

executive message

In Cape Town, South Africa, I was among 70 delegates from 18 countries who convened at the Annual World ORT Board of Directors Meeting in January. The participants, who hailed from as far as the Baltic and as near as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, gathered to define the direction ORT will take over the coming year. The WAO delegation included National President **Carol Linch**; Executive Director **Alice Herman**; Vice Presidents **Randi Brenowitz**, **Patti Aaron**, and **Dorene Berger**; Secretary **Sharon Ufberg**; Chair of the World ORT Executive Committee **Reese Feldman**; World ORT Honorary Vice President **Ruth Eisenberg**; and me as National First Vice President.

ORT South Africa was particularly delighted to host this meeting. It was the Jewish community of South Africa that provided the funds for the first ORT school in Israel, Yad Syngalowski, which was relocated from Sofia, Bulgaria, to Jaffa in 1949, and is

FOCUS

leadership matters

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today the flagship of the ORT Israel network. During the apartheid period, ORT would not hold international meetings within the country, and only recently introduced training programs there.

accomplishments in 2001 was very well received. Randi delivered a presentation on U.S. Operations that clarified, to an international body, the need for an operational presence in the United States. And Carol, American ORT President **Bob Sill**, and ORT Israel President **Uzi Tsuk** led a brief service in memory of the victims of Sept. 11 and the ORT Israel students who were killed by terrorist acts.

As Chair of the World ORT Standing Committee on Fund-raising, I served as the moderator for the session on fund-raising at which an emergency appeal for Argentina was launched. In record time – under an hour – delegates raised more than \$185,000 for ORT Argentina, to help alleviate the dire economic situation that has befallen the country. Israel and the Newly Independent States contributed to this appeal.

The most pressing issues addressed were the universal need for funding and the revitalization of the International Cooperation Program, ORT's non-sectarian assistance in training and education to developing countries around the world. A heated discussion ensued as to whether we should continue to serve needs beyond the Jewish community, and the conclusion was a resounding "yes" that ORT has an obligation to help the general community. The Board of Directors voted to continue and expand the activities of the IC program, particularly to

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WAO leaders played a prominent role in the meeting proceedings. Country reports were given at the panels, which included Israel, Latin America (with a major focus on Argentina), France, and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Carol served as one of two panelists leading a discussion on Israel, which was, of course, a central focus of the meeting. Alice's presentation on WAO's

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allocate resources to developing countries with small Jewish populations. The initiative already includes such programs in South Africa as ORT Step, which serves impoverished areas, information technology training, and the provision of expertise in health and agriculture services. Most recently, Hewlett-Packard has agreed to finance a three-year “digital village” in Dikhhatole, an underprivileged area outside Johannesburg, offering community members computer, accounting, and business skills.

At a reception in ORT’s honor attended by 400 people, Cape Town Mayor **Gerald Morkel** showed his appreciation for the training provided by ORT. “In the midst of mass unemployment and resultant poverty, we suffer from a desperate shortage of those skills which are necessary to oil the wheels of the modern technological state. ORT’s vocational and educational training opportunities will equip our people with those skills and competencies, without which they will never hope to succeed in the brave new world.”

As would be expected at a meeting of this nature, we also tackled administrative matters including passing the budget. World ORT is in the process of revamping its committee structure to be more responsive to both donor and operational organizations. The World ORT portfolio of projects is being revised to be more comprehensive and enable WAO and the other fund-raising organizations to better prioritize needs, which will help us in our fund-raising initiatives.

Speaking on behalf of the entire WAO delegation, I would like to thank you for the privilege of participating in this extraordinary meeting.

Judy Menikoff

National First Vice President

news in brief

Alice Herman named WAO EVP

Congratulations to Executive Director **Alice Herman** on being elected Executive Vice President, effective Jan. 1. Immediate Past National President **Pepi Dunay** officially installed Alice at the Board of Directors Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., on Feb. 3.

