



CENTRAL DISTRICT Women of Reform Judaism

Isha L'Isha



In This Issue

[WRJ Central](#)

[WRJ 48th Biennial](#)

[Isha L'Isha](#)

WRJ Central District

is your liaison between the Women of Reform Judaism and the local sisterhoods we serve.



Currently we are 36 sisterhoods in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

The president, five vice presidents, area directors and committee chairs are available to help you.

We can be consultants and we have an active speaker's bureau. If you want a speaker for a Sisterhood Shabbat or any sisterhood program just contact the [chair for Speaker's Bureau](#) and she will work with you to make this happen.

For more on WRJ Central, visit our website at www.wrjcentral.org and contribute to our blog, [Sharing](#)

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[WRJ Central](#)

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Communications

June 2011

Welcome to our continuing and new sisterhood presidents.

Congratulations on taking this important leadership role in both your sisterhood and the district. As a sisterhood president, you are a member of the Central District Board. We have set up a system called Area Directors who are your primary point of contact for district and WRJ information. The Area Directors are here to help you with questions and concerns that may arise. They will be contacting you soon if you have not heard from them already.

I would like to remind you to be sure to send Lisa Semen your board list so that we can make sure that you get this newsletter and other information.

For many of you, as the newly installed president, this is your first issue of *Isha L'Isha*. We encourage you to forward this to all of your sisterhood members and the clergy so that everyone is aware of all that is going on in the district and internationally with WRJ. Please share with us events and programs so that we can let others know what you are doing.

Please let me know if there is anything that I can do for you or your sisterhood.

Yours in Sisterhood

Communications

modified from WRJ Mid-Atlantic District Newsletter

Effective communications is the key to success within and between sisterhoods and WRJ. Districts are designed to help by assigning an Area Director to each sisterhood as "First Source" of information. Every sisterhood should know who their Area Director is and how to contact them. Click on [Directory](#), for a list of Area Directors for the WRJ Central District.

Although, email is an excellent way to send a message to multiple people or to communicate without concern about time of day, remember that not everyone is technology savvy. Be patient and always try to use multiple approaches to marketing a program or communicating a message.

A few important tips to remember when communicating by email:

1. Never assume that just because you sent an email, that it was received. Be sure to ask for confirmation of receipt if you are

own artist, Beth Goldstein at beth@bethgoldstein.com

More WRJ Central items will be available soon.

WRJ Central Board 2010-2011

President
Hilda R. Glazer

**Past President
Chair of Nominating**
Royalyn R. Vert

**Past President
Vice Chair of Nominating**
Bette Jo Stempel

1st Vice President
Marilyn Goldfein

VP Service to Sisterhoods
Michelle Simpson

VP Dev & Special Projects
Susie Strom

VP Marketing & Comm
Beth Lande

VP Prog & Advocacy
Karen Smith

Recording Secretary
Mimi Dell

Corresponding Secretary
Lisa Elyn Semen

Membership Secretary
Lucy Gersten

Treasurer
Lisa Singer

Bulletin Editor
Hillary Handwerker

Parliamentarian
Nancy Apfel

Historian
Beth Goldstein

Area Directors
Peggy Behrens
Laurie Blinder
Barbara Goldberg
Mimi Kaufman
Rachel Lambermont
Charlene Pfenninger
Tori Wucher

WRJ Board Members
Nancy Apfel
Hilda R. Glazer
Karen Sim
Bette Jo Stempel
Royalyn R. Vert

expecting a reply. This way you can be sure that the person received the information and it has not been lost or misdirected.

- Remember that it is easy to interpret emails incorrectly because the reader does not have the benefit of hearing your voice or seeing your expression. When sending information that may be sensitive, write the email and read it again with fresh eyes before sending it.
- If email is regularly used as a means of communication within your sisterhood, be sure to use an auto-reply when you are going to be away from your computer for a long period of time. This will notify the sender that you are not able to reply immediately.

Department on Programming and Advocacy

The Department on Programming and Advocacy included chairs in Programming (Jewish Education), Advocacy (Israel and Israel Twinning), and Jewish Family Concerns (caring community, sacred aging, and youth activities). Our department as a vacancy in Programming Chair. If you would like additional information about this job opportunity on the District Board, please contact Royalyn Vert.

We share the following stories with you.

TOURING JEWISH UGANDA

Touring Jewish Uganda is something I never dreamed of doing. My friend Dolores called me around August, 2010, saying we need to go to Uganda in January. What a crazy idea, I thought. And I said: "Do you want me to go somewhere where there is no electricity or running water?"

We landed at Entebbe, Uganda (remember Idi Amin and the captive airplane?) on January 9, 2011 about 11 p.m, local time.

