



WRJ District 13 Newsletter

Women of Reform Judaism-Southeast Federation of Temple Sisterhoods

Our Link to Each Other! Share your News!

President's Message



As a Southern girl for many years (living in Alabama and Florida), the surprise cold front that came through Houston was quite a shock! With 76 women representing 34 Sisterhoods from our District attending the WRJ 45th Assembly November 16–20, 2005, I am sure I was not the only Southerner taken aback by the wind chill. Being

together in Houston was wonderful and the friendship, inspiration, and knowledge we gained from WRJ certainly made a warm and inviting atmosphere. While many things took place over the five days, I would like to highlight a few for those of you who were not able to attend.

- Letty Cottin Pogrebin, our first Jane Evans Pursuit of Justice Award recipient, spoke of the days of consciousness-raising groups and that many women in their 20's and 30's take for granted what other women worked so hard to achieve; and if we do not motivate our younger generations, we are at risk of losing what we have fought so hard to win.
- Resolutions were adopted on Safeguarding Scientific Integrity and Preventing Child and Adolescent Self-Destructive Behavior.
- Cantor Sarah Sager spoke on the impact that WRJ's publication *The Torah—A Women's Commentary* will have on enabling the voices of our Matriarchs to be heard. This commentary will debut in San Diego, 2007.
- Many of our Sisterhoods were honored at our Honors Program. Temple Kol Emeth, Marietta, Georgia, and Temple Shalom, Naples, Florida, both won Or Ami Awards for their outstanding programs. Many of our other Sisterhoods received Special Recognition for their programs as well. Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, Florida, was once

again honored for their YES Fund contribution.

- Three new publications debuted: Covenant of the Spirit is now available, as well as a WRJ guide for Presidents, and a fabulous new resource on fundraising project ideas. If your Sisterhood was not present in Houston, look for these materials in the mail as each Sisterhood always receives a complementary copy of our new publications.
- The motion to increase WRJ dues was thoroughly discussed on Sunday morning. The motion passed with a vote of 244 to 59. The \$4 increase will be in effect for the 07-08 fiscal year. There has been much discussion on the list serve about this issue and the way WRJ handles its voting. Our new President, Rosanne Selfon, has assured us the Executive Committee will take this up at their February meeting. This dues increase will enable WRJ to implement needs and address concerns expressed by our Sisterhoods through both the Strategic Planning Process and the survey completed by over 300 Sisterhoods. Please let the District know if you are concerned about how to raise the additional dollars. That is why we are here—to assist our local Sisterhoods.

What a great Assembly it was! We thanked the members of the outgoing WRJ Board and celebrated the installation of our new WRJ Board where our District is well represented. We had a wonderful District Dinner Thursday night where we showed off our new website: www.WRJDistrict13.org. Many thanks go to our webmaster Betsy Garfield and her terrific committee.

Please look through the newsletter carefully. We have many events coming up during the spring, and we would love to see some new faces as well as our old friends during the next couple of months.

Have a safe and happy holiday season,
Barbara Shub, WRJ District 13 President

Interfaith

Back at the 2003 Assembly, Rabbi Eric Yoffie spoke about the need to “reach out to our neighbors and listen for G-d’s presence in their voices. Only in this way, speaking our fears while hearing the fears of others, will we build a shared commitment to a moral future.”

It is important for us as Sisterhoods to invite the churches in our communities to come together, to study together, and explain why things are done as they are in our churches and temples. We might be completely surprised by how much alike and yet how different some of our ideas and practices really are.

One way for you to begin might be to set up a mock Seder around Passover with some of the foods that we usually serve, especially Matzoh. Have a discussion of the celebration of Chanukah, reciting the prayers over the candles of the first night only. Then explain how Chanukah is not the “Jewish Christmas.” Or perhaps set up a Shabbat dinner table including the candles and Challah. You might say the prayers over the candles, wine, and bread, and have someone explain the customs for these celebrations. You are limited only by your imagination.

There are many ways that we can connect with our Christian neighbors in the community, and keep in mind that what becomes familiar is no longer a mystery or an oddity.

Phyllis Shapack, Chair, Interfaith Committee
Temple B’nai Israel, Clearwater FL

The World Union for Progressive Judaism

For those who do not know the history, the WUPJ was established in London in 1926. It serves and supports congregations in nearly 40 countries. The basic aims are to create common ground between its constituents and to promote Progressive Judaism to groups who are seeking authentic and modern ways of expressing themselves as Jews.

