Building a Better BUNWC

Chapters Working to Grow NWC

Ellen Norman wasted no time joining the National Women’s Committee after she retired from teaching three years ago. She moved into the retirement community of Concordia, New Jersey and says she was immediately told, “You have to join Brandeis.”

“I did and I’ve loved it,” she declared recently.

In many ways, Norman is the new face of the National Women’s Committee (NWC), a just-retired professional who is eager to fill all that new free time with challenging, intellectually stimulating activities. The burgeoning area of Monroe Township, New Jersey where her chapter is located is home to several relatively new and vibrant NWC chapters.

During her many travels this year, NWC President Carol Kern sat down with representatives of five chapters in the Monroe Township area in October, 2003. “There’s nothing like face to face communication,” Kern observes. “My trips this year have been a real eye-opener for me in this, our 55th anniversary year—to see how fast we’re growing in certain parts of the country and to meet so many of the dynamic women we’re drawing into this organization to continue our important mission of supporting Brandeis University.

“I want to personally thank our chapters for their support. I want to be sure they know we will do anything we can to help them grow, create programs, and nurture their members, so that the National Women’s Committee can continue its vital work of supporting the Brandeis Libraries and the University’s scholarship and fellowship programs. We will not be able to meet our commitments to Brandeis unless we grow the organization and bring in new members.”

Most of the five chapters that met in October with Kern and Barbara Selwyn, director of marketing and member services—Clearbrook, Concordia, Middlesex, Ponds, and Whittingham—were formed within the last 20 years. Located in retirement communities, they have attracted more than 2000 members with rich study group offerings, exciting trips, and other learning experiences.

There is so much demand for study groups that members of the Concordia Chapter, which offers 60, must limit each member to five study groups per year. The chapter even offers study groups to its snowbirds in Florida during the winter months. It has participated in a very successful adult learning camp in Pennsylvania for the past three years. As many as 110 members have attended these camps, making them not only intellectually-stimulating but great fundraisers as well.
The Younger Generation

Like many throughout the country, the New Jersey chapters are trying to attract even younger members with evening or weekend study groups and events for working people. In the more established Mid-Atlantic Region, where Kern and Selwyn met with representatives of four long-established chapters, Annapolis, Baltimore, Northern Virginia, and Washington, D.C., this effort is also underway.

Annapolis Co-president Dee Green reports that her 30-something daughter has been helpful in bringing in speakers that appeal to a broader audience. “Thanks to her, we have had a former White House correspondent who now works for Newsweek and a producer for CNN correspondent Wolf Blitzer,” Green says. “In addition, a Sunday afternoon barbecue for new members attracted mostly couples in their forties, people who work during the week and appreciate weekend and evening programs. We are trying to do more of these events, so they can be active participants, not just paying members. One of our brieflet study group sessions will be in the early evening to accommodate their schedules.”

Due to these efforts, about half of the new members of this small chapter have been from a more diverse population, as targeted through the National Women’s Committee’s long-range strategic plan, “Blueprint for Success.”

Green, who joined the National Women’s Committee almost immediately after retiring from her job as a public affairs officer for the Social Security Administration, believes the future of the organization lies in the next generation and she wants to help keep it strong.

A potential expansion area for the National Women’s Committee in the Mid-Atlantic Region lies in the Howard County (Columbia, Maryland) area with its young population of stay-at-home moms, says Arlene Heyman, vice president of membership for the Mid-Atlantic Region. “It’s not going to happen overnight,” she observes. “We will have to do a lot of membership events. Some of our chapters are talking about collaborating on one big book and author event, which I think would attract a lot of people. We need to do major marketing.”

Chapter leaders report they are impressed with the new marketing materials provided by the national organization—the “Study with the Best” study group guide, the full-color membership brochure, and the “Words to Inspire and Inform” packet about Brandeis and its history—and they have been energized by their meetings with Kern and Selwyn. “I can’t wait to order the new ‘Be a Part of Brandeis, Too!’ bookmarks and start giving them out!” one president said.

Atlanta: A Family Affair

Now 55 years old, Atlanta has always been a “young” chapter. Founded in 1948 by women in their 30s and 40s, its most active members are still in that age group. With a diverse study group program (57 offerings) that offers everything from children’s issues for young parents to self-improvement for seniors, shifts at the book processing center that accommodate children, and evening programs for working members, the chapter is flourishing, as one generation brings in the next and friends recruit friends.

