Szold Award honors Wertheimers

In recognition of their lifetime of service to Israel and Jewish people all over the world, Stef Wertheimer and his son Eitan Wertheimer were honored with the Henrietta Szold Award at Tuesday night’s banquet. June Walker, honorary vice president and chair of the Henrietta Szold Committee, presented the award to Stef Wertheimer, founder and chairman of Iscar, Ltd., who accepted on behalf of himself and his son, Eitan, who is president and CEO of Iscar.

“They personify the ideal of practical Zionism of Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold,” Walker said.

In his remarks, Wertheimer said he believes that having “power and an army are not the solutions to peace. Industry is the way to peace.” For 25 years, Wertheimer has devoted his time to creating industrial parks, including five in

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Falchuk: Hadassah is a bridge

For National President Nancy Falchuk, Hadassah plays a central role in linking Jews in Israel and around the world. “More than any other organization, we are a bridge between Israel and the Diaspora, and a pillar of both ends of that bridge,” she said at Tuesday night’s banquet.

Falchuk began the evening festivities by introducing a number of dignitaries. The invocation and hamotzi were delivered by past president Charlotte Jacobson, honorary vice president, who asked all to pause and remember those who had come before and had made the 60th anniversary of Israel possible. Following the dinner, Linda

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Convention photos are online at: http://www.hadassah.org/convention2008/photogallery
Gallery password: losangeles

Founders Dinner raises $6,842,000, See photos, page 5

National President Nancy Falchuk at Tuesday banquet.
Falchuk: Hadassah is a bridge

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Sklar, Hadassah Leadership Academy, led the birkat hamazon.

In a keynote address, Stewart Greenebaum, president of Greenebaum and Rose Associates, challenged Hadassah members to step up to the plate in these hard financial times.

“There is trouble ahead,” he said, citing a decline in Hadassah’s membership and donations of unrestricted funds. A slower U.S. economy and weak dollar are other factors.

“This is not a good recipe,” said Greenebaum, who set forth specific steps to “fix it, right here, right now.” Among his recommendations:

• Reverse the decrease in membership immediately by taking such measures as expanding the parameters of potential Hadassah members.
• Every delegate bring a new member of the next generation to 2009 National Convention.
• Create a new, sustaining membership (separate and apart from the life membership) with a minimum $100-a-year pledge. Monies would be directed for unrestricted use. If every member would become a sustaining member, it would raise $27 million in undedicated funds.

Greenebaum concluded his remarks with words from the Torah, “Be Strong. Be Strong. Let us strengthen one another.”

In her remarks to the delegates, Falchuk noted that Israel’s Jewish population – now six million— has surpassed that of the United States, making it the largest Jewish community in the world.

“Within another few years an absolute majority of the world’s Jewish population will live in Israel,” she said.

In contrast to Israel’s rapidly growing economy, America finds its economy in a tailspin “for the moment at least,” she said. “When did we ever think that the idea of the shekel soaring in value against the dollar would be anything other than a source of pride?”

Yet, the weak U.S. dollar is also a challenge to an organization like Hadassah, with its dollar-funded projects in Israel. “I see this as a challenge that carries an unmistakable thrill,” she added. “Remember, part of the new equation is Israel’s success.”

Pointing to Hadassah’s long-standing hospital policy of treating both Jews and Arabs, she said, “Many visitors have observed that when peace finally comes to the Middle East, it will look something like the corridors and waiting rooms of Hadassah’s hospitals.”

Finally, Falchuk observed that the founding generations of Hadassah built eight hospitals and 134 clinics in pre-state Israel. “How can we look at what those women achieved and not be awed?” she asked. “How can we look at what they built and not be inspired and challenged?”

As Falchuk said in conclusion, “We’re not waiting for the future, we’re building it.”

Falchuk: Hadassah is a bridge

Stewart Greenebaum

Singer David Broza performs at banquet. He was introduced by Sharon Krischer, chair, Local Committee. The evening concluded with dancing, singing and a great round of applause.
Walker said Wertheimer exemplifies the new model of the Israeli philanthropist. “He doesn’t believe in handouts, but instead believes in pragmatic solutions,” she said. “This makes him a kindred spirit to Henrietta Szold and Hadassah’s ideal of practical Zionism. He created the jobs necessary to employ Jews and Arabs alike, side-by-side.”

Wertheimer made aliya with his family from Germany in 1937 at age 11. At 18, he joined the Palmach and was charged with weapons development for Israel. In 1952, he created a small metal-cutting tool factory called Iscar, Ltd. in his backyard in Nahariya, and became one of Israel’s most distinguished and industrious entrepreneurs. In 2006, Warren Buffet invested $4 billion to buy 80 percent of the company.

