

Message from the District President

Bette Jo Stempel...



Ninety-five years ago, Women of Reform Judaism was founded by a group of

forward thinking women as they struggled to gain recognition and equality in a male-dominated world. Although sisterhood activities have changed over the years, the basic mission of WRJ remains the same today.

WRJ has been and still is at the forefront of social action in Jewish and secular venues. In each generation, the women of

sisterhood have worked to ensure the future of Reform Judaism by supporting our temple communities and our rabbinical students, educating ourselves and developing future leaders of our congregations.

L'Dor V'Dor, from Generation to Generation, sisterhood women can be found working for our congregations, raising money through the YES Fund for rabbinic and cantorial scholarships, studying together and joining together at our district events and WRJ meetings to grow future leaders. As Shelley Lindauer, Executive Director of WRJ, recently stated, "Our strength lies in our community - all 500 sisterhoods and 70,000 women - coming together to make the world a better place, to effect change, and to make sure our voices are heard. This was the intention of our

foremothers, who knew the power of having a collective voice, and it is still the reality today. We are able to meet with the president of the US, the prime minister of Israel, and have a seat at the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations." As sisterhood presidents, it is your responsibility to make sure your sisterhood women are aware of our extensive representation worldwide.

WRJ, made up of our sisterhood women, is an important communal

organization for which we should all take pride in being members. Our organization is recognized in many venues.

On September

14th, we will be honored by the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and receive the International Humanitarian Award. I hope you will share the honor with your sisterhood members and realize how valuable your membership is to this worldwide organization.

While we are part of such a large and powerful group, we must not lose sight of the individual entities that create the community of WRJ. We often refer to our congregations as a community: a community where people care about each other, making sure all members are given an opportunity to share in the life of the temple. As a subset of the temple family, the women of the congregation in our sisterhoods often "look after" the larger population through our myriad

of activities.

Some sisterhoods provide for the religious schools, supporting them monetarily and by securing staff. Other sisterhoods prepare weekly Oneg Shabbats or Kiddush luncheons. Many sisterhoods have a caring community committee that seeks to aid members of the congregations dealing with difficulties in their lives. If your sisterhood has such a committee or is considering forming this type of community builder, WRJ Central District has a chair, Elaine Arffa, who can help you. You can contact Elaine at elainea@ihcindy.org. Our Sacred Aging Chair is also a good resource for growing community in our temples. Contact Peggy Behrens, Sacred Aging chair for ideas at behrensw@sbcglobal.net. Peggy has written about some ideas in this edition of Isha L'Isha.

Most sisterhoods provide programming and opportunities for women to learn about Judaism. A prime example of sisterhood women having opportunities to learn can be found in Torah study groups using the new publication from WRJ, *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. Notice of new study guides being created for WRJ was

(continued on page 2)

Inside...

Check out the registration material for the next WRJ Central District Convention in Louisville, KY November 7 - 9, 2008.

The proposed slate for the WRJ Central District Board of Directors for 2008 - 2010 can be found on page 4.

l'dor v'dor & caring community

Sacred Aging — by Peggy Behrens, Sacred Aging Chair

Does your sisterhood have many senior citizens? Ours does—even though we encourage young women to join us. It is important to have programming that will stimulate the interest of these senior women since they have the time and talent that you need within your organization.

At our temple, Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple, we have many programs geared to them. Thirty Tuesdays during the year, our program co-chairs come up with varied and interesting programs. These are well attended and the women come for various reasons. Some come for company., some to see their friends, others to have a hearty inexpensive lunch and to be entertained and stimulated.

We have had a style show, book review, a doctor talk, and numerous musical programs to mention a few. Anyone needing suggestions can contact me at 216.831.7775 or behrensw@sbcglobal.net.

