

Fall 2011

# WRJ Southeast District Newsletter

Women of Reform Judaism — Southeast District

*Listen Sisters! Our Link to Each Other! Share your News!*

שמענה אחידה



## President's Message



*When we reach out to each other, when we nurture, support and care about each other, we are choosing blessing.*

*When we join together to act and speak out for those who need the strength of our collective voice and action, we are choosing blessing.*

*When we support the continuation and vitality of our faith now and through future generations, we are choosing blessing.*

*Dolores Wilkenfeld, from a Shabbat message 8/28/08*

As the New Year begins, all of us have so much to be thankful for: our families, our good health, our happiness and our friendships. May you be blessed with loving relationships, health and well being in 5772. May you experience feelings of contentedness and an inner peace, as you celebrate the success of your achievements. May your dreams bring you happiness and may the spirituality of your faith nurture you, giving you the strength to meet the challenges of the coming year. The leaves are changing colors and now that the High Holy days are behind us our sisterhood and congregational activities have begun.

Your district leadership would love to be a part of your programming. We are happy to attend your program as a guest, participate as a speaker, or lead workshop(s). Please take advantage of your district leadership — we are here to assist you in any way you need us. Please visit the [www.wrjsoutheast.org](http://www.wrjsoutheast.org) website, complete the Speaker's Bureau request form and email or mail to me and we will schedule someone to be at your event. While you are at the website, please read and enjoy the wonderful information we have displayed.

The WRJ Assembly is in December and thanks to the many of you who have registered to attend. This is a 4-5 day event providing you with educational workshops, socializing, dancing, singing and praying with over 5,000 reform Jewish members of WRJ/URJ. It is an experience of a lifetime and shouldn't be missed.

All first timers will be paired with a Mentor. I am working on the pairings now and the first timers will be hearing from their Mentor within the next few weeks. She will meet you at the Assembly, answer any questions you have, explain the week's schedule, and spend time with you so you don't feel overwhelmed. That is what your sisters are for. All the workshops are lead by experienced leaders and professionals who can provide you with guidance, new ideas and creative ways to help you create top quality programs quality. When the Assembly is done you will return to your Sisterhoods

with so much enthusiasm, everyone will want to share your experiences with you and attend the Southeast Biennial in Atlanta, GA in October 2012 and the next WRJ Assembly in 2013 in San Diego, which is the year we celebrate our Centennial — 100 years Strong!!!!

At the Assembly on Saturday evening, several of the women from the Southeast District will be installed on the WRJ Board. We are so very proud of these ladies and wish them mazel tov. They are Madi Hoesten, Parkland, FL; Ellen Petracco, Clearwater, FL; Elaine Lust, Hilton Head, SC; Diane Garber, Tampa, FL; and Wendy Adamson and Dara Amram have been given a two year extension. Blair Marks will continue as the WRJ First Vice President and I as your President and Sherry Schwimmer as your First VP will also be on the WRJ Board proud to represent the Southeast District. Let's all celebrate with them and our district Saturday evening at their installation!!!

The WRJ Southeast Interim is being planned by Sherry Schwimmer, the WRJ SE First VP and will be held April 27-29th, 2012 at the Best Western Hotel in Tampa, Florida. We hope to see many of you at the Interim. You will be receiving more information shortly. Look for the Save The Date elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are so pleased to announce there are several All Area Days planned in our District. Sunday, January 8, the Sisterhood of Temple Kol Ami in Plantation, FL will be hosting an All Area Day, and Blair Marks, the WRJ First Vice President, and I will be leading workshops. Watch for the Save the Date and Registration forms. On March 4, the Hilton Head South Carolina Sisterhood at Congregation Beth Yam will be hosting an All Area Day as well. Look for their Save the Date too!

If any Sisterhood would like to host an All Area Day, please contact me and I will be happy to explain in detail what the All Area Day consists of and work with you to create a meaningful day for all in attendance.

Our Southeast District Nominating Committee will begin its work at the beginning of 2012 to start the search for new leadership for our District. If you have any interest in becoming a member of the Southeast District Board, please contact Blair Marks, IPP, the Chair for this Committee. Many of our leadership will be moving up in the District and positions will be open. I look forward to seeing many of you in DC in December! Please consider registering prior to November 3rd.

Yours in Sisterhood,  
Andrea T. Cannon, WRJ Southeast District President



Women of Reform Judaism 48th Assembly  
December 14 – 18, 2011

Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center  
Washington DC area hotel

A WRJ assembly is an extraordinary gathering full of learning, bonding, worship, and fun. It's your biennial opportunity to connect with your peers who share your interests, concerns, love of Judaism, and the special bonds of sisterhood. This year's theme of "Many Dreams One Vision" is based on the assembly week's Torah portion, Vayeshev, which describes six prophetic dreams. WRJ members come from all corners of the Reform Jewish world with their own aspirations and circumstances, yet we all come together to coalesce our vision of sisterhood at assembly.

