



WRJ Pacific District Tuesday Chai Line

Tuesday, December 27, 2011

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**Sisterhood Presidents: Please forward this email
to your Board and Committee Chairs**

Pacific District News

Report from Lindie Henderson & Ellen Bick on the WRJ 48th Assembly, December 14-18th, 2011



We were thrilled to share the Assembly with more than sixty Pacific District women and missed those of

you who were not with us!

Approximately 520 women attended from 180 sisterhoods, in 37 states and 4 countries: United States, Canada, South Africa, and Israel. The venue of the Gaylord National Harbor Hotel situated on the Potomac River was just beautiful and huge. We had good weather, sunny and cold.



Gaylord National Harbor Hotel

Wednesday:

As various committees were meeting to coordinate their activities, the eight WRJ District Presidents and their eight 1st Vice Presidents spent two hours planning, discussing, debating and sharing issues facing our districts and our local sisterhoods. We can be very proud of the accomplishments and efforts of our Pacific District women.

The **Opening Plenary** keynote speaker was **Cecile Richards**, president of **Planned Parenthood**. She was an excellent, inspiring, and knowledgeable speaker who confirmed the important role that WRJ has as a partner for advocacy. In reference to Chanukah, she said to light the Chanukah candles for women's right to choose and don't let the lights go out. We passed a variety of constitutional revisions. Workshop Block 1 offered 13 choices in workshops, from a special president's workshop to membership and climate change and sustainability.

The **Endower and Lifeline Reception** special guest speaker was **Rabbi Rick Jacobs**, the new president of URJ.



Rabbi Richard Jacobs, Lynn Magid Lazar, Blair Marks & Rabbi Marla J. Feldman

A joint URJ/WRJ plenary followed from 8:15-10:15 pm with **Rabbis Eric Yoffie, Rick Jacobs, and Daniel Frelander** speaking, among others. The main speaker was **Dr. Wendy Mogel** talking about our families and child raising. **Natan Sharansky**, chairman of the Jewish National Agency, also spoke.

Late night entertainment began at 10:30. Long days and evenings filled with energy and good information.

Thursday: Morning T'Filah sessions began at 7:15 am. Following these, another joint plenary began at 8:45am. Singer **Julie Silver** opened the session. **Rabbi David Saperstein**, director of the **Religious Action Center** introduced **Representative Eric Cantor (R-VA)**, the US House majority leader.



Plenary Session Voting

Then **Lynn Magid Lazar**, president of **WRJ**, introduced speaker **Nancy Brinker**, founder of the **Susan G. Komen for the Cure**. One woman with a cause and an idea, working with others, has certainly made a difference in the efforts to eliminate breast cancer!

Joint URJ/WRJ workshops followed. The **World Union for Progressive Judaism** luncheon featured new president **Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs**. We participated in workshops from 2:30-4:00 pm followed by a WRJ Plenary with greetings from the **Israel Religious Action Center** in Jerusalem by **Anat Hoffman**, executive director. Or Ami winners were featured and honored. A special guest, **Marcia Greenberger**, co-president and founder of the National Women's Law Center, was honored as the 2011 recipient of the **Jane Evans Pursuit of Justice Award**. Greenberger discussed the on-going fight for women's equality, especially in health and contraception. WRJ resolutions were proposed and passed.

Pacific District received a Gold OR Ami Award for our Sew Green 2010 Convention bags and four of our PD sisterhoods received Or Ami Awards, as well.

The Chai Society Reception (WRJ Board alums) began at 7:20pm for its members and outgoing WRJ board members.

Another plenary session began at 8:30 pm with guest speaker **Rabbi Gilad Kariv**, Executive Director of the **Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism**. Polite and respectful discussion occurred regarding the WRJ dues increase that passed by more than two to one.

Late night entertainment began at 10:30 and other late night receptions were held.

Friday: The morning began at 8:00 am with each district's members working on the No Sew Blanket mitzvah project making blankets for the **Linus Project** and for **US and Canadian armed services veterans**.



