

December
2014

WRJ Southeast District Newsletter

Women of Reform Judaism — Southeast District



Listen Sisters! Our Link to Each Other! Share your News! שמענה אהודות

President's Message



Hello Women of the Southeast District of Reform Judaism! I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who do not already know me, and to wish everyone a warm and joyous Channukah and a very Happy New Year.

I am Madi Hoesten, your newly installed Southeast District President. I have

been involved in Sisterhood since I moved to Coral Springs, Florida from New York. I have held a wide variety of Board positions starting off with Recording Secretary and moving along through Sisterhood President at my local temple, Kol Tikvah in Parkland, as well as Social Action Chair, Area Director, Vice President of Marketing and First Vice President of the Southeast District. I am now thrilled to be representing the Southeast District as President, and I look forward to sharing my experience and thoughts with all of you. With all of our many talented, enthusiastic, lovely women in leadership roles, from our local sisterhood board members and Sisterhood Presidents through our District Board and WRJ Board members, we are going to have some great programming and ideas happening in the Southeast.

We have already begun with our updated Website and Newsletter. The Website has links to all of your District Representatives to make it easy to ask questions or get information. Our newsletter will now be monthly-allowing you to share all your events as they are happening. Remember to write about your news as soon as it happens and send it to our Newsletter Chair. Please see the article by Barbara Gitomer, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for more details. Caren Simon, Israel/ARZA Chair, has provided us with instructions and reasons for voting. See her article for registering through ARZA to vote. Each month the newsletter will feature articles from one of our Executive Board Members and one of our Chairwomen. Events for this spring are blossoming as well. The West Coast of Florida will hold an area day in May, and plans are under way for one in Charleston as well. Kol Emmeth in Atlanta is having a banquet honoring their WRJ women. Stay tuned for specifics on all of these events. Let us know what you are planning so we can post your news as well.

I had the honor of speaking at the Sisterhood Shabbat at Temple Beth Torah in Wellington two weeks ago, and would love the opportunity to come and visit with your sisterhood too. Please use the Speaker's Bureau Form on the Website to request a Southeast District speaker. I know many of you are planning to attend the Fried Leadership Conference in Austin, TX January 29-31st. I hope that those who have not yet registered will do so while there's still time. It's a fun, intimate weekend where I promise you will come away enriched with leadership skills and personal growth. I look forward to seeing my old friends, becoming reacquainted with my new ones from the Biennial in October and meeting more of you. Please stay in touch through the Newsletter, the Website, our Facebook page and personally by phone, text, and email. I appreciate the time that each of you dedicates to the Southeast District and it is a pleasure and a privilege to hear from you!

With Warm Regards-
Madi



*WRJ REGIONAL BIENNIAL
OCTOBER 24 – 25, 2014
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA*

*A FIRST TIMER'S EXPERIENCE
By BARBARA NUSSBAUM
Of TEMPLE BETH TORAH
Wellington, FL*



First timer's to WRJ Regional Biennial

My first conference as a new Sisterhood Board member and, from the moment I walked in, I knew it was a perfect choice. As a first time attendee, I began my day with "WRJ 101." The leader was Blair Marks, the President of WRJ and a really remarkable woman. I learned that WRJ was founded in 1913. Since that time, the organization has been doing things to make progressive, Jewish women's voices heard in order to make a difference in the world.

Let me list the many things I learned about WRJ in my first workshop.

- WRJ adopts resolutions on public policy issues.
- WRJ is present at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.
- WRJ provides educational resources and skills training to EMPOWER women to be effective advocates.
- WRJ is a non-governmental organization at the United Nations along with other women's groups and Jewish organizations to bring their ideals to the world stage. WRJ has 2 delegates at the United Nations.
- WRJ offers leadership workshops. The Fried Leadership Conference is coming up in Austin, Texas on January 30, 2015. We really should send someone to participate and learn

how to assume a leadership role in our Sisterhood. That person would then be positioned to carry on the ideas of WRJ.

- WRJ participates in IRAC, the Israeli Religious Action Committee that supports Women of the Wall. Women in Israel do not necessarily have equality. IRAC and WRJ are helping to change the lives of women in Israel.
- WRJ offers speakers to our Board and to the entire Sisterhood. All we have to do is ask!
- There are many events that we can attend or offer to host at my synagogue, Temple Beth Torah. They range from training classes, ritual and holiday resources.
- WRJ supports the Yes Fund (Youth, Education and Special Projects), PJ Library, NIFTY scholarships and many more.

WRJ has done so much for so many people. Our own, Rabbi Rosenkranz spoke about how WRJ has influenced his life. Rabbi Rosenkranz's mother was a past National President of WRJ and her involvement led to his becoming a Rabbi.

Blair Marks' talk was very stimulating and I left wanting to continue my learning of WRJ and the desire to do more. I also left

wondering “How do they do all that?” and not, “What do they do with our money?”

