

FALL UPDATE

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR
CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



FALL 2009
5769

PrezNet

Do you have questions for which you can't find answers? Do you need programming resources? Do you want to share your successful sisterhood programming and strategies?

If you are a sisterhood president and you said "yes" to any of these questions, then PrezNet—an online discussion group for sisterhood presidents—is for you!

The PrezNet now connects over 400 sisterhood presidents who discuss topics of interest that benefit their members. An added benefit? Women's League activity chairs collect information from the sisterhood presidents and are sharing the innovative ideas they pick up on PrezNet with all the members of Women's League.

Be the first to hear about Women's League programs and the entire spectrum of Women's League resources, including the website.

Our thanks to Moderator Carol Gopman and Lois Silverman, Internet Services Chair!

In this mailing:

- 🔥 *New*: BookMarks!
- 🔥 Keruv brochure
- 🔥 Sisterhood Planner pages
- 🔥 Divrei Hokhmah: The Environment
- 🔥 Proposed bylaws revisions
- 🔥 Annual meeting reservation

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This promises to be an exciting, if challenging, new year for Women's League and sisterhoods. To help you successfully fulfill your role as president, I am delighted to be sending you this Fall Update that contains new ideas and materials for you to utilize in your sisterhood.

One of the most important initiatives I want to make you aware of is the new keruv policy adopted by the Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism. Following a year of discussion and study, we now have a welcoming policy for anyone who is looking to be part of our communities. Included in this mailing is a brochure you can use to introduce your congregation to newcomers, Jews and non-Jews as well as interfaith families. You can download the brochure and *Tools for Building a Culture of Keruv* at www.wlcj.org.

I also want to invite you and members of your sisterhood to the Women's League annual meeting, on October 18 in Los Angeles. Included with this Update are a registration form and the revisions to the bylaws that will be voted on at the meeting. Please share these revisions with your membership.

Women's League – an active partner of Sharsheret, which links Jewish women in their fight against breast cancer – is a sponsor of Team Sharsheret and this year will be joining thousands of women and men in Walks or Races for the Cure around North America. On September 13, 2009, I will be walking with members of Women's League in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in New York City. If you can, walk with me and Team Sharsheret or plan on participating in a race in your area. Information also is available on our website.

You might have noticed a greater number of solicitations from Women's League in the past few months. There is a good reason for that. Despite the downturn in the economy Women's League does not want to raise sisterhood percapita dues. We are dedicated to making affiliation in Women's League affordable for every sisterhood, but we need funds to maintain the high quality of our services. We are hoping that those who share our commitment to educating and engaging the women of the Conservative movement – and who have the ability – will help us continue our mission. Please encourage your members to participate in these projects to the best of their ability. I thank you.

Please don't hesitate to call on me or the Women's League staff for any questions or help as we begin this new year together.

I wish you and your sisterhood family a *shanah tovah u'metukah* – a good and sweet new year!.

Cory Schneider,
President

By popular demand....

Virtual Rosh Chodesh

Join the new in-group: the WLCJ *virtual* Rosh Chodesh group. With the click of your mouse, access and participate in a Rosh Chodesh learning and discussion group. Study a designated text; ask and answer questions; share insights and *chidushim* (new and original interpretations) on a variety of subjects.

The forum will be moderated by WLCJ member (and soon-to-be chazzan) Barbara Barnett who leads a popular Rosh Chodesh group in the Chicago area.

Any (and *only*) Women's League member will be able to select an identification code and password that will enable her to join the conversation at any time, any day (except, of course, Shabbat), any hour.

Beginning with the month of Cheshvan (mid October), the texts and topics for *Virtual Rosh Chodesh* will change monthly.

Be the first in your sisterhood to join this cyberspace experience. The website is: <http://wlcjroshchodesh.org>

Hold the Date

WOMEN'S LEAGUE SHABBAT

JANUARY 23, 2010

Materials will be sent to every sisterhood president in mid November

MEMBERSHIP

Reflections on Membership and Sisterhood

As the summer is drawing to a close and the holidays drawing near, it's a good time to reflect on what you have achieved and where you want to be as you go forward. Have you met your membership goals? Did you remember to set membership goals? What are your goals for the coming year?

