

Kol HaDarom

A publication for the Southern Region of



WOMEN'S LEAGUE
FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



www.wlcj.org/southern Barbara Ezring, Southern Region President Fall Edition 2008

A Note from Barbara



I am honored to serve you as the president of Southern Region for the next three years. Many of you are meeting me for the first time in this edition of Kol HaDarom. I grew up in the Chicago area with parents and grandparents who were very involved in our Conservative synagogue. West Suburban Temple Har Zion was my second home - I attended Nursery School, Sunday School, Hebrew School and Hebrew High. I was an active member of USY (and I was a Wisconsin Ramah camper.) My dad's mother sang in the Sisterhood Choral Group. My father was on the Youth Commission of the synagogue for years and also served as Chair of that committee. As a child, I thought I was supposed to grow up to be Sisterhood president. My mother and her mother were president of their Sisterhoods. As a result, I attended many Sisterhood meetings as a pre-school child.

As an adult, I was a member of Sisterhood in 3 New Jersey synagogues, a south Florida synagogue, and finally, Temple Israel, here in Charlotte, North Carolina. I was introduced to Southern Branch in 2001 when Conference was held in Charlotte and I got involved by organizing the Monday morning service. I conducted a workshop for the first time in my life and I met Gloria Adelson. When Gloria assumed the presidency of Southern Branch, she invited me to be a member of the branch board. Time passed, I attended some Spring Conferences and summer board meetings, I conducted a few more workshops, took on some more responsibilities, made lots of friends - and here I am.

I am thrilled to lead Southern Region through the changes occurring in Women's League, as well as in the Conservative movement. The motto of the Conservative movement is "tradition and change." You'll see many changes this year.

The first big change is the format of Kol HaDarom - we're going green and we're distributing our bulletin via the Internet. No more trees will be hewn so that we can get the news of our region.

Another change - our Region has been divided into six Areas. Each Area is served by an Area Director who is responsible to our new Area Vice President, Catherine Buck Morgan. Sisterhood presidents can expect to receive regular phone calls from their Area Director. Also, Sisterhood presidents may call the Area Director to get information they need relative to

Women's League, Southern Region, or Sisterhood. Each of our Area Directors is an experienced past Sisterhood president.

Area Directors:

Lori Beth Susman, serving Shir Chadash, New Orleans, Gulf Coast Sisterhood, Biloxi, Ahavas Chesed, Mobile, B'nai Israel, Pensacola

Ellen Vinocur Potash, serving Beth Sholom, Memphis, West End Synagogue, Nashville, Temple Beth-El, Birmingham, Agudath Israel-Etz Ahayem, Montgomery

Cindy Jaret, serving Atlanta Sisterhoods - Ahavath Achim, Beth Shalom, B'nai Torah, Etz Chaim, Geshet L'Torah, Shearith Israel

Linda Tillinger, serving Adas Yeshurun, Augusta, Agudath Achim, Savannah, Emanu-El, Charleston, Beth Shalom, Columbia, Beth Israel, Greenville

Rosalie Nagler, serving B'nai Zion, Chattanooga, Heska Amuna, Knoxville, Beth-El JCOR, Oak Ridge

Denise Sussman, serving Beth Israel, Asheville, Temple Israel, Charlotte, Beth David, Greensboro

As we begin the New Year 5769, let us join together as Southern Region to embrace a year of ecological awareness, sharing, learning and change.

L'shana tova tikateivu v'teichateimu,

Barbara

Please send future articles and pictures for Kol HaDarom to:

Anne Weiss
alweiss@bellsouth.net

2008 SOUTHERN REGION SPRING CONFERENCE!

Lev U'Nshmah – Sisterhood: Heart and Soul of Synagogue

Conference 2008 was held at Savannah's Congregation Agudath Achim. Rene Montaigne and I along with Conference Local Chairmen, Linda Tillinger and Barbara Rubin planned a wonderful Shabbaton filled with workshops.

The weekend began with a President's session led by Woman's League consultant Sandy Myers. While they were meeting there were other workshops, Creative Judaic Arts, led by MaryJane Lewitt teaching us to make Vashti's Dancing Bracelets, although we know Vashti did not dance for the King!!! Otherwise there would be no Purium!! Also Kabbalah in Fiction led by Catherine Buck Morgan. We then unleashed our spirits with Belly Dancing and learning about Israel and its 60th Birthday. All the presidents joined the group for Lunch and Torah Fund led by Anne Greenbaum. Janet Reagan officially opened the weekend with the Plenary and a welcome by Linda Tillinger and Barbara Rubin.