Bright and early the next morning, our group of 10 people from the USA and Canada, embarked on safari. What an experience! We saw almost every kind of animal one would hope to see on safari. I had hoped to see elephants on my birthday and my wish came true! We saw lots of elephants. There were baboons playing in the road. We had to stop and wait for them to decide to let us pass.

Suddenly the driver stopped saying: "There is a leopard! Be very quiet!" The roof of the van was raised so we could stand and take pictures. You almost never see a leopard during the day, as they are nocturnal and very shy. We sat there for at least 20 minutes watching this young male leopard trying to catch a warthog, unsuccessfully. Finally he sauntered off.

An amazing site, only seen in the Ishasha National Park, are the lions sleeping in ficus trees. We saw a group of 3, a male and 2 females sacked out! We drove around the tree and they paid us no mind!

The next day we went on a boat ride on an isthmus between two lakes where we saw hippos, cape buffalo, a huge crocodile, and lots of birds. It was so exciting.

We spent the night in a tent, a tent deluxe, complete with full bath. The employees asked, are you ready for your shower, Mama (a term of respect) and we said yes. Then a man brought hot water, poured it into a tank outside the tent. Then I pulled a chain to control the water flow, inside the tent.

On Friday, as we went east to Mbale, we stopped for lunch in Jinja, which is the source of the Nile.

Friday evening, as we walked up to the synagogue at Nabagoye Hill, a village about 10 miles from the city of Mbale, we heard the most beautiful singing to welcome Shabbat. The people sing in Luganda, their native language, as well as in Hebrew, and English. Their prayer books are from American conservative synagogues, and

the service is much like any conservative service here.

It was a beautiful experience especially as it was the weekend of the USY conference. There were even a couple kids from California. The youngsters lead the service, and on Saturday morning, they read from the Torah. Some from our group of "honored guests", also were given aliyot.



During the rest of the week, we visited the school, two other Jewish villages, and the coffee plantation. It is amazing to see the beautiful school that is growing there, where the children learn Hebrew, English, and Luganda. The school is open to all children, who can pay the tuition, and so there are Muslim and Christian children who also attend. The children learn about all three religions.

There are 2 more villages which also have synagogues, all similar in style. They are large rectangular buildings, and decorated as best the people can manage.

The Mirembe Coffee, Delicious Peace, has been written about before in Ish L'Isha, and I refer you to the article (which I think was Spring, 2010).

These are the things that I learned about Uganda and the Abayudaya.

- People are very kind, friendly, and helpful.
- The poverty is overwhelming and life is difficult.
- Uganda is a beautiful country with many resources.
- The schools, the wells, the coffee plantation are all benefit Jews, Muslims, and Christians who live side by side. The organization Kulanu is instrumental in providing these much needed improvements.
- The Abayudaya work very hard to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

This tour was sponsored by Kulanu, an organization which helps many Jewish communities in isolated places. They have helped the Abayudaya greatly by helping them to find ways to earn a living and to improve nutrition and education. You can learn more about this trip, which happens each January, by looking at the website of www.kulanu.org.

~ Joyce Alpiner

WRJ Central District Jewish Family Concerns Chair

Women of the Wall Shabbat

Temple Shomer Emunim
Sylvania, Ohio

On March 5, The Temple Shomer Emunim of Sylvania, Ohio collaborated with the ladies at the conservative temple, B'Nai Israel, for a Women of the Wall Shabbat. The service was conducted by women from both congregations in support and honor of the Women of the Wall movement. Our special honored guest speaker for this Shabbat was Chaia Beckerman, Women of the Wall activist, writer and editor. Ms. Beckerman was there at the beginning of the movement in 1988. She

spoke eloquently about women's struggle's in Israel to have equal rights to pray at The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Even in the area designated for women to pray, women are not allowed to wear tallit, read from the Torah, or raise their voices in prayer. The Women of the Wall group goes on Rosh Chodesh at dawn for a Shabbat service where they read from the Torah at the risk of being arrested, where they are harshly harassed. Ms. Beckerman told us that in recent years the climate has become more restrictive because women riding buses in some neighborhoods must ride in the back of the bus and give up their seats to a man and women Israeli soldiers are not allowed to sing Hativka out loud. Her words were touching and eye opening to me.

The experience continued on March 6 when the confirmation classes were invited along with Sisterhood members to view "Praying in Her Own Voice" a documentary film about the Women of the Wall. This film was produced and directed by Professor Yael Katsiv and premiered at the International Film Festival in July 2006. After the movie a panel made up of Ms. Beckerman and representatives from the Sylvania Jewish community opened up for questions and discussion.

