



# WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

## BIENNIAL REPORT 2010-2012

Coordinator: Robin Rogel-Goldstein/Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

### THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE MISSION

*The mission of Women's League for Conservative Judaism is to strengthen and unite synagogue women's groups, their members and individual members; support them in mutual efforts to understand and perpetuate Conservative/Masorti Judaism in the home, synagogue, and community; and reinforce their bonds with Israel and Jews worldwide. Women's League accepts the Jerusalem Program, which is the platform of the World Zionist Organization.*

*The goal is to impact on every member through successful sisterhoods and thriving regions. To that end, the organization is structured around four main areas of operation: learning, living, linking, and sharing.*

With its membership of 450 sisterhoods and 50,000 members, Women's League continues as a vital partner in the Conservative/Masorti movement worldwide. The last two years have been an exciting period. The organization has been taking stock and looking to the future as its extensive strategic planning process comes to an end. The new strategic plan – almost four years in the making – will be unveiled at convention 2012.



### CONVENTION 2010

December 13-16, 2010

Baltimore, Maryland

Theme: Kehillah Kedoshah – Celebrating Community Woman To Woman

For a complete report, see Convention 2010 Proceedings at [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org)

## **EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

Rita L. Wertlieb, International President (Seaboard Region)

Sarrae Crane, Executive Director

Archives: Roberta Schleicher (BQLI Region)

Budget: Janet Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Region Budgets: Marjorie Fuhrmann (Seaboard Region)

Canadian Liaison: Randy Schwartz (IntraContinental Region)

Convention 2012: Faye Laveson (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Convention 2012 Program: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Development: Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Kol Ishah Society: Marcia Toppall (Seaboard Region)

KOACH support campaign: Gloria Adelson (Southern Region)

Financial Secretary: Myra Promisel (Seaboard Region)

Israel Mission: Judith Horowitz (BQLI Region) and Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

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

Nominations: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

Parliamentarian: Sandy Myers (Seaboard Region)

Past President's Council: Cory Schneider (Seaboard Region)

Per Capita: Toby Maser (International Northeast Region)

Personnel: Sue Press (MetroNorth Region)

Strategic Planning: Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region)

Tikkun Olam: Ziza Pallia (Seaboard Region)

Treasurer: Janet Coleman Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Women's League @ 100 Celebration: Evelyn Auerbach (Garden State Region) and Gloria Cohen (BQLI Region)

### **Liaisons**

JBI: Florence Belfer (Garden State Region)

Ramah Commission: Sharon Steinberg (MetroNorth Region)

Project Reconnect: Rhonda Cohn (Central Great Lakes Region)

Synagogue Standards: Toby Maser (International Northeast Region)

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

## **New in 2010-2012**

### **The campaign in support of KOACH**

Women's League's leadership is intent on ensuring that the Conservative movement does not lose the next generation of Jews to the myriad influences that impressionable young people encounter when they leave their home communities for the unlimited choices found on campus. Women's League collected over \$35,000 toward the annual KOACH kallah, which was in danger of being canceled due. At the February 2012 kallah over 150 students (double the previous year thanks to the Women's League support) from across the country gained

As a result of the response to the campaign, Women's League has committed to the ongoing support of the KOACH kallah.

## THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

The budget, finance, affiliation, retention, and per capita chairs have integrated their portfolios into a coordinated team. The **finance committee** is responsible for setting the annual Women's League budget, working with our outside accountant, investment advisor and actuary. Moreover, to ensure that the organization is financially responsible and on-budget, the chair presents monthly budget statements for the executive committee. A further effort to monitor the budget is reflected by the **region budget committee** that determines allocations to the regions and reviews the region budgets quarterly. Members of the team contact sisterhoods facing fiscal difficulties and/or disaffiliation.

### New in 2010-2012

- Converted the Women's League accounting system to Quickbooks
- Electronic interface between Quickbooks and membership database
- Moved retirement plan to the Joint Retirement Board of the Conservative Movement
- New travel reimbursement policy
- Review of Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Law & Standards teshuvah on workers compensation

## DEVELOPMENT

Ever aware that per capita dues do not cover the Women's League budget, a development committee has been reviewing new ways to raise the necessary additional funds. Donations to Women's League now can be made directly and easily on our website. The following campaigns have been designed to match interest with donor.

- **Annual Campaign** supports the Women's League mission to strengthen and unite synagogue women's groups, their members and individual members
- **KOACH Kallah** ensures that all our college students can benefit from a vital and engaging Conservative/Masorti presence on campus
- **Kol Ishah Society** is a required donation from members of the Women's League board designed to increase a sense of ownership in the organization
- **General Education Fund** supports the publication of study materials for sisterhoods and individuals. Our materials have gained international prominence for excellence and scholarship.
- **Masorti Women's Fund** perpetuates Masorti Judaism in Israel and around the world through support of Israeli congregations (kehillot), women's study days, and international study materials.

In addition, we have continued the **direct mail holiday campaigns** to the general membership through an outside vendor. Offering new and unique premiums designed just for us, we have gone from two to three mailings per year, with a total income over the past two years of more than \$220,000.

Women's League has attempted to incorporate several **affinity programs** through which vendors offer a small commission back to the organization for purchases made by our members. This program is more of a "friend raiser" than a fund raiser.

The Women's League **Kol Ishah Society**, an annual membership campaign introduced in 2008, was expanded in 2011 to include three levels of membership: minimum membership at \$54; Kol Ishah Plus at \$75; Kol Ishah Platinum at \$150. The Plus level was increased to \$100 in 2012. Kol Ishah Society members enhance Women's League's ability to provide educational and training services. **Membership in the Kol Ishah Society is required of all members of the Women's League board of directors.**

In honor of Women's History Month (March 2011) the Kol Ishah Society partnered with the Solomon Schechter day schools and sent copies of *With Strength and Splendor: Jewish Women as Agents of Change* (a 2008 Women's League publication by Education Director Lisa Kogen) to a Schechter school chosen by those who enrolled at the Plus level. For 2011-12, donors at the Platinum level received a copy of *The Women's League Hiddur Mitzvah Project: A Fresh Approach to Enhancing Mitzvot* (2011). In addition, for Plus and Platinum members Lisa Kogen presented two illustrated online classes on Jewish art and synagogue architecture.

Members of Kol Ishah are acknowledged in CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and on the website.

#### Kol Ishah Membership Numbers

- 2010-2011: 273 members (205 in leadership positions) \$19,668
- 2011-2012: 239 members (224 in leadership positions) \$17,070

#### A NEW VISION FOR WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The **Strategic Planning Committee** is moving forward after a year of writing implementation plans to change the process we use in membership, leadership, products and services, communications, and the international organization's structure. Strategic goals include building a multiple entry membership program; a more frequent rotation of leaders; services and activities centered on interest groups and individual members; a wider communication delivery system via social media; and reviewing existing activities to add applications for individual members. These goals were approved by the executive committee and the board. The implementation plan will go into effect in the fall of 2012, after a review by the membership and approval of specific items at the biennial convention.