L'Dor V'Dor / Intergenerational Style Show — by Charlene Pfenninger, Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation

With our opening luncheon we tried not only to bring back many of our members but to bring in other members and generations of their families to Sisterhood. We had an intergenerational style show that utilized models from our membership. We had at least two generations from each family, and up to four generations from a few. The afternoon really brought our Sisterhood community together more than anything had in recent years. We had over 100 in attendance. People reconnected with Sisterhood. One of the stores involved in the show set up a Boutique where our members enjoyed shopping with their friends. Ten per cent of the proceeds were given to our Sisterhood. This turned out to be over three hundred dollars

President's Message — from Bette Jo Stempel

(continued from page 1)

just announced. Look for information about this new project in the newsletter and on the WRJ website. Women in sisterhoods also have opportunities for leadership development in a safe caring atmosphere. Within our women's groups, we are able to work on committees and try different activities in a nurturing environment, eventually stepping into leadership roles we never envisioned for ourselves. On a district and North American level, even more leadership training opportunities are available. Our 1st Vice President, Royalyn Vert and the women in the two Louisville sisterhoods are hard at work planning our next district convention that will take place in November. It promises to be a special weekend with several learning and sharing opportunities and loads of fun and laughter. More information about the convention is found in this newsletter. In addition, WRJ will be holding a leadership conference in New Orleans in January. I urge all of our district sisterhood women to take advantage of all that the meeting has to offer. Look for an announcement in this newsletter and on the WRJ website.

As you are reading my article, you may be thinking that your sisterhood offers some of the activities I have mentioned but some are a part of your history or are on the planning table as part of your strategic plan for the future. As you move forward with the plans for your new sisterhood year, remember the value of the past generations' activities while planning for future generations. Help your sisterhood create caring communities for the women of your congregations, for all your temple family and for the future of Reform Judaism worldwide.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a joyous and healthy New Year. May your congregational women find value in sisterhood and may all of you grow from strength to strength in the coming year.

L'shana Tova
Bette Jo

Temple "Community Kitchen" — by Bernice Goldman, President, Fairmount Temple Sisterhood

We have a "community kitchen" at Fairmount Temple in Beachwood, OH. Even though it is not sponsored by sisterhood but by the congregation, we have sisterhood members who participate.



We help make meals for shut-ins and make and take cookies to congregants who have lost loved ones and are observing Shiva.

Also, we just concluded two years under the leadership of Ilene Schwartz. She began a program where we had the preschoolers come in before each of our weekly luncheons and sing the Hamotsi. We all looked forward to their participation.

WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

stronger together

... in the Central District

Service to Sisterhoods — by Sandy Adland, Vice President

The Central District Department on Service to Sisterhoods includes a fabulous and energetic team of Chairs. The areas they oversee are vital to the continuity of our District, and we are so fortunate to have these very capable women among us. Marilyn Goldfein, Membership Chair, (marilyn.goldfein@gmail.com) continues to reach out to our local Sisterhoods in her quest to offer support and ideas for enhancing our Sisterhoods' membership recruitment and retention practices. Our Leadership Development Chair Debbie LeCours (DLeCours@comcast.net) knows how important it is to create a strong and sustainable evolving group of Sisterhood leaders not only for the present, but for the generations to come. Our Speakers Bureau Chair Marilyn Bilsky (Mbilsky5@aol.com) is at your service, eager to assist your Sisterhood with obtaining a speaker, either from our District or from WRJ Headquarters. Marilyn will help you arrange for a speaker that best matches your requested date(s) as well as the topic you wish for her to speak about. All of our Sisterhoods are entitled to have a speaker, either from Central District or from the WRJ Headquarters at least every other year, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of this most valuable opportunity. PLEASE utilize this wealth of assistance that the Central District Department on Service to Sisterhoods can offer our local Sisterhoods. We are there for YOU! Lastly, Michelle Simpson, Chair of Affiliate Development, continues to research URJ synagogues within our District to seek out those that do not currently have an affiliated Sisterhood. If you know of any congregations nearby that do not presently have an affiliated Sisterhood, please contact Michelle Simpson at mssdw810@flash.net. What could be more rewarding than expanding our Sisterhood circle? It has been a true pleasure serving as Vice President of the Department on Service to Sisterhoods, and working with such a wonderful team of Chairs!

