

SUMMER 2012

Women Cantors' Network

Geri Zeller, President Gail F. Nalven, Editor



30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!



WCN Presidents

1982-1989 Deborah Katchko-Gray
 1989-1984 Doris Cohen
 1994-2000 Anita Hochman
 2002-2003 Rica Timman
 2003-2006 Anita Schubert
 2006-2008 Sue Roemer z"l
 2008-2010 Kathy Sebo



The Presidents: Rica, Robin, Geri, Anita, Debbie, Kathy, Anita, Doris.
 Inset: Sue

A LOOK BACK: OUR PRESIDENTS REMEMBER

In honor of the 30th anniversary of the Women Cantors' Network, our past presidents were asked to share some memories of their time in office.

Dreams Can Come True

by Cantor Deborah Katchko Gray

In the new home of the National Museum of American Jewish History, a Women Cantors' Network postcard shares space in a display case with one of Bella Abzug's hats. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined such a pairing. Likewise, in early 1982, neither could I have imagined the founding of the Women Cantors' Network.

During the spring of 1981, as one of only two women cantors serving Conservative congregations, I attended the Cantors Assembly convention. A fourth generation cantor, I'd previously attended the convention with my father when I was a college student. At the time, I was embarrassed and shocked by the reactions of some of his colleagues to the fact that I was singing as a cantor in the Boston area. Their comments are seared in my memory.

"Oh, what will come next?
 Topless on the *bimah*?"

"What else will they think of to fill the pews?!"

This time, though, I was delighted to find myself seated at a tableful of women! One of them, Elaine Shapiro, was serving—without investiture

—as the first full-time Conservative woman cantor at a congregation in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Elaine and I agreed to get together during the convention and invited other women to join us in the hopes that we could organize ourselves into a support group. A dozen of us sat around a table and shared our experiences. Some were studying *hazzanut* privately because at the time, the Jewish Theological Seminary was not granting cantorial degrees to women who had not completed the full course of study at its College of Jewish Music—the same curriculum that was providing religious accreditation to its male cantorial graduates.

Following the convention, I invited all of these women to a gathering at my temple in Norwalk, CT. I also placed ads in *Moment* magazine, *The Jewish Week* and other publications to spread the word. In May of 1982, 12 women from all over the country came to Norwalk for our first meeting. The Women Cantors' Network was born.

Today, in addition to a postcard next to Bella Abzug's hat in a display case at the National Museum of American Jewish History, the WCN

boasts almost 300 members and a not-to-be-found elsewhere nurturing and caring environment. Our listserv is a lifeline for many cantors and our annual conventions are full of heavenly light, song and friendship for everyone.

Although the status of women has changed in the Reform and Conservative cantorate during the last three decades, there always will be a need for the WCN, and we do not discriminate based on education, job experience, pulpit size, salary, ordination, certification, degrees or even gender! We welcome all who are nurturing, caring, musical, spiritual and loving—virtues that are not solely feminine.

It is my prayer that our WCN will continue to attract cantors, prospective cantors, writers, musicians, choir directors and rabbis—men as well as women—whose spirit is moved by our people's sacred music. Each one who attends brings beauty and kindness, an open heart and soul to share, and, sometimes, even a shoulder to cry on. I pray, too, that 30 years after its founding our Women Cantors' Network will continue as a beacon of light and hope, song and story, love and laughter for us all.

Down Memory Lane: Just The Beginning

by Doris Cohen

IN 1982, I responded to a notice placed in *The Jewish Week* by Cantor Deborah Katchko, clergy of Congregation Beth-El, a Conservative synagogue in Norwalk, CT. Reaching out to women already serving, preparing for, or aspiring to the cantorate, twelve women from several eastern states met at her synagogue, where we became the Women Cantors Network (WCN). I hadn't planned or realized that I was now part of a small outreach support group of pioneers.