The new vision of Women's League is of an organization that provides value to **all** the women of the Conservative movement, a value that entices them to be affiliated with a national organization. It is the intention of the plan to create an organization that meets the needs of Conservative Jewish women in their synagogues and homes, now and in the future, an organization that makes members' ongoing observance of Jewish rituals and traditions and participation in Jewish life fulfilling, relevant and meaningful.

The Women's League **Archive** is now in its 18th year as it continues to save today's materials for tomorrow's historical records. The committee has identified, preserved, and catalogued the historical records of Women's League and makes them available to researchers and others interested in the scope of Women's League over the years.

A committee has been formed to start planning the organization's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which will be in 2018.

## **CANADIAN LIAISON**

This portfolio was created in 2008 to improve and maintain the bond between Canadian sisterhoods and members with Women's League. The **Canadian liaison** ensures that Canadian interests and perspectives are acknowledged and addressed at every level. During this administration discussions focused on per capita payments and currency exchange rates and receipts for tax deductible donations to Women's League.

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

At the 2011 annual meeting, held at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the membership voted to accept the **Jerusalem Program**, which is the platform of the World Zionist Organization (see page 14).

For decades metropolitan New York area volunteers decorated the **Adele Ginzberg Sukkah** at the Jewish Theological Seminary and members of Pacific Southwest Region decorated the **Francis Kuris Sukkah** at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. While JTS is now decorating its sukkah, it remains the Adele Ginzberg Sukkah.



# LEARNING

## **PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Lisa Kogen, Education/Program Director

Coordinator: Judi Dickstein Kenter (MetroNorth Region)

Books: Illene Rubin (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Creative Judaic Arts: Wanda Pitzele (Central Great Lakes Region)

Jewish Studies: Renee Brezniak Glazier (North Atlantic Region)

Mitzvot: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Program Resources: Eve Gold (North Atlantic Region)

Tikkun Olam: Ziza Pallia (Seaboard Region)

Ways & Means: Robin Rogel-Goldstein (North by Northwest Region)

At-large members: Ellen Kaner Bresnick (Seaboard Region) and Barbara Ezring (Southern Region)

## **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Judaica Shop: Jaclyn Stevens (Southern Region)

With its primary emphasis on Jewish learning, the **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)** creates materials around an annual theme that encourages study in both formal and informal settings with coordinated programming, materials and events for sisterhoods, regions and the organization. PAC is made up of Books, Creative Judaic Arts, Jewish Studies, Mitzvot, Program Resources, and Ways & Means.

### **WLCJ and Torah Fund**

A successful programming innovation has been the integration of Women's League programs/activities with the Torah Fund campaign through a shared annual theme.

2010-11: Hiddur Mitzvah – Beautifying or embellishing a mitzvah

2011-12: Uri, Uri: Awake – Greet the New Dawn!

Ongoing programs and materials designed to complement the annual theme:

- Women's League Shabbat (commemorating the founding of Women's League)
- *Divrei Hokhmah*: 5-7 minute text study/discussion to begin sisterhood and region meetings
- *The Women's League Hiddur Mitzvah Project: A Fresh Approach to Enhancing Mitzvot*
- Kol Ishah Society 2-session class on Jewish art
- Region conference materials on the topic
- BookMarks and Orpah's List

## THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM HIDDUR MITZVAH PROJECT

A Fresh Approach to Enhancing Mitzvot

Holiday celebrations support the spiritual rhythm of our lives and the vitality of our family traditions.

Organized around the Jewish calendar, *The Women's League Hiddur Mitzvah Project* offers creative and practical ideas for making holiday and Shabbat observances more meaningful. It's an innovative guide for sisterhood programming, a perfect gift for new members, teachers, and friends, and a charming review of some of our basic religious concepts.



### ***The Hiddur Mitzvah Project includes:***

Words of Hiddur Mitzvah from Conservative movement leaders

Source material for study in groups or on your own

Creative Judaic Arts projects appropriate for family activities

Study guide based on Meredith Levin Jacob's *The Modern Jewish Mom's Guide to Shabbat: Connect and Celebrate - Bring Your Family Together with the Friday Night*

*Meal*

Resource lists

Introduced almost 20 years ago, there are now almost 600 members of ***Kolot biK'dushah*** who lead services, read Torah and fulfill other liturgical roles in their synagogues and sisterhoods. The three categories of membership are: Kolot BiK'dushah, Nashim BiK'dushah (women who are proficient in leading services, read Torah, and lead birkat hamazon), and Banot BiK'dushah (for post-bat mitzvah girls who regularly participate in services).

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

The following institutes were held during the past two years:

- Mid-Atlantic Region's Southern New Jersey Institute
- Mid-Atlantic Region's Bernice Oswald Women's League Institute of Philadelphia
- New York Institute (Jewish Theological Seminary)
- Florida Institute
- Seaboard Institute



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

## LIVING

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

**Tikkun Olam**, an essential aspect of our core mission, is manifested in several ways. Some of the suggestions in *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project* that focus on tikkun olam were chosen by sisterhoods for their annual agendas. These included Houses for Change, Mishloah Manot/Tzedakah boxes and bringing holiday meals to senior centers and/or shelters.

The **Creative Judaic Arts** committee provides activities that are authentically Jewish, artistically attractive, and easily replicated in sisterhoods. Toward that end, we offer a variety of activities using different artistic media. Several new projects were designed for *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project*, including ushpizot mobiles, handmade new year cards, and several Omer calendars (left).

Sisterhoods that manage **Judaica Shops** in their synagogues have a much appreciated resource in the two-year-old online discussion group just for shop chairs. They find and vet vendors, share information about pricing, learn more about marketing their shops successfully, and gain purchasing power by combining orders. *The Women's League Judaica Shop Suppliers Directory*, a long-time publication of Women's League now available online, is updated regularly.



Sisterhoods have also benefitted from the **Ways and Means** Committee that offered a Distance Workshop in February 2011 at which new and innovative fundraising suggestions were discussed, including partnering with professional fundraising organizations, instant donations, and no-cost virtual publicity.

### A COMMUNITY OF BOOK LOVERS

Women's League recognizes the importance of books and book clubs in building community. **BookMarks**, a semi-annual newsletter, features articles, author interviews, and recommended reading lists. Women's League now has its own **GoodReads** group on facebook for sharing and rating books. Contact Books Chair, Illene Rubin directly at [Illenerubin@aol.com](mailto:Illenerubin@aol.com).