From early on, the Women of Reform Judaism have been a major partner with WUPJ by funding the education of rabbis to serve in isolated congregations, and providing other assistance as needed.

WRJ also supports the Reform Zionist Youth known as Netzer Olami. It is the youth movement, home to thousands of young people in a range of countries spreading over four continents. Its base of operations is located in Jerusalem.

In 2004, 24 of 67 sisterhoods, or 36%, contributed to WUPJ. We are calling on our District to challenge your Sisterhood to step up and increase your participation in this very worthwhile endeavor. For a donation as small as \$100.00 per Sisterhood you will be recognized in the WRJ annual Book of Honors.

Midge Pasternack, Chair, WUPJ
Temple Shaari Shalom, Boynton Beach, FL

Save the Date!

DISTRICT 13 BIENNIAL OCT. 26–29TH, 2006 “TOGETHER WE BRING PROMISE”

Hosted By Congregation B’nai Israel at the Marriott Hotel, Boca Raton, Florida

Any questions, please email Andrea Cannon at redsisboca@aol.com or call 561-703-6004

Camp Coleman

Each and every day at camp, the morning begins with a cheery “Bo Bo Boker Tov; Boker Tov to Bobby” and Bobby replies “Boker Tov to Susie” and Susie replies “Boker Tov to someone else.”

Approximately 100 congregations send their kids to this camp, which was created approximately 40 years ago by a family here in Jacksonville, Florida.

At this camp, you can expect to find rock climbing, tug of war, bonfires, singing, canoeing, Havdalah, hockey, Maccabiah games, sign painting, bicycling, karate, baseball, boating, ceramics, performing arts, prayer services on Shabbat, and much more. Camp Coleman is a camp where friendships are made, where kids enjoy camaraderie, and where the camp has one overall spirit.

I found when going to a Camp Coleman reunion one day that the kids could not wait to get up and tell us what they remembered. They have counselors from Israel who make Israel a real place for them. The campers said the following: “Can not wait to be back”; “I have been coming here for five years”; “Part of paradise”. Shelby summed it up by saying “Meet people as friends and leave as family”.

I was there as a child and have fond memories of Camp Coleman and SEFTY. It warms my heart to know the camp is still going strong 30 years later!

Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, Florida and the Temple in Coral Springs have had the largest increase in campers attending Coleman. Send your kids too for a fun filled summer, with memories to last a lifetime!

Mindy Grinnan, Chair, Camp Coleman
Congregation Ahavath Chesed, Jacksonville, FL

Good and Welfare

✧ Congratulations to Marge Wein (District President 1978-80) on her retirement as Executive Director of the Pensacola Jewish Federation. Marge has been involved in a myriad of Jewish organizations in her lifetime and has truly set a standard of Jewish living that we should all strive for. We wish her well on her move to Birmingham, Alabama.

✧ We wish a speedy recovery to Gloria Cohen of Temple Israel, Columbus, Georgia. Her new address is 262 Lee Road, #790, Valley, Alabama 36854.

✧ We send our deep condolences to the family of Beverly Topiol, who passed away in October. Her family can be contacted at P.O. Box 367, Holder, FL 34445.

Announcing the District 13 Website

After a lot of hard work and much ado, I am pleased to announce the official launch of the District 13 website at <http://wrjdistrict13.org/>. Many thanks to my wonderful, hard working website team for their cooperation and excellent ideas: Reva Sandler, Sherry Schwimmer, and Mandy Thompson.

There is a wealth of information on the website about the District and how the District works to serve you, and I hope you will take some time to explore the site.

To encourage networking between Sisterhoods, if you offer local events which are open to others, your events can be listed on a special page at wrjdistrict13.org/localevents.html. Send your information to me at webmaster@wrjdistrict13.org to be listed.

I am always happy to hear from you.

Betsy Garfield, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster
Temple B'nai Israel, Clearwater, FL

A Conversation about Convention & Leadership

We often recognize ourselves in others. You work so very hard to do all the things you manage to cram into a day. Maybe you secretly dream of giving yourself a much deserved break from your work, home and volunteer responsibilities. Where would you go if you left everything for a few days and pampered yourself? With children, an aging parent, several boards and work responsibilities all pulling at my sanity, I took a week off to pamper myself in Houston at the WRJ/URJ Biennial. Would a spa have been your choice? Think of the cost and then the lasting benefit, and I think you too might choose as I did.