Initially, we held semi-annual or annual one-day conferences in New York, where we were generously given space at the Abraham Goodman House/Hebrew Arts School and the Headquarters of the National Council of Jewish Women. As we progressed to 2 and 3-day conferences, congregants, WCN members and their friends in Philadelphia, PA, Rockville, MD, Washington, DC, and NY offered sleeping accommodations at their homes. I am still overwhelmed by the willingness, indeed the eagerness, of the outstanding eminent men and women scholars, composers, cantors, authors, educators, publishers of scholarly journals and of Jewish liturgical and secular music who gave their time and energy to share their expertise with us. Providing validation as well, this led to the recognition of the WCN as an important presence in the Jewish community.

At our conferences during the 1980's and 1990's, public concerts of Jewish liturgical and secular music showcasing our talented members demonstrated the very high level of professionalism of our membership. My introduction to the program was:

Shir-song: It is the rhythm of tradition, the beat of history.

Shir-song: It is the commitment to our past, the promise of our future.

Shir-song: It is thousands of years old, yet new every day.

Shir-song: It is what this evening is all about.

A nation that lives sings, A nation that sings lives.

Reflecting on My 5 Years Serving as the WCN's 3rd President is a Precious Honor

by Anita Hochman

At that time, a great conference turnout meant that we had 40 members in attendance. The first night of our conferences were usually held in someone's home. It's a lot more challenging to pull that off now that we average 100 members attending!

During my terms we finalized the creation of our very first constitution and by-laws.

Email was... actually, email WASN'T. Email didn't go global until 1993 when AOL connected their system to the Internet. So it wasn't until a few years later that we really started communicating the way we do now (with our listserv coming quite a few years later than that!). And today we have Facebook, Twitter, Skype and FaceTime. No doubt we have the internet to thank for being almost 300 strong, with members throughout North America and extending to Israel, France and Germany. To this day that just blows my mind. We no longer have to wait a whole year to connect and network and gather the support we crave.

WCN has been one of the greatest gifts I could ever have hoped for. Shortly before we celebrated our 30th anniversary I celebrated 30 years with my congregation. I can't imagine my career, indeed my life, without my WCN family. She has carried me through some intensely dark times and has always been my support, my safety net, my inspiration and my blessing. I would not be the cantor I am, the woman I am, nor the light I embody were it not for my WCN sisters.

Kol haKavod to Debbie Katchko Gray whose vision and persistence bring us all pride and nurturance and a gathering we can call home.



Notes from a WCN Prez

by Rica Timman

WCN has been part of my life since the late 80's. I was a budding cantorial soloist looking for a place to belong. While visiting JTS I saw a flyer for the WCN on a bulletin board and I didn't hesitate to jump in. We were an intimate group of women who gathered for our conference and I along with the only other 'newbie,' Kathy Sebo, felt embraced as we attended our first conference. Kathy and I were warmly welcomed to WCN by Debby Katchko, Doris Cohen, Anita Hochman and Sue Roemer z"l, among others, and these women became my friends, role models and mentors in a world where men were the only role models I had known. I have never missed a conference in all these years and even hosted a conference one year. The emotional and spiritual recharge of being with my 'sisters' is unquestionably the focal point of each June for the past twenty-four years of my cantorate.

I was honored to be President back in the days we counted around one hundred members. It was easy to know everyone in our organization and I looked forward to seeing a majority of our sisterhood at our annual conferences. We grew by leaps and bounds and by the time I completed my three years we were moving toward a much larger membership. Harder to get to know each other! My happiest success was helping us move into the internet age and start up our listserv. It took a few months but we began to jump in and it was exciting to see daily posts that tackled the issues we all faced. The listserv has become an important part of our network and along with the website, newsletter and Facebook we are able to stay connected and truly support each other in our daily work.

WCN was there when I was a young soloist. I know that throughout my own journey to ordination and beyond I have the support and love of my sisters every step of the way. I love the diversity and talent of our membership, but mostly I love the *neshamot* and friendships that we are blessed to share.