If you interested in learning more about The Women of The Wall movement, there is information on the WRJ website, www.wrj.org.

~ Alida Marie Forshaw (Central District Advocacy Chair)
The Temple Shomer Emunim
Sylvania, Ohio

Talk about communicating.....

Save the date, plan to go!

48th Biennial Assembly



Connect with women who share common interests, concerns, a love of Judaism, and the special bond of Sisterhood

Learn from distinguished scholars, authors and experts
Worship with inspirational spiritual leaders, including celebrating Shabbat with over 5000 of your peers.

Visit www.wrj.org for more information.

Report to Central District from the WRJ Board Meeting

We were a strong presence with seven



of us in attendance:

From left to right:
Bette Jo Stempel,
Karen Sim,
Hilda Glazer,
Marilyn Goldfein,
Royalyn Vert,
Nancy Apfel and
Andrea Ludwig



The voices of WRJ Sisters are particularly beautiful singing the prayers of Shabbat. With HUC students Hannah Goldstein and Sarah Krevsky leading services, we began the WRJ Board of Directors' Meeting with Shabbat Services. We were enriched by our Rabbi and Cantor and know that the future of our movement is bright.



Merle Feld spoke with us after services reading her poems, touching our hearts, bringing laughter, and helping us find connections. Her point was that making meaning nourishes us.

We began the meeting with remarks from WRJ President Lynn Magid Lazar. She emphasized that WRJ has a strong voice on the URJ voice and has continued our work even with the changes at WRJ and URJ. Robin Cohen, our interim executive director, was introduced. Lynn reminded us that we are community and we build community. Other reports highlighted the activities of WRJ:

- There were labels to make a Tzedakah can.
- Did you know that there is a You-Tube page with WRJ videos?
- Miriam Wasserman, chair on South American WUPJ, introduced us to the movement in South America. The movement is strong and we have a place at the table with Helene Warnach as North American Chair.
- Resa Davids gave us the WRJ Israel report.
- Helene Warnach told about the exciting things happening world-wide with Reform Jewish Communities and young adults who are finding out for the first time that they are Jewish.
- We heard about the Biennial and how integrated we will be with URJ. We will not have to register for both

Central District is well presented on the Centennial Committee by Nancy Apfel and Karen Sim.

- The tag line is - Women of Reform Judaism 100 years Strong: Inspired by the past, committed to the future
- Every affiliate will appoint one member to be the ambassador to the Centennial Committee
- Each affiliate will be asked to share one artifact with the archives that will remain with them permanently.
- The Leadership conference will be the kick-off to the centennial year and will be held in Cincinnati.
- There will be a Centennial Sisterhood Shabbat.
- There will be a Centennial Cookbook
- There is a fundraising goal of \$5 million

There are many ways that we can be involved.

The will of Sylvia Plank bequeathed \$100,000 to WRJ. Sylvia Plank was from Muncie Indiana, Temple Beth-El. She and her family made important contributions to the Jewish Community of Muncie. Central District is grateful to her and her family.

All the departments reported to us about their work and plans. Using the materials on the website that are available to all of us is something to keep in mind.

- Membership materials, the Chai Society program, Lilith Salons, programs and services, executive essentials, and Twinning are materials to check out.
- The next leadership conference is in Cincinnati in January of 2013. We are represented at the UN, NFTY, and the National Associations for Camps.
- There are new YES Fund cards available.
- There will be a new book in the Covenant Series in honor of our Centennial.
- We are being encouraged to forward the weekly emails and the e-newsletter to our sisterhood members.



We were all energized by our time together and excited about all that is happening and will happen.

Respectfully
submitted,
Hilda R. Glazer, EdD
WRJ Central District
President

Update on Area Directors

The new email address to use for Rachel Lambermont is rachellambermont@gmail.com

The new Isha L'Isha

This is the new version of **Isha L'Isha**

Isha L'Isha is our attempt to communicate with you and your membership. Take the opportunity to talk to us and your area director; tell us your success stories and words of wisdom about communicating with your membership, temple and community.

Also, please take the time to visit our Blog, named "[Sharing the Best](#)" and let us know what you and your sisterhood have been doing. Register and then write your brief story. The blog is mediated, which means whatever you enter, the items have to be approved before they show up on the blog, but this is a wonderful opportunity to share and boast and get great ideas.

Deadline for the next issue-- Changes at WRJ and what they mean for us

July 10, 2011.

Send articles and images to ishawrjcentral@gmail.com

Looking forward to hearing from you

Hillary Handwerger
WRJ Central District, Bulletin Editor

[Forward email](#)