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

- 2011 fiction: *The Invisible Bridge* (Julie Orringer)
- 2011 non-fiction: *Cleopatra: A Life* (Stacy Schiff)
- 2012 *One More River*: (Mary Glickman)

## REACHING OUT TO HELP OTHERS

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

- *Shalom/Welcome* brochure that includes our principles of outreach and highlights the fact that the Conservative Movement is welcoming. The brochure may be modified to show pictures from your sisterhood and personalized contact information may be added.
- *Tools for Building a Culture of Keruv* offers specific programs for use in sisterhoods and synagogues
- *Ba Derekh*, a United Synagogue guide for professionals and lay leadership ([www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org))

Information available at [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org) to help implement outreach in sisterhoods:

- Basic Keruv Information
- Steps Toward Inclusiveness in Sisterhood
- Example Activities for Building a Culture of Keruv

The chairs of the committee have conducted webinars and consult with sisterhoods and regions that have specific questions.



# TRAINING SERVICES

## SERVICING WOMEN'S LEAGUE MEMBERS, SISTERHOODS AND REGIONS

### SERVICES TO SISTERHOODS

Distance Workshops: Barbara Safer (Florida Region)

Leadership Institute Administrator: Mimi Pollack (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Leadership Institute Lead Trainer: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Organization & Management Institute: Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region)

PrezNet: Sisterhood Presidents Chat Group Moderator: Sherry Lynn Rubin (IntraContinental Region)

Training Services: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Training Services Help Line: Margie Miller (BQLI Region)

Training Services Personnel: Harriet Merkowitz (North Atlantic Region)

The **Training Services** committee continues to help sisterhoods develop leadership and grow in strength by providing support, guidance, consulting, and essential resources, enabling them to reach their goals. We offer traditional on-site group interactive workshops as well as informal visits with sisterhood boards or general membership. We can assign a personal mentor to a sisterhood president to assist her with specific issues, offer guidance and set realistic action plans. Trainers are also available to facilitate conference calls to trouble shoot various issues. Our goal is to meet the challenges facing our sisterhoods in a timely, effective and relevant manner.

After ten years, the semi-annual Women's League **Leadership Institutes** have become a mainstay of efforts to identify, train and integrate new leadership into sisterhoods, regions and the international organization. Designed to enhance personal growth, reinforce a commitment to Conservative Judaism, and strengthen leadership capabilities, the institutes welcome new, potential and developing leaders. Participants study with rabbis and educators, and define their own leadership styles in dynamic interactive workshops. Approximately 550 women have returned to their communities with a renewed purpose and vision and many have become leaders in their regions.

### WOMEN'S LEAGUE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES

January 2011: Atlanta, Georgia  
July 2011: Dresher, Pennsylvania  
January 2012: Los Angeles, California  
August 2012: Amherst, New York



The **Organization & Management Institute** is now available by request to regions and sisterhoods. This program focuses on the Women's League organizational structure and services as well as on helping participants become successful within that structure. It is designed for women currently in leadership positions in their volunteer or professional lives who are committed to expanding their leadership roles, within both sisterhood and Women's League.



**Distance Workshops** are a relatively recent addition to the Women's League roster of services to help sisterhoods thrive. The innovative Distance Workshops use the technology of conference calls, webinars and online services to bring our advice, tips and tricks, and first-hand experience directly to members at no cost. In addition to saving time and money, sisterhoods immediately benefit from the presentations. Participant reviews have been

extremely positive and have noted the workshops' value. Sessions are led by activity chairs and professional directors.

#### 2011-2012 Workshops:

- Membership: Grow Your Sisterhood (Margie Miller)
- Z'havah: Bring Younger Women In (Joyce Weingarten and Lara Werwa)
- Sisterhood Presidents - A Crash Course (Margie Miller)
- Navigating the Women's League Website: The Wonders You Will Find (Phyllis Goldberg and Rhonda

- Kahn)
- Strengthen Sisterhood Through Social Media: Don't Let Facebook and Twitter Intimidate You (Lara Werwa and Jeanine Hoff)
- Nominations or How to Find Your Sisterhood's Next Leaders (Evelyn Seelig and Gloria Cohen)
- Creating Sisterhood Bylaws: How, Why, When (Sandy Myers and Sarrae Crane)
- Synagogue-Sisterhood Relations: Independence & Cooperation (Sarrae Crane and Marilyn Wind)
- Books, Books and More Books: Book Clubs and Sisterhoods Are Perfect Together (Illene Rubin and Lisa Kogen)

Yet another innovative service that has made a real difference in real time for our sisterhoods is the **Preznet**. The moderated listserv provides over 400 sisterhood presidents with a unique opportunity to ask questions, discuss common problems, share programming ideas, and assist one another. Discussions have centered on holiday programs, ways and means projects, Judaica shops, fiscal matters, sisterhood-synagogue relations, and leadership development. Announcing news and updates from activity chairs, distance workshops, educational initiatives, Israel mission opportunities, and Leadership Institutes increases utilization of Women's League resources and attendance at functions. The PrezNet has been a successful avenue for requesting essential information and receiving input from the presidents. Discussions resulted in the revision of sisterhood-synagogue relations recommendations to include fiduciary responsibilities. In response to posted messages, the moderator connects the sisterhood president with the appropriate Women's League personnel. The moderator also assists presidents directly, as needed.

#### **MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT**

AIM Coordinator (Affiliation, Individual Membership, Membership): Iris Lasky (Pacific Southwest Region)

Affiliation: Gloria Adelson (Southern Region)

Retention: Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Z'havah Chair: Joyce Berlin Weingarten (Central Great Lakes Region) Vice Chair: Lara Werwa (Florida Region)

To streamline the various elements of membership in both sisterhoods and Women's League, **Affiliation**, **Individual Membership** and **Membership** have been combined into a single **AIM** committee. The goal of AIM is to give guidance and support to region membership vice presidents and presidents as well as to affiliate new sisterhoods and grow Women's League.

To aid sisterhoods in their membership campaigns, new flyers and postcards were designed and posted on [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org). A new affiliation publication is being created to address bringing women into sisterhood and re-energizing sisterhoods. The goal is to recruit and reclaim as many women as possible for our sisterhoods while meeting the needs and expectations of current members.

#### **NEW AFFILIATES 2010-2012**

**IntraContinental Region:** Ohev Sholom, Prairie Village, Kansas

**Pacific Southwest Region:** Congregation B'nai Jacob, Bakersfield, California and Congregation Beth Shalom, Corona, California

Women have been able to join Women's League as individual members since 2006. Individual members enjoy 24/7 access to the Women's League website, CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism, Women's League publications, self-guided study materials, creative Judaic arts projects, and Orpah's Book List, among other benefits.

Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control, sisterhoods occasionally feel they must leave our ranks, usually due to demographic changes. The **Retention** chair reaches out to these sisterhoods and offers assistance and guidance. In several instances this personal contact has done the trick and helped the sisterhoods get back on track.