In speaking with other sisterhoods about why they were not able to send representatives to the Houston Biennial, the subject of cost came up. It was time off from work, it was money for travel, money for food and hotel, and money for registration fees. I had the same concerns, and I went to the conference intending to talk about the prohibitive expense; but conferences and conventions are hypnotical – they are inspirational – and they are rejuvenating.

From the moment I arrived in Houston, I was greeted by so many smiles, hugs, and chatter of the women I met, that I started to feel a little guilty that I had come. I already was having too much fun to substantiate my need to complain. The days were well planned with ideas, programs, and serious topics to take back to my sisterhood; projects and contacts for my temple; and selfishly and more importantly, life-affirming classes to help me negotiate the Jewish ethical issues for real life concerns with which I am dealing.

People whom I met became fast friends because they are dealing with the same issues as I am. I attended a prayer service conducted by and for women, attended classes on communicating with different generations, attended programs on Sacred Aging, Torah text, and intermarriage – all of these things valuable at sisterhood, but vital in my role as a teacher, facilitator, business woman, and caretaker for my family and aging parent.

For my friends, their interests lead them to choral practice, business or financial seminars, health initiatives or dozens of other offerings and entertainments. But me, I felt like I was experiencing the mikveh for the first time in a different type of conversion – one of a need for commitment to a spiritual path. Conventions help one to regroup and become a better leader and spokesperson for sisterhood, temple, and social action issues that affect us all. More importantly, I have become a true believer in the value of spending my money, my time, and my talents at leadership meeting and conferences, because I feel I am better able to cope with the challenges in my life with a renewed Jewish perspective. So next time, when you think of the cost and then the lasting benefit of a leadership conference, I think you too might chose as I did.

Carol Towbin Greenberg



(l to r) Carol Towbin Greenberg, Toby Hollenberg, Helene Waranch, Frances Lowery-Wilson & Dr. Fran Smith.



Toby Hollenberg, Carol Towbin Greenberg, Rosanne Selfon, & Frances Lowery-Wilson.



Toby and Fran celebrate Frances' honor as a new national board member.



Frances loves meeting up with WRJ friends and mentors like Blair & Wendy.

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Congregation of Reform Judaism, Orlando, FL

This new year has been one of tremendous growth and renewal for our Sisterhood. After several years of dormancy, Sisterhood has burst on to the scene in our congregation. This is due to the enthusiasm of a new board comprised of many novices to Sisterhood. Our motto is “We’ll try it!”

What have we tried so far? Well, first was to ASK! We looked at our stagnant membership numbers (approximately 80 members in a congregation of 700 family units) and decided that the first order of business was to increase membership. We started very simply. We asked people to join and they responded! Our membership is now just over 160 and many of those are at higher than basic dues levels.

Our first event was an evening program at a chocolate factory. Two hours of chocolate making (we got to take home a pound of our own creations) and champagne was a great ice-breaker! Word of how fun this event was spread like wildfire through the congregation and many asked us to repeat it in the spring!

In November we held our Paid-Up Membership Brunch and were honored to have Wendy Adamson come and be our guest speaker. She was wonderful and the approximately 70 women who attended had a very positive experience. Our annual Thanksgiving Raffle was drawn and that fundraiser raised about \$1,500. This is a raffle that has been done for years—I guess you could say we mixed a little of the old with the new!

As I write this article we are relaxing and marveling at our greatest accomplishment to date—the success of our first Chanukah Bazaar. The chairperson, Dorey Wolf, had never done anything like this before and was very anxious. But it turned out to be wonderful and we made over \$2,500! Not only that, but we were instrumental in coordinating a Gift of Life drive for a young man in our community in need of a bone marrow transplant. That screening was held on the day of the Bazaar and over 200 people were entered into the registry.

It has been an amazing year so far and I’m sitting here smiling as I write this. Thank you to all the district officers who have been so helpful and supportive.

Cathy Swerdlow, President

Temple Judea, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

WRJ celebrated the beginning of our WRJ year with a gourmet paid-up breakfast on Sunday, November 20, at the Temple. Our guest speaker was Dr. Jana K. Rasmussen, who spoke on “Non-surgical Tips for Facial Rejuvenation”, and we also enjoyed a Jewish musical program.