If you:

- Are involved in your sisterhood;
- Want to ensure the future of sisterhood and the Reform movement;
- Look for ways to improve your leadership skills and efficacy;
- Enjoy being surrounded by other bright and curious Jewish women ;
- Have a thirst for knowledge and a passion for sharing ideas;

Then, you **need** to join us in December for Women of Reform Judaism's 48th assembly!

## Assembly 2011 Featured Speakers



Opening Plenary (Wednesday) Speaker: Cecile Richards

President : Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Fund

The assembly's opening plenary session and luncheon will feature keynote speaker, Cecile Richards, a nationally respected leader in the field of women's health and reproductive rights. As president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Richards leads a national organization that has worked for 95 years to build a healthier and safer world for women and teens. Every year, through more than 800 affiliate health centers nationwide, Planned Parenthood provides health care services to three million patients, and sex education to more than 1.1 million people. Its website — [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org) — receives more than thirty million visits a year from individuals seeking health care services and education in both English and Spanish.

Since joining Planned Parenthood in 2006, Richards has expanded the organization's advocacy for access to health care and ensured that Planned Parenthood played a pivotal role in shaping health care coverage and services for women under the Affordable Care Act. In 2011, she led an unprecedented nationwide campaign to preserve access to Planned Parenthood's preventive care through federal programs. Under her leadership, the number of Planned Parenthood's supporters has doubled, reaching more than 5.7 million.

Richards is a frequent speaker and commentator on issues related to women's rights, reproductive health, and sex education, and is a regular contributor to the Huffington Post.



Marcia D. Greenberger, **Dr. Jane Evans Pursuit of Justice Award recipient**

The Dr. Jane Evans Pursuit of Justice Award is given to a woman of strength and action. At this assembly, the award will be presented during Thursday afternoon's plenary session to Marcia D. Greenberger, founder and co-president of the National Women's Law Center. She has been described by The New York Times as "guiding the battles of the women's rights movement."

The creation of the Center over thirty-five years ago established her as the first full-time women's rights legal advocate in Washington, D.C. A recognized expert on women and the law, particularly in the areas of education and employment, health and reproductive rights, and family economic security, Greenberger has been a leader in securing the passage of major legislation, counsel in landmark litigation establishing new legal protections for women, and the author of numerous published articles. Examples include the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (providing critical protections against sexual harassment on the job), and Supreme Court victories strengthening protections for students and teachers against sex discrimination in schools.

Her leadership and contributions are reflected in the professional honors she has received and the numerous boards on which she serves. She has been recognized by Working Woman Magazine as one of the twenty-five heroines whose activities over twenty-five years have helped women in the workplace, Washingtonian Magazine as one of Washington, D.C.'s most powerful women, by Legal Times as a "Top Lawyer" and one of its "30 Champions", and by Legal Times and The National Law Journal as one of "Washington's Most Influential Women Lawyers."

In addition to many other honors, she has received a presidential appointment to the National Skill Standards Board, and currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

## Facebook and more communications

Hi “all y’all” Southeast District Sisters! I wanted to be sure that everyone knows that there are ways to share our sisterhood and WRJ news throughout the year between newsletters.

First, I am so excited about our new Southeast District Facebook page. Here we can post our pictures and share our events with each other. It’s a great way to get to know each other, find out about events that we might like to attend at other sisterhoods in our area, share great programming ideas and support each other.

It’s very easy to participate. Simply go to our link at [www.facebook.com/WRJSoutheast](http://www.facebook.com/WRJSoutheast) and “like” us. Look at the top and center of the page and push the 'Like' button.

Also, if you have photos, links to flyers, or other news and info to share, you can contact me through the WRJ Southeast page, my own facebook inbox at Madi Harris Hoesten, email [XNYMAD@bellsouth.net](mailto:XNYMAD@bellsouth.net) or by phone at 954-675-3088.

Call or e-mail me your big sisterhood events for posting on our Southeast District Website calendar.

Please also be sure to visit our own website at [WRJSoutheast.org](http://WRJSoutheast.org), and the international WRJ website for resource materials, inspiration, YES fund items, Assembly registration and more! Hope to see all my sisterhood buddies, and meet many more, in Washington DC Dec 14-18!

With Love,  
Madi Hoesten  
WRJ Southeast, VP Marketing & Communications

## Youth and College

Our New Year brings a fascinating community wide program for our 11th and 12th grade students of all our Pinellas and Hillsborough counties’ congregations in Florida. This new curriculum created and produced by the Jewish National Fund called “Israel Inside and Out” was awarded to our congregations by a grant. All of our students on both sides of Tampa Bay are learning what was and is truly happening in Israel.