Annual WRJ Board Meeting — by Andrea Ludwig and Janie Roth

The annual WRJ Board of Directors meeting was held May 17-19, 2008 in New York with more than ninety members present. Shelley Lindauer, Executive Director, welcomed us, and Lynn Magid Lazar, 1st Vice President, officiated at the meeting in the absence of Rosanne Selfon, President.

Reports of the 47th Assembly were made by Sara Chaney and Andrea Cannon, local arrangements co-chairs, followed by stimulating brainstorming breakout groups. Judith Hertz, life member and co-chair of the Commission on Inter-religious Affairs reflected on her meeting with Pope Benedict and other religious leaders. Helene Waranch, WRJ chair of World Union for Progressive Judaism, spoke about her trip to Warsaw, Budapest and Berlin. We heard from Lynn Magid Lazar who represented WRJ with Shelley Lindauer at the official opening of the Abraham Geiger College WRJ Music Library in Berlin.

Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, director of WRJ Pennsylvania Council and president of the Women's Rabbinic Network, led us in Torah study of Parashah B'chukotai, suggesting that we each create a description of ourselves similar to that in "Packing Slip" by Jessica Greenbaum, p. 786 in *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*.

Guest speaker, Rabbi Elliott Kleinman, chief program officer, URJ, asked us to welcome and mentor women new to sisterhoods. Talks on our Jewish journeys were offered by Blair Marks, Angela Sacher and Janie Roth. Another highlight was when guest Speaker, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, President of the URJ, praised *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. He also said, "The focus in discussions with leaders of other faiths must be on maintaining our fundamental values and our commitments to a free, democratic Jewish Israel."

Of special interest were the department reports. Susan Bass, Vice President, Department on Service to Sisterhoods and districts, spoke of the new optional two day speaker's bureau training to follow the board meeting. During the report of Katie Roeper, Vice President, Department of Programming & Advocacy, a resolution was moved and passed for Paid Sick Leave. Karen Sim, Vice President, Department on Development & Special Projects, mentioned that the Gary Rosenthal project netted approximately \$10K. Sharon Benoff, Vice President, Department on Marketing & Communication announced that a monthly e-newsletter is being planned.

Bette Jo Stempel, Central District President, relates she is "Pleased that the WRJ Central District had two more representatives at the Board of Directors meeting. We are still greatly underrepresented as a district, and I hope some of you reading this report will consider applying for a position on the WRJ Board that will be installed in Toronto in 2009."

As newcomers, it was clear to us that the women attending came away feeling the passion of our motto, "stronger together."

WRJ Mission Statement

Women of Reform Judaism, an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism, is the collective voice and presence of women in congregational life. Stronger together, we support the ideals and enhance the quality of Jewish living to ensure the future of progressive Judaism in North America, Israel and around the world.