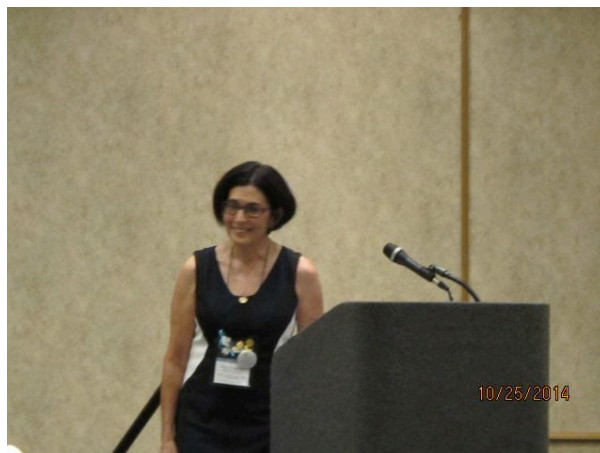
The next workshop was “Pluralism in Israel”. The workshop talked about women’s rights in a country where women are not considered equal. IRAC – Israeli Religious Action Committee is an arm of the Reform Movement and works to promote many areas of rights and issues for the Jewish people.

My next workshop was titled “Writing a Dvar Torah”. We were taught how to approach writing a Dvar Torah and given a framework and materials. My final workshop of the weekend was “Creative Services Using Technology”. The workshop discussed using creativity in the use of recorded audio and visual materials outside of the Siddur. Temples should consider the advancement in technology and staying up to date with the changes as we continue to advance at a rapid pace in the 21st century.

Having given my report to the Sisterhood Board, I have some thoughts that come from the heart. My profound thanks in helping me to attend the Regional Biennial Convention. It was an enriching and life changing experience. I felt welcomed as soon as I arrived and valued as a participant. I was a “sister” to some remarkable women. The leadership of the Southern Region are some very poised and accomplished women. I learned many useful and interesting things in two days. The most important thing I learned is that I am a member of a national sisterhood whose work affects progressive Jewish women far and wide. WRJ has done wonderful work for more than a hundred years and I want to help it continue for another hundred years.



Thanks to Last Year’s Board! What a Great Year



Sherry – THANK YOU!



WELCOME to MADI: Looking forward to wonderful things



We were so privileged to have the National President of WRJ, from our own region! Thank you Blair Marks!

More fun pictures from WRJ Southeast Regional Biennial.....



Fun at the pajama party



Going to sessions and LEARNING!



AND Playing



*AND Jewish! See more pictures on the WRJ Southeast District Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/WRJSoutheast>*



Marketing and Communications:

Hello to my WRJ Southeast Sisters. I am Barbara Gitomer, the new VP of Marketing and Communications for the Southeast District. Since the creation of this position just a few years ago, we have strived to promote ongoing communication, making it easier for our sisterhoods to share, inform, be in the loop, and generally help to create the larger community of our Southeast District. We do this through our website, newsletter, Facebook page, and email.

Our newly designed website is being managed by Amy Karlen. It is an ever evolving site, and I'm sure you'll agree that the look of it and ease of browsing through it are a great asset. Almost any question you may have about WRJ Southeast District will be answered on the webpage. And check out the great pictures from our recent District Biennial in Coral Springs – lookin' good, ladies! Share the web address with all the women in your sisterhood: www.wrjsoutheast.org

You may notice some changes to the newsletter this year. We're planning on a monthly email publication, probably a bit shorter than previous issues, but more often so that the info can be more timely. Stories from our sisterhoods are always welcome for publication. We love to share stories about special programs and/or projects that you are doing. Consider including pictures along with your story. Stories can be sent to our new newsletter editor, Amy Rogers at: amyjaguar@comcast.net Are you a friend of our Facebook page? You'll find

us on Facebook as "WRJ Southeast District". Risa Perl has taken on the job of managing the Southeast District Facebook page. Here is another great opportunity to keep up to date on events going on in the district and the broader world of WRJ and URJ. If you have an event of special interest that you would like publicized, please send me a flyer with all the pertinent information and we can post it on our Facebook page. Please send it to me at barbaragitomer@gmail.com

Getting the opportunity to meet many of you face to face at the WRJ Assembly and District events is a true joy that promotes the bond of sisterhood we all share. We can further strengthen that bond with continued communication throughout the year. Look for emails from the District. They will primarily be coming from Betsy Garfield, our communications coordinator. Visit our webpage and Facebook page and join in on dialogues on Facebook. Read and share our newsletter. And by all means, I encourage you to send in your stories for the newsletter. Do you have ideas for enhancing communication? Let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

With love and sisterhood,

Barbara Gitomer, VP Marketing and Communications
barbaragitomer@gmail.com
813-926-1881



Reform Jews Speak: World Zionist Congress Elections



Did you know that you are eligible to vote in the upcoming World Zionist Congress Elections? You must only meet three criteria to vote:

1. Be at least 18 years old by July 1st.
2. Be Jewish
3. Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States of America

Reform Jews 4 Israel is a campaign to encourage American Reform Jews to vote in the upcoming World Zionist Congress Elections. Registration and voting must be completed between January 15th and April 30, 2015 and may be done on the election website www.reformjews4israel.org or by paper ballot. The entire cost is \$10 for age 30 and above and \$5.00 for those under age 30. Now let me tell you why it is important for you to take part in this election! Your vote ensures delegates to the WZC, which is the single most effective way for the Reform Movement to influence and give voice to the policies and leadership in Israel. The election helps determine the Reform Movement's

influence in policy appointments and impacts important decision making in all aspects of Jewish life, including women's rights, the Palestinian issue, a democratic Israel, and funding dollars as well.