No Sew Blankets

This was the only time Pacific District women were together at Assembly. At this same time, our newest affiliate, **Beth Am in Seattle**, was presented with their gavel and charter by President **Lynn Magid Lazar** and 1st VP **Blair Marks**. **Merrie Siegel**, president of **Beth Am Sisterhood**, accepted. At 9:45, we went to a YES Fund brunch, honoring **Rabbi Eric Yoffie**. The NFTY president, **Forrest Yesnes**, thanked WRJ for its support. Rabbi Eric Yoffie spoke about the important part that WRJ plays in support of our synagogues. **Rabbi Naamah Kelman**, of **HUC-JIR in Jerusalem**, spoke about the importance of the projects funded by the YES Fund, especially in Israel.

And **Rabbi Joe Black** sang to us.



New Lifeline pins were presented.

Then, we passed through metal detectors as we entered the hall to hear **President Barack Obama**. Go to www.urg.org to hear President Obama's speech, as well as other featured items from the biennial.

We participated in another workshop block. Then all 5000 +/- of us celebrated Shabbat with a Kabbalat Shabbat service, with wonderful music and a great choir and dinner, all together, in the same hall. The food was good and we had the opportunity to have dinner with our own congregants and others. Later, an oneg Shabbat song session was held--wonderful music, song and ruach!

Saturday: The morning began with Torah study sessions and then Shabbat morning service at 10:00 am, with **Rabbi Eric Yoffie** giving the sermon and his daughter, **Adina Yoffie**, reading from the Torah. We went on to joint Shabbat study luncheons, with speakers and discussions on a huge variety of topics. Saturday afternoon brought the WRJ Havdalah, board installation, and Centennial kick-off. Our WRJ past presidents were part of the board installation. **Lynn Magid Lazar** and 1st VP **Blair Marks**, and other board members, both new and continuing were installed.

On Saturday evening, URJ and WRJ were treated to a Tribute to **Rabbi Eric Yoffie**, with wonderful music and song.

Sunday: The morning began with t'filah, if you chose. Then on to workshops, such as Ethical Wills, Fundraising, and Yoga Shalom. We closed the Assembly at our last plenary session. We heard about the **2013 Assembly** which will celebrate our **Centennial in San Diego**. Pacific District members **Julia Weinstein**, Local Arrangements Chair with **Lauren Milana** and **Phyllis Bigelson** as Co Vice Chairs invited our Pacific District delegation of 65 women to put on our visors and sunglasses. We got up and sang revised lyrics to the Katy Perry song "*California Gurls*" to invite our sisters to the WRJ Centennial in 2013. Everyone in the room felt the enthusiasm!

This was an incredible Assembly, with fabulous speakers, services, networking, attendance at workshops and receptions, with renewed friendships and countless new ones. It reminded us of the value of our connections as we continue our growth, challenges and sacred work as sisterhood women.

We welcome comments from women who attended the Assembly.

Lindie Henderson
WRJ Pacific District President

Ellen Bick
WRJ Pacific District 1st Vice President

*Also: Email us your pictures of Assembly events! Email them to: Myra Feiger at myra@feiger.com
Julia Feldman at yaelle@gmail.com*

Note: Assembly Pictures are from the WRJ Website.

Pacific District Board Meeting – February 4 & 5, 2012

Click on this link for the Notice of Board meeting, details of the weekend events, and the registration form: <http://www.wrjpacific.org/2012-leadership-training.html>

In addition, the registration form is attached in word format for those who wish to use that format.

Sisterhood presidents or their designees are invited to attend the Board meeting on Sunday, February 5, 2012 – 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Please register as quickly as possible to facilitate the planning that goes into this weekend.

Save the Date!



**WRJ Pacific District Convention
October 25 – 28, 2012 in Portland**

For more information, click here:

<http://www.wrjpacific.org/join-us-in-portland.html>