WRJ Central District Proposed Slate for 2008-2010

President	Royalyn Vert	Shaarey Zedek/E. Lansing, MI
Immed. Past President/Nominating Chair	Bette Jo Stempel	Israel/Columbus, OH
Vice Chair Nominating	Karen Smith	Beth El/Knoxville, TN
1st Vice President	Hilda Glazer	Beth Shalom/New Albany, OH
VP Dev. /Spec.Projects	Sandy Adland	Indpls. Heb. Cong./Indpls. IN
VP Service to Sisterhoods	Myrna Fisher	Kol Ami/W. Bloomfield/MI
VP Marketing/Communications	Phyllis Tenenholtz	Wise/Cincinnati, OH
VP Prog./Advocacy	Cathy Gorwitz	Shaarey Zedek/E. Lansing, MI
Recording Secretary	Maureen Dyer	Shaarey Zedek/E. Lansing, MI
Corresponding Secretary	Joani Sonnheim	Shalom/Louisville, KY
Membership Secretary	Barbara Goldberg	Shomer Emunim/Sylvania, OH
Treasurer	Liz McOsker	Wise/Cincinnati, OH
Bulletin Editor	Lisa Bass	Shaarey Zedek/E. Lansing, MI
Area Director – E. Mich.	Beth Goldstein	Rockdale/Cincinnati, OH
Area Director – W. Mich.	Tina Bissell	Beth Emeth/Ann Arbor, MI
Area Director – Southwest	Sheilah Abramson-Miles	Shalom/Louisville, KY
Area Director – South	Judy Berzof	Shalom/Louisville, KY
Area Director – Central Ohio	Ellen Half	Israel/Columbus, OH
Area Director – West	Charlene Pfenninger	Indpls. Heb. Cong./Indianapolis, OH
Area Director--N. Ohio	Clarice Goldstein	Emanuel/Cleveland, OH
Area Director – East	Marilyn Goldfein	Emanuel/Cleveland, OH
Affiliate Development	Nancy Apfel	Wise/Cincinnati, OH
Leadership	Karen Sim	Wise/Cincinnati, OH
Membership	Peggy Behrens	Anshe Chesed/Cleveland, OH
Speakers Bureau	Debbie Lecours	Kol Ami/W. Bloomfield, MI
Alumnae	Tori Wucher	B'nai Shalom/Huntington, WV
Awards	Pam Levine	Emanuel/Cleveland, OH
Jewish Family Concerns	Susie Strom	Tiffereth Israel/Cleveland, OH
Advocacy	Donna Hyams	Wise/Cincinnati, OH
Programming	Laura Beasley	Valley/Cincinnati, OH
Fundraising	Elaine Arffa	Indpls. Heb. Cong./Indianapolis, IN
World Union/JBI/Israel	Elaine Frayman	Tiffereth Israel/Cleveland, OH
YES Fund/Circle of Service	Karen Stern	Indpls. Heb. Cong./Indianapolis, IN

Submitted by the Central District Nominating Committee: Karen Smith, Chair (Beth El, Knoxville, TN); Barbara Seeder, Vice Chair (Israel, Columbus, OH); Abby Pook (Kol Ami, W. Bloomfield, MI); Marilyn Goldfein (Emanu El, Cleveland, OH); Liz McOsker (Wise, Cincinnati, OH); Joani Sonnheim (Shalom, Louisville, KY); and Sheilah Abramson-Miles (Shalom, Louisville, KY).

SHOW OFF YOUR SISTERHOOD!!! District Convention Fall 2010

Do you want to have fun?! Do you want all of Central District to know what a great Sisterhood you are?!
You can show off YOUR SISTERHOOD and YOUR CITY by entering a bid to host the 2010 CENTRAL DISTRICT CONVENTION!!!

The Presidents of all of our Sisterhoods have received a letter of explanation and an application form to bid for the honor of hosting the 2010 Central District Convention. All applications will be considered, and the decision as to the selection of the Host Sisterhood will be made at the meeting of the Executive Committee that takes place just prior to our 2008 District Convention on Thursday evening, November 6, 2008. The decision will be based on information submitted by each Sisterhood. The criteria will include: location, feasibility of transportation, hotel accommodations, the Sisterhood's reason for desiring to hold the convention, their enthusiasm, and their ability to assume the responsibility for all local arrangements.

If your Sisterhood is selected, you will have the opportunity to select a weekend in the Fall of 2010. You will work closely with the District 1st Vice President and the Convention Facilitator. You will have notebooks from past District conventions to provide guidance. You can include Sisterhoods nearby to work with you bringing Reform Jewish women together sharing goals and skills.

(continued on next page)

... in the Central District

From the First Vice President...*Royalyn Vert*

The Central District Convention is only a few months away. I hope everyone is planning on coming to Louisville, KY, November 6 - 9, 2008 to attend our 2008 Convention, "Shema! Hear Our Voices!". The theme of our meeting will be communication. How do we communicate with one another; what causes communication to break down; and how do we communicate with a new generations of sisterhood members are just a few of the topics to be covered.