Love in the Mushroom and Barley Soup

By Sue Roemer, z"l, 2008
"Dear Chevre,

Memories of our Boston conference dance in my head. The learning, the sharing, the connecting, the fun – all within a spiritual framework that permeated everything! Those of us who were privileged to attend soared upward, if not higher! Thanks, thanks again to Lorel, Lois and the whole committee for the time-consuming and caring work you all put in—you created the holy environment that allowed us to get in touch with the best in each of us.

Being president of WCN is really an honor, and every once in awhile the honor also becomes a distinct privilege. I experienced that privilege when I said a few words on behalf of myself and our group this past December on the bimah of M'kor Shalom in Cherry Hill, NJ as the congregation was honoring their beloved Cantor Anita Hochman for her magnificent 25 years of service. The wonderfully uplifting and very musical Friday night service (in and for which Anita worked very hard) and the Saturday evening celebration could be described as a love-in for Anita, but I felt it was beyond that—it was a love-in for the best that happens when a clergy person and

congregation go the extra mile for each other, respecting and supporting each other through the bitter and the sweet. Kol haKavod!"

This was written by Sue for the 2008 WCN newsletter. I know that she loved the WCN and being its president as much as she loved anything. She put all that love into the mushroom and barley soup she served to the Board when it met at our house. There was no place else in this world where she felt so lifted up by strong, loving women. The WCN conferences and Board meetings were the only times in five decades of our life together that I can remember Sue not feeling as if it all rested on her shoulders. And I too felt that incredible support for myself when, already quite ill, she went to her last conference. Thank you.

Peter Roemer

Time Travel

By Robin Joseph

Thirty years is a long time. Thirty years ago, I was heading off to college. Thirty years ago, I had just begun to start playing guitar consistently. Thirty years ago (plus a few), I began to work as a cantor at my current shul. And thirty years ago, I was totally unaware of the groundswell that would signal the

entrance of women into the cantorial mainstream.

Twenty years ago, I recorded my first collection of Jewish folk rock. Twenty years ago (minus a few), I published my first liturgical composition. Twenty years ago, I decided that after 10 years of working as a cantor I would enter cantorial school. And twenty years ago, I went to my first cantorial convention. The overwhelming majority of attendees were men.

Ten years ago (plus a few), I heard about a network of women cantors. Ten years ago, I went to my first Women Cantors' Network conference. And ten years ago, I found the camaraderie and support of women like me, cantors and Singers-in-Israel, in all their glory—who understood.

Two months ago, I became WCN's president emerita. Two months ago, I took part in a milestone of an incredible organization. Two months ago, I celebrated a 30-year-old vision of an incredibly brave woman and her colleagues. And two months ago I heard, not for the first time, an astonished young child saying to his parent, "Mommy, I didn't know boys could be cantors."

WCN—Hazak, hazak, v'nithazeik.



A little kibbitz with Geri

Shalom & Bruchim habaim (yes, our membership is made up of women & men supporting women in the cantorate),

Deborah Katchko Gray founded the Women Cantors' Network in her own unique trailblazing way letting the cantorial world know that we were here and here to stay. And now we are now 30 years old and blossoming into a new world where we are fully accepted.

Rabbi Keith Stern attended our *ma'ariv* service the opening night of our conference in Newton and said "Kol isha! Boy, did our ancestors get that wrong." It was so heartwarming to hear.

My first conference was a one day gathering at the NCJW offices in NYC. I sat on the circular staircase in awe as Rica Julie Timman and Mary Feinsinger presented the music of WCN composer Sylvia Goldstein. Now I may not be able to tell you what I did last Tuesday but I can remember my first WCN gathering as if it was this morning. I truly thought that God had guided my footsteps. For those of you new to us, I know you will come to know that God has guided your footsteps to this amazing organization. And that was 25 years ago.

As I assume the office of the presidency it is with a great deal of humility and trepidation. Can I live up to the examples of those who came before me? Doug Cotler taught us with "Standing on the Shoulders," "that we are not alone and since I'm only 5' 0" tall, standing on my predecessors shoulders is the best place for me to be, but only as long as I have your support and involvement. This is not MY WCN, it is OUR WCN. As we go forward may we go from strength to strength.

