweig Branch Membership Chair Resources: Sally Hagen Past Branch President Iris Leaky Branch Torah Fund Special Gifts Chair Colette Segal Conference Vice Chair
12:30 PM to 1:30 PM	<b>LUNCH</b> Remarks: Marian Hall Past Branch President
	<b>Sirkat:</b> Eve Wechsberg Past Branch President
1:45 PM to 2:45 PM	<b>"FACING THE CHALLENGES" - LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b> Introductions: Gloria Cohen National Consultant "Speaking with Authority" National Trainers: Anita Gorkin National Trainer Iris Leaky National Trainer Myra Shapiro National Trainer Linda Zwig National Trainer
	<b>Section A:</b> SALON A/B/C <b>Section B:</b> SALON F/G/H <b>Section C:</b> BEVERLY/HOLLYWOOD LOS ANGELES/IRVINE
(Please Refer to the Back of Your Name Badge for Section Assignment)	
<b>MONDAY, MAY 8, 1995 (continued)</b>	
4:00 PM to 6:30 PM	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b> "HOLD THE BEARERS..." An Exploration of Jewish Superstitions Presenting: Gury Reiner-Grueth Branch Education Vice President Marcia Ahlman Branch Adult Education Chair Presenting: Monica Thompson Programs Build
	<b>CREATIVE HAND CRAFTS</b> Presenting: Monica Thompson Programs Build
	<b>"IN OUR PERSPECTIVE"</b> A focus on Jewish survival in the "real world" Presenting: Marcia Ahlman Branch Area Vice President
6:15 PM to 7:15 PM	<b>TORAH FUND RECEPTION</b> Presenting: Sylvia Levine Branch Torah Fund Vice President
	<b>Video Presentations:</b> "The Open Gate"
7:15 PM to 10:00 PM	<b>SIRKAT</b> Presenting: Sally Hagen Past Branch President Remarks: Edie Witberg Branch Administrative Vice President Sirkat: Lela Jacoby Past Branch President "THE NEWS OF THE DAY: IS THERE A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE?" Executive Director: Jay Sanderson Executive Director, Jewish Television Network <b>SISTERHOOD PARTIES</b>
10:00 PM to 11:00 PM	<b>TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1995</b>
7:15 AM to 8:00 AM	<b>SHARONIT</b> Leader: Miriam Rubinstein Hollywood Valley Beth Israel
8:15 AM to 9:45 AM	<b>SUPPER BREAKFAST (NETWORKING)</b> Sirkat: Brenda Preter Remarks: Rejoice Bik' Shoshan
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM	<b>TORAH STUDY: THE FAMILY DYNAMIC IN BIBLICAL TIMES</b> Guest: Rachel Michael Gottlieb Speaker: Temple Judea, Vista

*Walk in the Path of Understanding: The Ties that Bind" was theme of the 1995 Conference. 'Facing the Challenges' leadership training and 'The News of the Day: Is there a Jewish Perspective' were some of the programs.*

University of Judaism Direction, 1996

### A Sukkah of Our Own

Students, faculty, and staff thought they had wandered into the promised land in October, when they celebrated *Sukkot* in a new, huge, and beautifully decorated *sukkah* erected on the UJ's second-floor patio with a scenic view of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The 80'x21' booth, which could hold up to 100 people, was a project of the Women's League of Conservative Judaism (WL). "We wanted to have a *sukkah* befitting the stature of the University," said League member and past president Frances Kuris, who conceived of the *sukkah* project. Individual WL members and sisterhoods throughout the Pacific Southwest Branch of the League paid for the *sukkah*, which will now be used every year.

Together, WL members and UJ students decorated the *sukkah* with gourds, posters, fruits and vegetables, and chains of *Rosh Hashanah* cards. Then the students enjoyed the fruits of their labor by holding a pizza party.



Frances Kuris with Frank Maas

### WELCOME TO OUR WOMEN'S LEAGUE SUKKAH!

*With great joy in our hearts, we, in the Pacific Southwest Branch of Women's League for Conservative Judaism, dedicate our gift of this beautiful Sukkah to the University of Judaism. This temporary dwelling, where students, faculty and arms of the Conservative Movement gather together during the festival of Sukkot, is symbolic of our unity in observing and preserving Jewish tradition.*

Joan Karchem  
Branch President

*This is an auspicious moment in the life of our University of Judaism - a time of great beginnings. How wonderful it is that, at this time, we have been able to make our dream become a reality. Through the harvest of so many people's energy and generosity, our Women's League Sukkah is here -- now and for many future generations.*

*I am deeply grateful to all of you who have shared my vision and joined together to fulfill this great mitzvah.*

*May your mitzvot lead us to holiness and may we be among those who devote themselves to Torah, Mitzvot and Ma'asim Tovim.*

Frances Kuris  
Sukkah Project Chair



The 'Women's League Sukkah' (renamed in 2002) became our most beloved venue. Every year since, for seven days, the rabbis, students, administrators, guests and our women mingle and enjoy the beautiful *sukkah* their hands created. We issue 'invitations' to everyone at the UJ, Ziegler and Sisterhoods to join us in decorating the *Sukkah*. Along with achy joints, dirty hands and faces, our women end the day with big smiles and warm hugs. We celebrate *Sukkot* with a lunch and learn and a Board meeting open to the entire membership. The Kuris family (Eileen, Al, Joan and Janet shown above) join us in paying tribute to Frances whose vision and determination made it a reality. The Ziegler students are especially appreciative. They are grateful for the opportunity to thank us for the work we do, and enjoy the delicious free food.



At the 2002 Women's League Convention in Philadelphia, sixty-five PSW Branch delegates 'kvelled' as Frances Kuris and Bea Reynolds were awarded the Honorary Lifetime Board Memberships of International Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Back in Southern California, a dinner was held in their honor where family and friends could celebrate and share this occasion. Among the guests were the International President, Gloria Cohen and many Past Branch Presidents'.



*Back row, left to right: Edie Nitzberg, Roz Goldstein, Benita Getzkin, Alice Greenfield, Jan Shulman Mitzi Goodis, Colette Segal, Gloria Cohen, Joan Karchem.*

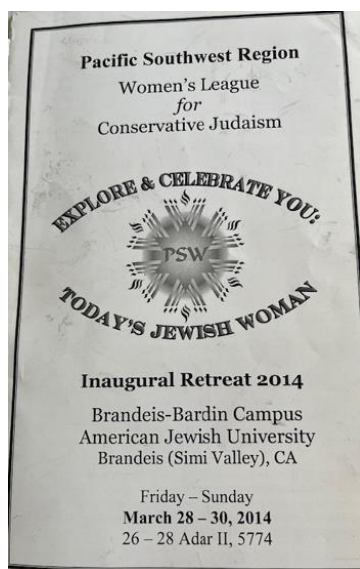
*Middle row: Sally Hagen, Sylvia Levine, Bea Reynolds, Myra Shapiro, Lela Jacoby, Carol Maller, Selma Weintraub*

*Seated: Anne Miller, Margie Pressman, Frances Kuris, Sarah Feder, Eve Wechsberg*

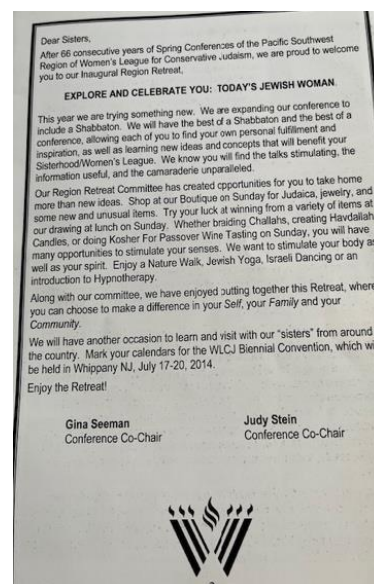
We were pleased and honored when Women's League asked us to host the first National Leadership Institute in February of 2002. *"It was a two-day intensive Jewish Leadership development program for current and future Sisterhood and Branch Board leaders led by International (?), Branch Past Presidents and Branch Trainers"* as written by Carol Maller, Past President, 2017 in an article entitled, *The Fruit of Our Hands*. It was held on the campus of the University of Judaism, with overnight accommodations in their student dorms. As a participant, I was encouraged to discover my strengths, supported and empowered to face my

challenges, taught skills and techniques to become an effective leader and had lots and lots of fun.

There were major changes in the Conservative Jewish community in 2007. The University of Judaism and the Brandeis-Bardin Institute, two institutions that had been operating independently, joined forces. This merger led to the establishment of the American Jewish University that we know today. While it took some time for us to adjust to this new name, this union did provide us with not only a new venue but new programming ideas as well.