This thought provoking program is giving our students an accurate history and current insight into Israel and the Middle East once per month rotating each month from congregation to congregation around Tampa Bay. Topics include Israel and the Media, US and Israeli relations, Israeli and Palestinian areas of conflict, Democracy and dilemmas, pro-Israel activism, Israeli innovations, Humanitarian aid, and Israeli awareness & Jewish connections on the college campuses. As we send our students off to colleges around our nation and into the world in the future, this program will give all of them a foundation for engaging in meaningful, accurate, and constructive dialogues about Israel and the Middle East as well as bringing our Pinellas and Hillsborough counties’ Jewish students together each month for insightful programs, socialization, and dinners.

We have had great enthusiasm as we just began this program in October 2011 with great attendance from all of our area congregations for our first session. Our second session is in gear for November 2011 and in the months ahead for 2011-12. What a wonderful way to provide great knowledge, ruach, and camaraderie to all our youth!!!

Anne-Marie Cumming, Chair, Youth and College  
Temple Ahavat Shalom, Palm Harbor FL

## **DUES REMINDER**

District membership dues are currently payable. Dues are \$1.50 per member. Make checks payable to WRJ Southeast District. Send to:

Elaine Lust  
11 Royal Pointe Dr.  
Hilton Head, SC 29926  
Questions? Call Elaine at 843-837-1639

Do you wish to contribute to Camp Coleman? Send Camp Coleman donations to the above address.

Do you wish to contribute to the YES Fund; World Union? Send these contributions directly to WRJ in NY.

We need your dues to carry out our projects and programs. Please remit at your earliest convenience. Thank you. Elaine Lust,

**WRJ Southeast Interim**

**Save the Date  
WRJ Southeast Interim Kallah**

**April 27 – 29, 2012**

Come join your “Sisters” for a weekend where spirits will soar and minds will expand as we come together for our Interim meeting.

Don’t miss the fun, bonding, and learning from each other. We’ll be on the bay in Tampa. Serene surroundings will provide a superb backdrop to enhance our weekend experience.

Details and registration on this exciting event will follow shortly.

Registration begins at 1:00 in hotel lobby

Interim begins Friday at 2:00 with a Southeast District Board meeting for board members

Workshops at 4:00

Shabbat services at 6:00 pm

Dinner at 7:15 pm

Free shuttle service from airport to hotel

Registration fee \$90.00 includes all meals

Best Western Hotel

Hotel room \$89.00 per night plus tax

Sherry Schwimmer

WRJ Southeast District 1st Vice President



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[https://www.wrj.org/Catalog.aspx?  
Sd=FI&deptID=36&prodID=182](https://www.wrj.org/Catalog.aspx?Sd=FI&deptID=36&prodID=182)

**New Affiliates**

We all know how we would like our individual sisterhood membership to grow...

And when those numbers increase, we all know how that would make our WRJ-SE District numbers grow...

And when our District numbers expand, we know that makes WRJ as an organization, numbers grow...

All of this is what we want, need, and are striving for.

What we also need are more sisterhoods (AKA women’s groups) of affiliated URJ congregations who are currently not affiliated with WRJ.

With that said, we have a small committee of women who are working on trying to make contact with some of those congregations. Blair Marks, as the IPP and me, as a recent past president, are the co-chairs of the “New Affiliates Committee” for our District.

In addition to Blair and I, the committee consists of Judy Rosenkranz; Barbara Shub, Dara Amram, Rachel Barich, Alice Klein and unofficially, Andrea Cannon, as our District President.

We have been trying to contact the women who head up the women’s groups within their congregations. Some groups have been affiliated in the past with WRJ and some have not. We need to get our foot back in the door of those who were once affiliated and in the door to speak with someone about joining WRJ now and sharing with them all of the wonderful benefits of affiliation.

We need all the help we can get. If you know of a congregation that fits this profile and if you have any connection at that congregation, no matter how slight you may think it is, please contact either me or Blair. We could use your help!!!!

My e-mail address is: [wadam412@aol.com](mailto:wadam412@aol.com)

Blair’s e-mail address is: [marksbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:marksbc@bellsouth.net)

Thank you, Ladies! Blair and I look forward to hearing from some of you and letting you know just what we would need from you in the sacred task of growing our bottom line.

Wendy Adamson  
New Affiliates Committee Co-chair

## Membership Development

By the time you read this your membership recruit for the 2011-12 year is probably well underway. However, membership is something that should be worked on year round. It is important to think about your goals and the times when to evaluate your progress as well as be prepared with answers to questions that may arise during recruitment.