After 14 years, **Z'havah** is a fully engaged project directed to younger women in Women's League congregations. The mission of Z'havah is to promote and develop future leaders by assisting sisterhoods in attracting and involving younger women, bringing them together and enabling them to create a variety of activities directed to their interests. The Z'havah team has established a strong social media presence on **faceBook**, Twitter and with a blog.

The Z'havah Planner, available at [ww.wlcj.org](http://ww.wlcj.org), continues to be updated with techniques and tools for success as well as proven tried-and-true programs. A tri-fold Z'havah brochure can be downloaded as well. Region Z'havah chairs regularly confer with the Women's League chairs.



## **WORLD AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

Sarrae Crane, Executive Director

Ba'Olam - In the World Blog

Editor: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)

Canadian Liaison: Randy Schwartz (IntraContinental Region)

Israel: Sandy Blumenthal (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Israel Liaison: Diane Friedgut (Israel)

Israel Mission: Judith Mary Horowitz (BQLI Region) and Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region)

JCPA Representative: Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region) and Marilyn Wind (Seaboard Region)

Masorti Women International: Heddy Belman (Garden State Region)

Mothers of Olim: Susan Marcus (Garden State Region)

Public Policy & Advocacy: Dr. Marilyn Wind (Seaboard Region)

United Nations NGO: Gloria Fischel (BQLI Region) and Laurie Stone Brofsky (BQLI Region)

United Nations NGO Alternate: Barbara Glass (MetroNorth Region)

USCJ Commission on Israel: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

USCJ Commission on Social Justice Representative: Marilyn Wind (Seaboard Region)

Washington Liaison: Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region)

Women's League Committee to Achieve World Status: Rivy Blass (International Northeast Region)

WZO: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

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

## **ISRAEL and WOMEN'S LEAGUE: A VITAL CONNECTION**

Since its inception Women's League has reached out to reinforce bonds with Israel and Jews worldwide. To that end, the **Israel** department promotes the Six-Point Program for Israel: Zionist philosophy; support of the Conservative/Masorti movement in Israel, its synagogues and women's groups; tourism; aliyah; religious pluralism; and social action. Our goal is to nurture a real sense of *ahavat Zion* (love of Israel) among our members. At its annual meeting in 2011, Women's League added to its mission that it "*accepts the Jerusalem Program, which is the platform of the World Zionist Organization.*"

### **The Jerusalem Program**

**ZIONISM**, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, brought about the establishment of the

State of Israel, and views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people for its continuity and future.

**The foundations of Zionism are:**

- *The unity of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael, and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the nation.*
- *Aliyah to Israel from all countries and the effective integration of all immigrants into Israeli Society.*
- *Strengthening Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state and shaping it as an exemplary society with a unique moral and spiritual character, marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people rooted in the vision of the prophets, striving for peace and contributing to the betterment of the world.*
- *Ensuring the future and the distinctiveness of the Jewish People by furthering Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education, fostering spiritual and cultural values and teaching Hebrew as the national language.*
- *Nurturing mutual Jewish responsibility, defending the rights of Jews as individuals and as a nation, representing the national Zionist interests of the Jewish people, and struggling against all manifestations of anti-Semitism.*
- *Settling the country as an expression of practical Zionism.*

We release updates, action alerts and link articles to Ba’Olam regarding issues in Israel and the Masorti movement, as we strive to strengthen relationships between Women’s League members and our sisters in Israel. Region Israel chairs and presidents share information and program ideas with their sisterhoods, including religious and gender equality and Israeli celebrations.

**Israel Advocacy Training** was the focus of a two-day seminar, attended by the chair of Masorti Women International, presented by MERCAZ, The Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement together with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Zionist Organization.

**American Mothers of Olim** is an online discussion group for those who have family and friends in Israel ([am-mothers-of-olim@googlegroups.com](mailto:am-mothers-of-olim@googlegroups.com)).

**Masorti Women International** continues as a vital outgrowth of our commitment to enhance our connection to the movement’s Israeli kehillot (communities). Women’s League has relationships with all of the Masorti congregations and supports special projects in those communities with donations from our sisterhoods. Our goal is to have 100% of our sisterhoods support our relationships with the Masorti kehillot in Israel.

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

Together with MERCAZ-USA and MERCAZ-Canada, Women's League sponsors a biennial **essay contest** that provides scholarships to Conservative teenagers for any Conservative/Masorti program in Israel. Women's League has also joined with MERCAZ for its Conservative Movement Israel Advocacy Seminars designed to strengthen Israel advocacy in our synagogues.

### **Women's League 2011 Mission to Israel and Prague, November 6- 20, 2011**

The 25 people on the 2011 mission benefited from the care and attention of the chairs and President Rita Wertlieb in a program that included Jewish history and culture combined with fun and entertainment. Masorti Rabbi Ron Hoffberg guided the group throughout Prague where they met with Israel's ambassador to the Czech Republic. In Israel, several unusual events took place including a visit to a border guard base, where participants were allowed to fire a machine gun, and dinner in Zichron Yaakov in the homes of various members of the local Masorti kehillah followed by study with Rabbi Elisha Wolfin.

### **Masorti Women's Study Days**

Every year, the Women's League liaison organizes study days throughout Israel, together with the Schechter Institute and with the cooperation of the Masorti movement. Three regional study days were held in February and a national day was held in June at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem. More than 600 women, ages 17-85 from towns and cities across Israel, participated in a range of courses taught in Hebrew, English, Spanish, and Russian, including twice as many as last year from Kesher, the leadership institute for Russian-speaking women. During the February study day at Kibbutz Hannaton, a mikveh workshop to mark life transitions was held for the first time.

### **PUBLIC POLICY & WORLD AFFAIRS**

On the domestic scene, the **Public Policy** committee provides timely information on issues that impact the Jewish community, in general, and Jewish women, in particular. Women's League works in concert with other Jewish organizations to establish policy and is active with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The liaison to the **Jewish Council for Public Affairs** and **Washington Liaison** represents the organization in Washington when neither the president nor the executive director can attend. She also is a member of the Council of Governors, representing Women's League at the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Historically, Women's League has supported a broad array of positions to enhance the democratic, pluralistic society in which we live. These include, among others, reproductive choice, gun control, health care issues, protecting the environment, political campaign finance reform, civil liberties, and human rights. Every two years, at its biennial convention, Women's League adopts the resolutions crafted by the committee that then permit Women's League to articulate and promote positions, either alone, as individual sisterhoods, and together with other organizations. The entire body of Women's League resolutions is available on the website, by subject.