The leadership gavel has also been passed down through the generations, from founding member Helen Goldstein to her granddaughter Cathy Goldstein Schwartz, a member of the current presidium. Former president Nancy Freedman reports that, just like her mother Betty Jacobson before her, she was installed as president when her son was only four years old. And her son, like so many other children of members, worked the book sale with his mom when he was eight.

Although what Freedman would describe as the chapter’s “active membership” is in their thirties and forties, former chapter presidents usually fill one or two tables at every event. Founding
Thanks to generous individual gifts, planned gifts, and the imaginative fund raising efforts of chapters, the National Women’s Committee’s 55th Anniversary Fund has reached 80 percent of its goal of $550,000. The Fund will benefit the Library Technology Endowed Fund as a means to ensure that the Brandeis Libraries can continue their tradition of providing state-of-the-art technology to students and faculty in the future.

Technology has been a focus of NWC support for more than 20 years, when the organization funded computerization of the catalog, acquisitions, and circulation. Since then, NWC gifts have supported the complete rewiring of the Libraries for high-speed Internet access, the creation of an electronic research center, the purchase of thousands of electronic databases and journals, and several generations of computer upgrades. The Libraries’ budget for 2004-05, for example, includes funds for the replacement of 51 desktop computers.

THE VISION
The goal of technology at the Brandeis Libraries is to free faculty and students from the constraints of location, format, and time. Several recent innovations are bringing the Libraries closer to that goal.

- **Attacking the Cost of Journals.** Addressing the issue of skyrocketing journal costs, the Libraries recently introduced a journal article delivery service. The lifeblood of faculty research, journals are the primary method of communication among scholars. This service allows faculty members to access approximately 45,000 journals and almost 30 million articles directly. Those available in electronic form can be downloaded directly to the user’s computer.

- **WebCt Course Management.** WebCt is an online software product that allows professors to deliver course materials to students via the web. More than 250 faculty members use WebCt to post syllabi, course readings, class notes, sound files and art images. Some also mount discussion boards and provide a “drop box” for electronic delivery of papers.

- **24/7 Reference.** Brandeis faculty and students can now direct their questions to a live professional librarian 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via a web browser on their computer—from their apartment, their dorm room, or from a laptop anywhere. Sixty-eight libraries nationwide are part of this program.

COMING ATTRACTIONS
A wireless campus, electronic archives, and ever-faster and better access to electronic resources are also on the drawing board for the Brandeis Libraries.

- **The wireless campus.** Cell phones are not the only wireless communication tools today. Students may soon be able to access the Libraries’ vast electronic resources from their laptop computers without plugging into hard wiring. A broadcast box installed in the building and wireless networking card in the computer would facilitate wireless access to the Libraries’ web site and all databases.

- **Electronic dissertation and theses.** As more and more students submit dissertations and senior theses electronically, the Libraries are working to accommodate permanent electronic storage of and access to these papers.

- **Speeding up access.** MetaLib/SFX software will simplify and accelerate research for students and faculty. MetaLib, for example, allows the user to execute a search of multiple databases simultaneously, instead of one at a time.

- **Electronic Archive.** Brandeis is interested in creating an institutional repository of documents, scholarly work, photographs that is produced at the University. In some cases, this could serve as a vehicle for the publication of research papers, to bypass the commercial publishing industry.

For information on the 55th Anniversary Fund, contact Janice Fineman, director of development, Brandeis University National Women’s Committee (781-736-4179; fineman@brandeis.edu).
A member recently wrote me: “We spent a thrilling day at Brandeis this summer and had a special tour of the magnificent library. I am still on cloud nine because of the welcome and warmth.”

I had the same reaction on my first visit to Brandeis. Now, I feel so privileged to be able to visit the Brandeis campus frequently as national president, but this experience shouldn’t only be the domain of national leaders. Brandeis is a place where you too can see first hand the excellent libraries that your support has helped build. Walk through the campus during the glorious spring and summer months or under the beautiful fall foliage and see students and faculty on their way to the library and going about their daily activities.

This June will be the perfect opportunity for you to visit Brandeis as we celebrate the 55th Anniversary of the National Women’s Committee and Brandeis University at our National Conference, to be held on campus June 2-6, 2004. Conference is a bonding, inspirational, and learning event you will never forget. You will meet our organization’s most dynamic leaders, attend stimulating faculty lectures and hands-on workshops, meet Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz and other top administrators, and hear Professor Anita Hill and former Clinton advisor Sidney Blumenthal ’65. I would like to celebrate our achievements with you face-to-face. I hope you can join us for an uplifting experience that will fill many pages in your memory book.