*This Shabbaton was a very new experience for all of us. It took a great deal of work from many women, over many months, sending many emails, meeting many times and traveling to and from Brandeis-Bardin many, many times.*



At International Women's League, the 28 Branches were reorganized into 13 Regions. Unlike the other Regions, the only effect on us was a change of name – Pacific Southwest Region.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in a wave of new technology. We embraced the internet, emails and user-friendly programs and put them to use in serving our Sisterhood Affiliates. Our Region website was developed providing information on our Affiliates, Board members, upcoming events, and links to relevant organizations. A Region e-newsletter was launched, sent to our entire membership bi-monthly, offering them news and access to our conservative Jewish community. A separate, monthly e-bulletin promoting our Sisterhood Affiliates programs was sent as well. We created our iconic logo, proudly portrayed and recognized. We learned to use ZOOM for our meetings, allowing more people to participate and offer new ideas. For the first time, we elected a Region President

from outside of California for the 2015 – 2018 term. For the first time, a PSWR member, Debbi Kaner Goldich was elected as International President for the 2020 – 2023 term.

As the country became smaller through these technologies, we sought to strengthen the connection between our Affiliates, our Region, and Women's League. We hosted Leadership and Organizational Management Institutes, International Presidents joined us for Area workshops and Board meetings, and the 2012 Women's League Convention was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, the first time 'west of the Mississippi'.



*Dinner at WLCJ Convention in Las Vegas honoring Blanche Meisel (above), PSWR member, with lifetime membership in the WLCJ.*



*Also in 2012, at our open Board meeting and Sukkot event, we honored Angela Horvitz for her many years of service to Women's League.*

*Our renowned Ruach Revelers. They have Serenaded us at our conferences and special events for many, many years and created an atmosphere of much 'ruach'. They have also performed at WLCJ Conventions. From left: Janice Banarer, Lori Rose, Roberta Fox, Kelley Stein, Rhoda Lipsig, Renee Ravich, Joan Karchem, Iris Lasky, Julie Steinschreiber, Deena Gordon, Breena Prater, Phyllis Fleschler, Musical Director at keyboard*



During this time period, we reviewed our organization structure to be more relevant to our members and to better serve our Affiliates. We retired some portfolios, merged others, and created more Area Directors and Chair members. The Job Descriptions for both Officers and Board Members were revised, spelling out in more detail their duties and responsibilities. Finally, the By-Laws were updated to be in concert with these changes.

The 2014 By Laws revision reflected a very important change in the Conservative community – inclusion of non-Jewish partner. Membership in the Region was now open to ‘any woman...’ no longer ‘any Jewish woman...’. It also included the necessary portfolio alterations. The 2016 revision adjusted the term of office to three years to coincide with International and changed the name ‘Chair’ with ‘Team Leader’ and ‘team’ members to foster cooperation and teamwork. As Brenda Katz, Region Past President reflected, *“the most important wonderful thing that happened is that PSW grew stronger with teamwork and determination we overcame issues and turned them into challenges.”*

The most recent By Law revision in 2021 once again updated some portfolios and permitted elevating them to the position of Vice President or Secretary, when required.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the first Conservative ordination in Germany since the Shoah was held in Berlin by the Zacharias Frankel School, the newest Conservative Rabbinic School of the University of Potsdam under the religious supervision of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. We were so proud of our beloved Past President, Eve Wechsberg z”l, who, representing Women’s League participated in the opening of the Ark. As Eve wrote later *“For me, attending this event had a very special and personal meaning because my husband, Rabbi Bernard Wechsberg z”l, was one of the last graduates of the original seminary in 1936”*.

*From left: Nitzan Stein-Kokin, ordinand; Eve Wechsberg, Past President; Rabbi Artson, Dean of Zacharias Frankel & Dean of Ziegler.*



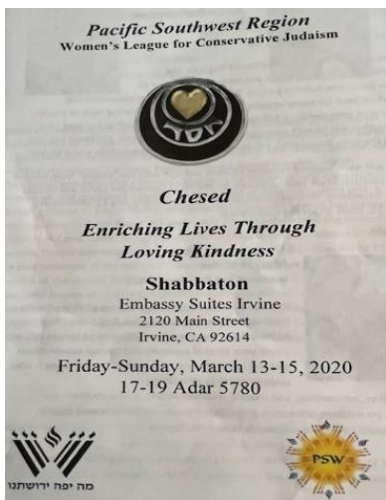


The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PSWR and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Torah Fund were also in 2017. We held a full day Gala at the AJU celebrating our anniversary, that of Torah Fund and our 30 Sisterhood Affiliates from 5 states. Once again, we proudly hosted Women's League Annual Open Board Meeting on this occasion.



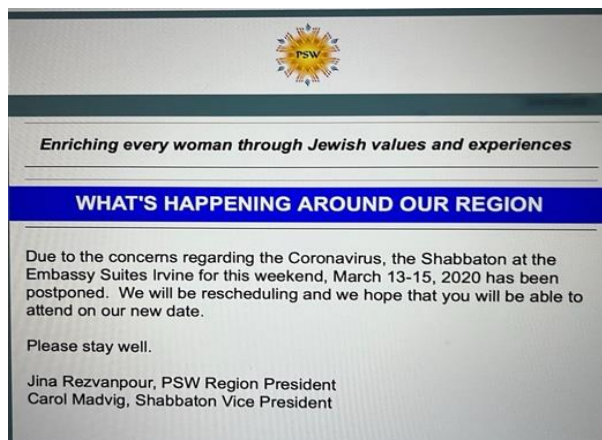
*'The Fruit of Our Hands' was the theme for our celebration, which included five Jewish female panelists sharing personal stories of success (notice Nitzan Stein-Konin); breakout sessions with panelists; exhibits from 30 Affiliates and recognition of each; and the Women's League Open Board Meeting.*

*From left: Carol Simon, Int'l President  
Myra Shapiro, Past Pres, Region;  
Bea Reynolds, Past Pres, Region;  
Rita Wertlieb, Past Int'l president.*



*We planned another Shabbaton Conference for March 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> of 2020. The Hotel Contract was signed. Rooms were booked. Reservations were paid. The speakers, workshop leaders, were scheduled and confirmed. Women's League President had arrived. Our materials, supplies and portable Ark was packed and loaded in cars.*

***On Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, the following e-bulletin was sent.***



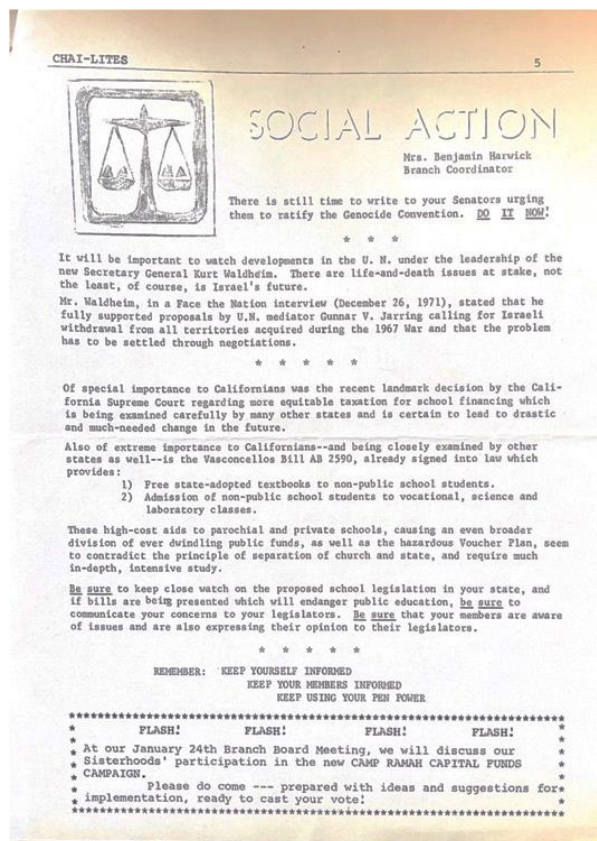


## SOCIAL ACTION

*"There is no greater mandate than to leave this world better than we found it. The obligation to perform gemilut hasadim (acts of loving kindness) and tikkun olam (repairing the world) are pervasive precepts in our work", WLCJ, Social Action Outreach.*

Social Action has and continues to be woven into the fabric of Women's League and therefore, PSW Region. As early as 1953, workshops were held to inform and assist Sisterhood Affiliates on how to productively voice their concerns on issues effecting their communities. *"Sisterhood chairwomen were invited to monthly meetings...issues of the day were discussed...digests were distributed...speakers on social action were sent out."*, Outline of Year's Activities, 1953-1954.

Two of the topics discussed were 'Israel Affairs', and 'Israel and The United Nations' In the 1950's. Cooperation with other organizations such as the Community Chest and the United Jewish Welfare Fund, supporting servicemen and Veteran's Hospital services, and working for the Jewish Braille Institute were the focus at that time.



On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1971 after the membership Conference held at the Valley Jewish Community Center and Temple, hundreds of women marched around the Synagogue as a *“sign of solidarity and concern for our brethren in the Soviet Union. December 6<sup>th</sup> had been designated as ‘Women’s Plea for Human Rights Day for Soviet Jewry’.* Eve Wechsberg, President’s Report, 1972.