The Women's League **United Nations NGO** (non-governmental observer) and alternate attend relevant briefings, programs, workshops, and conferences, as well as support the work of the Holocaust and United Nations Outreach Programme. They network with other NGOs and maintain a Jewish presence at the United Nations, advocating on behalf of Israel and other Jewish issues. Through the distribution of packages before

holidays, they educate UN staff members about Jews and Jewish life. They also arrange for sisterhoods to tour the UN and meet with members of the Israeli delegation.

January 27 has been designated by the UN as international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

Jewish tradition demands that we be active members of our communities and our world, with an understanding of the times in which we live. Today, that means that the information we share needs to be immediate and timely and delivered electronically. We therefore have updated the monthly world affairs newsletter **Ba'Olam** to a blog. Articles of interest to Conservative/Masorti women are posted on a daily basis, and emails are sent to remind past subscribers to check the blog at [wlcjbaolam.blogspot.com/](http://wlcjbaolam.blogspot.com/) Articles come from reliable American, Canadian, international, virtual, and Israeli sources, which are always credited.

#### Contributors to Ba'Olam



Public Policy & Advocacy Chair Dr. Marilyn Wind  
Israel Chair Sandy Blumenthal  
United Nations NGO Gloria Fischel  
Editor: Lois Silverman  
Executive Director: Sarrae Crane



# SHARING

## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Rhonda Jacobs Kahn, Communications Director

CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism

Editor: Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

Women's League representatives to the CJ editorial committee: Bernice Balter (MetroNorth Region), Renee Brezniak Glazier (North Atlantic Region), Debbi Kaner Goldich (Mid-Atlantic Region), Shelly Goldin (Seaboard Region), Roz Goldstine (Pacific Southwest Region)

Internet Services: Lois Silverman (International Northeast Region)

Website Editor: Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region)

WLCJNet Moderator: Bette Siegel (International Northeast Region)



**CJ: Voices of Conservative/Masorti Judaism**, a joint effort of Women's League, United Synagogue, and the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, is now in its sixth year. The mission of the magazine, which is mailed to over 230,000 homes quarterly, is to help members of the Conservative movement live lives increasingly filled with Jewish learning and commitment to klal Yisrael. Women's League's allotted pages highlight unique features of the organization and include WomenSpeak, written by Education Director Lisa Kogen. Women's League committee members are instrumental in finding appropriate and compelling articles and authors.

## ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS ARE HERE!

Women's League has incorporated various online and virtual tools to expand communications with members overseen by the **Internet Services chair**, who assists region web masters, maintains region web sites, and establishes and monitors several Women's League listservs.



This year, as well, we have updated our **facebook** page to include weekly updates and shout-outs to members who have made a difference. Check out our page and like it so that even more people can become friends of Women's League.

The Women's League website, [www.wlcj.org](http://www.wlcj.org), is constantly being updated. It has blossomed into the portal and information center for everything Women's League. Most of the valuable educational materials and publications of Women's League may be downloaded easily at no cost. 'Quick Find' directs users to all the material in the password protected area of the website (WLCJ for YOU). Secure online payments allow members to make donations in honor or memory of someone, join Kol Ishah, order publications, and register for events. There are direct links to view the Women's League facebook page, read the latest issue of CJ

magazine, or visit region websites. Convention information, newsletters, handouts, registration, and the virtual ad journal can all be found on [www.wlci.org](http://www.wlci.org).

Women's League upgraded its data base over the course of the last year. Now sisterhood presidents, financial secretaries or treasurers and designated data managers can access the data that Women's League maintains about their respective sisterhood members. This greatly reduces the chance of misinformation in the data base and allows each sisterhood to use the information in various ways. A ***Guide to the Website for Sisterhood Presidents*** has step-by-step directions to help them make the most of this new system.

Celebrating its 16th year, **WLCJNet**, the 460+ member Sisterhood without Walls, is a resource of information about Women's League as well as a successful means of networking. Participants have posted virtual candle lightings for Chanukah, weekly Washington updates, holiday ponderings, recommended books, craft projects, programs, scripts, fundraisers, general information of interest to other Jewish women and information of political events around the world and of interest to Jews. We answer questions and offer suggestions of appropriate Women's League materials. Net women recite Psalms for those who are ill and a misheberach list is kept for those in need of healing. We share happy and sad occasions and are a source of comfort and support for one another. Most importantly the WLCJNet keeps us connected with our sisters around the world.

A tradition dear to generations of Jewish women is the publication of the annual Women's League **Calendar Diary**. Since 2009 the calendar has illustrated the many aspects of Women's League, making it a creative publicity tool. The theme of both the 2011/12 (5772) and 2012/13 (5773) calendar diaries was Hiddur Mitzvah, highlighting Women's League programs and materials, especially *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project*. The calendar diary continues to generate substantial income to Women's League.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2011-2012**

## **NOMINATIONS**

### **Officers nominated for 2012-2014**

**President:** Rita L. Wertlieb (Seaboard Region)

**Vice Presidents:** Gloria Adelson (Southern Region), Heddy Belman (Garden State Region), Sandy Berenbaum (Mid-Atlantic Region), Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region), Judi Dickstein Kenter (MetroNorth Region), Janet Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region), Iris Lasky (Pacific Southwest Region), Toby Maser (International Northeast Region), Margie Miller (BQLI Region), Mimi Pollack (Mid-Atlantic Region), Robin Rogel-Goldstein (North by Northwest Region), Joyce Berlin Weingarten (Central Great Lakes Region)

**Recording Secretary:** Meryl Balaban (Garden State Region)

**Financial Secretary:** Myra R. Promisel (Seaboard Region)

**Treasurer:** Cheryl Patt (International Northeast Region)

**Nominating Committee:** Chair Cory Schneider (Seaboard Region), Gloria Adelson (Southern Region), Judi Dickstein Kenter (MetroNorth Region), Iris Lasky (Pacific Southwest Region), Faye M. Laveson (Mid-Atlantic Region), Toby Maser (International Northeast Region), Sherry Lynn Rubin (IntraContinental Region), Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region)

## 2010-2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**President:** Rita L. Wertlieb (Seaboard Region)

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

**Recording Secretary:** Cheryl Patt (International Northeast Region)

**Financial Secretary:** Myra R. Promisel (Seaboard Region)

**Treasurer:** Janet Kirschner (Mid-Atlantic Region)

**Nominating Committee:** Chair Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region), Gloria B. Cohen (BQLI Region), Phyllis Goldberg (Florida Region), Gail Goldfarb (Seaboard Region), Harriet Merkwitz (North Atlantic Region), Mimi Pollack (MidAtlantic Region), Tobie Rosenberg (Pacific Southwest Region), Terry Winston (International Northeast Region)

**Past Presidents:** Evelyn Auerbach, Audrey Citak, Gloria B. Cohen, Ruth Magil Perry, Cory R. Schneider, Evelyn Seelig, Janet Tobin, Selma Weintraub