Workshops continued in the afternoon with choices of Programming with Barbara Ezring and Jodi Beck, Sisterhood Membership led by Lisa Hecht and Youth and School led by Marcia Menuskin and Roslyn Konter. We returned to the Hotel for some R&R before the evening Installation and dinner program. Throughout the weekend Lisa Stuart practiced with our Shir Choral of women.



Vashti's Banquet— Belly Dancing Workshop

Beautiful Friday evening services were coordinated by Jacki Stevens and led by PGW and Southern Region women. Gloria Adelson Installed our 2009-2011 slate of officers and Rabbi Ezring installed his wife, Barbara as new Southern Region President.

After such a busy day, everyone was up and ready for Shabbat Services at Agudath Achim Synagogue. Services were well orchestrated and led by all of our Southern Region women and impressed the local community! A delicious Kiddush luncheon followed. Rabbi Ezring (our own Barbara Ezring-Southern Region President's husband) led us in a stimulating Torah Study. This was followed by a thought provoking session with our Consultant, Sandy Myers. The topic was "Looking at Torah through Women's Eyes" After such a spiritual afternoon we went back to the hotel for R & R and networking with other Sisterhoods in the hospitality room.

The evening began at the synagogue with Rabbi Leitner leading us in a study of "Spirituality through Poetry, the writings of Rav Cook". Following was our special "Light of Torah" awards presented by Gloria Adelson and Marcia Menuskin. Lisa Stuart and her group of singers presented a special musical performance for these honorees. Individual Sisterhoods were very proud of their Light of Torah awardee. This is a special award given to those women from each sisterhood that have given over and above to their individual sisterhoods. Dinner was served along with violin musical entertainment in honor of the Light of Torah.

The evening ended at the hotel with Fun and Games in the Hospitality Room. Sunday morning was informal networking breakfast in which we were able to get information concerning your specific portfolio. Ways and Means with Ellen Potash and Martha Segel followed breakfast with the Closing Plenary. Attendees were then given a professional tour of Jewish Historical Savannah on a trolley with box lunches. Many thanks to Agudath Achim Synagogue, Rabbi Leitner and the Sisterhood women of Agudath Achim for a fun and spiritual weekend.

Shalom Ya'll
Bernice Mellman --2008 Conference Vice President



Sisterhood...Naturally! Relax, Renew & Rejoice @ Ramah

On Monday, July 28, Barbara Ezring, Regina Newman, and I met at Camp Ramah to tour their facilities first hand to better plan for Southern Region Spring Conference 2009. We had wonderful weather and a thorough tour of the camp.

We started out at the new Welcome Center, which has wooden rocking chairs lining the porch for relaxation. As you can see, we took full advantage of this opportunity!



Inside the Welcome Center, where our attendees will register, are beautifully furnished hotel rooms that will be available. The rooms and furnishings are modern and comfortable. There are several other room accommodations throughout the camp, and we will have plenty of space for everyone who can join us. The beautiful, scenic views will make you forget there is no television!



The main hall at Camp houses the dining room, the library, the synagogue and many other rooms that can be used for conference sessions. Computer access is available so any presenters who want to will be able to do a power-point presentation.



There are two outdoor covered areas available for morning or evening services as well if the weather permits. The outdoor areas and the surrounding vistas will provide a lovely backdrop for services.



Imagine it is a Monday evening in April. The temperature is a comfortable 70 degrees and the sun is beginning to set over the Blue Ridge Mountains. Throw on a pair of jeans, hiking shoes, and a light jacket and you are ready for the short walk to evening services.



Once there, you marvel at the surroundings and feel the presence of your sisters surrounding you. You raise your voice in song and prayer and know that you are part of something bigger than yourself, bigger than your Sisterhood, and bigger than our Region.

You feel yourself relaxing as you renew your connection to conservative Judaism. You rejoice at your decision that brought you here. You silently give thanks for the natural beauty surrounding you, the friends you are davening with, and the gift of this beautiful experience at Camp Ramah.

After dinner, a campfire beckons. Music, storytelling, and s'mores bring the night to a close, and you are reminded of the *Shehekienu*... "Blessed are You, Creator of the Universe, for bringing us to this Time".

Picture yourself here. Envision being a part of Spring Conference 2009. This will truly be an experience you will never forget.

Sisterhood...Naturally. Prepare to Relax, Renew & Rejoice @ Ramah with others from Southern Region April 26 – 29, 2009.

