



MIDWEST DISTRICT M'KESHER

מְקֶשֶׁר

Kislev 5777 / December 2016

Message from Janet Buckstein Midwest District President

Greetings!

So our turkeys (or vegetarian alternatives) have been eaten, warm coats have come to the front of our closets, and we are preparing for Hanukkah and December breaks. After a VERY short rest to catch our breath, district business once again is taking center stage.

While our two-year leadership terms may present challenges in transitioning to new people and learning curves, one of the wonderful results is that we all bring a fresh perspective to our roles. I know that almost every step along my way so far when I hear that “this is the way it has been done”, my response has been “why”? If we truly want to grow and thrive as a district and as individual sisterhoods, we need to be alert to every opportunity to be more welcoming, inclusive, and meaningful to our members and the community at large. Of course, we can't change everything at once and we need to be sensitive to the needs of our volunteers, but perhaps we can all look out-of-the box for those opportunities and plan them into our efforts.

The perfect example of a change that has already been made is in this month's **M'Keshet**. While **Linn Ullenbrauck** moved us light years ahead in the quality and effectiveness of our district communications, our new Communications Chair, **Karen Dillon**, has improved the design and made it mobile device-friendly.

Other examples...

Peggy Kipp incorporated more and better organized

QUICK LINKS:

[Speakers Bureau
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[Expense
Reimbursement
Form](#)

[District Deposit
Form](#)

information in our new District Directory (an updated version will be forthcoming), and we have a new monthly column, **Critical Issues**, provided by **Marilyn Glazer**.

All of this in only 5 weeks!

Well, I have also been thinking about some initiatives that we need to undertake as a district. To address this, I am creating **two special committees**:

1. District Fundraising Ad Hoc Committee

I would love to visit and work with every sisterhood in our district and bring in the support they need to thrive. I tell many that help is “a car-ride away,” but the reality is that we have limited resources at the district level. A **District Fundraising Ad Hoc Committee**, chaired by **Development Vice President Zabe Williams**, will create the necessary structure and processes to initiate and maintain an ongoing fundraising effort, and also generate ideas and possible programs. Would you like to join us? Contact Zabe at zabe.williams@me.com or me at wrjmdpres@gmail.com.

2. An Archiving/Data Sharing Task Force

Ever heard of backing up in the “cloud”? Well we back up in the “basement”! I’d be willing to guess that just about every one of us has paper files, flyers and photos in boxes in our basements or garages. While we have quickly moved to electronic files and back ups on thumb drives, it is not coordinated or organized. This is definitely an area where we need an “out-of-the-box” solution!

An Archiving/Data Sharing Task Force will recommend how we should file our records, reports and photos; who should share the information, and the best technology solution. **Please let me know if you would like to be part of this effort.**

Finally, a reminder: the **2017 Fried Leadership Conference** is **March 3 - 5** in **Charleston, SC**. I will be arriving in time for dinner on March 1, as will 5 to 10 others from our district, and play time in Charleston on March 2.

Want to join us? Check out our **Midwest District Yammer Group** to participate in our conversation. If you have not yet received your invitation to join, contact **Marla Goldberg** at auntiemar@msn.com

I wish all of you a wonderful Hanukkah and Happy (secular) New Year. If you are traveling to a warmer climate, know that I am **VERY** jealous!

Talk to you next year.

L'Shalom,

Janet Buckstein

President, WRJ Midwest District

Creating Our WRJ Community... Are you Stepping UP?



Last month I talked about my vision for our district...that we come together as one community. I would like to highlight in every M'Kesher individuals and sisterhoods/women's groups that are going beyond the boundaries of their women's organizations to foster a sense of WRJ Community.

The obvious place to start is with those whose very job description requires a commitment to forging relationships among many women's groups. Yes, I am talking about our Area Directors. We know that they are advisors, coaches and liaisons to our sisterhoods, but they also look to forge sisterhood-to-sisterhood relationships in their areas.

Whether through Area Days, networking brunches or conference calls, their goal is to have sisterhood presidents feel connected to each other and WRJ. Have you met these incredible women? If not, reach out and offer your thanks and support to them:

- **Metropolitan Chicago** – [Andrea Blain](#), [Marsha Cooper](#) and [Cheryl Stern](#)
- **Greater Illinois/Northwest Indiana** – [Carole Fefferman](#) and [Judy Lohr-Safcik](#)
- **Iowa** – [Alese Goers](#)
- **Minnesota/Dakotas** – [Beth Ettinger](#)
- **Wisconsin, Western Illinois** – [Nikki Levin](#)

Are you stepping up to creating our WRJ community? Let me know and I'll let everyone else know! Email me at jfbuckstein@gmail.com.