ORT Israel appoints new director-general

In the January issue, we ran a notice that **Haim Ben-Ami** has resigned as ORT Israel Director-General. This move is effective March 31. **Zvi Peleg**, who has been with ORT Israel for many years and is currently the Director of Human Resources, will assume the top position beginning in April.

We look forward to working with Zvi and know that the same close relationship between Women’s American ORT and ORT Israel will thrive under his leadership.

ORT / JECC partnership receives \$175,000 grant

The ORT /JECC Partnership for Technology in Education has received a three-year grant of \$175,000 from the Covenant Foundation to further strengthen educational technology integration at the Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrahi School, Hebrew Academy and Solomon Schecter Day School.

The project, now entering its fifth year, trains a core group of educators to infuse technology into the general and Judaic studies curriculum and build peer-mentoring knowledge and skills.

Once trained, these teachers will

Area Council receives grant

Members of the Greater Sarasota Area Council were especially pleased to learn of the addition of a new Sam’s Club store to their community when the retail chain heralded the grand opening by awarding grants to local nonprofit organizations. A Sam’s Club representative approached Area Council President **Ann Baum** about applying for a grant. In order to qualify, a charity must have held a fund-raising activity in December. The Area Council had just completed its annual holiday gift wrap, which raised \$21,000. Ann attended a luncheon on Jan. 30 at which she was presented with a check for \$500. Other recipients included United Cerebral Palsy, the American Heart Association, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. WAO was the only Jewish organization to be honored.



serve as “technology lead teachers,” assisting other educators to integrate technology into the learning environment.

In addition, the grant will assist in establishing Web-based school sites enabling teachers, students, parents and administrators to communicate with each other and engage in collaborative learning.

The ORT/JECC Partnership for Technology in Education has drawn national attention. The partnership is co-directed by Yossi Israeli, an ORT/JECC information technology director, and Maury Greenberg, JECC professional development and educational technology director. (From the *Cleveland Jewish News*, 1.18.02)

Baroness high tea attracts new members

Baroness Yvonne de Gunzbourg’s invitation to attend the Gulf Coast Florida Baroness de Gunzbourg High Tea attracted 100 WAO members to the Sarasota Ritz Carlton on Jan. 3. In her role as the Baroness, **Alice Cotman** and her Baron, portrayed by **Richard Hershorin**, gave an amusing glance back at ORT’s history. National President **Carol**

Linch offered greetings, and 19 new Society members were pinned. **Bernice Goodman** and **Dottie Stevens** co-chaired the event. Serving on their Steering Committee were: **Alice Cotman**, **Evelyn Driscoll**, **Paula Murzin** and **Bernice G. Stern**. The High Tea was fully underwritten by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Rittenhouse Nuveen, Furman Selz LLC, Alliance Bernstein, Patti and Richard Hershorin and Betty and Herbert Schiff of the Hershorin/Schiff Philanthropic Fund, and Bernice G. and Myron H. Stern Individual Trusts.

Deputy Director-General addresses Baronesses

At the 5th Annual East Coast Florida Baroness de Gunzbourg Society Luncheon on Jan. 29, World ORT Deputy Director General **Gideon Meyer** briefed the 120 attendees at the Carolina Club in Margate on the latest challenges around the world, particularly in Argentina, Israel, and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. The Baroness de Gunzbourg herself, who incidentally bares a striking resemblance to **Elinor Katz**, thanked the members for supporting the Society. The event, chaired by **Zelda**

Magid and co-chaired by **Jackie Laderman**, also celebrated WAO’s 75th anniversary.

Congratulations to the hard-working committee, including: East Coast Florida Planned Giving Committee Chair **Toby Feuer**, Associate Chair **Shirley Sokolsky**, **Toby Bien**, **Ruth Freund**, **Judith Friedman**, **Helen Fuchs**, **Florence Gilbert**, **Millie Grackin**, **Norma Heit**, **Elinor Katz**, **Nana Klein**, **Joan Mazurek**, **Susan Parnes**, **Myrna B. Pototsky**, **Miriam Pressman**, **Rita Sadowsky**, **Marilyn Selevan-Wesler**, **Evelyn Solomon**, **Florence Wagner**, and **Jean Zugman**.