Martha Segal, 2009 Conference VP

YOM KIPPUR TEKHINE SAID WHEN FASTING

This tekhnine, an East European Yiddish prayer written for (and sometimes by) women, is just one of the many wonderful texts you'll find in this year's Divrei Hokhmah from Women's League, mini-study sessions to be used to open each meeting. You can download the entire set of Divrei Hokhmah at www.wlcj.org/EducationPrograms.

May my tears wash away

My worst troubles,

And may my repentance
Strike away Your anger
When you judge me.

Accept my table
As a substitute
For the holy sacrificial altar.

And let the pot
That I have not placed
On the coal fire
Be the fire
On the sacrificial altar.

And let the listlessness
Of my blood through fasting,
Be the sacrificial blood
That was dashed on the horns
Of the altar.

And let my shrinking flesh
Be the fat
That was poured
Onto the altar.

And let the sound
Of my weeping
Be the song
That the Levites sang,
At the offering.

And let the taste of hunger
In my mouth
Be the scent
Of incense.

And let the weakness
Of my limbs
Be a substitute
For the gasping
Of the sacrifice.

And let my broken heart
Tear to shreds
All evil decrees,
And let my bath

That I avoid today
Represent the washing of the priests
In the Temple.

And in my turning to You
May you turn to me,
And to all Israel.
Amen

SISTERHOOD ACTIVITY KIT

Check with your sisterhood president for these helpful materials sent by Women's League during August:

Blueprint for Membership revised, with more information than ever

The 2008 Elections, an activity guide for sisterhoods

Sisterhood by Design from the education department

Public Relations & You with tips and new art
The World We Live In for public policy and community service

WWW.WLCJ.ORG News with lots of ideas from our website

Five new pages for your **Sisterhood Planner**

Information from our partners at Mercaz, Torah

Fund, the Jewish Women's Studies MA Program at JTS, the Shabbat Eco-candle program

Pamphlets about our tikkun olam tzedakah projects

MISSING CHUPPAH

Our beautiful chuppah, lovingly created for Southern Branch is missing. Please look in the corners of your home, your closets and attics, and your synagogues. We know there are several Southern Region brides that would like to be married under it. If found, please contact Barbara Ezring, bezring@bellsouth.net or 704/607-7195.



WOMEN'S LEAGUE COVENTION

The Best Yet!

It's not too late to join your region sisters at the Women's League Biennial Convention in Detroit, November 9-12! There is time on the schedule for each region's delegation to meet and get to know each other better and there will be opportunities for developing personal skills and leadership talents. You also give yourself the gift of study with outstanding scholars and movement leaders.

Women's League is going green, so all registration is online at www.wlcj.org. For assistance, call 212.870.1263.

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Soul Food: Mitzvot

Professor Arnold Eisen, JTS chancellor, will challenge you to fill your lives with mitzvot, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, and Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, will illuminate the road to spiritual fulfillment and communal rejuvenation.

The Heart of the Matter: Women's Health

A conversation with Drs. Ruth Lerman, Barbara Levin and Rhoda Pomerantz will demonstrate how our physical health and spiritual well-being are intricately intertwined.

Israel at 60

Rabbi Danny Nevins, dean of the JTS rabbinical school, will explore ways to keep Israel in our hearts at all times.

The Jewish View

Writers Naomi Rosenblatt, Maggie Anton, and Ilana Blumberg will chat about writing books for and about Jewish women.

HEART & SOUL

The 2008-2009 Program Theme

The relationship between heart and soul, body and spirit -- recognized two thousand years ago by the rabbis -- has now moved to center stage in public conversations as clergy and health care professionals emphasize the sympathetic connection of our physical to our emotional beings. *Heart and Soul* is the theme for the Women's League Biennial Convention, Divrei Hokhmah, and Torah Fund campaign theme for this year.

ELECTION YEAR ACTIVITY GUIDE

Every vote counts! In 2000, George Bush won the state of Florida by just over 500 votes. School budgets, impacting local budgets by millions of dollars are often approved by less than five votes.

Your sisterhood can help make this difference. Use this year's Election Year Activity Guide for Sisterhoods to help get out the vote, provide meet the candidates events, focus on issues.

Why?

Although Jews comprise a small minority, our high voter turn-out has made the difference in many elections. It is imperative that we continue to make voter turn-out a priority and a cultural norm.

We are citizens of representative democracies and should participate to the extent that we can in the process.

As a community with immigrant roots, we need to cherish the right to vote.

Every sisterhood president received a copy of the guide in the recent sisterhood activity kit from Women's League. If you would like more information, please call 212.870.1260.

