



WRJ Midwest District



The Messenger

MARLA GOLDBERG, PRESIDENT
PENNY SHNAY, EDITOR

Summer/Fall 5771/5772

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Marla Goldberg

Shalom WRJ Midwest District Sisters:

What a great year (almost) we have had together...it is so exciting that we will be together again, at OSRUI, to learn, study, and certainly have fun at our Leadership Retreat and Interim Board Meeting. Somehow, when we gather—we bring out each other's best. That is the magic of "sisterhood."

We share a voice—we can agree to disagree, yet we get work done and make things happen. It is always amazing to experience something greater than any one of us can do individually. We are there for each other—offering assurances, lending an ear, giving a hug, or praying together. We laugh, we learn, and we teach. We often have the opportunity while away at camp, to get caught up in a moment and just be—the soul we are meant to be and share ourselves with the world.

Over the past 11 months, I have enjoyed the privilege of being invited and attending several events throughout the district, sometimes as "speaker" and sometimes as guest. One great lesson that keeps reappearing is, "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." I believe in this notion whole-heartedly, especially with regards to leadership.

Sometimes, it seems best to lead the group and other times, it is best to encourage others to step up and find their own significance. It is noticing and reflecting the untapped potential in others which may prove challenging. Sometimes, we get so busy or involved in the task we are attending to, that we don't pay attention to those around us who offer to help or lend an ear.

As our Jewish New Year speedily approaches, I ask that you take a moment and consider all that you receive from this wonderful organization called WRJ...WRJ Midwest District...sisterhood—and/or whatever your women's group calls itself. It is an even richer experience to give back—there is more magic to discover. And the circular exchange of energy is beyond extraordinary—you will find that you are truly never alone. It seems to me that there is always a sister to encourage you, listen or coax--depending on the circumstances, and always one or more cheerleaders on the sidelines. The opportunity to engage will always present itself, and when it does, please answer, as those who came before us have done, with "Hineni,"—here I am.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, sweet and peaceful Jewish fall holiday season—
In the spirit of sisterhood,

Marla Goldberg

WRJ Midwest District President
Temple Beth Israel; Skokie, IL



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

Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center
Washington DC area hotel

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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!



Opening Plenary (Wednesday) Speaker: Cecile Richards

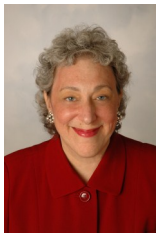
Cecile Richards

**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 — 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.



Area Days

WRJ Midwest District Chicago Metropolitan Area Day

June 25, 2011

'Finding Balance in Your Life'

Alese Goers, Julie Newman, Lynne Turry

Area Directors

Approximately 65 women attended the Chicago Metropolitan District WRJ Area Day this year. It was a wonderful day. BJBE in Deerfield, IL was kind enough to host the event.

The day began with registration and breakfast, followed by an hour or so Shabbat Worship.

There were two sessions of workshops. Torah Study with Rabbi Lester Frazin from BJBE was offered at both sessions. Other options were: 'Looking Ahead-Identifying and Asking Future Leaders' led by Terri Argentar and Sharon Sabin (both from BJBE), and 'YES I can, YES you can, YES we can!' led by Marla Goldberg (Temple Beth Israel – Skokie) and Adrienne Daskal (BJBE). The second session options were 'Healing Ourselves, Healing Others-Developing a Healthy Balance Using Judaism and the Jewish Community for Resources and Support' led by Tracey Kite, director of the Jewish Healing Network of Chicago, 'Building Membership/Building Sisterhood-How to Entice and Retain Members' led by Sandi Firsell (Temple Chai – Long Grove), and 'Putting the 'Action' into Social Action' with Amber Wood (Temple Beth Israel – Skokie).



Terri and Marla

BJBE provided a delicious lunch. Our keynote speaker was the entertaining and inspirational Linda Wolfe, Director of Career Services, JVS (Jewish Vocational Services) Chicago.

We had an evaluation form that people filled out at the end of the day. Feedback on the speakers/program was simply outstanding – thank you so much, ladies (presenters) – you made the day!! A number of women commented that they learned a lot and are anxious to return for the next Area Day. Just goes to show – you (veterans) have so much to share and impart to the rest of us!