On behalf of the WCN Board I wish you all a healthy, happy and meaningful High Holy Day season.

G'mar Hatimah Tovah,

Geri

Save The Date

WCN: 31-derful years: Adding New Flavors to Judaism!

June 16-19, 2013 in the Live Music Capital of the World: Austin,

Texas!

Hosted by Robbi Sherwin, Francyne Davis Jacobs & Abby Gostein
Y'all come back now, ya hear?



Susan Colin, Francyne Davis Jacobs, & Robbi Sherwin
invite y'all to Austin!

On the Road Again

Music: Willie Nelson,

Lyrics: Francyne Davis Jacobs with Robbi Sherwin & Susan Colin

On the road again
Guess we're leaving the East Coast again
Can't wait to be back in Austin with my friends
We just can't wait to get on the road again!

On the road again,
Just can't wait to get on the road again,
Live Music Capital, my friends
In 6/13, you'll be on the road again!

Rockin' boots and hats
Welcoming back the ladies of the WCN
It's like herding cats
And we promise you
It will be hot again
It will be hot again.



Welcome to the New Board!

President: Geri Zeller

Executive Vice President: Jacqueline Breines

Communications Vice President: Debby
Lewis

Special Events Vice President: Robbi
Sherwin

Corresponding Secretary: Sherry Barnes

Recording Secretary: Barbara Stambler

Treasurer: Robin Sparr

Members-at-Large:

Marian Kleinman

Lisa B. Segal

Francyne Davis Jacobs



Executive VP Jacqui Breines, Communications VP Debby
Lewis, Special Events VP Robbi Sherwin, and President
Geri Zeller at the 30th Anniversary celebration.

Need listserv help?

contact Donna Spencer
thebeachbubbe@aol.com

Need website help?

contact Chana Karmann-Lente
chana.karmann-lente@gmx.net



My favorite memory of my first WCN conference is....

Boca '05...My favorite memory is the overwhelming feeling of complete welcoming and acceptance, the incredible food, and the sound of 100 woman's voices singing together as if angels had descended upon the synagogue.

Marci Vitkus

In Boca Raton '05, hosted by Stephanie Shore, I was under the impression that ALL WCN conferences had black & white formally set tables, tuxedoed servers and air-conditioned bus transportation! I was happy to find out that every conference has its own beauty, local flavor and personality! (but, boy howdy, what a great first conference!)

Robbi Sherwin

...the spirit of welcoming and open hearted greeting I received from everyone. From the uplifting and inspiring *t'fillot* to the helpful workshops and group sings and even to the conga line and dancing, I enjoyed making new friends and connecting with old ones. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this holy assembly and to share some of my music and yoga embodiment worship with you!

Lisa Levine

...in Boca '05 when Geri Zeller introduced herself to me and gave me a big hug as if I were a long lost friend! I've loved the WCN from that moment on!

Debby Lewis

...in D.C., '04, meeting all of these incredible women and seeing the camaraderie and acceptance of everyone. It was a thrill to meet so many other women dedicated to Jewish music and to establish a rapport (and to put faces with names)!

Francyne Davis Jacobs

...Kathy Sebo and Jinny Marsh performing at the cabaret in Ridgefield '09. They were hilarious.

Gail F. Nalven

WCN Commission

Every two years or so, the WCN commissions a talented and dedicated composer to create something very special for women's voices. The WCN Commission Committee announces that the 2013 composer is Annie Rose! Thank you to those who served on the committee: Robbi Sherwin, Debbie Katchko-Gray, and Kathy Sebo

OySong Discount

WCN members get a 15% discount off all purchases at OySongs.com when you use the code WCN2012 courtesy of owner and WCN member Susan Colin.