*Debbie Hammer
National Director of Planned Giving*

Queens Region gift wrap

This past holiday season, the Queens Region held its annual holiday gift wrapping at Barnes & Noble in Forest Hills, N.Y., raising over \$3,600. Thanks to all our members who gave their time and effort to make this event successful.

*Phyllis Wernau
Queens Region*

**Deadline for next FOCUS!
is Mon., March 4.**

assignment update

As of Jan. 31, our year-to-date assignment income is \$3,499,301, which is 49 percent of the 2001-02 annual assignment of \$7,191,500. Last year at this time, our total fulfillment was \$3,875,300, which was 52 percent of the 2000-01 annual assignment of \$7,390,500.

Office of the Controller

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And the winner is...

In a drawing held at the National Office on Jan. 16, **Sylvia Lipski** of the Suburban Chicago Region and the Fountains Chapter, North Palm Beach County Region was chosen as the winner of a free trip to participate in the April in Paris Mission to Montreuil, April 21-28. A limited number of spaces are still available. To reserve, please contact Jan Kovacs at 800.51.WAORT, ext. 256 or jkovacs@waort.org no later than March 15.



WOMEN'S AMERICAN ORT
FOCUS!
leadership matters

Distributed to: Board of Directors, ADCs, Planned Giving Resource Team, Major Gifts, Young Leadership & Financial Management Specialists, Presidents of Chapters and Coordinating Bodies, Chairs of Bulletin, Community Action, PYLC 1-8, Protégée Classes 1-4, Past National Presidents, Honorary Vice Presidents, Professional Staff, Region offices.

'Adopt-A-Shelf' chapter focus

At Mary Hall Freedom House, members of Atlanta's Tri-County Chapter read from several of the books they were presenting to the abused women's shelter, during a ceremony with some of its youngest residents. The shelter operates a pre-school to care for the children while their mothers attend counseling sessions.

Chapter members launched the "Adopt-A-Shelf" campaign at their "Kugel Cook-off" in December. With the money raised, they purchased books on self-esteem, interviewing skills, and parenting, as well as children's books. Collecting books for the shelter is an ongoing initiative.

If your chapter is interested in participating in the "Adopt-A-Shelf" campaign, contact Amy Fiedel in the National Office, ext. 221 or at afiedel@waort.org.

Compensating victims of National Socialism

On Oct. 10, 2001, **Polly Liss** of the Northern Virginia Area Council attended an information meeting on Compensation/Restitution for Victims of National Socialism, at the Austrian Embassy.

The Austrian National Council has unanimously adopted a General Settlement Fund Law for the comprehensive settlement of open questions of compensation and restitution for victims of National Socialism. The purpose of the General Settlement Fund is to acknowledge, through voluntary payments, the moral responsibility for losses and damages inflicted upon Jewish citizens and other vic-

tims of National Socialism as a result of or in connection with the National Socialist regime. The law went into effect on May 28, 2001. Applications must be filed before May 28, 2003.

We are aware that there are ORT members who would be entitled to this consideration. If you know of those who may benefit from the Fund, please inform them. You may contact Polly Liss at 703.524.1040 or polly-rl@juno.com for additional information from the Austrian Embassy, or call the Embassy directly at 202.895.6745.

Polly Liss
Northern Virginia Area
Council

good & welfare

mazel tov to...

Board Member **Jan** and **Steve Azose** on the marriage of their daughter, **Lea Azose**, to First Lieutenant **Luis Vazquez**.

Treasurer **Kay Freeman** and her husband, **Irwin**, on the birth of their grandson, **Brett Levin Freeman**.