When setting goals I would recommend using the S.M.A.R.T. method. (Taken from *WRJ Strategies for Success 7/25/2011*)

- **Specific** – A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a vague one. It should describe what you want to accomplish, when you want to accomplish it by, and the action steps you will take to achieve it.
- **Measurable** – Ask yourself, “How will we know when we’ve reached our goal?” Establish criteria for measuring your progress. When you do, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the excitement of achievement which urges you to continue working toward that goal.
- **Agreed Upon** – It is important to have consensus when setting your membership goals. Once you come up with your goals, bring them to the sisterhood board and ask for their endorsement. Having board “buy in” is key as it increases each woman’s commitment to achieving the goals.
- **Realistic** – If you set goals that are too far out of your reach, you probably won’t commit to doing them. Make sure your goal is do-able but at the same time allows you to stretch a bit.
- **Time-Bound** - Set a specific timeframe for your goal. Having an end date on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If you don’t have start and end dates, the campaign tends not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there’s no urgency to start taking action now.

During recruitment you may come across some of the following questions and need answers that will help you to educate and obtain the new member.

### **I work and/or have small children at home and I am involved with so much already, why should I join?**

Some Sisterhood events are held in the evening. There are many opportunities to help day and night. Even if you can’t attend or volunteer, your dues help us to support our sisterhood and the greater Jewish community.

### **Who can join?**

Sisterhood membership is open to all women. We have members who are young and “young at heart.” We share a desire to give back to our community, support congregation, and make great friends in the process.

### **What are the benefits of membership with Women of Reform Judaism?**

By being a member of Women of Reform Judaism, each member of your sisterhood is automatically connected to a community of more than 65,000 women representing approximately 500 sisterhoods throughout the world. WRJ enables each of us to speak with one (very powerful) voice as we advocate for issues of social justice, education, children, and women across North America, in Israel, and around the world.

### **This is just another group that I will have to volunteer to take on another project.**

Your level of participation is up to you. Of course, we need help to make our events a success. However, by attending the events you are also helping to make it successful. You will not be asked to head up any committees or make commitments you are uncomfortable with.

### **I really think this is a group for my mother.**

This is a group for everyone! Sisterhood is an intergenerational group with programs and events designed to meet the needs of everyone. One common theme emerged from the first “Meet & Greet”. The theme was that everyone wanted to be involved and give back to our temple. We all learned that we each have something unique to bring to Sisterhood and we want to share this with each other. You can also join your daughter and granddaughter to keep Sisterhood vibrant for all generations to come.

### **Will there be anyone my age?**

Yes!! Especially, if you encourage your friends to join with you.

### **I’ve been there done that!**

We need you because you have been there and done that. Please come and share your memories and knowledge with a new Sisterhood. We can all learn from each other.

### **What’s in it for me? I can’t possibly be a part of another group.**

It is possible to be a part of more than one group! Sisterhood is unique. Our programming and events focus on a variety of topics related to only women. The goal of Sisterhood is to focus on a woman’s Jewish Identity. This year we will accomplish that through women’s health programs, a women’s Seder, and other speakers on topics important to women.

I wish you all a successful membership year! Please feel free to contact by phone or email with any questions or concerns you may have regarding membership or development.

Dara Amram - VP of Development

## WRJ Advocacy

Through the Women of Reform Judaism's Social Justice Advocacy and Programming, advocacy action is taken on behalf of 500 sisterhoods. Recommendations are made to sisterhoods for local, state/provincial, or national advocacy and community service.

WRJ through our Critical Issues Action, has signed on the following:

- Pay Equity, a coalition letter to the U. S. Senate urging the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act to promote economic opportunity for women.
- Child Care, a letter to Congress to include an increase of \$1 billion for Child Care and Development Block Grant and \$1 billion for Head Start in 2010.
- Juvenile Justice, a coalition letter urging support for reauthorization of the Senate Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.
- Reproductive Health and Rights, a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services with strong support to rescind the final rule of December, 2008 which allows any employee of a hospital or clinic working in an HHS-funded program to refuse to perform or give information about treatments that would violate their moral beliefs, potentially preventing millions of women from accessing vital reproductive health services.
- Other issues addressed included a budget that includes healthcare reform and human needs funding and a letter to Congress to support and build upon President Obama's budget to renew America Now.

Also a letter was sent to support increased funding for the grant programs.

Our Torah says in Deuteronomy 16:20 . . . Justice, justice shall you pursue.

*Is not this the fast that I have chosen:  
to unlock the shackles of injustice...  
to let the oppressed go free...?  
Surely it is to share your bread with the hungry,  
and to bring the homeless poor into your house.*

- Isaiah (58:6-7)

Women of Reform Judaism's mandate for social justice advocacy is built upon three foundations: the WRJ constitution; its resolutions; and the values expressed in the texts of our tradition.

*(written by Julia Ziev, WRJ Midwest District Critical Issues/  
Social Action Committee)*

## Judaica Shops

Our Judaica Shop manager was very pleased with our RH and YK holiday sales. It is wonderful when people are stopping by the synagogue to join, pick up tickets, info, etc. As soon as they walk through the door of our little shop, they love our merchandise. Getting people to come in is a big challenge for all of us. We try to offer specials and have sales to get people to come in, as well as giving them great service.