Bruchot HaBaot to New Members

Laura Berkson

Jodi Blankstein

Debby Gelber

Sherrill Stott

Baruch Dayan Emet to

Bob Bruner, husband of Pat Bruner

Seymour Friedman, father of Beth Friedman-Romell

Aaron Siegel Brother of Doris Cohen

MEMBER NEWS

MAZEL TOV to

Chana Karmann-Lente on her rabbinic ordination
Gail Nalven, Patricia Rudden, and Galit Levy-Slater who will receive rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Spiritual Leaders Institute on August 25th

PROFESSIONAL NEWS

Gail F. Nalven and Patricia S. Rudden who have authored *The Kiddush Murder: A Shoshana Goldberg Mystery*, available as an e-book @ <http://tinyurl.com/6plkurx> or www.amazon.com (kindle version) or in paperback @ <http://tinyurl.com/cf48vxx>

Judy Caplan Ginsburgh on her Jubilation Fellowship by the Tides Foundation which is given to "individuals who possess an exceptional talent for helping young people feel fully alive through rhythm – as expressed in music, dance and poetry." Judy also recently received her certification in Sound Healing which uses tuning forks, color visualization and vocalization to balance and open the body's energy centers for relaxation and healing purposes.

Robbi Sherwin & Scott Leader of the band, Sababa, who will be recording the band's 3rd CD of original Jewish folk/rock/roots music. www.SababaMusic.com

ACC/GTM Conference in Portland Presentations

Rebecca Schwartz's "Adonai S'fatai" (which was debuted at the WCN conference in Philly).

Abby Gosten's Vayarotz Likratam – And He Ran to Greet Them (A Song of Welcoming) was presented in the Composers' Workshop.

Susan Colin's choral arrangement of "*Hashkiveinu*" (SATB plus soloist).

The Houston Ballet is performing *Ketubah* (a Jewish wedding ballet) for 8 performances from 9/20 - 9/30. WCN member **Isabelle Ganz** will be singing in the pit with members of "The Best Little Klezmer Band in Texas" led by Marcia Sterling.

PERSONAL NEWS

Gail Gordon Skall whose daughter, Aviva Skall, was recently promoted to VP and part owner of MMG, Model, Talent and Celebrity Management



A TASTE OF THE WCN CONFERENCE, NEWTON, MA

Arlyne Unger -- the Shiva service
 by Laura Lewis Mandeles

This workshop explored the *shiva* service and the *ma'ariv nusach* that is appropriate to that service. The workshop addressed three topics: (1) training lay leaders to conduct a *Shiva* service; (2) creative ways to enhance the service; and (3) the *nusach*.

Arlyne has put together a training and reference binder for the lay *shiva* leaders that includes a complete copy of the service from *A Minyan of Comfort*, a CD, a course outline, background on Jewish mourning traditions, lists of resources for more information and for readings, information about the *Kaddish* and more. The course includes a series of assignments that build toward a final assignment to conduct a model service.

Arlyne described how she tries to make the liturgy meaningful in different situations. She sees the

liturgy as a means to comfort the mourners and help them find a way for Judaism to lead them through their mourning process. During the service there are not only the prescribed prayers, but there are also opportunities to use English readings and for the leader to tie the service together with brief remarks as appropriate. If a family member has died during or near a holiday, for example, she might say something briefly about the meaning of the holiday for that family. She has also used an English reading of "*Adon Olam*" as part of the service and finds that is very powerful, as many people know it in Hebrew but haven't focused on the meaning of the words.

It is also important to be aware of non-Jewish participants at the *shiva* and to include them in the community of people who have come to carry out the commandment of comforting the mourners. One way

Arlyne does this is to take a moment before the *Sh'ma* to teach briefly about the *shiva*.

There was time toward the end of the workshop to learn and practice the weekday evening *nusach* that is appropriate for the *Shiva* service. Arlyne feels strongly that it is important not to use *Shabbat nusach* even with a group that doesn't know the weekday *nusach*. She might explain briefly at the beginning of the service that *Shabbat nusach* has a very different purpose and the weekday *nusach* is part of the very particular purpose of the *shiva* service. She also suggested that some of the prayers can be sung using non-*nusach* tunes that the mourners know and that are appropriate to the service.

As always, any workshop with Arlyne leaves everyone wanting more and of course she said, "Get in touch any time with questions." Thank you, Arlyne!