Members will be participating in the “Race for the Cure” in West Palm Beach in January, and we are holding a Pot Luck Havdalah at a member’s home.

Our group has supported our Youth Education Program with woman power, cash, and merchandise donations. Our Temple sponsored a family affected by Hurricane Katrina. We also operate the Temple Gift Shop, and promote YES Fund cards through the website and shop.

Cheryll Rabin Plotkin, Co-President

Temple Israel, Melbourne, FL

Our little sisterhood of 70 women is very alive and active in Melbourne, Florida. At least once a month we hold one function or another, and we have varied programs that appeal to all ages.

Our Chanukah bazaar on December 4th, was a smashing success. We had so many adults as well as children shopping. Our “Judaica” lady, Helen George, has done a wonderful job for sisterhood in fully servicing our temple’s Judaica shop.

On December 30th, we will hold our annual “Covered Dish Menorathon”. We expect a full house of about 150 people with Sisterhood supplying turkey, brisket, and fried chicken. Sisterhood does this as a service for the temple and it is not a money making project.

Marilyn Feinber, President

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Congregation Mickve Israel , Savannah, GA

On Thanksgiving Day, 28 Sisterhood members and their families once again provided a wonderful holiday meal to the families and staff at Hospice Savannah. Prepared in our members' homes and brought to Hospice on Thanksgiving morning, 11 turkeys, pumpkin and pecan pies, sweet potato casseroles, corn pudding, cranberry sauces and salads, dinner rolls, mashed potatoes, green bean and lima bean casseroles, hearty homemade soup, macaroni and cheese, pasta casserole, and other dishes graced their Thanksgiving table. Southern Motors and several individuals provided financial support for this annual event.



Volunteers prepare a Thanksgiving buffet at Hospice Savannah.

Diane Abolt, Volunteer Coordinator of Hospice Savannah wrote the following note:

“Marvelous! The feast your sisterhood provided for our staff and family members was just marvelous! You will never know just how much it was enjoyed and appreciated. Each year it keeps getting better. Staff told me yesterday how delicious it all was. Each of you are to be praised for your unselfish, caring and giving spirit. How fortunate Hospice Savannah/Hospice House is to have such friends. Thank you.”

Watch for news of our Sisterhood's upcoming Historic Tour of Homes being held on April 23rd.

Toby Hollenberg and Barbara Bart, Co-Presidents

Temple Beth El, Ormond Beach, FL

We have been enjoying a great year!!! We held our third annual Indoor Garage Sale in June and realized a nice profit, and sponsored a Havdalah event in August which turned out great. We held a Pot Luck Dinner with the Havdalah and hosted about 80 people. There was a beading activity for the children.

Our Sisterhood Calendar Book is great. This has been done each year for more than 50 years and this year's book is beautiful. We dedicated it to the memory of two of our beloved members who passed away during the past year. One of our members is an artist and she did a color drawing for our cover which was of a lovely part of our grounds. The calendar book is our biggest fundraiser.

Our esteemed Rabbi and his wife are celebrating 30 years with our congregation. We are collecting small donations and will have a large Uniongram prepared with all the contributors names.

A graduate of our religious school is now in Israel studying to become a Rabbi. What a blessing!! We are helping to partially fund his trip to Russia this coming Passover when he and other Rabbinical students from HUC will bring Pesach to the Russian Jews.

A fun night took place in November. We had a mother/daughter craft evening at a local store where we painted mezuzahs and menorahs and had them fired in the kiln.

A big event will be held in December prior to Chanukah. We call it Shopper's Night and sell tables to vendors for a modest fee. We do all the advertising and hope to have a nice turnout. This will be the second year for such a program. Additionally, we will have a Sisterhood Boutique with items donated by our members.

I am so proud of our Sisterhood. Thanks for letting me share our good news!!

Iris Gardener, Sisterhood President

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Temple Kehillat Chaim, Roswell, GA

Greetings from Roswell, Georgia! Our Sisterhood is in the middle of another exciting and productive year. We were pleased to have WRJ State Director, Alison Schlenger, visit our April 2005 Board meeting and help our group brainstorm on ways to increase our membership. At the following Board meeting it was decided that we needed to “change things up” if we wanted to remain attractive and interesting to members and potential members. So far, we have had success!