We have started our Chanukah ordering. What I like to do is go through the merchandise from last year to decide what we need to add to our stock. We always do well with kid's menorahs and find people like things that have sports themes. Of course, you need your staples like candles, gelt, different kinds of dreidels, cookies, etc.

We don't buy Chanukah paper and window decorations because there are so many party stores, grocery stores and discount stores in our area that carry them, we can't compete with them price wise. Sometimes, we do pick up a few roles of paper at a dollar store just to have it on hand if someone wants it. We don't have a lot of space either so we're very selective in our purchasing. I also ordered things that would be nice teacher gifts that aren't Chanukah items but lovely Judaica pieces.

We like to stock traditional pieces for Chanukah because many people ask for a menorah and describe the one their Bubbe had when they were young. It's nice to have inexpensive Chanukah pieces as well as upscale, and contemporary along with the traditional. Since we have a small shop we generally order one of each item unless the company has a minimum order....which may be two or three pieces.

We offer baby gifts, wedding gifts, Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts, anniversary gifts, etc. It's nice to be full service so you can provide one stop shopping.

Debby Glick  
CBI, Boca Raton, FL

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**Stories from our Sisterhoods**
**Rabbi Gold, Twin Sisterhood in Israel**

*This email from Rabbi Miri Gold was taken from the WRJ listserv. Rabbi Gold is from our WRJ SE District's Twin Sisterhood in Israel. She is helping young women in Israel become a Bat-Mitzvah and she needs our help. If you have a DVD of your daughter's Bat-Mitzvah and would like to share it, please let me know. Remember, you won't get it back. Thank you. Ellen Petracco*

The portion of the week, [May 27, 2011 Bamidbar/24 Iyar 5771] , is the opening Torah portion of the fourth book-Bamidbar, or Numbers of the Five Books of Moses. The narrative resumes with Rosh Hodesh Iyar, the start of the second month of the second year since the children of Israel left the bondage of Egypt. Having acquired freedom, they are now struggling to build themselves into a nation with guidelines and rules. As they take a census of their membership, the background setting of the desert symbolizes both a vast and daunting wilderness as well as offering a sense of limitless possibilities for their future in the Promised Land.

Sometimes we too feel that the challenges that confront us seem overwhelming. Yet, just as we may see the sweeping canvas of uphill battles in our lives as women, as Jews, as human beings in a world fraught with dangers, frustrations, and injustice, when we take a close look at the desert in springtime, we see the fragile yet beautiful wildflowers, the glorious colors of the mountainous rocks, the small pools of precious water.

Some people, who've never visited Israel, imagine a desert of sand dunes and camels. When they finally make the journey, they are surprised and delighted to see the myriad colors of the diversity that make up the physical and human topography, of the land and of the people. From a distance, we see a Jewish state that gives Jews the

world over a chance to practice Judaism without the obstacles that Jews faced in unfriendly lands. Shabbat is truly a day of rest; holidays follow the rhythm of the Jewish calendar of nature and history. Pesach is truly a holiday of the spring. As we commemorate the more modern holidays of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, and Israel Independence Day which lead us to Shavuot, when we celebrate receiving the Torah at Sinai, we can indeed see Israel as the beginning of our redemption.

However, when we look closely, we see that Israel still has a long way to go to achieve religious tolerance and pluralism. Relatively few girls celebrate their bat mitzvah with an aliyah l'Torah, because peer pressure bends them to bow out. The young and impressionable girls think "Girls don't do that!" WRJ is helping change the picture and the message by supporting mother-daughter bat mitzvah groups in the Reform Movement in Israel. The Southeast District is committed to helping its twin congregation in Israel, Kehilat Birkat Shalom at Kibbutz Gezer, which I serve, make a short film available to Israeli girls, so that they can see first-hand that "Girls DO do that!", that it's "cool", and on a deeper level, that it is their right as maturing Jewish girls to have equal opportunities to celebrate our heritage and make it an integral part of their lives.

WRJ, thank you for helping us empower our young women in Israel. May we look closely at the vast desert and see the brilliant blooms that are our future.

Rabbi Miri Gold, Kehilat Birkat Shalom, Kibbutz Gezer

*Submitted by Ellen Petracco,  
Sisterhood President,  
Temple B'nai Israel, Clearwater, FL*

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## Stories from our Sisterhoods

### *Ahavath Chesed, Jacksonville, FL*

On January 22, 2012, WRJ will host the second bus tour of historical Jewish Jacksonville. Jacksonville's Jewish history begins with the arrival of Philip Dzialynski in 1846. While just a 13 year old boy, Dzialynski was a peddler who arrived with nothing more than a pack on his back and a dream. He saved for the arrival of his parents and eight siblings who were still living in Prussia. A descendent, Morris Dzialynski, was our Temple's first president and also the first Jewish mayor of Jacksonville. His descendent, Wilma L'Engle, will share her family's history on this tour.