I’ve been told that I am a President “on the go!” I have found my work at the national office on campus and my many visits to chapter events very rewarding. We all need to continue being on the go—in our travels, in our communities and in our performance as members of an extraordinary organization that supports a University founded upon the uncommon principals and values of social justice; a University that educates its students to say these words expressed at the 2003 Commencement ceremonies by Ana Yoselin Bugallo ’03:

“We are rooted in a history of compassion, of courage, of character, and of bravery. Our education was made possible because those before us put themselves on the line to build an institution of higher learning, based upon AND guided by the morals of integrity, honesty, and inclusion. Today we stand, 55 years after the dream of Brandeis was realized, soon to be graduates of one of the most prestigious, yet humble, scholarly, imaginative, and peace-promoting institutions of ours or any generation.”

These students are living testament to a dream that began 55 years ago and we have helped each and every graduating class since 1952 realize their dreams.

**Rolling Out the Red Carpet: My Visit to Brandeis**

While I was in the Boston area recently, I was invited to visit Brandeis University and tour the Library. I can’t begin to tell you of my emotions during Mark Alpert’s (social science librarian) explanations and descriptions of what is going on in “our” library.

My cousin and her daughter and I were guests of the Women’s Committee for lunch at the Faculty Club. I felt that the red carpet had been rolled out for me and my Chapter.

Friends, I must tell each one of you that every dollar you have raised for Brandeis was the best investment ever made for teaching, learning, and overall education. We can proudly state that the Women’s Committee sponsorship of the Library is a monument to education.

I wish each one of you could be at the Library to see the great institution we have sponsored.

*Roberta Fredericks  San Diego Chapter*
president Leah Janus, who joined the National Women’s Committee in 1948, attended a recent luncheon with about 150 members from several generations. Members from age 30 to 75 were on the bus recently when the chapter toured the mansions of the Buckhead neighborhood.

One big goal for Atlanta this year has been to “bring more Brandeis” into the chapter. “Our members need to know more about Brandeis and why our work for the University is so important,” explains Freedman. “I learned this at Conference on campus about ten years ago and I’ll never forget it.” Two events have brought that into focus so far this year—a book and author luncheon with Michael Kalafatas ’65 who was director of admissions at Brandeis for many years, and an inspiring talk by a local rabbi about Louis Brandeis and how he changed the course for Jews in America. The chapter will further benefit by a spring visit planned by American Studies Professor Stephen Whitfield.

“Connecting our chapters to the mission of the National Women’s Committee is the reason I have made so many trips to chapters and plan to keep going,” explains Carol Kern, who will visit Atlanta soon. “I want them to know about all the wonderful things that are going on at the University.” Not one to slow down, Kern’s spring itinerary includes Florida, California, Corpus Christi, and Kansas City, after which she will come together with the whole organization at National Conference on June 2-6, 2004 on the Brandeis campus. “This is how we’re building a better BUNWC!” she declares.

BUILDING A BETTER BUNWC

Treat Yourself to All the Things You Love About Brandeis

Imagining Possibilities II: Creating a Future

BUNWC CONFERENCE JUNE 2-6, 2004

❖ Tour the Brandeis campus and see how Brandeis has grown.
❖ Visit the outstanding Libraries that you’ve helped build.
❖ Experience the Brandeis classroom with lectures by our renowned faculty.
❖ Meet President Jehuda Reinharz and other top administrators.
❖ Participate in stimulating workshops and networking sessions.
❖ See old friends and make new ones.
❖ Welcome our 2004 Sachar Award recipient and celebrate the installation of our new National President.

Come and be part of this unique opportunity to join chapter, region, and national leaders on the Brandeis campus.

REGISTRATION IS $350; $25 DISCOUNT FOR EARLY REGISTRANTS

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CHAPTER
Nora Dorn joined the National Women’s Committee at 84 years of age, late in an adventurous and exciting life, but she left a lasting legacy in the form of a $1 million bequest, which will fund scholarships for Brandeis students. Dorn left this generous gift to Brandeis University in the form of the Nora Dorn Scholarship after only five years in the National Women’s Committee. Like everything else in her long and active life, she made the most of her membership in the organization, attending study groups, lectures and meetings, and making many trips with the Aventura/Hollywood, Florida Chapter. She was a discreet but generous philanthropist to other institutions in South Florida as well.