Instead of accepting membership at our “Kick Off” event, we mailed a package to all female members of the Kehillah. In this package we sent the WRJ publication “Women of Reform Judaism Welcomes You”, our proposed calendar, a letter explaining what our Sisterhood does locally, and an invoice with several tiers of dues membership. We also followed up with phone calls to our members who did not renew from 2004-2005. As families joined our temple, they too were sent that same membership package along with a personal note from me welcoming them to our temple. I am incredibly pleased that we have a 100% increase from the previous year!!! Last year we had 43 members—now we have 87!!! Our VP of Membership, Lorena Weinkle, has done an incredible job this year. It is a pleasure to work with such a dynamic and exciting person!

Our “Kick Off” event was held at a very popular local restaurant on a Monday night instead of our usual Sunday brunch. 55 women attended and every one enjoyed this strictly social event. Many in attendance had not been to a Sisterhood event in a while. It was a pleasure to meet and visit with everyone.

In January, we will host our first “Sisterhood Shabbat”. We have over 35 women playing a role in what should be a very special worship experience. It will also be the 20th Anniversary of our Sisterhood and we will honor our Past Presidents with a WRJ Local Past President pin.

Our largest fundraiser is the February dinner event. Sponsors financially underwrite the entire evening when they host a dinner party in their home. Members then pay to dine at the host homes. This evening is wildly popular and successful. The Sisterhood appreciates our many generous benefactors.

In addition to the annual Purim carnival, we plan to have more social events including a “Ladies Evening Out”, a Bunko night, and a Leadership workshop “Pajama Party” at a local hotel.

Our Sisterhood is a prism of women with many different facets. I am grateful to be a part of such a dynamic group of women. Best wishes from my Sisterhood to yours! Look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

Kathy Starr, President

Sisterhood Leadership Conference ☆ February 10 – 12, 2006 ☆ Westin Atlanta Airport in Atlanta

Our Sisterhood Leadership Conference is less than two months away. We are pleased to invite you to join us at this informative and valuable session. The conference will begin with Shabbat dinner at 6:00pm on Friday, February 10, 2006 and conclude around 12:30pm on Sunday, February 12th.

A block of rooms is being held at the Westin Atlanta Airport in Atlanta, Georgia. The room rate is \$89 per night and there is a complementary airport shuttle included. To reserve your room, please call 888-627-7211 and identify yourself as a member of WRJ. Reservations must be made by January 19, 2006.

Please fill out and send in the registration form included in this newsletter. There is a \$195 fee for registration, materials, Shabbat dinner, Shabbat lunch, Saturday dinner and Sunday brunch. Please complete and return the enclosed form no later than January 6, 2006.

Last year’s conference was a huge success and we received many positive responses from those of you who participated then. This year, it is in our own backyard and now is the time to take advantage and bring back new ideas and inspirations for your Sisterhood.

Stories from our Sisterhoods**Congregation Schaarai Zedek, Tampa, FL**

On Friday, December 9th, we were honored to have Rosanne Selfon speak at a luncheon attended by 75 people, including Sisterhood members from five area synagogues, District 13 representatives Barbara Shub and Wendy Adamson, as well as a number of Rabbis from area congregations. Rosanne spoke about the many ways that WRJ and individual Jewish women can make a difference in people's lives in our own communities and around the world. Rosanne also joined us for a more intimate Shabbos dinner before being our guest speaker at our Sisterhood Shabbat service.

Rosanne was a hit! She was incredibly warm, down-to-earth, smart, and full of hope and ideas for the future of our Sisterhoods and WRJ. We were thrilled that Rosanne's first official visit as WRJ President was at Congregation Schaarai Zedek.



(l to r) Jill Neuman, Rosanne Selfon, and
Lori Schwartz

Earlier in the year we had our most successful "Star Event" ever! The "Star Event" is our one and only fundraiser of the year and this year 300 women attended. Leah Feldon was our guest speaker. She's an author and style expert who has been featured on Oprah and many magazines from People to InStyle. The "Star Event" committee (our largest) did a phenomenal job putting together this "must see" event.

We've had some wonderful programs this year such as mother/daughter pottery painting, "Sisterhood does ... Pie", a program on sexual chemistry featuring our own Sisterhood member Bonnie Saks, M.D., and our paid-up event taught our members how to play Texas hold'em, complete with Texas style décor and food.