Would you like to know which Jewish judge settled an argument with a duel, what started the Great Fire of 1901, who were the Pushalote Jews, who broke the Japanese code in World War II, or which Jacksonville rabbi conducted the first post-Nazi Jewish service on German soil in 1944 and more? Then, hop on and board the bus to find out. Local Jewish historians will share the community's story as we travel throughout the city exploring and learning about our history.

Before we board the bus, brunch will be served at Temple during which we will be treated to an entertaining historical speaker. Tour and lunch is \$20. Last year's tour sold out in 3 weeks, so be sure to get your reservation in soon. The photos are from last year's tour, to show you the flavor.

Celeste Danos, President



### *Sisterhood Joint Cancer Awareness Program, Birmingham, AL*

Sisterhood Joint Cancer Awareness Program – Sept 18, 2011

All three Birmingham Temple Sisterhoods (Beth-El, Emanu-El and Kneseth Israel) together with the Birmingham Chapter of Hadassah presented an educational program about breast and ovarian cancer. The program was entitled 'Girl Talk: Life-Saving News on Breast and Ovarian Cancer'.

Over 55 attendees were captivated by the presentations of the diverse and informative speakers. Our first speaker was a breast cancer survivor and an ophthalmologist. Our second speaker was an ovarian cancer survivor and a RN in the field of women's health. They both discussed their experiences leading up to their diagnosis and the treatments of their cancer. Ironically, our ovarian cancer survivor missed many signs of a medical problem although she teaches them to her patients.

Our third speaker was the Hadassah Health Education Representative, who is also a pediatrician. She provided an update on the pioneering work in cancer diagnosis and treatment that takes place at Hadassah Hospital at Ein Kerem.

Our fourth speaker was a certified genetic counselor from the UAB Department of Genetics who educated the group about methods used to detect possible genetic mutations that cause higher risks of cancers. She specifically discussed the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes responsible for hereditary breast and ovarian cancers in Ashkenazi Jews.

Following the presentations, the panel held a question and answer session and clarified many questions and controversies about this complex subject. The program was extremely well received and the panel of presenters was amazing. Since both survivors are in the medical field, they were able to discuss their cancers from both personal and professional viewpoints.

As with any Jewish women's program, there was a lovely array of bagels, lox spread, fruit, tuna and cookies along with coffee and orange juice. Thank you to all our wonderful presenters. Thank you to Ginger Brook and Sharon Kahn for facilitating this program at Temple Beth-El. And thank you to everyone else who had a hand in making this program such a huge success!

Lori Weil and Alisa Nadler  
Co-Presidents, Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood

## Stories from our Sisterhoods

### **Congregation Schaarai Zedek, Tampa, FL**

The 2010-2011 year ended with a Mah Jongg night on April 7, a Women's Seder the evening of April 12, the installation of the 2011-2013 Executive Board on May 2, and a Post-Planning meeting of the new and old Executive Boards on May 23.

Because of the popularity of the April 7 Mah Jongg night, Sisterhood, under the chairmanship of Meg Moskowitz, began holding Mah Jongg nights on a bi-monthly basis beginning on August 9 to be continued throughout the year. Open to both members and non-members, attendees are charged \$10 to participate. The money raised will then be used for Youth Group projects. In addition, several women have joined Sisterhood as a result of the Mah Jongg nights.

The big event during July and August was the renovation of Sisterhood's Judaica Shop. The entrance was moved to the Temple foyer and new windows, flooring, shelving, and lighting were installed. The shop reopened for the first day of Religious School on September 11<sup>th</sup>. However, a grand opening week is currently being planned after the High Holy Days.

The very full fall schedule has already begun. Sisterhood's opening luncheon took place on September 12 at the Tampa Museum of Art. Because TMA is noted for its collection of Greek and Roman art, the women were treated to a presentation by Seth Plevnick, the museum's expert in this area. Following his presentation, the women enjoyed lunch prepared by Mise en Place's Sono Cafe at TMA, then toured the museum on their own. Seth made himself available in the Greek and Roman section of the museum to answer questions.

On September 18, Sisterhood held a New Member Tea at Faith Alexander's home. Chaired by Membership Vice-President, Pattie Schreiber, the event featured Sharon Ravner, Sisterhood President, demonstrating her famous mandelbread recipe.

In October, the Book Club, chaired by Barbara Shine Hicks, will continue its monthly lunch time sessions. Another evening Book Club is currently being planned under the leadership of Rachel Haman. In addition, the quarterly Torah Study Scholar Series will begin on Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. The congregation's Cantor, Riselle Bain, will lead this session.

Planning began last spring for Sisterhood's major fundraiser, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Star Event. Chair Lynne Merriam has engaged Anne Heyman, a founder of the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village in

Rwanda, to speak. Heyman and her husband, Seth Merrin, developed the idea of providing a village for the many orphaned teenagers that resulted from Rwandan genocide after hearing a speaker on this debacle in November, 2005.