You may be asking, "What is the World Zionist Congress"? The WZC meets every 4 years in Jerusalem. It determines policy, and chooses the leadership of the World Zionist Organization (Founded by Theodore Herzl in 1897). The Congress makes decisions that affect the status of Reform Jews in Israel and all over the world. These decisions affect funding available to Progressive Jews in Israel.

Look for vote pledge drives from your local synagogue or community events. You can contact the WZO Campaign Help Desk at WZC2015@ARZA.org.

Check out www.ReformJews4Israel.org for regular updates.

And Vote!

Sisters!

Support the Yes Fund with Uniongrams

Uniongrams can be used for any occasion: Jewish and secular holidays, birthdays, b'nai mitzvah, installations, welcoming new sisterhood members, weddings, and any time when you want someone to know that you're thinking of them.

To order Uniongrams and other YES Fund note cards, or to order Uniongram e-cards, please click <https://www.wrj.org/Catalog.aspx>



Good and Welfare

Heartfelt condolences to Tammy and Rabbi Ronald Gerson on the passing of Rabbi Ronald's mother, Doreen Gerson. Tammy has been an active member of the WRJ Southeast District Board, serving in the positions of VP of Development, State VP, and Chaplain. Rabbi Gerson has served as Rabbi at Congregation Children of Israel in Athens, GA. Condolences may be sent to Rabbi Ronald and Tammy Gerson, 135 Dunwood Dr., Athens, GA 30605. May her memory be a blessing for all who knew and loved her.

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Meeting & Programs -Logistics and Planning for WRJ Meetings and Conventions, including WRJ Fried Leadership Conference, Assembly, Board and Committee Meetings; Administration and Facilitation of WRJ Programs, including Lilith Salons.

Manager Amanda Feldman Afeldman@wrj.org Ext. 4054

Marketing & Communications – Internal & External Communications; Media and Public Relations; Information Technology, including WRJ Website, E-Newsletter, Friday Voices E-mail and E-mails; Social Media, including WRJ Blog and Facebook; Marketing Materials; Publications, including Art Calendar.

Manager Dana Stein DBStein@wrj.org Ext. 4066

Development & Special Projects -YES Fund (Youth, Education, & Special Projects); Circle of Service; Lifeline; Board Giving; Special fundraising Projects, such as *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*; **World Union for Progressive Judaism**; **Annual Campaign Grants**.

Manager Elizabeth Rosenblum ERosenblum@wrj.org Ext.4056

Service To Sisterhoods & Districts – Membership and Dues; Support and Programming for Current & New Affiliates; E-mail and Mailing Lists Maintenance; Speakers Bureau; Leadership Training; WRJ Board Alumnae; Fried Leadership Conference and WRJ Assembly Grants; WRJ Consultations; Leadership Log-in; listserv Membership.

Manager Heather Lorgeree HLorgeree@wrj.org Ext.4063:

Programming & Advocacy - Critical Issues and Resolutions; Advocacy, including Commission on Social Action, Religious Action Center, and United Nations; Israel Initiatives; Commission/Committees on Social Action Issues.

RAC Legislative Assistant Sarah Greenberg SGreenberg@rac.org 202-387-2800

Executive Directors Emerita

Shelly Lindauer, Dr. Ellen Y. Rosenberg, Dr. Eleanor Schwartz, Dr. Jane Evans, OBM



South District
South Florida Community

invites you to a special performance of

STARS OF DAVID

Story to Song

A funny and captivating new musical revue, based on the best-selling book by Abigail Pogrebin, celebrates the lives of your favorite Jewish stars and public figures. Humorous and human songs shed light on Gloria Steinem, Aaron Sorkin, Gwyneth Paltrow, Norman Lear, Joan Rivers and many others, with original music by Broadway's finest composers and lyricists.



BROWARD CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Sunday, January 4, 2015 at 1:00 P.M.

immediately followed by an on-stage interview with the author

The Broward Center is located in the heart of the Riverwalk Arts & Entertainment District, 201 SW 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

Optional events include:

A South Florida Community Brunch from 10:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Meet the author and cast members during brunch, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

Book signing by the author, with benefactors and sponsors at 3:00 P.M.

Seating for the show is limited:

For more information, or to reserve your tickets, please visit: urj.org/south/starsofdauid.

Questions? Please contact:

Carmen Ackerman—cackerman@browardcenter.org, 954.414.8810 or

Marilynn Rothstein—marilynn@earimr.com, 954.752.4104



WRJ Southeast District
email: WRJNewsletter@yahoo.com

You can read the WRJ-SE Newsletter online at <http://wrjsoutheast.org/newsletter.html> Email the WRJ Southeast District Newsletter to others in your sisterhood!