Looking ahead we are about to publish our first ever Sisterhood newsletter titled, "Sisterhood Scoop". It will be sent out to all women in our Congregation, showing pictures from the Biennial, a Q & A article with our Sisterhood Judaica Shop chairs, a mazel tov section, information about what Sisterhood does, and much more. We hope it will make those who aren't already Sisterhood members race to join. We're also busy planning our first Past President's luncheon and Women's Seder.

It's been a great year so far and we're looking forward to more good things to come!

Jill Neuman and Lori Schwartz, Co-Sisterhood Presidents

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Temple Beth-El, St. Petersburg, FL

Sisterhood's programming year began with an inspiring presentation by Nan Colton at the November 2nd luncheon. As the Museum of Fine Art's Artist-in-Residence, Nan has developed a theatrical style all her own. Her highly acclaimed representations of famous artists is widely applauded throughout art communities.

We sponsored a "Chai Tea on The Trail" event on Saturday afternoon during the Brotherhood camping weekend. Women attending this fun-filled family weekend joined together as we traveled the Pinellas Trail to a surprise location where refreshments awaited us. Todah to Brotherhood for helping make our event wonderful. On Sunday, December 4, we offered a day of pampering called "Mimosas, Massages & Manicures." Not just for Sisterhood members, this was a chance to just park your car and take some time for yourself.

Sisterhood also organized "The Most Creative Menorah" and "Cradle Roll" events on Sunday, December 11, during Religious School hours. These fun activities create holiday memories that families treasure for years to come.

January 11, 2006 will feature Dr. Muriel Gold Poole at the monthly luncheon. As a past Temple Beth-El ArtFest exhibitor and author, Dr. Poole's presentation promises to be insightful and entertaining.

The Sisterhood/WRJ 80th Anniversary Gala will be held on Friday, March 17, 2006. The evening will include a formal Shabbat dinner, followed by a Shabbat service, special Oneg, and a surprise unveiling event. We will be honoring our past presidents at the service. This unique celebration will feature the many generations of women and mitzvot that the Women of Reform Judaism have contributed to our Temple Beth-El family. You might be interested to know that our Sisterhood was formed before there was a Temple Beth-El.

Gertrude Debowsky, President

Temple of Israel, Greenville, SC

We've had several interesting programs and events this year and are looking forward to a busy December. Fall is always busy as we organize onegs, break the fast, welcome new members, and plan our year.

We just hosted one of the most successful and fun "mini" fundraisers ever. It was an Accessory Fair, where old jewelry, hats, scarves, and pocketbooks were collected and cleaned up for resale. We then presented them to our members on the same day as the Judaica Shop Chanukah sale and made a few dollars for Sisterhood.

Our Sisterhood Shabbat will be held in January, when we also honor someone with our annual service award. In February, I hope to attend the WRJ Leadership meeting to be held in Atlanta, GA. It's another wonderful way to learn and grow in Sisterhood.

Jo Stamler Thompson, Sisterhood President

DUES REMIINDER

2005-2006 District Dues
Payable Now
\$1.50 per member
Check Payable to
WRJ District 13-SEFTS
Mail to Blair's new address:
Blair Marks
4507 Woodhaven NE
Marietta, GA 30067

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Temple Shalom Sisterhood, Naples, FL

The Sisterhood of Temple Shalom was honored to be the recipient of two awards at the 45th Assembly in Houston. We received the Honorable Mention Award for our program "The Bielski Brothers". Our Sisterhood also voted to contribute \$1,000 for a Lifeline to support the Youth, Education and Special Projects (YES Fund). On behalf of Sisterhood, I received a beautiful silver and 14-karat gold Lifeline Pin, which will be passed on to each succeeding President.

We were fortunate in our community to have no loss of life during Hurricane Wilma. Lots of trees and vegetation loss and pool cages were destroyed, and power was out for a few days. As a community, we weathered the storm and watched out for each other. Several of our Sisterhood members and their spouses volunteered to work for the Red Cross at the hurricane shelters.

On December 7th we held our annual Chanukah Bazaar, featuring vendors from the community. In addition, we had our Food Fair, with Sisterhood members bring their favorite homemade delicacies, including soups, brisket, kugel, ruggelah and more. People wait in line for the Bazaar to open and it is always a sellout. Our Judaic Shop also benefits, as many people in our community get the opportunity to do their Chanukah shopping that day.