Sisterhood presidents should have received their registration materials. Copies of the forms also appear in this edition of Isha L'Isha. It is important that you observe the deadline dates to ensure your place at the hotel, The Hampton Inn, as well as enable the members of the host sisterhoods, Temple Shalom and The Temple, to finalize their plans. The women have been working diligently since last October to make sure every detail is attended to and that you will have a fun and informative week-end.

Representing Women of Reform Judaism will be Katie Roeper, Vice President of the Department of Advocacy and Programming. She is very knowledgeable about the world of sisterhood from the local to the international levels. I know that Katie will have much to share with us about WRJ and will be a good resource for all of our Sisterhoods.

Also joining us for Shabbat services and workshops will be Rabbi Lane Steinger, Director of URJ's Midwest Council. Although Rabbi Steinger is now based in St. Louis, MO, he is well known in our area as he was the Rabbi at Temple Emanu El in Oak Park, MI for many years.

Throughout the week-end we will have some fun activities as well as informative workshops. On Friday evening following Shabbat services and dinner, we will hold our Awards Program. Deborah Awards will be announced as well as awards for various programs submitted by our local sisterhoods. One of the highlights of the week-end will be our Havdalah Installation, which will be held in the Derby Museum. If you have not been there, you are in for a real treat!

To add to the festivities at the Derby Museum, we are asking everyone to bring a Derby Hat! We will be having a contest to see who has the best hat! There will be prizes and lots of fun!

The Local Arrangements Chairs and I can hardly wait to see all of you in Louisville. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or write us. You will find contact information for the local chairs on your registration forms. Or, you can get in touch with me by calling 517-323-4355 or by emailing me at LRVERT@MICHCOM.NET.

YES Fund Cans

Last December, at the WRJ Assembly, each delegate received a YES Fund can to take back to her sisterhood. At our meeting in Cincinnati, WRJ Central YES Fund chair, Jenny Broh, handed out additional cans to some sisterhood women. **Please tell WRJ and your district sisters how you are using the cans.** Where are they in your temples? When your can is full, do you send the money to WRJ as a contribution to the YES Fund? If so, please note that the money is coming from your new tzedakah can.

Consider how much money we can collect for the YES Fund by just dropping our spare change in a can sitting in your Judaica Shop or on tables at meetings. Remember, monies raised for the YES Fund help ensure the future of Reform Judaism by supporting Youth, Education and other Special Projects through our grant system.



SHOW OFF YOUR SISTERHOOD! *(continued from previous page)*

The winning application for the honor of hosting the 2010 WRJ Central District Convention will be announced at the Closing Plenary of the Central District 2008 Convention in Louisville, Kentucky on Sunday morning, November 9, 2008. If your Sisterhood is selected, you will have the opportunity at that time to invite all of Central District to visit you city with a flyer, fun souvenir, or skit.

Applications must be submitted as directed in the letters by October 1st to the Time and Place Chair. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Smith, Central District Time and Place Chair, 8409 Barbee Lane, Knoxville, TN 37923, phone: 865-691-3231, or E-mail: briankarens@comcast.net.

Women of Reform Judaism Support Student Learning



Reform sisterhood members take part in a demonstration for women's suffrage, circa 1900.

The **Women of Reform Judaism** (WRJ) is the single largest cumulative donor to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion: it has provided devoted support to the College-Institute annually since 1913. Through the YES Fund (Youth, Education, and Special Projects), WRJ has traditionally provided scholarship aid to North American rabbinical students and students in our Israel Rabbinical Program, as well as cantorial prizes to students at HUC-JIR's School of Sacred Music. In addition, the WRJ has subsidized HUC-JIR's *Pesach* Project in the Former Soviet Union, whereby scores of students lead Passover *sedarim* in Jewish communities large and small throughout Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Shelley Lindauer, WRJ Executive Director (center), meeting with HUC-JIR students (from left) Zoe Jacobs, Andrew Goodman, and Erica Greenbaum.