A TASTE OF THE WCN CONFERENCE, NEWTON, MA

Debbi Ballard

by Marci Vitkus

DYNAMO! It is the best way to describe Debbi Ballard! This woman sees a job that needs to be done and does it!

She left the corporate world to follow her heart and her passion for Judaism and spirituality. In doing so she found a gaping need in South Florida for connectedness. She discovered by officiating interfaith weddings that people wanted to keep Judaism in their lives, but had no avenues to accomplish this. They were being left out because they weren't Jewish enough for the existing synagogues (especially if they were interfaith), or their lives didn't mesh with the old ways of synagogue life. She also noticed that synagogues were laying off clergy, reducing expenses, and demanding more while giving less. Many Jewish/Interfaith families want Judaism to fit their lives, not vice versa. They don't want to abandon their heritage, but they want it to move forward and grow as society changes.

Debbi spoke to us of ways to serve the unaffiliated community in our neighborhoods. She was careful not to call it a "movement" because that then defines something and each community is different. She encouraged us to embrace the freedom that comes with being unaffiliated and not having constraints in HOW and WHEN and WHERE we must serve our "congregation."

Debbi does not stray so far from Judaism's core. She realized the need for a congregation was strong so she has connected these unaffiliated families with her congregation called *Sh'ma Koleinu*, Hear our Voices. She bravely followed the "Build it and they will come" philosophy by renting out a large venue in the Miami area for High Holiday services. She had 450 people in attendance her first year! She shared video with us of this service and it was moving and heartfelt.

She spoke of not holding yourself back by getting mired in details and just starting with a number one idea. Tackle that and see where it takes you. She also shared her experiences with details of non-profit status, as well as how you create a congregation without the four walls.

Regardless of whether we agreed with Debbi's ideas or direction, no one can deny this woman is going to change the world. In fact, she stated that very thing. I for one have no doubt she will do just that! One couple, one *Bar Mitzvah*, one Jewish person at a time.

Schvitzing and Singing - Nick Page style!

Robbi Sherwin

Pick an instrument - become that instrument! Be it bass, drums or sax, Nick Page had all of us moving and grooving and "playing" for each other. Filled with energy, *ruach* and harmony, we "oompahed" our way

across the "bowling alley" (narrow space next to the sanctuary), met and danced with our sisters-in-song and had a rockin' great time. A highlight - getting to sing "*Yesh Lanu Koach*" - a piece we did in performance at our Chicago conference. Larger than life, Nick Page, choir master extraordinaire, always gets us on our feet in Boston!

Relax, ReJewvenate, Retreat!

By Melody Davis

If you ever want step-by-step directions on how to plan a successful retreat, Robbi Sherwin is the "go-to" person. Robbi highlighted the importance engaging "The Triple H:" Heart, Head, and Hands. She involved our class through techniques she has utilized such as tossing a beach ball which had been prepared with questions designed to create community. The message I took away most clearly was to prepare, prepare, prepare as much as possible. Food, too, is very important. (What a surprise for Jews!) It is crucial to keep those who maintain a vegan or gluten-free diet in mind so that all are happy and comfortable. Honoring the *minhag* of the community with which you are working is another factor that Robbi emphasized. This is not an endeavor to undertake alone. Involve your local rabbi(s), educators, art professionals, movement people and activity co-ordinator. Don't do it by YOURSELF!

A TASTE OF THE WCN CONFERENCE, NEWTON, MA

Instantly Accessible Music Which Can Be Learned By Ear

By Melody Davis

Using her body, her guitar and her dynamic personality, Ellen Allard demonstrated various methods of teaching music to anyone. While she is widely known for her prowess with children, approximately 30 musicians were completely absorbed in her music and knowledge. Unlike members of some other religions, many Jews are “stuck in their bodies,” according to Ellen. Not only did she get us up off of our derrieres, we were happily shaking them and giggling and enjoying. In a serious moment, Ellen opined that “we do not do an adequate job in the Reform movement to access God.” Most of her songs are written to address her own personal struggle to find God. While her lyrics are seemingly simple, they speak to a deep yearning within: With my lips I talk to God and the words come from my heart. (From ‘*Adonai S’fatai Tiftach*’ by Ellen Allard) Ellen teaches from her heart and engages the soul.