2008 ORPAH'S LIST BOOK SELECTION

The Faith Club by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner

The Faith Club – the first work of non-fiction that Women's League is recommending for the Orpah's List selection – is a fascinating account of three women of the Abrahamic faiths – Idliby is a Muslim of Palestinian descent, Oliver a Christian, and Warner a Jew – who met regularly to seek common ground. Their initial goal was to write a children's book on these commonalities. But the three soon realized that they had to first understand each other before they could pursue their original goal. The women grapple with topics from those of personal piety to a highly tense discussion over Israel-Palestine issues.

In addition to this stimulating narrative of women engaging with each other on matters of religion and politics, the authors offer step-by-step assistance to others who would like to create their own interfaith discussion groups. Included in an appendix in English, Hebrew and Arabic are a conversation with the authors, a comprehensive guide for setting up a faith club, and a helpful brief guide to the basic tenets of belief of all three religions.

This is an ideal tool for sisterhoods and their book clubs to engage in many of the deeply sensitive issues that confound and conflict us all as citizens of the world.

The publisher, Simon and Schuster, is providing WLCJ members a 40% discount for purchases of 10+ copies. We will e-mail the order form and study guide on request. Contact Maxine Frye, mfrye@wlcj.org for more information.

Guides for the other books selected for Orpah's List are available for members at www.wlcj.org/MyWLCJ:

[*Disobedience*](#) by Naomi Alderman

[*Those Who Save Us*](#) by Jenna Blum

[*The Singing Fire*](#) by Lilian Nattel

Crafts for the High Holidays

You can also find creative Judaic arts projects just in time for Rosh Hashanah on MyWLCJ. Directions are for an apple and honey dish, fiber postcards, and a family sukkah decorating project.

WITH STRENGTH & SPLENDOR: Jewish Women as Agents of Change

With Strength and Splendor is an engrossing look at 48 Jewish women who have made significant — and often overlooked — contributions to modern life. Author Lisa Kogen (Women's League Education Director) presents such fascinating stories as that of silent film vamp Theda Bara; award-winning children's author Judy Blume; Frances Slanger, the army nurse who was the first female casualty after D-Day; fashion icon Carrie Marcus Neiman; Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, and dozens more.

You will laugh, you will cry, you will be surprised, and you will be in awe. Additional sidebars feature unusual and often humorous complementary information. Find out about the Barbie Dolls that offended, crazy fad diets, banned children's books, and birth control methods from the pantry and the garden.

You'll find a bit of your Grandma Rose, your mama and Aunt Tessie. And your Jodi or Sydney or Talia will find the inspiration to dream dreams and to act on them.

You can order your copy at the pre-publication price of \$29.95, by calling 212.870.1260, extension 7165#.

WWW.WLCJ.ORG

Study from the Web

Don't start a meeting without some serious Jewish learning. You can now download all four years of Divrei Hokhmah:

- The Book of Proverbs
- The Ten Commandments
- Kol Ishah
- Heart & Soul

In Honor of Betty Maskewitz z"l

We will honor the memory of our Branch Past President Betty Maskewitz z"l, by purchasing a special tzedakah box to be used at all Region events. Please join us in this special way of memorializing Betty by sending your personal donation, a check made payable to Southern Region WLCJ, to June Schwartz, 1213 Potomac Road, Dunwoody, Ga 30338,

"Heart and Soul of Sisterhood-Membership"

Success depends on the ability to recruit, retain and motivate people. Recruit new members, those new in town. Retain members on the books, recognize achievements, recognize veteran members (5, 10, 15 year members). Motivate new members by having new members paired with veteran members (big sister/little sister). Understanding the generations volunteering together and having balance between the generations will help recruit, retain, and motivate members. There are 4 generations (traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X and millenials) with different values, experiences, and attitudes which can create misunderstandings and frustrations. Their goals, feedback and rewards are all clash points we need to work on to understand what balance, results, flexibility and creativity have in volunteering. It takes every member to help keep members in Sisterhood while recruiting others to come back or join for the first time. Welcome members, value members, involve members, appreciate members, inform members, and instill pride in our members. A survival kit was passed out to all those in attendance. The survival kit consisted of a **toothpick** to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others; a **rubber band** to remind you to be flexible as things may not always go the way you want but it will all work out; a **band aid** to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's; a **pencil** to remind you to list your blessings everyday; an **eraser** to remind you that everyone makes mistakes and it is okay; **chewing gum** to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything; a **mint** to remind you that you are worth a mint; a **candy kiss** to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday; and a **tea bag** to remind you to relax and go over your list of blessings. Remember, membership is a never ending effort.