“She joined the National Women’s Committee after her husband’s death because she liked the type of bright, intellectual women she met here,” explains fellow member Elaine Bernstein. She was very active in the Aventura/Hollywood’s study group program and other activities, and spent two years in Bernstein’s memoir writing special interest group, “Windows into our Lives.” She also often attended the symphony, opera, and ballet, and played tennis every day.

Born in 1913 in Russia, Dorn traveled with her mother through Siberia and Mongolia at the age of five on their way to the United States. Once settled in New York, her mother became a high-profile fashion designer, working under the name of Jenny Novik. Her designs were featured in Vogue and Harpers Bazaar. She also became a well-known painter.

Nora also pursued the creative arts after graduating from Hunter College in New York—acting, playing the piano, and producing plays for American troops during World War II. She married businessman Harry Dorn in 1953 and they traveled around the world to Leningrad, Japan, Australia, Paris, and China.

Nora Dorn’s gift brings to more than $1.3 million the amount raised by the National Women’s Committee in scholarship funds since the organization broadened its mission in 2000 to include scholarships. Other scholarships have been established by the Los Angeles, Phoenix, and North Shore, IL Chapters, by the Florida Region, by Blanche and Norman Ginsburg of the Laguna Hills, California Chapter, and by the Helen and Norman Livingston Foundation.

Recipients of the National Women’s Committee scholarships include a future doctor, teacher, and writer:

◊ Olga Oksman ’04, a psychology major, has spent two summers volunteering in the emergency room at New York’s Bellevue Hospital.

◊ Dean’s list student Vanessa Anik ’05 teaches English as a second language to members of the Brandeis dining services staff. She is majoring in English and American literature, minoring in Spanish language and literature, and is enrolled in the education program at Brandeis.

◊ Daniel Olinsky ’05, also on the dean’s list, is a transfer student from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. An English and American literature major, he is a teaching assistant in Hebrew and plans to write and translate after graduation.

Most Brandeis students receive financial aid (75%), which topped $46 million last year, $8.6 million of it in donor-funded scholarships. “Scholarships are one of the University’s highest priorities since they allow us to attract talented students, regardless of their financial resources,” said Raquel Rosenblatt, director of donor relations for Brandeis. “With tuition alone approaching $29,000, they are very important. We greatly appreciate the support of the Nora Dorn Scholarship, and all the other National Women’s Committee scholarship funds that help our students.”

For information on establishing endowed scholarships, contact Janice Fineman, director of development, Brandeis University National Women’s Committee (781-736-4179; fineman@brandeis.edu).
MARIE CURIE ONCE SAID: “YOU CANNOT HOPE TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD WITHOUT IMPROVING THE INDIVIDUALS. TO THAT END, EACH OF US MUST WORK FOR HIS OWN IMPROVEMENT, AND AT THE SAME TIME SHARE A GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL HUMANITY . . . .”

I believe this is what all members of the National Women’s Committee do—for Brandeis, for our communities, for our nation and the world. By providing needed resources to build and sustain the Brandeis library system, as well as funding scholarships and fellowships, we ensure that the best and brightest become tomorrow’s leaders and peacemakers. But, how do we maintain a connection with a University that for many is hundreds, even thousands of miles away? For inspiration, you need only look at the exceptional students at Brandeis and at the University’s many contributions to humanity.

❖ Freshman Jennifer Kruger, from Germantown, Tennessee, was chosen to serve on the Leadership Advisory Council for Congressman Harold Ford, Jr., of the 9th District of Tennessee. She founded the Memphis, Tennessee chapter of the Adopt-a-Grandparent Program and the Jewish Community Center’s Mitzvah Corps, and was a leader in United Synagogue Youth.

❖ Julia Resnitsky, from Beit-Shemesh, Israel, has attended the Seeds of Peace camp in Otisfield, Maine, where young Jewish and Arab Israelis form friendships. At home in Israel, this politics major has organized conflict resolution workshops and volunteers to help disadvantaged Palestinian and Israeli youth.

❖ William Chalmus, the first person in his family to attend college, worked 40 hours a week as a custodian and was completely self sufficient, while enrolled as a full-time student during his senior year in high school.