Realizing that this situation was similar to the challenge that Israel faced after World War II when Israel experienced a large influx of orphans from the Holocaust, Heyman used the model of the Israeli residential living communities, called Youth Villages, such as Yemin Orde Youth Village, in developing Agahozo-Shalom. Open to the community, registration for the Star Event will begin at 10:00 a.m. on November 14 at the Renaissance Hotel, followed by lunch at 11:00 a.m. A variety of raffle items will be on display during the registration period. After lunch, Sisterhood members will interview Heyman in the format of "The View."

December should prove to be a very busy month. Sisterhood's Chanukah Bazaar will be open from December 4 to 22, a mother/child pottery making event will also take place on December 4, a combined Torah Study Scholar Series and luncheon will occur on December 6, Sisterhood's Membership Appreciation event will take place on December 12, and ongoing events, such as the Book Club and Mah Jongg nights, will continue. In addition, Schaarai Zedek Sisterhood plans to send a delegation to the Women of Reform Judaism Biennial in Washington, DC, where another one of its members, Deborah Garber, will be installed on the WRJ Board.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy New Year.

Paula Zielonka, Past President

*NOTE:*

*Attached below is a website of pictures of Schaarai Zedek Sisterhood's recent events. Copy and paste the two links below. Many photos are captioned.*

<http://gallery.me.com/paulazielonka#100627>

<http://gallery.me.com/paulazielonka#100627/P1100358&bgcolor=black>

## Stories from our Sisterhoods

### Temple Israel Sisterhood, Tallahassee, FL

Temple Israel Sisterhood spent a busy summer planning programs for the coming year. In September we ushered out the year with a special cooking program presented by sisterhood member, Anat Michaeli-Ling, who shared with us some Rosh Hashanah favorites from her Romanian grandmother with a modern twist. We had fun in the kitchen learning new dishes and tasting the creations.



Our program schedule for the fall will include our Sisterhood Paid Up Dinner to be held jointly with our Temple Brotherhood, monthly Mah Jongg games, and a five session program titled "Preparing Your Home for the Holidays". We continue to operate our gift shop, The Spinning Dreidel, and have been busy ordering merchandise for Hanukkah.

Rebecca Lockenbach, President

### Tree of Life Congregation, Columbia, SC

Our installation on September 22nd WRJ Southeast Area Representative, Sherry Schwimmer, was well attended by new as well as returning members. There was a higher turnout than in recent previous years. A light supper buffet included not only the typical salads, but also food was available for those who have dietary restrictions. The camaraderie among the ladies forges not only long friendships, but a wonderful support network. A round of applause for the ladies who are serving as this year's WRJ's (Sisterhood's) board.

On Sunday afternoon, October 23, 2011, we feature this year's first fundraising event when TOL's WRJ presents a fabulous Fashion Show by Coldwater Creek along with delicious desserts.

Be a sugar artist on November 10th at the TOL Social Hall. You will have fun making beautiful flower cupcake decorations on your very own cupcake! Marcia Geers (our instructor) has taught this class to five year olds as well as senior citizens with success! You can do it too!

The TOL Book Club, sponsored by TOL WRJ, meets every other second Tuesday of the month at 7PM in the TOL Library. The current schedule is November 8, 2011, *The Garden of Ruth* by Eva Etzioni-Halevy and January 10, 2012, *The Tattoo Artist* by Jill Ciment. The club focuses on books with a Jewish or Israeli theme. New members are encouraged. All are welcome. Happy Reading!

Save the Date! Saturday Evening, March 24, 2012, we are planning a fun evening that should appeal to all adults. Look for details soon.

Cheri Alexander, WRJ President

## Stories from our Sisterhoods

### Temple Beth Torah Sisterhood, Wellington, FL

Our mission is to foster and further the highest ideals of Judaism as expressed through the temple to promote closer fellowship among its members; and in cooperation with the congregation, be a mentor for religious, social, and educational activities.

Our dues support our meetings and events; Women of Reform Judaism; gifts for all Bar and Bat Mitzvah children, gifts for preschool graduates, and gifts and support for our religious school and temple. Sisterhood also operates the Sisterhood Judaica Boutique at Temple Beth Torah.

Sisterhood sponsored the Religious School Kick-off at the Wellington Community Center. In photo: Sisterhood Pres., Tammy Smith, Judaica Boutique, Sue Thornton, and V.P. Membership, Donna Rosman.

Temple Beth Torah Sisterhood participated in Macy's Shop-for-a-Cause fundraiser. It was a huge success! Thank you to all who purchased 'shopping passes'. Your donation makes a difference to our congregation!

We are having a heart-warming Sisterhood Shabbat service written by Sisterhood Member Suzi Grbinich on Friday Oct. 14. Sisterhood members are participating in the ceremony. All are welcome to join us. A chocolate fountain dessert will be supplied by Sisterhood to complement the Oneg.