**Executive Director:** Sarrae Crane

**Education/Program Director:** Lisa Kogen

**Communications Director:** Rhonda Jacobs Kahn

**Administrator:** Razel Kessler

**Israel Liaison:** Diane Friedgut

## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ruth Aach  
Sally Abbey  
Lorie Abernethy  
Marla Allentoff  
Gaye Ellen Altman  
Janet Arnowitz  
Elana Artson  
Meryl Balaban  
Bernice Balter  
Carolyn Baron  
Lucy A. Becker  
Florence G. Belfer  
Heddy Belman  
Marilyn Berkowitz  
Barbara Bess-Pashak  
Genie Green Blaher  
Rivy Blass  
Annette Blitzer  
Karen Block  
Gerri Blum  
Sandy Blumenthal  
Laurie Stone Brofsky  
Deborah Bruce  
Marlene Bukstein  
Frances Caine  
Molly Chernofsky  
Rhonda Cohn  
Laurie B. Davis  
Estelle W. Dobrow  
Beverley Dunn  
Tina M. Eisenman  
Sandra Eliaser  
Agnes Gold Emert  
Barbara Ezring  
Harriet Feinstein  
Donna S. Finkelstein  
Gloria Fischel  
Judith S. Fisher  
Sheri Fox  
Naomi J. Friedman  
Lila S. Frost  
Helene Fruchter  
Marjorie E. K. Fuhrmann  
Janet Geldzahler  
Dr. Reva Gershen Lowy  
Barbara Glass  
Jody Glass  
Renee Brezniak Glazier  
Aliza Goland

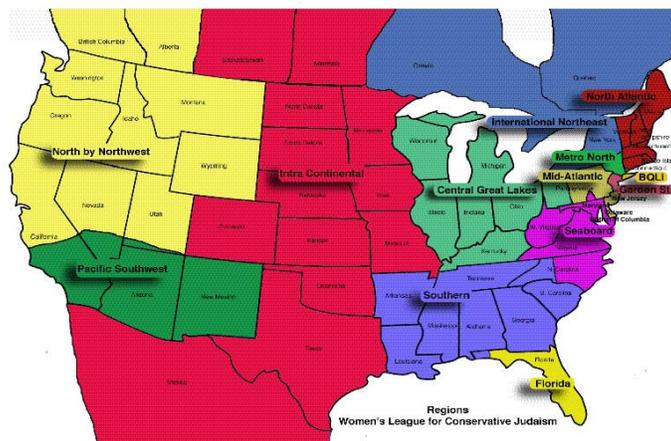
Eve Gold  
Gail Goldfarb  
Debbi Kaner Goldich  
Judy K. Goldstein  
Miriam Golob  
Claire Gondelman  
Carol Gopman  
Anne Greenbaum  
Phyllis Haas  
Corinne Hammerschlag  
Rochelle Hirt  
Toby B. Holtzman  
Judith Mary Horowitz  
Amy Hymes  
Vicki Isman  
Lela Beren Jacoby  
Terry Jonas  
Beverly Jones  
Harriet Kantrowitz  
Renee Kaplan  
Sheila Kaufman  
Razel Kessler  
Sandra Kirsh  
Sandra Koppell  
Arlene Krawitz  
Faye M. Laveson  
Jackie Leader  
Vivian Leber  
Dr. Adriane Leveen  
Dr. Barbara Levin  
Brenda Levine  
Linda L. Levine  
Phyllis Levy  
Dana Lichtenberg  
Lynne Lichtig  
Rhoda Lipsig  
Susan F. Lodish  
Ruth Loewenstein  
Karen Lukin  
Louise Maerov  
Carol Maller  
Susan L. Marcus  
Cheryl Maser  
Blanche Meisel  
Charlotte Lois Meyer  
Marion Mohl  
Rene Moutaigne  
Sandy Myers  
Deborah Napoleon

Anne Nicolson  
Susan Orlando  
Ziza Pallia  
Pam Penner  
Idette Pfeffer  
Wanda Pitzele  
Connie Pollack  
Mimi Pollack  
Ellen Vinocur Potash  
Sharon Presby  
Sue Press  
Renee F. Ravich  
Bea Reynolds  
Jina B. Rezvanpour  
Susan Lee Romanoff  
Linda Rosenberg  
Tobie Rosenberg  
Lauri Rosenbloom  
Ilene Rothman  
Illene Rubin  
Sherry Lynn Rubin  
Ethel Sachs  
Barbara Safer  
Mary Hagan Sanders  
Trudy Sassoon  
Elaine B. Scharf  
Cindy Schechter  
Anne Schimberg  
Roberta Schleicher  
Lisa Geffen Schlesinger  
Barbara S. Schreiber  
Karen Seltzer  
Marc J. Seltzer  
Lauren Sepulowitz  
Ruth Shayne  
Sharon Shorten  
Bette Siegel  
Lois T. Silverman  
Carol Shayman Simon  
Patricia Smolker  
Charlotte Stein  
Sharon Steinberg  
Jaclyn Stevens  
Beth Gray Tannenbaum  
Marcia Toppall  
Anna Tractenberg  
Carol K. Vanaver  
Eve F. Wasserman  
Eve Wechsberg

Rhoda Weinstein  
Lynne Weiss Marshall  
Lara Werwa  
Dr. Marilyn Wind  
Terry Susan Winston

Lauren Wishnew  
Diane Wohl  
Jacqueline Wolf  
Florence G. Wolpoff  
Idelle S. Wood

Iris Zackheim



## THE 13 REGIONS OF WOMEN'S LEAGUE

---

### **BQLI**

President: Molly Chernofsky  
Bulletin: Kol Ishah

### **Central Great Lakes**

President: Rhonda Cohn  
Bulletin: The Wave

### **Florida**

President: Amy Hymes  
Bulletin: Reaching Out

### **Garden State**

President: Janet Geldzahler

Bulletin: Garden State  
Newsletter

### **International Northeast**

President: Frances Caine  
Bulletin: Chai Lines

### **IntraContinental**

President: Judy K. Goldstein  
Bulletin: ICR

### **MetroNorth**

President: Susan Orlando  
Bulletin: MetroNorth Express

### **Mid-Atlantic**

President: Donna S. Finkelstein  
Bulletin: Mid-Atlantic  
Happenings

### **North Atlantic**

Presidents: Karen Block  
Bulletin: North Atlantic Region  
Newsletter

### **North By Northwest**

President: Anne Nicolson  
Bulletin: The NorWester

### **Pacific Southwest**

President: Renee Ravich  
Bulletin: Chai Lites

### **Seaboard**

President: Sandra Kirsh  
Bulletin: Medidot

### **Southern**

President: Ann Greenbaum  
Bulletin: Kol HaDarom



### **REGION PERSONNEL**

Region Conferences: Terry Winston (International Northeast Region)  
Region Presidents Conference: Heddy Belman (Garden State Region)  
Region Services: Carol Simon (Florida Region)  
Past Region Presidents Council: Cory Schneider (Seaboard Region)

Although the demographics of our regions are ever changing and challenging, the primary mission of the regions remains to support and provide resources to each sisterhood in the region. **Region Services** provides direct support to the region leadership in their efforts to serve every sisterhood and sisterhood member. Networking, staying connected, meeting the needs of our members, and providing resources - one sisterhood at a time, one member at a time - will insure our success as an organization.