Educating the Jewish community about the 180,000 visually impaired Jews across the country continued to be an important public service. PSW sponsored many free workshops at the UJ to inform the public about the Large Type Print Program to enable them to read.

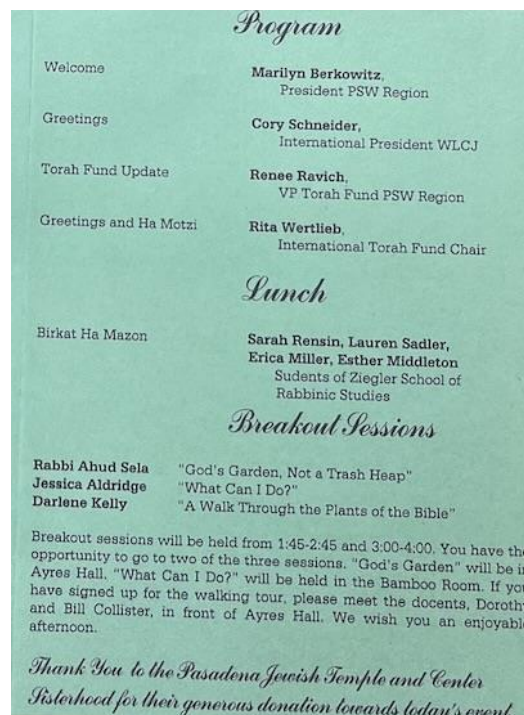
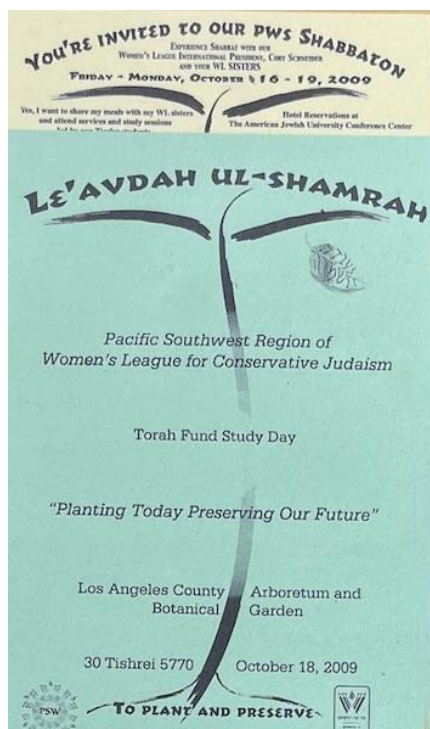
Our youth is our future. PSW always supported programs and organizations that engage our youth in Judaism. *“The Ramah Experience”* was such an event in 1983, sponsored by PSW and held at the UJ. The agenda featured films, lectures and brainstorming about the adult, family, Tikvah and summer courses offered by Camp Ramah. *The “Tikvah Program...is the only West coast camping program catering to Jewish children with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances and mild mental retardation.” Ramah Experience, New California, 1983.* The meeting assisted the Sisterhoods in finding ways of funding the scholarships needed for children to attend the camp.

We continued to focus on social issues in our community. There were programs on 'Washington to Jerusalem – Political Hotline' and 'Jewish Family Violence – Breaking the Silence and the Cycle'. We sponsored a community workshop on Outreach to the Disabled; provided service to several state hospitals; and participated in the 1986 National March for Women's Lives held in Los Angeles. At our 1991 Conference where the theme was 'Truth, Justice and Peace', we offered a program on Jewish Law and Women's Issues and a lecture on the *"Conservative Movement's response to such crucial issues as homosexuality, abortion, fetal mourning and AIDS"* by Dr. Elliot Dorff.

For every Conference, Sisterhoods prepare and bring baskets of requested items to be donated to a specific local charity such as a food bank.



Our Torah Fund events also featured a social matter of concern, such as the environment. At our 2009 Torah Fund Study Day the theme was 'To Plant and Preserve'. We also hosted the annual Board Meeting of WLCJ at this event.





We support the social action platform of Women's League *"as they partner with many organizations in the areas of social action and public policy. As partners, Women's League participates in advocacy that is consonant with our resolutions and mission."* E-Bulletin, December 2013. Some of these include the environment, family planning, religion, women's health and gun control. We also participate in the Resolution Process which produces the formal stance of the Women's League Organization.

As tragedies occur around the country or the world, the internet permits an immediate call for assistance to be sent. Our Sisterhood Affiliates spread the news and organize the help effort, such as food or clothing collections, letter writing campaigns or knitting warm blankets.

## **NEW!! Convention 2020 Social Justice Projects**

Check out two of our upcoming **Convention 2020 Social Justice projects** with **The Ark Chicago** [here](#) and [here](#) in these new videos by WLCJ's Rachel Ferber and Edna Schrank, and don't forget to share with your friends on Facebook!



## COVID 19

March 19, 2020

CDC asks healthy people to donate blood if they are able amid a national shortage of blood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

California governor Gavin Newsom issues a statewide stay-at-home order to slow the spread of COVID-19 instructing residents to only leave their homes when necessary and shutting down all but essential businesses.

Shock, fear, confusion as the world stood still...but not for long. PSW Region, like others, quickly reached out to one another, via ZOOM, to assess what was needed to continue to serve our Sisterhood Affiliates and our community. A **lot** was needed.

We had an office we could not access. What to do with programs, workshops, and meetings and how to stay connected with our affiliates had to be addressed quickly. Suddenly, we had to become proficient in audio-visual technology, ZOOM, recording and posting on internet, scripting, and more. We had to adapt, and we had to help our Sisterhood Affiliates to do so as well. Much harder to figure out, how do we meet for lunch, coffee. How do we maintain the connections that had enriched our lives?

We found a way.

**Renee and I have been emailing  
and have chosen the following date/time  
for our PSW Past Presidents Zoom get  
together**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020**

**4:00 pm**

*(with or without our cocktails)*

**Renee will use her Zoom account and  
will forward the reminder and link to  
everyone before the date.**


**Hope this works for everyone.**



  
Iris

Jina Rezvanpour, Region President from 2019 – 2021 described her term as *“started normal, then Covid...pandemic changed everything and all things went virtual...although did not have same intimacy, we learned to adapt and found some advantages to our new normal. I have learned the great strength of this community as we reach out to one another and connected”*.

Other than Board meetings, the first virtual program we held were our summer Torah Fund and Sisterhood President training workshops. The usual materials were now presented through desktop-share and emailed. Consultants carefully scripted their presentations and ZOOM etiquette was crafted. ‘Web links’ became the norm.



New World,  
New Torah Fund Campaign,  
New Challenges? Yes.  
AND New Ideas, New Possibilities! New Successes!

Please join us at ONE of the following

**Torah Fund Campaign 2020 - 2021 ZOOM Workshops**

**Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm**  
OR  
**Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon**



We will discuss the new forms, procedures, brochures and instructions and share creative fundraising ideas for these unique times.

We can and will meet the many changes and challenges  
**B'YACHAD - TOGETHER**

Please RSVP your date of attendance by July 30<sup>th</sup> to Roberta Spaccia at [rspacciaTFVP@gmail.com](mailto:rspacciaTFVP@gmail.com) and we will send you the ZOOM link.

Please contact Roberta for any questions.

Please DOWNLOAD the Torah Fund Materials & Campaign Guide By clicking on the following link:  
<http://www.wlcregion.org/pacsw/torah-fund/>  
and have them available during our workshop discussions.

**Welcome Pacific Southwest Region  
Sisterhood Presidents**

Join us for a virtual Zoom workshop to:  
Learn how to connect with your membership  
Learn about zoom programming ideas  
Learn about updates from Women's League and our Region  
Learn about the changes to Torah Fund the campaign

Choose one session:  
Tuesday, August 11 at 10 am  
Or  
Thursday, August 13 at 7 pm

RSVP by Thursday, August 6 to Jina Rezvanpour at [pswpresident@wlcrj.org](mailto:pswpresident@wlcrj.org)  
Once we have your rsvp, you will be emailed the zoom invite to your workshop

**CAN YOU HEAR ME?**  
**I CAN'T HEAR YOU?** Let's Zoom! #StayHome

Our Sisterhood Affiliates adapted to the virtual world.




**Friday, January 15, 2021  
7:00 pm**

Please join us in honoring  
CBS Sisterhood's  
Woman of Valor  
&  
Sisterhood Board  
Installation by  
Maxine Silverberg  
from Women's League

Meeting ID: 786-948-2153  
Password: 453915

One positive outcome of the pandemic was the realization that with the technology of ZOOM, we can literally connect with anyone in the world. Adjusting for the time difference, with a few clicks, we can video-chat with Torah Office in New York or Rabbi Ederberg at Zacharias Frankel College in Potsdam. The world is our 'oyster'.