We look forward to Coffee Talk with Sisterhood on Sunday, Oct. 25. We meet in the lobby or Youth Lounge, purchase a 'nosh' from our Youth Group's Café Bagel and talk with Sisterhood Members.

Sisterhood Book Club meets Tuesday, November 1. Gloria Zakon will lead a discussion of *The Cantor's Daughter* by Scott Nadelson. Please read this wonderful book and join us.

Sisterhood Holiday Wrap-a-thon will be available from Nov. 15 to Dec. 20. Sisterhood members and high school Youth Group volunteers will gift wrap your holiday presents for you! We have beautiful holiday wrapping paper to choose from and specialty bows! Suggested donation prices range from \$2 to \$5 per present.

Finally, thanks to the generosity of Wal-Mart, the Sisterhood was able to donate over \$250 worth of food to the Jewish Family & Children's Service organization. Staff at JFCS were overjoyed!

Tammy Smith, Sisterhood President



Brotherhood President Jeff Sharkey purchases a gift from Dulcie Burns.



Sisterhood Pres., Tammy Smith, Judaica Boutique, Sue Thornton, and V.P. Membership, Donna Rosman at the Religious School Kick-off.



Tammy and Donna purchased the large sizes of the all-kosher Wal-Mart brands of staple, healthy foods.

## Stories from our Sisterhoods

### Congregation B'nai Israel, Boca Raton, FL

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon as the ladies of CBI gathered to celebrate with our beloved Rabbi Marci Bloch on her upcoming wedding in August. The food kept pouring in as so many ladies from sisterhood were so gracious in making yummy dishes and desserts to enhance this special occasion. The center pieces were beautiful and the present table was over flowing with gifts for the happy couple and their new lives together.

Our communications chair, Susan Klein read a beautiful poem, one she had read at her daughter's showers. And, our very own Andrea Cannon, Women of Reform Judaism Southeast District President, lead us in a beautiful candle presentation.

Rabbi Marci Bloch's bridal shower was a lovely gesture of how much the ladies of CBI adore her and wish her and Jason a long life together in love and harmony.

Penny Laufer  
President, WRJ/Sisterhood



Now that the High Holy Days are over, our year begins with an exciting list of events and projects. There is so much to do and we have so many plans for the coming year. We held a lovely "Getting to Know You Breakfast" while Religious School was in session, on a Sunday morning. Our Board Members gave brief descriptions of their part in WRJ and our Sisterhood's synagogue activities and then we had the attendees introduce themselves. We could "get to know each other" in this personal atmosphere. We are now phoning each attendee as a follow up and to invite them to participate this year.

We will be walking in our local American Cancer Society "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer" on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, at Mizner Park. We will also attend the Susan G. Komen "Race for the Cure" on January 28<sup>th</sup>, in West Palm Beach, where we "Pray with our Feet" and have a short service before we join the walk. Some of this year's events are: School Backpacks & Supply collection for needy students, Rosh Hashanah Baskets, Day 2 Rosh Hashanah Ushering, Sisterhood Shabbat, Wine Tasting & Appetizers, a Progressive Dinner, and a book signing & sales of the Holocaust Survivor Cookbook – Volumes I & II where members will serve some of the book's recipes. We have a Judaica Shop on wheels, where we bring the shop to events in different parts of the synagogue such as: Pre-School Fall Boutique, Religious School Parents' meeting, and the Chanukarama & Purim Carnival. We have "WRJ Tee Shirts" for sale at \$35, in black, round neck with the WRJ logo in pink sparkles, and can be mailed when ordered with size information. (To order, please send email to: [sscwalker@bellsouth.net](mailto:sscwalker@bellsouth.net))

Once a month the "Blanket Buddies" meet to cut and knot the fabric that turns into cuddly fleece blankets which are donated or can be purchased for ill patients who need a soft touch at a tough time. They have been donated to children's cancer centers at hospitals, adults undergoing cancer treatment, and to other critically ill patients, over the last three years. We add other programs or events as new ideas and opportunities are presented. The year is new and we are off to a busy start with many more upcoming events. Best wishes to all for 5772!

Susan Stein Chiesa, WRJ Liaison

## WRJ Southeast District

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### *WRJ Southeast Upcoming Events*

December 14-18, 2011  
WRJ 48th Assembly  
Washington, DC

January 8, 2012 Area Days  
Plantation, FL

February 26, 2012 Area Days  
Miami, FL

March 4, 2012 Area Days  
Hilton Head, SC

April 27-28, 2012  
WRJ SE Interim  
Tampa, FL

October 25-28, 2012  
WRJ Southeast District 34th Biennial Convention  
Atlanta, GA

Visit us on the web at <http://www.wrjsoutheast.org/>

**Please email the WRJ Southeast District Newsletter to others in your sisterhood!**