The Region Services Chair and President Rita Wertlieb confer with the region presidents approximately every six weeks. Additional individual training calls were held with the area directors and region vice presidents by region and as a group. There is a moderated listserv for the region vice presidents and area directors.

### **Face to Face**

In October 2011, the region services chair and **Central Great Lakes Region** President Rhonda Cohn visited sisterhoods in Munsey and Gary, Indiana, and met with the area directors and other region leadership.

**Southern Region** President Anne Greenbaum and Torah Fund Vice President Renee Montaigne traveled with Carol visiting sisterhoods and synagogues in Nashville, Knoxville, Oak Ridge, Asheville, and Greenville. Rita Wertlieb spent time meeting with leaders in the **International Northeast Region** (April 2012) and at the **Pacific Southwest** summer area workshops (July 2011).

**Region conferences** – traditionally held each spring – are a highlight of each region’s calendar of activities. Since 2012 was not an election year for the regions, many chose to hold a meeting/event in lieu of the traditional spring conference to focus on programs that met their specific needs. Whichever choice they opted for, the **Region Conferences** chair helped them plan and facilitate events showcasing Women’s League services,

region personnel, and new Women's League publications and materials, as well as providing training and support to sisterhood presidents and members.

In 2011, all 13 regions held a conference, supported by a Women's League consultant. In 2012, five regions held meetings/events and six regions held traditional spring conferences.

#### **New for 2010-2012**

- Conference handbook and material available online
- *The Talking Points* is a single document for Women's League consultants, with information collected from all the departments and services
- Consultants assessed the needs of each region's sisterhoods before meeting with the sisterhood president

#### **2011 PRESIDENTS and TORAH FUND CONFERENCE**

New York, New York

Chair: Heddy Belman

President: Rita L. Wertlieb

Region Services Chair: Carol Simon

Torah Fund Chair: Lauren Wishnew



As in the past, spring 2011 saw the **Region Presidents and Torah Fund Conference**, a biennial training session for incoming region leadership. It prepared presidents and Torah Fund vice presidents for their vital roles in their regions over their two-year terms. Region teams created joint visions and game plans through the use of brainstorming and problem solving, group and individual projects, and group discussions. This conference emphasized increased delegate participation and employed team teaching and rotated teams and groups.

Delegates were encouraged to meet together without any designated format.

The **Past President's Council** was conceived at Convention 2008 when many of the presidents from our former 25 regions/branches discussed ways in which their history and contributions to Women's League would not be lost. As an organization, we know that we have to build on our past to grow in the future, and our past branch and region presidents are our best links to that past.

During this term, the council was expanded so that each region has its own past presidents council headed by a coordinator. The agenda of each council is driven by the past presidents themselves. The coordinators keep the women connected to things happening in their region. There were regularly scheduled conference calls with the region presidents and all the region council coordinators to share successes and challenges.

#### **Projects**

- Gathering and organizing region archives (merged from old branches, and/or collect stories from past sisterhood presidents, especially those that did not maintain an archives)
- Region past president get-togethers
- Good and welfare notices
- Assist region presidents when asked

## FROM THE REGIONS

Most of the region presidents have made better communications and constant contact with their presidents a priority. They use phone calls, conference calls, emails, weekly pre-Shabbat messages, face-to-face meetings, cluster and area meetings, conferences, and parlor meetings to expand their contact. Vice presidents and area directors are urged to be in frequent touch with their counterparts. Regions also use websites (hosted by Women's League) and emailed bulletins to engage their members. Women's League provides the regions with four pages of organizational news and information for their print bulletins, which is also used on web pages and weekly messages.



Considering the size of some of the regions, presidents have been creative and flexible in reaching out to their sisterhoods. **Central Great Lakes** is raising funds specifically to ease the costs of participation in events. By selling all-occasion cards designed for the region for the Central Great Lakes Leadership Fund they have been able to provide scholarships to the region shabbaton and a Women's League Leadership Institute. **Florida** held its first Region Camp-Out designed to foster team building, but mostly to have fun. Of the 35 women there, 13 had never before been to a Women's League event!

**International Northeast Region**, which also covers a very large area, held meetings in three different areas based on previous region divisions: Ontario Seaway, Montreal, and New York State. Smaller regions also held successful area meetings. **Mid-Atlantic** held five Area Leadership Meetings. **North Atlantic** encouraged attendance at meetings by planning interesting and fun events after each board meeting, including a picnic (in the rain) at a private home and a visit to a traveling mezuzah exhibit. They also asked everyone at spring conference to contribute a creative touch to their new region banner.

**North By Northwest** is particularly proud of its new found sense of common purpose and unity. They accomplished this with a Canmore, Alberta Roundup and a Riverside Rendezvous in Richland, Washington. **Study**

The pleasure of learning with friends and peers is a constant among our regions. In particular, **BQLI** offered a Tu B'Shevat Seder and Luncheon as well as a Chanukkah Celebration that included music and song, and a Torah Study Day focusing on the Secret Lives of the Matriarchs. Women's League Education Director Lisa Kogen visited the **Florida Region** where she spoke about Hiddur Mitzvah through the Eyes of My Sisters: How This Passover Workshop Is Different from All Others. Florida was just one of several regions that addressed the 2012 theme of Hiddur Mitzvah. Others were **International Northeast** (Anna Van Delman, Judaic Arts Chair presented handcrafted Judaica), **Mid-Atlantic** (a high-tea with featured speaker Lisa Kogen explaining how to "do" hiddur mitzvah), and **BQLI** (handcrafted headcoverings). Members of **Pacific Southwest** used their time in the American Jewish University sukkah for study. They also enjoyed a panel of outstanding rabbis at a panel entitled "Blessed Is God Who Made Me a Woman." **Mid-Atlantic** enjoyed the sukkah at JTS and a tour of the rare book room. Delegates to **Southern's** open board meeting (with a record 65 in attendance) studied with local rabbis. **Seaboard's** day of learning took a look at the core exhibition of the National Museum of American Jewish History, with a presentation entitled Three Role Models for Today: A Girl Named Rebecca, a Young Matron Named Abigail, and a Woman of a Certain Age Called Sarah.