❖ Brandeis University scientists recently identified a new family of enzymes thought to regulate biochemical changes that may cause a cell to become more susceptible to cancer.

❖ A study by the Center on Hunger and Poverty at Brandeis University and the Food Research and Action Center revealed the dual threat of hunger and obesity in many households.

❖ The Center of Middle East Affairs, a significant new cornerstone of the University currently under construction, will build on the University’s renowned faculty and its strengths in a number of areas to address the most pressing issues facing the modern Middle East.

As we celebrate 55 years of partnership with the University, let’s take pride in achieving what Marie Curie challenged others to do: building a better world by improving individuals. I thank you for making an indelible mark on this University’s first half-century and encourage you to continue your good works and make those important donations that will make the next half-century equally extraordinary.

Is Brandeis in your will?

Join hundreds of National Women’s Committee members, Brandeis alumni and friends who have answered yes to this important question and have been recognized by the University with membership in the SACHAR LEGACY SOCIETY.

The SACHAR LEGACY SOCIETY is a honorary organization that recognizes individuals who have indicated that Brandeis University is included in their wills or who have made planned gifts to the University. These include charitable gift annuities, remainder trusts, and pooled income funds, all of which provide income for life. Legacy Society members receive certificates suitable for framing and are regularly honored at events throughout the country.

For more information on the Sachar Legacy Society, please contact Judy Diamond, development officer, at 781-736-4167 or jdiamond@brandeis.edu.

BRANDEIS HONORS SACHAR LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS IN CALIFORNIA

Beth Ann Saplin of the Brandeis Development office traveled to California to welcome these Santa Clara Valley members into the Sachar Legacy Society. Left to right are major gifts chair Judy Marlin; Sachar Legacy Society inductee Evelyn Perl; Saplin, associate director of development at Brandeis University; inductee Elaine Elkin; and Society member Sandy Stein. Not pictured are Gloria and Harry Alabaster who were previously presented with certificates of membership in the Society.

EXECUTIVE VIEW

BY KATHLEEN CRAGIN BRITTAN

M arie Curie once said: “You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for his own improvement, and at the same time share a general responsibility for all humanity . . . .”

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Center for Middle East Studies to Be Unbiased Think Tank

This past spring Brandeis received an outstanding anonymous gift to create the Center for Middle East Studies. Building on the University’s renowned faculty and its strengths in a number of areas, the Center will provide a coordinated program of education, research, and policy analysis designed to address the most pressing issues facing the modern Middle East. It will be a leading source of fair and accurate information about the social, historical, economic, political, and environmental aspects of the Middle East.

The Center will be unique among similar university-based Centers in the United States in its comprehensive and unbiased view about issues impacting this region.

The University is currently establishing a $30 million endowment to support the Center. This will provide annual support for a director and support staff; a number of faculty chairs; a research and visiting lecture fund to host scholars from around the world; and scholarships and fellowships to prepare the next generation of leaders in this important field.

To date, the University has received $20 million in gifts that support the Center, including endowed chairs in Islamic Studies, Arab Politics, Sephardic Studies, and Israel Studies. To complete the Center, the University expects to establish chairs in Turkish Studies and Economic and Political Geography of the Middle East.

Additionally, the Center will require annual support for a research fund, and both annual support and endowment for scholarships and fellowships. As development of the Center continues, the endowment goal may increase in response to the priorities and needs related to research and scholarship in the area of Middle East studies.
the move

It Takes a Village

Community or neighborhood-style living is built into Brandeis University’s new residence hall for junior and seniors, The Village. Each of three connected buildings in the new complex contains active and quiet lounges, seminar rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and multipurpose rooms that can be used for performance rehearsals. Opened in the fall of 2003, The Village brings Brandeis closer to meeting its goal of housing 90 percent of its undergraduate students in campus residence halls, enhancing the University’s ability to attract and retain the best students.

Make any occasion doubly special with a donation to Book Fund.

BUNWC and Rosenstiel: Our Alliance with Science

For decades the National Women’s Committee has played a key role in supporting cutting-edge research at the Rosenstiel Basic Medical Sciences Research Center by providing funds for critical research journals. To continue to meet our commitment to this very important work at Rosenstiel, the gift for the blue Research Journal Folio has been raised from $50 to $55—a small way to make a big impact on the future of humanity.