LAOTI Chair **Carolyn** and **Al Gold** on the birth of their grandson, **Matthew Alexander Todd**, born to the couple's youngest daughter, **Karen**, and her husband, **George**.

National Zone Advisor **Rhonda Wolfson** and her husband, **Roger**, on the birth of their grandson, **Noah Wolfson**.

Financial Management Specialist **Tess Friedman** on the marriage of her son, **Paul**, to **Alicia Brafford**.

Financial Management Specialist **Esther Fries** on the bat mitzvah of her granddaughter, **Ashley**.

Board Member **Haya Varon** on being recognized as an outstanding leader by the Jewish Family Service in Houston.

Sandi Omanski, N.Y./N.J. Planned Giving Committee Chair, whose son, **Scott**, was graduated from the University of Hartford with honors in December, a semester early, and was named to the President's List. Scott is now attending graduate school.

speedy recovery to...

Honorary Vice President **Claire Mazer** who is recovering at home from surgery.

Honorary Vice President **Naomi Finger** who is nursing a broken arm.

Board Member **Patti Hershorin's** son and daughter-in-law who were both in a serious automobile accident and are recuperating at home. Also, to Patti's father who had major surgery.

National Zone Advisor **Marcia Friedman** who is at home recuperating from surgery.

Al Gold, husband of LAOTI Chair **Carolyn Gold**, who is recuperating from knee replacement surgery.

sincere condolences to...

Jerry Don on the passing of his wife, **Esther Lasker-Don**. Esther was an ADC and a member of the Florida Gulf Coast Planned Giving Committee.

Bernice Stern on the loss of her husband, **Mike**. Bernice, now retired, was a long-time WAO employee and held the position of Fund-raising Director for many years. She continues to be a very active member.

Candy Gardner, President of the San Antonio Alamo Chapter, on the passing of her father.

Susan Sher, on the loss of her father, **Herman Weiss**.

staff update

In order to better serve the needs of our organization and its members, the Leadership Development & Outreach Department will assume responsibility for *The Reporter*, *FOCUS!*, and other member-centered publications, as well as the Annual Report and press releases.

Roberta Zulawski, who has done a wonderful job as Acting Director of Marketing and Communications over the past year, will be moving on to other opportunities outside of WAO, as of March 8. **Amy Fiedel** continues to grow in her role as our Communications Associate and will work under **Karen Bloom**. The WAO web site, which has been successfully utilized as a fund-raising tool since its redesign, will be managed by **Tara Nestell** and **Jeff Cohen** of the Fund Development Department.

Stephen Shafer, former Associate Director of Marketing & Communications, has joined the Metropolitan Opera as Assistant Director of Institutional Relations. We wish him much success and happiness in his new position.

calendar

March 6

North Palm Beach County Region – Golden Circle Luncheon at Le Mond, 11:30 a.m. Guest speaker is **Parvine Motamed**, former Director of ORT Operations USA. Contact: Florida Development Office at 561.470.9006.

March 9 - 16

Suburban Chicago Region – PasspORT to Savings. For a \$60 contribution to WAO, participants receive a personal PasspORT to Savings Card that entitles them to a 20% discount on regularly-priced

merchandise at over 140 stores in the Chicago Metropolitan Area. Contact: Suburban Chicago Region Office at 847.291.0475.

March 11

New Jersey Region – An Evening of Good Taste. A sampling of New Jersey's finest cuisine. The Greystone Manor at Van's Freehold Inn, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets: \$36 in advance; \$40 at the door. Call 888.675.2678.

March 12

Greater Sarasota Area Council – Major Gifts/Golden Circle Cocktail Party at the new home of **Nancy and Howard Cobin**, 6 p.m. Guest speaker is **Parvine Motamed**. Call 561.470.9006.