*Pacific Southwest Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism*  
cordially invites you to

**Torah Fund Study Day**  
Sunday, January 31, 2021 @ 10:00 am PST

Presenting PSW 2019-2020 Torah Fund Campaign Honor Awards

**B'Yachad, Together, Throughout the World**

**Guest Speakers**

***Debi Kemer Goldsch*** International President WLCJ

***Barbara Zertig*** International Torah Fund Chair

**Panel Moderator**

***Rabbi Ellen Wolitz-Flade*** Executive Director, WLCJ

**Panelists representing the five Seminaries we support through Torah Fund**

***Rabbi Gena S. Ederberg***  
Associate Dean, Zacharias Frankel College

***Rabbi Dr. Rab Mimi Fajelson***  
Spiritual Director & Senior Lecturer, Schechter Institutes

***Rabbi Patricia Fenton***  
Lecturer, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies & AJU  
Manager, Public Services at the Bel and Jack M. Ostrow Library

***Rabina Marcela Garabito***  
Professor, Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano  
Founding Director of the JAVA Center for Women

***Rabbi Naomi Kalich***  
Harold & Carole Wolfe Director of the Center for Pastoral Education, JTS

Please [RSVP](#) by January 25, 2021 to receive Zoom Information.  
Please make a voluntary donation to Torah Fund in honor of our participants. [Donate](#)  
Questions? Contact Gina Seeman at [wlpw@aju.edu](mailto:wlpw@aju.edu)

Our Conferences went virtual, allowing women to participate who had never done so before. A multitude of women choreographed, scripted, practiced, prepared visuals, recorded and met for long hours over many months to present an informative, engaging and thoughtful program in 2023.



**Women's League Pacific Southwest Region**  
**Annual Conference and Torah Fund Study Day**

**Being Strong and Courageous:  
Helping Our Communities and Helping Ourselves**

**Sunday, March 12, 2023**  
10:00 AM-3:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time via Zoom  
(The 1st day of Daylight Savings Time in 2023)

**Learn from our Morning and Afternoon Panelists**

**Morning Panel:**  
**Strengthening Our Communities Through  
Engagement, Volunteerism and Support**  
moderated by California State Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel

 <b>Jesse Gabriel</b> California State Assemblymember	 <b>Jeffrey Abrams</b> Los Angeles Regional Director, ALCJ	 <b>Michael Lawrence</b> Chief Advancement Officer, Beit Shalom Synagogue, Beverly Hills, CA	 <b>Nancy Volpert</b> Senior Director of Public Policy & Community Engagement, Jewish Family Service Los Angeles	 <b>Cheryl Wolf, MPA</b> Regional Public Development Director Chico, CA
--	--	---	--	--

**Afternoon Panel:**  
**Strengthening Ourselves Physically, Mentally,  
Emotionally and Spiritually**  
moderated by Mindy Steinholtz, MD, WLCJ Vice President, Health and Wellness Chair

 <b>Mindy Steinholtz, MD</b> Women's League International Health and Wellness Chair	 <b>Suzanne Gilberg-Lane, MD</b>	 <b>Aimee Sax, MSW</b> California Support Program Manager, Shantel	 <b>Carolyn Hoffman</b> Executive Director of the Beit Shalom Jewish Health Center	 <b>Rabbi Nicole Gusk</b> Beit Shalom
---	--	--	---	--

For Registration Questions, Call Gina Seeman at 818-536-3273

Questions? Please Contact:  
**Michele Gabai** ([michelegabai@gmail.com](mailto:michelegabai@gmail.com))  
**Lisa Porman** ([lporman@gmail.com](mailto:lporman@gmail.com))



After three years of masking, Lysol shortages, keeping six feet apart, take-outs and Face Timing with grandchildren, we were finally able to gather in person for large events. Our very first in-person program was Sukkot in 2023 at Temple Ramat Zion. When AJU sold their campus and we moved out of our offices, unfortunately, our beloved Frances Kuris Sukkah was lost. On a happier note, we finally were able to hear our renowned Ruach Revelers under the direction of our distinguished Musical Director, Phyllis Fleschler. It was lovely to see and hug each other.



We have emerged from the pandemic more resilient, with new skills and techniques to serve our Sisterhood Affiliates and community, and with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for connecting to one another, whether next door or across the world.

**Pacific Southwest Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism**



**Torah Fund Study Day**

**"PSW Connects with Israel"**

**January 28, 2024 9:45 am to 12:30 pm**

**Available by ZOOM only**

- **Avi Mayer**, Editor-in-Chief of the Jerusalem Post
- **Rabbi Arie Hasit**, Assistant Dean at Schechter Institute
- **Rabbi Erez Sherman**, Co-Senior Rabbi at Sinai Temple
- **Julia Loeb**, WLCJ President
- **Lori Snow**, International Torah Fund Chair
- **Ashira Tehilot** program with **Rabbi Shani Ben Or**



**ZOOM Link will be sent to your email address a few days before the event.**

**Cost: \$18**





OCTOBER 7<sup>th</sup>.

Dear Israel  
We Stand with You  
...as  
We Cry with You  
We're in Pain with You  
We Fear with You  
We're Strong with You

You are Us  
We are You!



*Am Yisrael Chai*, By Iris Lasky, Past Region President, October 9, 2023

*"...it is important not only to show unity and support, but to let our brothers, sisters, cousins, sons, daughters, and grandchildren in Israel know how much we love them and how this tragedy breaks our hearts. We see these hateful, inhumane acts in the Holy Land against our own and our blood boils with outrage, as tears come streaming from our eyes.*

*But this is not only a time to express sorrow and solidarity; it is a time to be strong and have courage. It is a time to show support for the State of Israel and its people in every way possible. It is a time to donate (to organizations such as Magen David Adom, JNF, or Friends of the IDF), a time to insist that our elected leaders follow through on their words of support, a time to insist that countries around the world call out Hamas for their war crimes, and a time to reach out to family and friends in Israel to show your concern, your love and support. Our theme for this year is Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh BaZeh, all of Israel is responsible for one another. It is a time not only to stand with Israel in words, but to be side-by-side with Israel as sisters, and to do all we can to support it."*

By Julia Loeb, Int'l President, WLCJ, October 8, 2023

*"I have difficulty finding topics for my monthly articles to write about. These last few weeks do not leave me a choice. I am so saddened with the past few weeks of Hamas's attack on Israel, I know that everyone is feeling the same pain as I am. I know people who have loved ones that were killed or taken hostage, people who*

*are fearful for their loved ones' lives, and people whose children and grandchildren have been called back to duty from the reserves. Our own Carol and Mel Maller and Jina and Ata Rezvanpour were in Israel during the beginning of the war. Jina and Ata have arrived back in Los Angeles safe and sound. Carol and Mel should be home next week. Even people who don't have relatives in Israel are affected by this brutality as they say: Am Echad - b'Lev Echad - One Nation, with One Heart. We are all a part of Israel.*

*When readers opened the Jewish Journal this week, what they saw was page after page of coverage of the massacres of October 7th, arguably the biggest Jewish story of our time. With more than 1,300 lives brutally extinguished and many thousands wounded, this was a calamity of unspeakable proportions. The images of the barbaric violence were virtually impossible to watch.*

*I have to say that part of me is still an emotional mess. The images of the victims haunt me. The thought of grieving families haunts me even more. I can't stop thinking of the hostages. I worry that things may get worse. The fact that I must keep up with the news nourishes that emotional mess. The emails never stop. The stories keep coming. The whiplash continues”.*

By Carol Madvig, Region President, October 20, 2023



**One People, One Heart  
Solidarity  
With Israel**

**Sunday, November 19th  
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
Sinai Temple, Ziegler Sanctuary  
RSVP Required**

Israel needs us at this moment! Join our Los Angeles community in a moment of solidarity, as we demand the release of the hostages and stand together in support of Israel. Hear from elected officials, clergy, interfaith, and community leaders from across Southern California and show our unity in this climate of rising antisemitism.

**Community Partners:**

Adat Shalom	JFAC Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California	Temple Beth David of the San Gabriel Valley
AIPAC	Jewish World Watch	Temple Beth Hillel
American Jewish Committee Los Angeles	Jews United for Democracy & Justice	Temple Beth Israel
American Jewish University	JIMENA - Jews Indigenous to the Middle East & North Africa	Temple Isaiah
Anti-Defamation League	Kehillat Israel	Temple Judea
Beth Shalom	Kol Tikvah	Temple Menorah
Beverly Hills Synagogue	Leo Baeck Temple	Temple Ramat Zion
B'nai David-Judea	Los Angeles Jewish Health	Temple Shalom
B'nai Haim	Malibu Jewish Center & Synagogue	UCLA Hillel
Congregation Or Ami, Calabasas	March of the Living	USC Hillel
Hamakom	Mikven Community School	Valley Beth Shalom
Israel-American Civic Action Network	Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel	Wilshire Boulevard Temple
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles	Stephen Wise Temple	Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies
Jewish Family Service LA	Temple Ahava	30 Years After
	Temple Beth Am	

**We will also be joined by California State Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel, Reverend Johnnie Moore, President of the Congress of Christian Leaders, and more!**

CNN, December 15, 2023

Gaza protesters shut down L.A. freeway, angry drivers lash out.