### **Mitzvot and Tikkun Olam**

Women's League has always understood the value of observing the mitzvot and of helping repair the world (tikkun olam). For the regions, these two areas have been of particular focus in creating communities of women. **BQLI** joined in the Sharsheret Walk for the Cure. **Florida** initiated a new project with March Mitzvah Month. Almost every sisterhood in the region did some kind of mitzvah project over the course of the month. **Pacific Southwest's** region conference included "Autism: The Musical" (directed by Elaine Hall, performed by the Miracle Project and Nes Gadol Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program students).

### **Spiritual Renewal and Growth**

In our busy and plugged-in lives it has become essential to spend moments catering to our spirits. Regions have provided many such opportunities. **Southern**, under the leadership of Dr. Barb Levin, began a pilot program for Women's League to allow sisterhood members to identify spiritual, educational and health goals; identify activities and regimens to achieve those goals; and, self-assessments. Their first activity was a summer retreat with Rabbi Elana Kantor. Central Great Lakes' conference included a spiritual Shabbat.

### **Programming**

Regions are the front-line in programming for sisterhoods. Here is a sampling of programs offered.

- **BQLI** enjoyed a book and movie night with Evelyn Rubin (*Ghetto Shanghai*)
- Orpah's List Selection discussion at **International Northeast**
- Membership: The Missing Piece of the Puzzle, at **Mid-Atlantic's** open board meeting

- The Odessa Klezmer Band helped **Mid-Atlantic** celebrate Israel Independence Day while **North by Northwest** Skyped a conversation with members of a Masorti kehillah in Jerusalem
- Speed Programming is a perennial favorite for **Pacific Southwest**
- Ruach Revelers and the Off Keys always entertain at **Pacific Southwest**
- **North by Northwest** learned how to enhance sisterhood with social media
- Many regions honor women of achievement; **BQLI** has added the N'Shei Kodesh (Emerging Leaders) award



# TORAH FUND

Women ensuring Conservative/Masorti Jewish

education

## **TORAH FUND DEPARTMENT**

Carolyn Baron, Executive Director

Torah Fund: Lauren Wishnew (BQLI Region)

Campaign Development: Janet Arnowitz (Garden State Region)

Treasurer: Evelyn Seelig (BQLI)

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

Associate Patrons: Gaye Altman (MetroNorth Region)

Guardian: Brenda Levine (Intra-Continental Region)

General Solicitation Lynne Weiss Marshall (Garden State Region)

Keter Kavod: Blanche Meisel (Pacific Southwest Region); Mary H. Sanders (MetroNorth Region)

Special Gifts: Phyllis Haas, Anna Tractenberg (Mid-Atlantic Region) and Evelyn Seelig (BQLI Region),

Lela Jacoby, Carol Maller and Bea Reynolds (Pacific Southwest Region)

Planned Giving: Ruth Aach (Garden State Region), Mimi Pollack (Mid-Atlantic Region)

Campaign Materials: Ruth Loewenstein (BQLI Region)

Broadcast Email Coordinator: Barbara Schreiber (MetroNorth Region)

eBay: Marjorie Fuhrmann (Seaboard Region)

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

Canadian Liaison: Trudie Sassoon (International Northeast Region)

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

Over the past two years we have raised over five million dollars. Over our 70 year history we have raised in excess of 90 million dollars.

### **Online**

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

Please "Friend us" on facebook where information on Torah Fund and happenings in the Conservative movement are regularly added to our page.

### **Cards**

Check out the assortment of greeting cards on the web-site. Purchase them through your sisterhood or contact Torah Fund directly.

### **Scholarship Project**

Ongoing project to benefit students attending JTS, Ziegler, Schechter Institute, and Semanario Rabinico in Buenos Aires. Extra funds provide relief from the high cost of education. Since its inception in 2005 Torah Fund has raised over \$817,600.

### **Support Torah Fund on eBay**

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

### **Speakers and Tours**

The Torah Fund office worked with sisterhoods from BQLI, Florida, Garden State, International Northeast, Intra-Continental, Metro North, Mid-Atlantic, North Atlantic, Seaboard and Southern Regions to arrange speakers and tours. The tours brought more than 200 individuals to JTS, where they saw firsthand the importance of their support and hard work.

Torah Fund International Chair Lauren Wishnew spoke at special events at BQLI, Garden State, Metro-North, and North Atlantic Regions.

### **Special Events**

The Torah Fund Conference, held in June 2011, was designed to prepare the 13 region vice presidents for the exciting and challenging position of raising funds for Torah Fund. They met with JTS and Ziegler administration, faculty and students; studied Torah; participated in workshops and solicitation training; enjoyed tours of the campus, library and residence halls and tefillot in the Women's League Seminary Synagogue.

### **Torah Fund at Convention**

The Torah Fund luncheon, for all delegates attending the Convention 2012, is a celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Torah Fund Campaign, looking to the past and embracing the future. Chancellor Arnold M. Eisen will deliver a special message.

### **Major Gifts**

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



## 5772 Pin

### Hiddur Mitzvah



The concept of *hiddur mitzvah* – beautifying or embellishing a mitzvah – is considered by many to be the inspiration for Jewish aesthetics. One possible source for the mitzvah derives from a verse in the Song of the Sea: “This is my God and I will glorify Him” (Exodus 15:2).

With adornment, sacred objects become more precious.

This Torah Fund theme is one that particularly resonates with women who have always been involved in Jewish artistic activities. Whether in the stitching guilds in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian synagogues or needlepoint crafters in 20<sup>th</sup>-century women’s groups, women are committed to this most ancient of Jewish values.

The pomegranate imagery has a multi-layered meaning. Pomegranates (*rimmonim*) are associated with the land of Israel as one of its bountiful fruits, and *rimmonim* is also the term for the finial adornments on the atzei chayyim, or staves, of a Torah scroll.

## 5773 Pin

### Uri, Uri

#### Awake-Greet the New Dawn



As women, we experience many wake-up calls. Devorah the Prophet was a judge in Israel when she was roused from her seat under a palm tree to lead her people’s troops into battle with the words, “Arise, arise, Devorah; arise and join in the chant.” (Judges 5:12) But Devorah was also known as a mother in Israel, and as such she must have been responsive to the great variety of wake-up calls women experience throughout their lives: a hungry baby, a child in need, a cause that demands immediate attention and action.

Being roused to action is often just the prelude to awakening others, whether via the shofar as seen growing out of the letter ‘ayin in the 5773 pin, or by using our voices to focus on the critical needs of our families and communities. The imagery of dawn invokes an awareness of the challenges before us. Will we rise to meet them, and will the glory of God be present in our response? Uri, uri – Wake up – shir dabeiri – sing a song – of activity, of victory, and of thanks to the Holy One whose light illuminates all of our waking moments.