Save The Date...

Mah Jongg & Canasta Weekend

March 31 - April 2, 2017

OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

WRJ Fried Leadership Conference

March 3 - 5, 2017

Charleston, SC

Midwest District Kallah

April 28 - 30, 2017

OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

**4/28 Executive Committee Meeting (more information coming soon.)*

WRJ "Women's Journey to Israel" Mission

May 21 - 29, 2017

[Preview the flyer .](#)

Midwest Leadership Training & Interim Board Meeting

October 27 - 29, 2017

OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI

**10/27 Executive Committee Meeting*

**10/29 District Board Meeting (more information coming soon.)*

QUICK LINKS:

[Directions to OSRUI](#)

[Mah Jongg & Canasta Weekend](#)

[Fried Leadership Conference](#)

[WRJ Israel Trip](#)

Upcoming Midwest District Sisterhood Events:

These are open to the public - check them out and bring your friends!

What's Up Down There? with **D r. Lauren Streicher**

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL
Gynecologist, Public Speaker & Author of Sex Rx, Dr. Streicher has been described as "*Intelligent, impassioned and disarmingly funny.*"

[More about Dr. Streicher](#) .

Sisterhood Brunch & Mah Jongg Tournament

Sunday, January 29, 2017

Congregation Beth Am, Buffalo Grove, IL

Do you have an upcoming event that will appeal to a larger audience? Tell us about it!

Please send a pdf or website link to kyellendillon@gmail.com as soon as possible and we will try to include it in the next eblast. **Materials must be received no later than the 25th of the month.**

Please Note: If there is a fee to attend the event, all WRJ members are invited at your Sisterhood rate.

Good & Welfare

Happy Birthday

Yom Huledet (Happy Birthday) Wishes to our Midwest Board Members:

- Dec. 2 Susan Pittelman - spittelman@icloud.com
- Dec. 4 Sharon Kalling - sharon.kalling@berrienresa.org
- Dec. 15 Sandra Brottman - sandybrot@sbcglobal.net
- Dec. 15 Cherrie Worker - cherriew777@yahoo.com
- Dec. 31 Debbi Josephson - debbi.josephson8@gmail.com

- Jan. 2 Adrienne Daskal - ADaskal@att.net
- Jan. 4 Sharon Green - punchy4@aol.com
- Jan. 4 Ruth Garner - ruthsg1966@comcast.net
- Jan. 17 Amy Fields - afields1717@gmail.com
- Jan. 24 Mary Fisher - maryfisher105@aol.com
- Jan. 25 Gale Nudelman - gnudelman7@gmail.com

Jan. 26 Lois Gibson - lgibson900@aol.com
Jan. 27 Donelle Macey - donelle12@comcast.net
Jan. 30 Beth Ettinger - beettinger@gmail.com

R'fuah Sh'leimah (Get Well) Wishes to:

Alumnae **Helene Steen** recovering from a recent fall. Get well wishes may be sent to her at hs8549@aol.com or by mail to 6833 N. Kedzie Ave. #207, Chicago, IL 60645.



Critical Issues

As we enter into December, a month of holidays for those of all faiths, I thought it might be interesting to write about religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

"Separation of church and state" is a phrase used by [Thomas Jefferson](#) and others expressing an understanding of the intent and function of the [Establishment Clause](#) and [Free Exercise Clause](#) of [First Amendment](#) to the Constitution of the United States which reads: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*"

[Click here](#) to read her entire article. Questions?
Contact Marilyn@MarilynGlazer.com.

Need a Speaker For Your Next Event?



**REQUEST
a Speaker**

Having a WRJ speaker available for Sisterhood Services, installations or to just help facilitate or conduct workshops is really easy to do. Just fill out the form and return it to me to let me know what you are looking for.

Also, do you know someone in your Sisterhood who has an area of expertise she

might be willing to share? We are looking to expand our Speaker's Bureau and we can only do that with the help of each of you. I am looking forward to your requests and wonderful ideas from each and every one of you. Thanks!

Gloria Kaiz

Midwest District Speaker Bureau's Chair

gloria@kaizs.com 847-945-3741

[Download the Speaker Request Form](#)



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
stronger together

The Mission of WRJ

WRJ strengthens the voice of women worldwide and empowers them to create caring communities, nurture congregations, cultivate personal and spiritual growth, and advocate for and promote progressive Jewish values.

Connect with us



Janet Buckstein, WRJ Midwest District President

jfbuckstein@gmail.com wrijmdpres@gmail.com

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