WRJ is the collective voice and presence of women in Reform congregational life and works to ensure the future of Progressive Judaism in North America, Israel, and around the world. The organization has recently strengthened its dedication to HUC-JIR students by committing to named scholarships to fund rabbinical, cantorial, and education students at all three HUC-JIR stateside campuses, and continuing to fund students in our Israel Rabbinical Program

The 2007-08 recipients of the WRJ Scholarships are rabbinical students **Karen Kriger**, C '11, **Rochelle Kamins**, L '09, **Judith Bacharach**, N '09, cantorial student **Leah Holland**, N '09; education students **Olga Bluman**, RHSOE '08, L '09, and **Sarah Ruderman**, NYSOE '09; and communal service student **Anna Schwarz**, SJCS '09. For the duration of their careers as Jewish leaders, these students will carry the name of the WRJ as part of their identity. During the course of their studies, these WRJ Scholars will benefit from a close relationship with the WRJ, its scholars, and its programs, and an enriched understanding of the role of women's leadership in the congregational setting. They will be better prepared to engage the active involvement of women and Sisterhoods within the professional settings in which they will work.

Rosanne M. Selfon, President of WRJ, explains, "We've always had a strong relationship with HUC-JIR students, but moving forward, we need to have a stronger, better commitment to them. WRJ is building connections to HUC-JIR students and these students are learning more about our support of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the URJ's Youth Programming, and the Religious Action Center." Selfon says, "Our hope is that with these scholarships, we will be able to increase interest in WRJ and the important work that we do."

WRJ also continues to work with the entire HUC-JIR student body and faculty and provides exceptional support and resources. The WRJ, in partnership with the URJ Press, has just published *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, edited by Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi,

Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, and Dr. Andrea Weiss, Assistant Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/New York. WRJ commissioned the work of the world's leading Jewish female Bible scholars, rabbis, historians, philosophers, and archaeologists for the Commentary – the first of its kind. WRJ gave HUC-JIR students early access to preview materials from the Commentary, which debuted at the 2007 WRJ Assembly, and students have been able to use Torah studies and program materials provided by WRJ in their coursework and student pulpits.

Selfon lauds Rabbi David Ellenson's "immense support of the *Torah Commentary*" and looks forward to its use in HUC-JIR's curriculum and by HUC-JIR's students. With the generous endowment support of Elizabeth Blaustein Roswell and Arthur Roswell, all 2nd-year students at HUC-JIR will receive a copy of this extraordinary volume from the WRJ for the next three years. This year, the WRJ will underwrite the expense for students in their 3rd to 5th years. This wonderful gift will ensure that this important scholarly work will inform the learning of all of HUC-JIR's students in the future.

As a New Year's gift this past *Rosh Hashanah*, WRJ donated copies of *Covenant of the Spirit: New Prayers, Poems, and Meditations from Women of Reform Judaism* to every HUC-JIR student as a resource for their internships, pulpits, and everyday life. The volume is a collection of original prayers for all types of occasions and for each individual's daily life – from "Torah: Source of our Covenant" through "Lifecycle Events: Living the Covenant," and includes meditations on illness and hope, the *Shoah* and Israel, prayers for peace and gratitude, holidays and *Shabbat*, and blessings and benedictions for meetings, gatherings, and rituals.

"Our support of HUC-JIR is one of the proudest things our organization has done," says Shelley Lindauer, WRJ Executive Director. "In some way, WRJ has supported every HUC-JIR student since 1913. By supporting HUC-JIR, we have helped to ensure the future of Reform Judaism."

The YES Fund in Action!

WRJ is being honored by the World Union for Progressive Judaism for our "continued support of Reform and Progressive Judaism around the world through [the] YES (Youth, Education and Special Projects) Fund" at a dinner in New York on September 14.