*“On January 26th a Women’s League group attended the Holocaust Remembrance ceremony at the United Nations. This is an observance that has been mandated by the United Nations since 2005.*

*It was when Gilad Erdan, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN spoke, we heard the truth spoken loud and clear, and I quote, “We have been persecuted for millennia. Hitler seared the meaning of genocide into our DNA. But, on October 7th, Hamas tore open the wound,” patting a yellow star, a badge the Nazi regime forced Jewish people to wear, affixed to his lapel. “On International Holocaust Remembrance Day I stand here, in the name of the State of Israel, in the name of those murdered by the Nazis and Hamas, and I swear, we will not forget. Never again is now.” He received a standing ovation.”*

WLCJ Bulletin, January 30, 2024



## INFINITE POTENTIAL

"I think that part of our success as a Branch/Region has been our ability to adapt and change to remain relevant to our members. I would hope that we continue to do so. My wish for the future of PSW is that we inspire new women to be part of our Region board, that we continue to be creative in the programming we do and that we establish a stronger connection to our sisterhood affiliates with increased outreach to them."

Marilyn Berkowitz, Region President 2008-2011

The core purposes of WLCJ are to help Sisterhoods be a supportive arm for their respective synagogue communities and to inspire the women of same to grow Jewishly, as individuals and as leaders in their own Jewish homes. For me, the focus needs to be on connecting with each other and with the Jewish People (and that must include Israel and all Jews.) And it is especially meaningful when we help guide each other and enjoy our camaraderie. Does this still make sense today? We're living in a vastly changed environment generally and Jewishly; indeed, some would say, a crisis environment. Does that—or should that change our focus, goals, direction?"

Alice Greenfield, Region President 1984-1986

"Yes, we are living in more challenging and less happy times. But this is when we should be able to be most valuable, giving support and meaningful direction, working with our Sisterhoods to create bonds of friendship and always looking to enable new ideas to flourish. And maybe there is not a "one size fits all" answer to each Sisterhood. There are unique challenges in each synagogue and Sisterhood, and we should be open to new avenues of connection and progress.

But the bonds and camaraderie of Jewish women still exist and I think that nurturing that commonality and friendship is still most important."

Jan Shulman, Region President 1976-1978



## SISTERHOOD AFFILIATES THEN AND NOW

# 1953

### AFFILIATED SISTERHOODS

#### ALHAMBRA

Congregation Israel

#### BURBANK

Burbank Jewish Community  
Center

#### ENCINO

Valley Beth Sholom

#### HUNTINGTON PARK

B'nai Yehuda Sisterhood

#### LAS VEGAS

Jewish Community Center

#### LONG BEACH

Temple Sinai

#### LOS ANGELES

B'nai Israel Conservative Cong.  
Congregation Sinai  
Fairfax Temple  
Olympic Jewish Temple & Center  
Hollywood Temple Beth El  
Southwest B'nai Zion Temple  
Temple Beth Zion  
Temple Beth. Israel of  
Highland Park and Eagle Rock  
Tifereth Israel  
Westchester Jewish Congregation

#### NORTH HOLLYWOOD

Valley Jewish Community Center

#### PACIFIC PALISADES

Pacific Palisades  
Jewish Community

#### PASADENA

Temple B'nai Israel

#### PHOENIX

Beth El Congregation

#### RESEDA

West Valley Hebrew Center

#### SALT LAKE CITY

Montefiore Sisterhood

#### SAN DIEGO

Tifereth Israel Synagogue

#### SAN FERNANDO

Menorah Temple

#### SIERRA MADRE

Foothill Jewish Community  
Center

#### SUN VALLEY

Sun Valley Jewish Center

#### TUCSON

Congregation Anshei Israel

#### VAN NUYS

Van Nuys Jewish Center

#### VENICE

Congregation Mishkon Tephilo

#### WEST LOS ANGELES

W.L.A. Synagogue Center

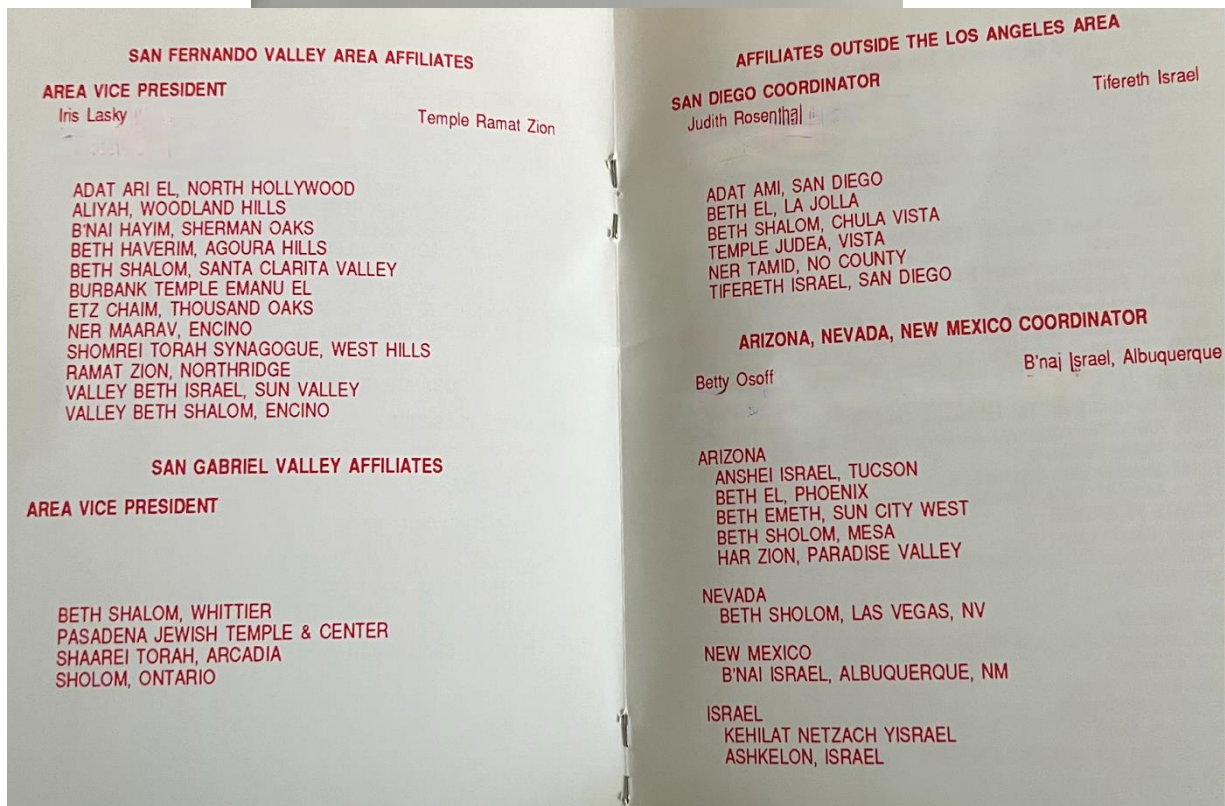
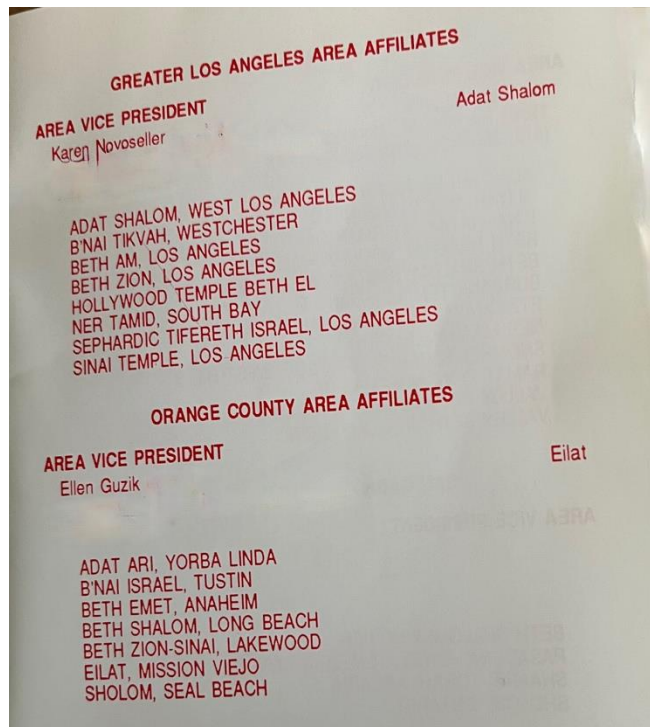