The Choral Festival Comes To WCN: Salamone de Rossi

Rachel Adelstein

On Monday evening, Louise Treitman treated us to an hour of exploring the music of the 17th-century choral composer Salamone de Rossi. Rossi served as court composer for the Gonzaga rulers of Mantua, and is the first major

European Jewish choral composer. Treitman, who performs Rossi's work with a professional vocal ensemble, gave us a brief introduction to Rossi and discussed ways in which one might introduce his music to a congregation. She described a service that she and her choir have put together that is composed entirely of Rossi's music. Congregations that experience this service appear to enjoy it very much and ask for its return.

Rossi's music does present some challenges, as we discovered when we began to read through his three-part “*Barekhu*.” Treitman gave us an effective object lesson in how to teach Rossi to a choir. She worked each individual line quickly but efficiently, pointing out both consonances and suspensions and advising us on the best ways to bring out both features. We worked through the “*Barekhu*” and a three-part Kaddish, which featured several changes of time, from duple meter to triple meter and back again. In the end, we chose to present the “*Barekhu*” to the rest of the WCN, as it was the piece that we felt more comfortable performing.

Just before we rejoined the group, we had the opportunity to examine photocopies of the part-scores used by singers in Rossi's day, printed in Renaissance notation in the original clefs. When we rejoined the other three choral groups, it was with a newfound appreciation both of Rossi's lovely, madrigal-like music and of the

musicologists who transcribe it into modern notation so that we can continue to experience its beauty.

The Choral Festival Comes to WCN: Congregational/Community Volunteer Choir

By Pat Rudden

A large group of enthusiastic sopranos and altos gathered with composer/conductor Annie Rose to prepare a complex and challenging piece, Michael Isaacson's “Halleluyah,” and to learn from Annie how to make a piece like this happen in a choir of volunteers. Annie not only taught us the piece efficiently and effectively (as evidenced by our performance an hour or so after we first saw it) but also modeled for us what a conductor/teacher does to make the music happen. She distributed a detailed handout with the Isaacson piece, specific tips for teaching that piece, and general advice on recruiting, requirements, resources, rehearsal techniques and repertoire for volunteer choirs, including “Top 18 Suggestions for ALL Ensembles,” most of which are good advice for leading any kind of organization, musical and otherwise. Annie's total command of the music itself as well as of the best strategies for getting the most from her choir made this an especially rich and valuable section of the “Choral Festival Comes to WCN” workshops.

The Back of the Book

What kind of editor would I be if I didn't fill up every space? Since there was this bit here, I want to take this opportunity to share what's been going on with me. I had a great time at my one day of this year's conference, but because I am a Fellow in the Leadership Institute for Congregational Educators, I had to go back to attend the Summer Seminar at HUC in NYC. This was just one part of my crazy summer of conferences, including Hava Hashira, the Moving Traditions Rosh Chodesh training, a Shoah education conference, and Matan training.

In the meantime, Pat and I have found the time to publish the mystery we've been working on for years, *The Kiddush Murder*, with a cantor as the protagonist. (See Member News for links.) I expect the upcoming months to be just as exciting. Later this month I will receive rabbinic ordination, along with other WCNers Pat Rudden and Galit Levy-Slater, and will be joining the faculty of Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York as a grade leader-coordinator, *b'nei mitzvah* tutor and adult ed teacher.

As a synagogue educator I've always been more of a song leader than a cantor, but thanks to Barb Stambler, I found WCN. Through this wonderful community, great things have followed. Wishing you all a *Shana tova um'tukah*.

Gail F. Nalven, Newsletter Editor

Women Cantors' Network

Founded 1982

<http://womencantors.net>

President: Geri Zeller

Executive Vice President: Jacqueline Breines

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Lisa B. Segal

Francyne Davis Jacobs

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