The YES Fund (Youth, Education, and Special Projects) represents the collective financial efforts of our members and donors to strengthen the institutions of Reform/Progressive Judaism and ensure the future of Reform Jewish leadership. Together we are able to achieve what no one individual or sisterhood could accomplish alone. Through the YES Fund, WRJ is able to provide financial assistance to our rabbinical and cantorial students, our youth, and organizations throughout the Reform/Progressive Jewish Movement.

What this really means is that **you, our local sisterhoods, are being honored for your continued commitment to the YES Fund.** Without you, we would not be able to support overseas rabbinic students who will establish or support progressive communities in the Former Soviet Union, Germany, England, and Israel. Without you, we would not be able to support Bat Mitzvah programs for teen girls in Israel, the WRJ Music Library at Abraham Geiger College, or sponsor an early childhood education curriculum for Reform Jewish children in Russia. And without you, the World Union would not be able to continue the scope of its work strengthening Jewish life in Israel and worldwide by establishing and supporting modern, pluralistic congregations and institutions, developing Jewish communal and youth leadership, and advancing social justice.

June 18, 2008

Shelley Lindauer, Executive Director
Women of Reform Judaism
633 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Ms. Lindauer,

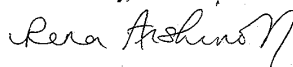
I am deeply honored to be one of the two Ordinees from the Cincinnati class of 2008 to receive the Women of Reform Judaism Centennial Prize. This is a most significant accolade acknowledging noteworthy and important contributions to the role of women in Judaism and I feel both humbled and privileged to receive such recognition.

The decision to apply to rabbinical school six years ago as a mature female student with a family and a well established career in Canada was not a light one. Acceptance to HUC-JIR meant leaving my Toronto home to go to Israel and Cincinnati and adapt to two new countries and their respective cultures, study with classmates much younger than myself, and leave the field of science to embark upon something completely new. It is a decision I have never regretted and I believe my family and I are all the stronger for it.

My years at HUC-JIR have been filled with learning from remarkable scholars who opened a new world for me. The opportunities to engage in new experiences have been endless, and I have been fortunate to work with professors who taught me that I can be the rabbi I uniquely choose to be. I had the privilege of being actively involved in many community volunteer experiences for four years and interfaced with people in the Cincinnati community who greatly enhanced my studies as I became involved with individuals and families in extremely meaningful rabbinic work. This included working with seniors, low-income individuals with HIV/AIDS, and children who lost a parent or sibling. These experiences and my rabbinic thesis on bereaved children along with the intense academic studies at HUC-JIR reinforced how much I want to be a rabbi and how rabbis can take the texts and traditions we treasure and apply them to those with whom we interact in meaningful ways.

I had the pleasure of sitting next to Sally Priesand at the Cincinnati CCAR convention in March of this year. She is a remarkable woman who paved the way for those of us who also want to make a difference. She proved that women have a powerful role as leaders in Judaism. I am honored by the acknowledgment of both Women of Reform Judaism and the faculty of HUC-JIR as an individual who has contributed to such an important area. Thank you so very much for this beautiful recognition. I am honored to receive it and to represent the values of Women of Reform Judaism.

Yours sincerely,



Rena Arshinoff

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ANNOUNCING

The Torah: A Women's Commentary Study Guides

Since the publication and great success of the parashat Chayei Sarah study guide, Women of Reform Judaism has had requests for a study guide for all the parashot from *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*.

Working with the commentary's editors and adult education specialists, the weekly guides are now in development and will be offered on a monthly basis as free downloads for anyone who signs up.

Registration is now open at www.womenofreformjudaism.org.

What can you do?

SAVE THE DATES NOW

for the first Shabbat
of each month (beginning in November)
so that you, your sisterhood, and your congregation can
study together from this historic work.

Questions? Contact Shelley Lindauer at slindauer@urj.org



SAVE THE DATE!	Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple Sisterhood is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year with an exciting program the weekend of October 24-25. The guest speaker for the weekend is Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, the editor of <i>The Torah: A Women's Commentary</i> . Please consider joining us in Cleveland for what promises to be a most special event.
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