On February 14th we will hold a brunch honoring all new members who joined Sisterhood since July 2005. The meeting is open to all members and will be held at a local Country Club.

In 2002, Sisterhood established the Abraham Shusterman Religious School Endowment Fund with a donation of \$30,000. Our goal was to place \$10,000 a year into the fund. Through our fund raising endeavors, we were able to contribute an extra \$10,000 bringing our total donation to \$70,000. We have much to be thankful for.

We are an energetic and vibrant multi-generational Sisterhood and I am proud to be a part of it.

Helene R. Weiss, President

Temple Beth El, Hollywood, FL

We are saddened to report that on this, our 50th anniversary, we have had to put all of our activities on hold due to the devastation we have faced from hurricane Wilma. We lost our roof. Our rabbi's study was flooded and the majority of his books were destroyed. Our sanctuary and our auditorium are unusable at this time due to the flooding. Fortunately our torahs survived and we are able to utilize our chapel!

Due to the generosity of our congregational families and friends we are close to having raised the majority of our deductible. It will probably be quite some time before we will be able to return to our beautiful sanctuary. On the other hand, we are looking forward to coming back even better in the near future.

As for the sisterhood itself, after having to cancel our annual fashion show and ice cream social, we look forward to finally being able to hold an event in January. We are inviting the religious school moms to join us in a morning of line dancing. This will be followed with lessons in child care/discipline by a renowned speaker. Anyone who wants to put on their dancing shoes is more than welcome to join us!

Thank you for your kind prayers.

Micki Mallinson

*We send our prayers and best wishes
to those who were so deeply affected by
Hurricane Wilma this fall.
Thanks for sharing your stories.*

Stories from our Sisterhoods

Temple Bat Yam, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

This year we were unable to have our Paid Up Membership Event due to Hurricane Wilma. Our temple and most of its members were without power at the time. Due to scheduling we won't be having it, but plan on having a luncheon in the spring. Our members came through and we have a healthy membership. We find that a fair amount of the members actually join at the event, so we were concerned, but everyone understood the situation and sent in their dues.

We tried something new this year and I encourage everyone to give it a shot as a fund raiser and generally an all round great get together. We organized a Patio Arts and Crafts Show and Sale. It proved to be a financial success, and we plan on doing it again next year and will definitely make more money. Aside from the money making end of it, it brought our temple together for a day of fun and shopping.

We invited the Youth Group to participate by having a bake sale, which was a huge success. There are only about five in the Youth Group and they did just great. They donated their proceeds to Camp Jenny and to the Darfur Fund Raising event. The Religious School had a Chanukah table, which realized them some extra money for school supplies. The sisterhood had a Pre-Loved Jewelry table along with a craft table which also proved to be a success. The rest of the vendors were temple members and local artists. We didn't have any commercial vendors. Everyone left

feeling that they had a successful day. It truly was a lot of fun for everyone.

I was privileged to present Dr. Fran Smith, a member of our Sisterhood, Past President, and now serving on the National Board of WRJ, a plaque honoring her for her commitment to the YES Fund. We made this presentation during one of our Shabbat Services which was really a festive event, as we had our own "Few Jews Blues Band" playing that night. The place was packed and it was an honor to be able to recognize Fran for all the hard work that she has done for our Sisterhood, The Yes Fund, and the National Board of WRJ.

In January we are having a Challah Baking demonstration. Julie Gerber, a pioneer in Health Food and Nutrition in our area, will be giving a demonstration along with some members who will be talking about the significance of "Breaking Bread". We are encouraging the young mothers in our Religious School to come and start a challah baking tradition in their home. There is nothing like the smell of bread baking to welcome the Sabbath.

We have also scheduled the Breast Chronicles for a program in February. This program was discussed in the WRJ Presidents Email that I receive. It got such rave reviews by other temples that I passed it on to our Programming Chairperson. We haven't finalized it yet, but I think we are going to open it to the public as it is such an important issue.

Mable Ladin

WRJ District 13 Upcoming Events

Next Newsletter Deadline March 30, 2006

February 10-12, 2006 Sisterhood Leadership Conference
Atlanta, Georgia

March 31-April 2, 2006 WRJ District 13 Retreat
Camp Coleman, Cleveland, GA

October 26-29, 2006 WRJ District 13 Biennial Convention
Boca Raton, FL

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