# 1972

## AFFILIATED SISTERHOODS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1921<br>Montefiore, Salt Lake City  | 1957<br>Beth Shalom, Whittier<br>Beth Zion, Lakewood<br>Sholom, Ontario  |
| 1937<br>Sinai, Los Angeles  | 1958<br>Beth Ami, West Covina<br>Beth El, San Diego<br>Beth Sholom, Chula Vista<br>B'nai Hayim<br>Ramat Zion<br>Rodef Sholom |
| 1940<br>Sinai, Long Beach   | 1959<br>Beth Kodesh<br>B'nai Emet, Montebello  |
| 1946<br>Beth Am<br>Beth Zion, LA<br>Pasadena JT&C<br>Valley Jewish<br>Comm. Center & Temple       | 1960<br>Southwest Beth Torah   |
| 1947<br>B'nai Tikvah<br>B'nai Yehuda  | 1961<br>Ner Tamid, South Bay<br>Har Zion, Scottsdale   |
| 1948<br>Beth El, Phoenix  | 1962<br>Ner Tamid, Simi<br>Temple Isaiah, Palm Springs   |
| 1949<br>Emanu El, Burbank<br>Adat Shalom<br>Beth Ami, Reseda                                      | 1963<br>Aliyah, Woodland Hills<br>Etz Chaim, Thousand Oaks<br>Sephardic Tifereth Israel                                      |
| 1950<br>Anshei Israel, Tucson<br>Beth El, Hollywood<br>Beth Torah, Alhambra<br>Valley Beth Israel | 1964<br>Beth Shalom, Long Beach<br>Beth Sholom, Las Vegas  |
| 1952<br>Ner Tamid, Van Nuys<br>Valley Beth Shalom   | 1966<br>Hillel, Huntington Beach<br>Beth Tefilah, San Diego  |
| 1953<br>Beth Torah, LA<br>Verdugo Hills H.C.  | 1968<br>Beth Sholom, Corona<br>Sharon, Costa Mesa  |
| 1954<br>B'nai Jacob, Bakersfield<br>Beth Knesset Bamidbar   | 1971<br>Temple Eilat<br>B'nai Aron   |
| 1956<br>Beth Emet, Anaheim<br>B'nai Israel, Albuquerque<br>Maarev, Encino                         |  |

# 1998



# 2018

## **Arizona/Nevada/New Mexico/Texas**

### **Arizona**

Beth El Congregation, Phoenix  
Congregation Anshei Israel, Tucson  
Congregation Or Tzion, Scottsdale  
Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley, Chandler

### **New Mexico**

Congregation B'nai Israel, Albuquerque

### **Nevada**

Temple Beth Sholom, Las Vegas

### **Texas**

Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso

## **Southern California**

### **Los Angeles/South Bay**

Adat Shalom, Los Angeles  
Congregation Ner Tamid of South Bay, Rancho Palos Verdes  
Congregation Tikvat Jacob-Beth Torah, Manhattan Beach  
Sinai Temple, Los Angeles  
Temple Beth Am, Los Angeles

### **Orange County**

Congregation B'nai Israel, Tustin  
Temple Beth Emet, Anaheim  
Temple Beth Shalom, Long Beach

### **San Diego**

Congregation Beth El, La Jolla  
Ohr Shalom, San Diego  
Tifereth Israel Synagogue, San Diego

### **San Gabriel/Pomona Valleys**

Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center  
Temple Ami Shalom, West Covina  
Temple Beth Shalom of Whittier  
Temple Sholom of Ontario

### **Tri-Valley East**

Adat Ari El, Valley Village  
Congregation B'nai Jacob, Bakersfield  
Congregation Beth Shalom, Santa Clarita  
Valley Beth Israel, Sun Valley  
Valley Beth Shalom, Encino

### **Tri-Valley West**

Shomrei Torah Synagogue, West Hills  
Temple Aliyah, Woodland Hills  
Temple Etz Chaim, Thousand Oaks  
Temple Ramat Zion, Northridge



# 2023

Adat Ari El, Valley Village  
Adat Shalom, Los Angeles  
Beth El Congregation, Phoenix, Arizona  
Congregation B'nai Israel, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Congregation B'nai Israel, Tustin  
Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso, Texas  
Congregation Beth El, La Jolla  
Congregation Beth Shalom, Santa Clarita  
Congregation Ner Tamid of South Bay, Palos Verdes  
Congregation Or Tzion, Scottsdale, Arizona  
Congregation Tikvat Jacob Beth Torah, Manhattan Bch.  
Hamakom, Woodland Hills  
Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center, Pasadena  
Sinai Temple, Los Angeles  
Temple Ami Shalom, West Covina  
Temple Beth Am, Los Angeles  
Temple Beth Emet, Anaheim  
Temple Beth Shalom, Long Beach  
Temple Beth Shalom of Whittier, Whittier  
Temple Beth Shalom, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley, Chandler, AZ  
Temple Etz Chaim, Thousand Oaks  
Temple Ramat Zion, Northridge  
Temple Shalom of Ontario, Ontario  
Tifereth Israel Synagogue, San Diego  
Valley Beth Shalom, Encino

## ISRAEL AFFILIATES

Masorti Kochav Yair  
Neve Zedek, Tel Aviv  
Kehilat Masortit Petch Tikva



## BRANCH/REGION PRESIDENTS 1947 - 2023



**Augusta Kohn z'l (1947-48)**

**Sinai Temple**

She personified the Jewish mother and home maker as the wife of Rabbi Jacob Kohn of Sinai Temple. Augusta was one of the original groups in New York who aided Mrs. Solomon Schechter in founding the National Women's League and was the founder and first President of our Branch. She never sought the limelight, but her leadership and warmth enhanced any gathering. She was our Founder.

**Mildred Beresow z'l (1948-50)**

A charming and personable lady, she came to our Branch from across the country, imbued with the Sisterhood spirit. She was very knowledgeable about Conservative Judaism. Our Branch Torah Fund Campaign began during her administration.



**Shirley Whizin z'l (1950-51)**

**Valley Jewish Community Center**

Shirley was bubbly and enthusiastic. She eagerly took on the leadership of our Branch with determination, strong ideas, and the ability to carry through to her goal. She was wise enough to know that an organization benefits when a chairperson moves on and attempts a new challenge.

**Saralyn Spilky z'l (1951-53)**

**Valley Jewish Community Center**

Saralyn was known for her beautiful smile and artistic ability. She designed and made the most incredible hats! She was very knowledgeable about Judaism and the goals of the Conservative Movement. Saralyn epitomized the qualities of leadership and was a most effective and impressive speaker.



**Deon Simon z'l (1953-54)**

**Valley Jewish Community Center**

Deon not only had terrific organizational skills but was deeply committed to our entire Jewish community. Her strong belief in the need for Jewish education channeled her energies to the support of Camp Ramah and encouraged our women to raise funds for scholarships within their own congregations. Deon's effectiveness earned her the position of Ways and Means Chairman on the National Board.

**Selma Carow Heuer z'l (1954-56)****Sinai Temple**

According to her final report, she was President of a “spirited and progressive group of women.” With the guidance of her own Rebbitzin, Augusta Kohn, Selma led our Branch through two years of valuable outreach and service to all our Sisterhoods. Though diminutive in size, she was a bundle of enthusiasm and spirit, topped off by her still dynamite smile.

**Shira (Shirley Finn) Deutsch z'l (1956-58) Valley Jewish Community Center**

Shirley, as she was known in those days, was well-trained in the ways of our Branch and our devotion to Torah fund as she had chaired two of our most spectacular Torah fund events. Under her leadership our Branch reached out with mobile workshops and numerous opportunities for personal involvement and growth.

**Marjorie Pressman z'l (1958-59)****Temple Beth Am**

Marjorie was known for her willingness to undertake any task someone else would find impossible. Her term in office was marked by innovations such as creating the position of Administrative Vice President, the mimeoed Branch Calendar/Directory and the UJ snack bar. She was the recipient of the Seminary's National Community Leadership Benefactor Award in 1964. She was on the National Torah fund Cabinet and a National Board Member.

**Bess Freeman z'l (1959-60)****Valley Jewish Community Center**

During Bess' year in office, the Branch adopted the organizational structure known as the “Wheel of Administration” to improve the functioning of Branch. The position of Executive Secretary held by our beloved Sylvia Newman z'l became a permanent 4 day-a-week position. Bess was always a staunch supporter of programs for our young people, USY and Torah Fund. She still worked for Torah Fund at her home congregation, Beth Shalom in Las Vegas, and this remarkable lady never missed a Spring Conference held by our Branch.