March 17

Suburban Chicago Region – 4th Annual Lunch with a View, 11:30 a.m. **Achy Obejas**, a former *Chicago Tribune* writer and author of the recent novel *Days of Awe*, will read from her book, and **Dr. Ruth Behar**, a University of Michigan anthropology professor and documentary filmmaker, will screen a segment from her recently completed film *Adio Kerida*. They will speak about the Cuban Jewish community as reflected in their work. Call 847.291.0475.

Through March 25

North Palm Beach County Region – Diamond Jubilee Raffle to benefit ORT schools in the U.S. Enter to win \$10,000. Two hundred tickets have been issued at \$100 each. Of the \$20,000 raised, \$10,000 will be donated to ORT. Tickets can be shared by up to 10 people. Contact: North Palm Beach County Region Office at 561.964.4520



Educating for Life

WAO web site updates

Did you know that Women's American ORT's web site, www.waort.org, is an excellent source of your daily WAO information requirements? New material is posted frequently, so stop by and see what's new. Below are some of the latest updates and additions. If you don't see what you want or need, please let us know at info@waort.org.

Read All About It: WAO's Public Policy Resolutions are online at www.waort.org/about_top.html.

Planning For the Future: Want to earn income for life, avoid capital gains tax, receive current income-tax deductions, and best of all, ensure an ORT education for generations to come? Become a member of the Baroness de Gunzburg Society (www.waort.org/baroness.htm). Visit our Planned Giving Center at www.waort.org/giving.html.

Youthful Pursuits: WAO's Young Leadership program has many opportunities for women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Go to www.waort.org/youngleader.htm.

Give and Learn: WAO's National Mentoring Program matches up-and-coming local leaders with members of the Board of Directors to provide an ongoing opportunity for learning and growth. See www.waort.org/mentoring.htm.

Drop By the Newsstand: For our current and archived newsletters (*FOCUS!*, *QuORTerly Briefing*), press releases, the complete issue of *The Reporter*, the *World ORT Times*, and our Annual Report, go to www.waort.org/newsstand_top.html.

It's a Small World: Learn about current international and domestic

projects and download the full brochures in PDF format at www.waort.org/currentprojects.htm.

Israel:

The Sunflowers Project: Using computers, software, and training provided by ORT, students bring the Internet to young cancer patients.

ORT Horowitz Comprehensive High School: Advice Center for the School Community.

ORT Yad Shapira High School: Improving a School with a Multicultural Society.

ORT Miteranni High School: Promotion of Underachieving Students.

ORT Ya'arat Ha'Emek Community Junior High School: Laptop Computer Classrooms.

ORT Megadim Comprehensive High School: Science Centers Project.

ORT Syngalowski Comprehensive High School: Promoting Academic Achievement.

ORT Hanna Senesh School: Matriculation Reinforcement for Slow Learners Project.

ORT Melton High School and College: Student Achievement Improvement Project.

France:

ORT Montreuil: ORT France's flagship school is undergoing a major renovation.

Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova:

Project Regeneration: Developing Technology Centers at Jewish Schools in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus

The St. Petersburg and Kiev Mezuzot Projects: Affixing a *mezuzah* to the doorpost of each classroom.

The Jewish School in Dniepropetrovsk: Ecology Laboratory.

The ORT Technology Center in Dniepropetrovsk and ORT Kiev Technological Lyceum: Teamwork Training Projects.

WAO web wanderings

www.mfa.gov.il – the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs' site provides updates on the situation in Israel and actions of the Israeli government.

www.jta.org – an international news service that provides coverage of political, economic and social developments affecting Jews around the world. Daily reports include the latest information about the Middle East peace process, political developments in Washington and Jerusalem, the activities of anti-Semites, trends affecting Jewish life in North

America, security incidents in Israel, and conditions for Jews in Eastern Europe, Latin America and far-flung communities around the world.

www.joi.org – the Jewish Outreach Institute offers resources and develops Jewish community-based outreach programming for intermarried couples and their families.

www.aish.com/holidays/passover – features the following sections: Haggadah Insights, Laws of Passover, and a cookbook.