NEW FROM BOOK FUND

To meet the rising cost of putting a new book on the library shelves, an attractive, newly-designed $15 Book Fund card has replaced the $10 plum card. Call toll free 888-TO-BUNWC (888-862-8692) for credit card purchases or see your chapter Book Fund chair.

Some of the world’s most renowned public figures associated with Brandeis since its founding are featured in a series of new National Women’s Committee bookmarks available from the National Office.
PALM GARDENS brought 60 cartons of books to a community garage sale and left seven hours later with only four boxes remaining and a profit of $554. Volunteers included Carol Carswell, Sharon Holinstat, Sandi Goren, Eve and Jim Meyerhoefer, Lil and Ray Zanarotti, Carole Levine, Jose Alvarez, and Meryl Natelli.

Another BRANDEIS BOOK STORE opened in the Lake Worth, Florida area recently, operated collectively by the Central Palm/Lake Worth, Lakes, Palm Beach East, Palm Gardens, Wycliffe, and West End Chapters. At the grand opening, store manager Audrey Bernstein (center) accepts a donation from Elyssa Kupferberg of the Mellon Bank. Other dignitaries attending were Councilman Charles Shaw (left), and Florida Region President Charlotte Schiff and Mayor Sam Ferrere on the right.

CLEARBROOK welcomed authors Ilene Beckerman (Love, Loss and What I Wore), seated center, and Robbie Clipper Sethi (Fifty-Fifty), seated right. Others are Co-President Beth Curtis (seated left) and (standing, L-R): Co-President Lorraine Okun and Co-Chairs Mildred Schneider and Isabelle Tucker.

CORPUS CHRISTI borrowed some muscle from the city’s Alternative Incarceration Program for its book sale. The helpers came in full dress and were “work horses,” according to the chapter. NWC members (L-R) are: Elizabeth Susser, Bernis Hecht, Leigh Steinberg, and Marlene Super.

GOTHAM members boarded a yellow school bus and took a trip down memory lane where they revisited their Brooklyn roots, including lunch at Brighton Beach and a stop at Nathan’s in Coney Island. Twenty-five members got onboard for this fundraiser.

ATLANTA’s opening luncheon featured Michael Kalafatas, ‘65, Brandeis alumnus and former Brandeis University director of admissions, shown here with Atlanta member Roya Deljou. He discussed his new book, The Bellstone, a modern odyssey based on his grandfather’s long-lost epic poem, “Winter Dreams.”

LOS ANGELES honored Harold and Gloria Savinar at the chapter’s 23rd Authors and Celebrities Award Luncheon which attracted 550 members and guests and raised $37,000 for Brandeis.

SAN DIEGO members, Roberta Fredericks (left) and Phyllis Perkal thoroughly enjoyed the chapter’s “Art in the Afternoon” event at the beautiful home of artist-member Rhoda Lemlein. Music, poetry reading (by Beverly Kluger), and a display of pottery by Marge Rubenson rounded out the event.
TRAILS, FLA

Passover Women’s Seder: Bringing the Community Together

Members of the Trails, Florida Chapter and friends broke bread and joined hands and voices last spring at the chapter’s second Passover Women’s Seder. More than 200 women packed the temple where the seder was held, sharing the seder meal and singing and dancing, weaving through the seder tables with tambourines. They also heard stories from the Bible, as well as tributes to modern-day women.

As one reader declared: “At our seder we are ‘Dancing in Miriam’s Footsteps.’ We honor Miriam, a leader of colossal vision and indomitable spirit. Miriam was so sure the Exodus would be successful that she told the women to pack timbrels so they could sing and dance in celebration of freedom. This year we will also sing and dance with timbrels (tambourines) as we envelop Miriam’s spirit as our inspiration to overcome our own adversarial forces.”

Lenore Jaye and Beverly Berger, who led a committee of a dozen members, explained that the seder was held as a community event and attracted many women from outside the chapter. Featuring original songs and dancing, the seder was a lot of work to organize, Jaye admits, “but it was well worth it.”

Rabbi Marilyn Werman wrote a special Haggadah for the occasion, which included prayers emphasizing women’s issues and social justice. In honor of the occasion and in keeping with the tradition of sharing with those less fortunate, participants brought donations for a Kosher food pantry for those in need.

“IT was such a moving experience, I sat there crying,” recalled Dottie Pierce, former Florida Region president. Her chapter, Boca Raton, will be holding its own women’s seder on March 23, also to be led by Rabbi Werman. Palm Gardens has held one for two years.