**Sarah Harwick-Feder z'l (1960-62)****Hollywood Temple Beth El**

Sarah's theme for her Presidential report was “draw from the past, live in the present and work for the future.” That has always been her personal motto. She fine-tuned the administration of our Branch, encouraged community participation, and laid the groundwork for dealing efficiently with the needs of our Sisterhoods and their leadership for our growing Branch which numbered 50 Sisterhoods in 1962. Sarah's excellent talent for speaking and analysis has made her our ear on World Affairs and Social Action for many, many years.





**Marian Wall z'l (1962-64)**

**Valley Jewish Community Center**

Marian was President during very significant times in the history of our movement and country. During her term the Seminary launched the Torah Fund Combined Campaign to raise funds for the Mathilde Schechter Residence Hall. She introduced the concept of Area Vice Presidents who served as Branch liaison to specific sisterhoods and the Branch Board held a weekend retreat at Camp Ramah with study sessions by our rabbinic scholars and leadership training by our own Women's League authorities. Marion served for many years as part of the OUTLOOK Editorial Board, and you will find many of her articles in our Anniversary display.

**Tillie Mandell z'l (1964-66)**

**Adat Shalom**

Tillie was known for her careful planning and precise coordination as well as her stylish millinery attire. Outreach to the broader Jewish community was increased by programs such as Ongay Shabbat at Fairview, Camarillo, and Pacific State Hospitals. In addition, the first Girl Scout Menorah Awards were presented to our region. Under the auspices of the Los Angeles office of Urban Affairs, Women's League volunteers began working with disadvantaged children.



**Frances Kuris z'l (1966-68)**

**Temple Beth Am**

Frances had the special opportunity of serving as President when Women's League observed its Golden Jubilee, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The first city-wide Advanced Gifts event for the Torah Fund Campaign was sponsored by the Branch. Frances served is a National Board Member, a member of the National Torah fund Cabinet and the National Women's Patrons Society. She was also the recipient of the Seminary's Solomon Schechter Award.

**Bea Reynolds z'l (1968-70)**

**Adat Ari El**

Bea, with her quiet, dignified manner, kept our sights on our Jewish heritage and our obligation to educate ourselves and our women. She provided us with increased opportunities for developing leadership skills and supporting Torah Fund. Bea, like many of her predecessors ably represented us on the steering committees of Welfare fund, Israel Bonds, United Way and was our first representative to the newly formed Women's Conference of the JFC. Bea has long been a member of the Board of the University of Judaism and as you see in our program has been deservedly recognized by our National Organization. She was the recipient of the National Community Leadership Award and the Solomon Schechter Award presented by the Seminary. She served on The National Board, National Torah Fund Cabinet, National Women's Patron's Society, and the Outlook Editorial Committee.







### **Eve Wechsberg z'l (1970-72)**

### **Ner Tamid of South Bay**

The two highlights during Eves' administration were the celebration of twenty-five years of the PSW Branch, present was the LA Consul General of Israel. The second was we held a special Torah Fund Benefactor Day at the Music Center where we honored Zubin and Nancy Mehta. Eve began her term as a delegate to the World Council of Synagogues Convention in Tel Aviv. On the Homefront, our Branch was honored to host the first National Board meeting to be held on the West Coast. Eve possessed the necessary devilish humor and excellent organizational skills and efficiency to lead our Branch during such exciting times as well as to carry on our day-to-day activities. She has always been a resource for our Branch in matters of Judaica, the Holocaust and Parliamentary Procedure. Eve has been a member of the National Board for many years. We just celebrated Eve's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday at our annual spring conference May 1, 2022 *"We look to the past with pride and to the future with determination"*

### **Anne Miller z'l (1972-74)**

### **Temple Beth Am**

"Na'aseh" – "We Will Do" was the theme of Anne's administration and under her quiet and insightful leadership our Branch carried out its responsibilities to our member Sisterhoods and supported our institutions of higher learning despite the crisis of the Yom Kippur War in Israel. We witnessed the inauguration of Gerson Conen as the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and even held a workshop on "Kreative Kosher Know-how." Anne had a special knowledge of Parliamentary Procedure, a special talent for writing, and a steadfast devotion as is shown by her continued hard work on behalf of her congregation.



### **Mitzi Goodis (1974-76)**

### **Congregation Tikvat Jacob Beth Torah**

Although all our Presidents were – and still are beautiful – the first image of Mitzi that comes to mind is her wonderful, shining smile. Her charming manner brought greetings to the first Federation of Men's Clubs National Convention held on the West Coast. She brought a new emphasis to some of our lesser-known activities such as when Branch sponsored the first "Judaica Handicrafts Fair." She graciously represented us in the community and at the groundbreaking for the University of Judaism. She still smiles cheerfully whenever our Branch calls on her for her special talents.

**Jan Shulman (1976-78)**

Jan, in her quiet but eloquent way, led our Branch through two very exciting and significant years. First came the dedication of the Familian Campus and Fingerhut Academic Building at the University of Judaism which prominently displayed the magnificent needlepoint tapestry crafted by our Sisterhood women. She accepted a Citation from the Los Angeles City Council on our behalf for our service to the community. Her term was crowned by the joyous celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's League. Jan was the recipient of the National Community Leadership Award and serves as a member of the International Board and the National Torah Fund Cabinet.

**Valley Beth Shalom****Sondra (Sonny) Raffle z'l (1978-80).**

Bubbly, enthusiastic, creative, irrepressible are all adjectives which describe Sonny. Her term in office was geared toward creating a more secure Sisterhood leader. By teaching and sharing Branch expertise, we serviced our Sisterhoods. There was time for an "idea exchange" day and the management training for our Branch leaders. She revived the idea of a Branch Board retreat at Camp Ramah. We held our first mini conference, entitled "Have Workshop, Will Travel" in Phoenix, Arizona. We served as hostesses for the 79<sup>th</sup> Rabbinical Assembly Convention held in Los Angeles. We raised funds to contribute to the rebuilding of Beth Jacob Temple in Redwood City. We held our first Sunday Open Branch Meeting. Under her expert leadership and bounding energy our Branch experienced many firsts. Sonny was a recipient of the National Community Leadership Award and served as a member of the National Board, National Torah Fund Cabinet, and the National Women's Patron Society.

**Shomrei Torah Synagogue****Lela Jacoby (1980-82)**

Lela's term in office was busy, exciting, and filled with creative activities. Among the outstanding events of 1980-82, the first "away" Open Branch Board Meeting and Conference, held in Tucson, Arizona; the Branch meeting scheduled in conjunction with the emotion-stirring Danzig Exhibit at the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles; the National Board Meeting and Conference, which brought our National Leaders from throughout the country to Los Angeles; and moving into our new offices in the Ziegler Administration Building at the University of Judaism. Lela with her sweet, sunny smile and gentle manner kept all the "ins and outs" running smoothly. Lela was a recipient of the National Community Leadership Award. She served as a National Trainer and is a member of the International Board, International Torah Fund Cabinet, and the International Women's Patron Society.

**Adat Ari El**



**Myra Shapiro z'l (1982- 84)**

**Shomrei Torah Syg .& Valley Beth Shalom**

Myra, bursting with energy and working as well, led us through a term marked by dedication and commitment. There were several firsts – a workshop co-sponsored by the Jewish Braille Institute to help Project Large Print come to life; an informative World Affairs Day; a Camp Ramah Day; a special seminar for Treasurers and Financial Secretaries; an emotionally packed orientation “Reaching Jews with Disabilities”; two Away Branch Meetings in the San Diego and Arizona areas; and our first Study Day for Torah Fund. She served as National Ways and Means Chairperson for two terms. Myra was a recipient of the National Community Leadership Award and served as a National Consultant and Trainer and was a member of the International Board, the International Women’s Patron Society and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Committee.

**Alice Greenfield (1984-86)**

**Valley Beth Shalom**

Alice joyfully sang her way through two years of service. She heightened our awareness of all things Israeli and strengthened our commitment to the basic goals of Women’s League, reaching out to our women with education and increased contact with Sisterhood Presidents through regular meetings. She has served as a National Trainer and Consultant and is one of the leaders who has turned her training into a profession. Alice served as a member of the National Board and the OUTLOOK Editorial Committee.



**Sally Hagen z'l (1986-88)**

**Temple Aliyah**

Sally, in her very quiet, competent way led our Branch through two years of “getting back to basics” with an emphasis on adapting to the changing scene in Sisterhoods. We held a wonderful “Super Sunday” to help our working women learn the leadership skills needed in times when volunteers have become scarce, and we had programs dealing with problems which challenge the modern Jewish “Family (Homosexuality, Mid-life Crisis, Jewish Hospice, etc.). Salley served as a National Board Member.

**Roz Goldstein (1988-90)**

**Sinai Temple**

Roz’s term was a very exciting time for our Branch as we again hosted a National Board Meeting. With the help of our National Officers, we dedicated the Torah Fund plaques to the University of Judaism Residence Halls. We explored the newly published text on the principles of Conservative Judaism with Rabbi Neal Gilman and continued our participation in community related affairs. Roz was a National Vice President on the OUTLOOK Editorial Committee and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Committee.