Alese Goers



Greater Illinois, NW Indiana

This year we held our Area Day at B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom in Homewood IL. Thirty-four representatives from five out of eight area sisterhoods joined together on Saturday, June 11. They included women from Sinai Temple in Michigan City, IN; Temple Beth-El of Munster, IN; B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom; Temple Anshe Sholom in Olympia Fields, IL; and B'rith Sholom in Springfield, IL. After registration and morning refreshments, we gathered for a quick icebreaker to get acquainted and warm up to spend a few hours together.

A beautiful Shabbat morning service followed with Kristin Stern of Temple Beth-El in Munster, IN once again leading us in a spiritual journey through prayer and music. Adina Sutlin participated in all the singing as well as reading the Torah portion. Bimah honors were given to several of the ladies who came from the farthest distance.

Our program facilitator was life coach Suzy Vance of Beverly Shores, IN. The program titled: "Freedom Words: Developing a Personal Poem" was the art of the Japanese Haiku poem writing. Through a thought-provoking exercise, we each identified internal issues or subjects of personal importance and meaning, creating our own poems. This was a new experience for all of us, and the challenge was fun and worthwhile.

We enjoyed a wonderful lunch prepared by the sisterhood members of BYBS, and took advantage of the time permitted to socialize with the other participants.

WRJ Midwest District President, Marla Goldberg spoke of WRJ and all it stands for with a hands-on exercise and the participation of almost everyone in the room. This day confirmed to all of us again the importance of being part of the whole, and that there is always something new and positive to learn that we can take home with us to practice in our own community. I hope we can attract even more participation in our next Area Day.

Submitted by
Adina Sutlin



Area Directors Adina Sutlin and Kristen Stern



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."

Julia Ziev, WRJ Midwest District Critical Issues/Social Action Committee

jgziev@sbcglobal.net

*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.

Good and Welfare notices now are sent out as part of the monthly Mekasher. This makes them more timely and provides more information.

If you have any joys or sorrows to share with WRJ Midwest District, please send the information to Mae Schwab (maewash@aol.com). Thank you .

Coming to Interim?

This year at Interim, we are planning a very special "Action Auction" on Saturday night to benefit the YES Fund. You will have the opportunity to bid to have one of our Midwest District machers "do" something for you. Looking for someone to serve you snacks and drinks while you hang out with your "sisters" on Saturday night? Bid! Sick of the Sunday morning OSRUI routine of stripping the bed, collecting the trash, and lugging bags out to the car? Bid! District officers and others will be offering their services and talents to the highest bidder. Want something more tangible? We also will auction off a beautiful, WRJ exclusive Gary Rosenthal Chanukah menorah. All the money raised goes to the YES Fund, so bring your checkbook and get ready to have fun!

Not coming to Interim?

A contribution to the YES (Youth, Education and Special projects) Fund would be welcome. This is a prime example how we are Stronger Together as small contributions add up to much more to be used for the benefit of others.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Speakers Bureau Chair Sue Schneider is busy tapping the talents of WRJ Midwest members and organizing the lists of those who are available to come speak to your members on a myriad of topics. Watch for further information.

Sue Schneider, Speakers Bureau Chair



Editor's Note:

WANTED: *The Messenger* is in the process of evolving into a newsletter that will reflect not only what and who WRJ Midwest District is, but also what YOU want it to be. So I am looking for your input and contributions.

Penny Shnay plshnay@sbcglobal.net



WRJ Midwest District

Check us out at www.wrjmidwest.org. There you will find out up-to-date information, calendar, ideas for your sisterhood, useful links to other sites, photos, messages from our president and WRJ, and much more.



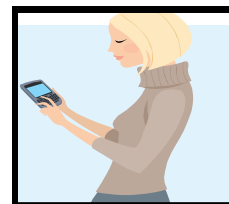
HAVE A SWEET, HEALTHY 5772!



WRJ — Stronger Together



DATES TO REMEMBER



September 16-18, 2011

**WRJ Midwest Interim Board Meeting and Leadership Retreat—OSRUI
Executive Committee, OSRUI, September 16**

December 14-18, 2011

**WRJ 48th Assembly, Washington, DC area
URJ Biennial**

April 27-29, 2012

**WRJ Midwest District Kallah—OSRUI
Executive Committee Meeting—OSRUI, April 27**

Editors Note: If you want to
receive a hard copy, please e-mail
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