The Women's League theme for this year is the environment. Turn your sisterhood into a blossoming garden. Just as we plant and harvest every year, we also renew our friendships and activities on an annual basis. Our flowers are annual and perennial, but camaraderie is timeless. Welcome the new members into your garden, never forgetting to continue to nurture those who have blossomed with you.

Sometimes we need to invest our efforts with renewed purpose. If an annual membership tea is not working, spice it up with cocktails and conversation. Take advantage of Sukkot to invite new members to join you in the sukkah for hot drinks and warm conversation. If an activity no longer draws the crowd it once did, make it a SIG (special interest group) for those who want to continue and offer a new program in its place (scrapbooking? yoga? book group?).

Have you lost members and don't even realize it? Look around. How many familiar faces aren't there? Be sure to call all those who didn't renew their memberships just as you call prospective members to invite them to meetings. Don't forget to call anyone to whom you offered free membership last year and encourage them to join this year.

Strong programming inspires strong membership. Evaluate last year's programs. A survey or focus group is an ideal tool to discover what your membership would like. You'll find a sample survey on our website, www.wlcj.org. Or this might be the year for more SIGs. The website has a list of successful SIGs. Be creative and develop the special interest groups that meet your members' needs.

We all need to set S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reached with effort, and Timed) goals for membership. Your goal may be to introduce five more members to the joys of sisterhood, someone else's might be grander. Or you may want five new women at each meeting, someone else may want more than two meetings a year. The goals may vary, the objective is the same: grow membership, grow sisterhood.

Reflect on your success. Renew activities that work. Invigorate the friendships that have been made and nurture new ones. Develop new leadership. Make sisterhood the best it can be for all of its members. We are a diverse group with common goals: our love of our synagogues and of Judaism and *klal Yisrael*, the Jewish people. Make this the most successful sisterhood year ever and grow your membership!

Additional copies of the materials in this mailing

and other useful Women's League resources can be downloaded from the Women's League website, www.wlcj.org



ISRAEL

Join MERCAZ

As Conservative Jews, it is important to support religious pluralism in Israel. Our institutions in Israel do not receive government funding, and the only opportunity to receive funds is through the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency.

The World Zionist Congress has been called the parliament of the Jewish people. As the most important democratic gathering of Jews worldwide, it decides the policies of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and Jewish Agency. Any Jew over age 18 who belongs to a Zionist association is eligible to vote.

The first Zionist Congress was convened by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. More than 200 delegates representing Jewish communities from 17 countries approved the establishment of the World Zionist Organization. Even after the goal of a Jewish state was realized on November 29, 1947, the WZO continued, committed to the revitalization of the Jewish people.

While a number of representatives affiliated with the Conservative movement (including Solomon Schechter) served as delegates to the first congress, they were not there specifically as Conservative Zionists. In 1987, at the 31st World Zionist Congress, the Conservative movement officially was seated under its Zionist political name, MERCAZ. The name, meaning center, is an acronym of Movement to Re-Affirm Conservative Zionism. Since then, Conservative Jews have been able to elect official Conservative delegates to represent them at Zionist congresses.

Our involvement in the WZO has netted more than \$30 million in allocations for our institutions: the Masorti movement, Schechter Institute, United Synagogue's Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center, USY Pilgrimage, Ramah Israel Seminar, Nativ, the Conservative Yeshiva, plus Masorti congregations in Europe and South America. The Zionist Congress serves as a platform from which to promote religious pluralism, protest unwarranted changes to the law of return, advance environmental protection, and uphold aliyah activities around the world.

The 36th World Zionist Congress will convene in June 2010. Now is the time to raise awareness in your sisterhood and communities. Schedule programs and distribute information concerning Israel and the upcoming congress. Feel free to use or adapt this article as a part of your campaign. Join forces and work with your congregation. For further assistance contact Women's League Israel Chair, Sandy Blumenthal, at sblume80@aol.com or 215-752-3506.