**Benita Getzkin z'l (1990-92)****Shomrei Torah Synagogue**

During Benita's term in office, we strengthened our ties with the other arms of the Conservative Movement. Through her work on the Conservative Council, we participated in the formation of the Bet Midrash, an annual study program made available to all our Pacific Southwest congregations and jointly sponsored by Women's League, Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, Rabbinical Assembly, Cantor's Assembly, United Synagogue, and the University of Judaism. We enjoyed a delightful bus trip to Camp Ramah in action. In the area of Torah Fund, Benita represented the Branch as our name was added to the Founders' Plaques at the University of Judaism and when we hosted the first Study Day for the San Diego area Sisterhoods. We also sponsored a magnificent Special Gifts Tea in honor of Bertha Aronson. Benita revived the "away" mini-Conference with an action – packed visit to Arizona and our "desert" Sisterhoods. Benita served as a member of the National Board.

**Bertha Aronson – Honorary National Board Member**

For more than 60 years, Bertha has taught, counseled, and promoted Jewish life in the home, synagogue, and the community. As a pioneer of the Women's League, she was instrumental in organizing the Midwest, Southern and our own Pacific Southwest Branch. Her wisdom and insight continued to stimulate and enrich us all.

**Margaret Carlton z'l (1992-94)****Temple Aliyah**

Margaret Carlton joined Women's League as a longtime member of Temple Aliyah in Woodland Hills, California. Margaret truly treasured her rich friendships in Women's League and its members nationwide, who helped nurture, stimulate and further develop her intellectual and spiritual passion as a Jewish woman of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to the Masorti movement. Margaret served as the PSW Region Torah Fund Chair, Torah Fund Vice President, Education Vice President and President.

**Joan Karchem z'l (1994-96)****Sinai Temple**

Joan's first order of business was to make Francis Kuris' dream come true providing the Sukkah for the University. She encouraged Board members to bring in Judaica items from home to share with the Board. During her term over 50 delegates attended the National Convention



**Edie Nitzberg (1996-98)**

PSW Branch spearheaded the first ever fundraiser of any Branch in Women's League. The project was to defray the cost of a new computer. Thus, was born our "Count Your Blessings" project to purchase a new computer. The first Open Branch Meeting was held in the Frances Kuris Sukkah at the beginning of Edie's administration. A Gala Special Gifts Tribute to honor Marjorie Pressman, who brought Torah Fund to Los Angeles in 1946, was held at Beth Am with many New York dignitaries in attendance. 50 years as a Branch was celebrated at the first two-day Conference.

**Sinai Temple****Sylvia Levine z'l (1998-2000)**

Working together with Sylvia Levine was a pleasure. She was very helpful to up and coming leadership. She was instructive to those who followed her in any of the positions she had to make sure they had success. Sylvia always had a smile when you saw her and cared deeply for people and PSW.

**Adat Ari El****Carol Maller (2000-02)**

The Z'havah program was inaugurated for young and new leadership of 45 and under for all Sisterhoods. PSW was asked to host a new International Pilot program, "Love Shouldn't Hurt" on teen dating and the "domestic violence" occurring in that segment of our population. The UJ Sukkah became the Women's League Sukkah, our gift to the UJ many years before. Also, implemented was the year-long Jewish Study program within the Branch and individual Sisterhoods.

**Temple Ramat Tzion****Collette Segal z'l (2002-04)**

We had a dinner at Valley Beth Shalom honoring Bea Reynolds and Francis Kuris z'l who had been named as Honorary International Board Members. An ad book in their honor raised a great deal of money which put our Branch back in good operating condition.

**Valley Beth Shalom****Tobie Rosenberg (2004-06)**

Tobie and her husband Ed hosted a brunch at their home to launch a kick-off campaign for Scholarship Torah Fund. PSW raised \$250,000.00, the largest amount ever raised in Women's League history. PSW hosted Women's League International Leadership Institute with the largest attendance.

**Valley Beth Shalom**



**Iris Lasky (2006-08)**

**Temple Aliyah & Temple Ramat Tzion**

This was the last administration of WLCJ 25 regions...the changes of becoming 13 regions started. We celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> PSW Anniversary with a big dinner and festivities at Sinai Temple. For the **first time** four Ziegler rabbinic students were invited, with our financial help to attend a WLCJ convention in Philadelphia and lead workshops. **First time** a Torah Fund Study Day, (Women Cantorial concert) was held on a Sunday drawing several hundred men and women.

**Marilyn Berkowitz (2008-11)**

**Temple Aliyah**

Marilyn's priority was to make sure that our Sisterhoods feel connected to the Region and to Women's League. Her team created the **first** Region Email Newsletter and the **first** Region Website. She took a road trip and visited with our out of state Sisterhoods. She represented Women's League on the following Boards: American Jewish University, Pacific Southwest Region of United Synagogue, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, and Women's League International Board where she was part of the Strategic Planning Committee. PSWR hosted the annual meeting in Los Angeles in October 2009. Marilyn was also a mentor to a first-year rabbinic student.



**Renee Ravich (20011-13).**

**Congregation Beth El**

*July 17-21, 2011* – Rita Wertlieb, International President of Women's League for Conservative Judaism visits Pacific Southwest Region. She joined us for five area Workshops and one Region Board Meeting. *December 1, 2011* – Renee brings greetings to the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Kallah in San Diego on behalf of Rita Wertlieb. Angela Horvitz was honored for her service to PSW and Torah Fund at our annual Sukkot meeting in the Frances Kuris Sukkah at the AJU.

**Agnes Emert (2013-15)**

**Temple Beth Am**

Participating in the first Women's Leadership Institute was a pivotal experience in her life. Agnes was determined to have our Sisterhoods nurture relationships, acknowledge strengths and limitations with respect, encourage passions, and welcome differences. She believes Sisterhoods role is to enrich lives, and create a community of women embracing Judaism. The PSW Website and Shabbat bulletins were re-designed. The Region's organization structure and By-Laws were reviewed and revised. She began the 'tradition' of inviting Ziegler rabbinic students, as our guests, to our Sukkah event. Agnes visited sisterhoods in Arizona, Nevada and most of California helping to build personal connections to our Region and women's League



**Brenda Katz (2015-2018)****Temple Beth Sholom, LV**

Brenda was the first PSW President that lived outside of California. During Brenda's presidency we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PSW as a Branch/Region and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Torah Fund. Also celebrated was Israel as it turned 70 as well. She loved being President of our Regions' five states. She enjoyed reaching out to the Sisterhood's and working together, helping each other, and rejoicing in our future together. Had the most successful Torah Fund Study Day ever, January 2016. She attended the twentieth anniversary of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at which time Roz and Abner Goldstine and Lela and Norman Jacoby were being honored. This was held during the Ziegler Ordination weekend, May 2016. Brenda was the **first** PSW President to accept a third year after being elected for a two-year term.

We incorporated Zoom Conference Calls in order to "see each other" for a meeting even when we weren't together. We hosted the WLCJ Annual Open Board meeting March 5, 2017, at AJU during our Gala, when Carol Simon was the International Women's League President

**Jina Rezvanpour (2018-21)****Sinai Temple**

Jina's Presidency started as quite a normal one but ended very differently. Our last in-person event in 2019 was our Sukkah program in the Francis -Kuris Sukkah at the AJU Campus. It has been a very meaningful and challenging three years. Jina says her hopes were far more than surpassed. The first two years everything was done in person meetings, events, services, and that was an amazing experience which she cherishes. Jina's final year took a turn, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit, everything that we had done before in person we had to do now virtually. In some ways it was revolutionary, we learned to adapt and realized that it did have advantages as well. In a time when we were so physically isolated our reach became even greater as we were able to virtually travel across cities and states. We were able to not only have our meetings but participate in different long-distance events and make new extended friendships. She was able to navigate through this time - learning, exploring new avenues of technology, and growing individually and as a Region.

**Carol Madvig (2021-24)****Shomrei Torah Synagogue**

Shomrei Torah Synagogue, West Hills and Temple Aliyah, Woodland Hills merged on July 1, 2023, and became **HAMAKOM**. Carol was the second PSW President that lived outside of California. During her presidency the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PSW and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Torah Fund were celebrated. Her first year and a half was in Covid-19 Pandemic mode, and everything was

on zoom. Towards the middle of her second year, she visited many Affiliates in Southern California, Las Vegas, Nevada and of course Arizona where she resides. Her first in person event was October 2023 for Sukkot, at the American Jewish University, in the Frances Kuris Sukkah. This was our last event at the AJU as the AJU was being sold and we had to vacate our office by August 2023. 2023 was the first year PSW was not at the AJU for our annual Sukkah event. It was held at Temple Ramat Tzion and was a beautiful program. During her last year she was so excited about attending the 2023 Convention IN PERSON...as it had to be cancelled in 2021. She interacted with her co-Region President's and made new lifelong friends.