Article By: Lisa Hecht, 2008 Membership Workshop Presenteer

INSTALLATION OF FIRST SOUTHERN REGION BOARD

The first board of the new realigned Southern Region was installed on Friday night, May 2, 2008. Officers installed included Barbara Ezring of Temple Israel, Charlotte, NC as President; Dr. Barbara Levin as Torah fund Vice President; Anne Greenbaum as Membership Vice President; Catherine Buck Morgan as Area Vice President; Martha Segal as Conference Vice President; Ava Feldman as Education Vice President; Barbara Rubin as Treasurer, Rene Montaigne as Administrative Secretary; and Irene Jayson as Communications Secretary. Paula Coplon will serve as Parliamentarian.

Also installed were the following Area Directors: Lori Beth Susman, Ellen Potash, Cindy Jaret, Linda Tillinger and Rosalie Nagler.

Region Committee chairs installed were Donna Newman, Budget, Marsha Fish, International Trainers, Jaclyn Stevens, Special Gifts Torah Fund and Phyllis Grusin Weinstein Award, Marcia Menuskin and Marilyn Liberman, Light of Torah, Janet Reagan, Nominations, June Schwartz, Speakers Bureau, Anne Weiss, Kol ha Darom, Catherine Buck Morgan, webmaster and Gloria Adelson Long Range Planning. Also installed were June Schwartz, Archives, Lisa Sturt, Books, Mary Jane Lewitt, Creative Judaic Arts, Susan Steinberg, Israel, Elissa Bluth, Jewish Studies, Maxine Schein, Judaica Shop, Bernice Mellman, Mitzvah, Jodi Beck, Programs, Ellen Levy, Ways and Means, Sandy Raisen, Youth, and Regina Newman, Conference Vice Chair.

Following installation there was a beautiful reception honoring Barbara and her board and our Women's League consultant Sandy Myers.

Article By:
Gloria Adelson-Long Range Planning

TWENTY RECEIVE LIGHT OF TORAH AWARD

Twenty women received the Light of Troah Award from their Sisterhood at Southern Region Conference on Saturday, May 3, 2008.

Southern Region established the Light of Torah in 1987, to honor those women who are involved and committed to their Sisterhood; working for the sheer love of doing what needs to be done to accomplish all that is necessary for Sisterhood to remain a viable arm of the congregation.

This Conference marked the 16th time the region honored these special women. Since 1987, we have recognized 288 Lights of Torah. These women represent a cross section of Sisterhood. Some are involved in leadership positions, active in the community, both Jewish and secular. Others are working behind the scenes just because that is their way. Mothers, grandmothers, widows, singles, those who chose Judaism, those who were born to it, working outside the home, devoted to family, all active in the Sisterhood...for few years to 60 years, some born in the US and others who chose to live here. All very special women.... to whom Sisterhood plays a central role in their lives. They choose Sisterhood, they met the challenge and they helped bring about change.

Lynette Kaplan Mazer from Sisterhood Beth-El, Birmingham, AL

Jo Anne Rousso from Agudath Israel-Etz Ahayem, Montgomery, AL

Sarah Leah Davies from Sisterhood B'nai Israel, Pensacola, FL

Patricia (Pat) Balsler from Sisterhood Ahavath Achim, Atlanta, GA

Rene Montaigne from Sisterhood Beth Shalom, Atlanta, GA

Sandy Bailey from Sisterhood Etz Chaim, Marietta, GA
Lauren Rudnick from Sisterhood Shearith Israel, Atlanta, GA

Susan Steinberg from Sisterhood Adas Yeshurun, Augusta, GA

Anne Scheer from Sisterhood Agudath Achim, Savannah, GA

Toni Nadler from Sisterhood Shir Chadash, New Orleans, LA

Lisa Sackett from Sisterhood Shir Chadash, New Orleans, LA

Irene Jayson from Sisterhood Temple Israel, Charlotte, NC

Patti Bagg from Sisterhood Emanu-El, Charleston, SC

Heidi Lovit from Sisterhood Beth Shalom, Columbia, SC

Erica Zaglin from Sisterhood Beth Israel, Greenville, SC

Marion Shuman from Sisterhood B'nai Zion, Chattanooga, TN

Peggy Litman from Sisterhood Heska Amuna, Knoxville, TN

Linda Fenton from Sisterhood Beth Sholom, Memphis, TN

Martha Segal from Sisterhood West End, Nashville, TN

Peninnah (Peggy) Laxton from Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge, TN

Article By: Gloria Adelson—Long Range Planning