Strong membership numbers in MERCAZ will translate into strength in the WZO. This strength will enable the support of Masorti institutions and ideals in Israel and throughout the world.

For additional information and resources contact MERCAZ USA at www.mercazusa.org or call 212.533.2061. In Canada, go to www.mercaz.ca or call 416.667.1717 or 866.357.3384.

BOOKS FOR ISRAEL

Last October, 21 cartons of English books left my basement for two Tali schools (public schools with Jewish studies supervised by the Masorti movement) in Ashkelon, Israel. This was a project of the Philadelphia Region (now part of the Mid-Atlantic Region).

Once the books were collected, they were sorted, decisions about their appropriateness were made, each had to be labeled, and money had to be raised for shipping. Many people and sisterhoods helped, as well as the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

The books were warmly welcomed by teachers and students at the two Tali schools who thanked us with an invitation to visit. So when my husband and I were recently in Israel, we traveled to Ashkelon. Our visit was the highlight of our trip. We were brought to the library where a beautiful English corner had been set up. The children were thrilled to meet the people who sent the books and the teachers presented me with albums of pictures of the children reading our books. I was overwhelmed by their warmth and appreciativeness. At the end of our morning I could only promise that on our next trip to Israel I would return with more books.

I would be happy to help you get started collecting books for Israel. Contact me (215.635.1587 or razeitlin@aol.com) or Susan Heckler of the Jade Bar Shalom Books for Israel Project (Susanhecklerb4i@yahoo.com) or booksforisrael.wikispaces.com.

Join us for the trip
of a lifetime!

**THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE
2009 MISSION TO ISRAEL,
ROME AND PETRA**

November 1- 15, 2009

Highlights

Explore Rome's Jewish heritage
Meet with VIP'S in Rome and Israel
Explore the environment
Visit Petra, Jordan, the eighth wonder of the world
Participate in an archaeological dig
Visit Masorti kehillot and network with their members

Trip includes:

3 nights at the Cicerone Hotel, Rome, Italy
3 nights at the Sheraton Hotel, Jerusalem
3 nights at Ecology Paradise at Kibbutz Lotan
5 nights at the Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv
Breakfast daily, 3 lunches, 7 dinners

\$4,199 per person,
double occupancy

ISRAEL ONLY \$3,469 per person,
double occupancy
(Land-only available)

For further information, contact:

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We provide personalized attention throughout the tour.



**Women's
League**

DISTANCE

**WORK
SHOPS**

It's not too late to register for our unique in-service conference call training experiences just for members of Women's League. Sisterhood presidents and all members are invited to acquire new skills to apply in any sphere of life; increase your sisterhood membership, and expand

member participation and involvement. Workshops coming up this year include: The How, What & Why of Public Advocacy; Image Is Everything; Keruv; Creating a Budget; and Program Planning.

There is no charge but pre-registration is necessary. Participation is limited. For the schedule and to register, go to www.wlcj.org (News and Events/Something New from Women's League: Distance Workshops). You will be notified of the call-in number and access code one week before the scheduled workshop. For questions, email distance@wlcj.org or call Maxine Frye at 212.870.1260, extension 7165.

CONVENTION 2010: ALMOST AROUND THE CORNER

Plan now to attend the Women's League biennial convention, December 12-15, 2010, at the Marriott Waterfront Baltimore. Sisterhoods should try to provide funds for the president and at least one up-and-coming leader to join us for four exciting days of learning, living, linking, and sharing!

YOMYAROK: GREEN DAY, A TU B'SHEVAT FESTIVAL
Save the Date: January 24 or January 30 or 31

The Education Department is preparing a variety of programming for Tu B'Shevat. Plan a day of multi-generation celebration with activities for all ages, with some activities appropriate for Shabbat if you have it on Tu B'Shevat itself (January 30). Coordinate with your synagogue, Hebrew school, Kadimah and USY, seniors, tots. Everyone is welcome!

Materials will be available by early November. Included will be Creative Judaic Arts (and crafts for children), study, story telling, music, environmental projects, special foods.

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