After his remarks, National President Nancy Falchuk showed her appreciation to the Wertheimers. “Thank you for giving us the privilege of honoring you,” she said. “Todah rabah.”

**From page 1**

Israel, and one in Gebze, Turkey. These industrial parks are sites that contain factories, schools and hothouses for budding entrepreneurs. They provide much-needed employment for thousands of residents in nearby neighborhoods, people of all ethnicities and religions.

Wertheimer said these parks are his way of creating peace. “Friction can only be solved if income levels become similar,” he said. “We have to help our neighbors be successful so that everyone has something to lose by conflict.”

His industrial parks serve as islands of hope and sanity in the Middle East. “Peace is created by being part of the world market,” he added, “and productivity, not violence, is our goal.”

According to Wertheimer, once a country’s gross domestic product surpasses $6,000 per capita it no longer has any interest in harboring terrorists. “This happens all over the world,” he said. “In the Balkans, where they were fighting about nothing, and Ireland where they were fighting about nothing. It stopped because people understood industry and jobs are the way to peace. This model has been proven again and again.”

Walker, former National President, introduces Stef Wertheimer

**June Walker, former National President, introduces Stef Wertheimer**
Keeping a close eye on Iran

Preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons must be a global priority, agreed speakers at a Tuesday morning session, “Eye on Iran,” with Mona Wood, national secretary, presiding.

The contentious discussion often pitted conservative British columnist Melanie Phillips against former television journalist Marvin Kalb. “The idea of a terrorist state having nuclear weapons is unconscionable,” said Phillips, who writes for one of Britain’s most influential national newspapers, The Daily Mail.

Kalb suggested that given the fact that weapons of mass destruction were never found in Iraq despite the assurance of their existence by every western intelligence agency, no one can be certain that Iran is close to having a nuclear capability.

“It reminds me of the months preceding the March 2003 invasion of Iraq,” Kalb said, “when we didn’t really consider the alternatives. Since then we of course have learned that military action wasn’t the best thing to do.”

Phillips responded by accusing Kalb of “looking at Iran through a liberal prism.”

A third perspective was offered by David Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He suggested ratcheting up the economic sanctions as an alternative to a military strike against Iran. But he also said, “We can’t talk, talk, talk while they build their bomb. The Iranian leaders are Islamists who would like nothing better than to take the country back to the 12th century.”

Phillips agreed, noting, “ Appeasement is always an attractive option until you see what it produces. We should not view the Iranian leaders as rational people with rational interests. They would welcome the apocalypse.”

But Roya Hakakian, a Yale University fellow who was born and raised in Iran until the age of 19, stressed the importance of distinguishing between the Iranian government and its people.

“ I find it extremely distressing that, by focusing only on nuclear weapons, all of us are doing precisely what Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wants,” she said, adding that what’s missing from the equation is a more nuanced look at Iranian society, where the current regime’s attempt to create a vehemently anti-Israel public has failed.

“We should be investing as much in societal change and bringing the Iranian people to our side as sounding the alarm about their nuclear weapons,” she added. “Iran could actually be a potential ally in the Middle East, and this is an opportunity that we as Jews have to embrace. I know this seems farfetched, but it isn’t.”

Makovsky suggested that most of the countries in the Mideast feared Iran more than they feared either Israel or the United States. “Arab leaders are scared,” he said. “No one in the Mideast wants to live in the shadow of a nuclear Iran. They understand that Israel has a bomb which they keep it in the basement, but that if Iran gets a bomb they will wave it for everyone to see.”

While war with Iran is a “fierce, appalling prospect,” concluded Phillips, “a nuclear Iran is worse.”
Honoring Hadassah’s Founders

Professor Shlomo Mor-Yosef, HMO director general; with Yosi Nitzani, chairman, HMO Board of Directors; Judy Swartz, co-chair, HMO Capital Campaign; and National President Nancy Falchuk at Monday’s Founders Dinner.


New Founder Laura Noveck, left, with proud mother Suzanne Boschan.

From left, HMO Professor Avi Rivkind, Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum and Dr. Yoav Mintz, HMO.

Rhonda Bernstein, chair, Major Gifts; Bernice Tannenbaum, past national president; Joyce Rabin, coordinator, HMO Capital Campaign; and Elaine Weiser, chair, Donor Relations.
Young people from Israel and the U.S. took the stage Tuesday to report on how the contributions of Hadassah members have changed their lives (see next page).

The “Youth Takes the Stage” Plenary included moving videos produced by young participants in three Hadassah youth programs – Hadassah College Jerusalem, Youth Aliyah and Youth Judaea – who had been flown in especially for the Convention.

Presiding at the session were Ellyn Lyons, chair, HCJ; Shelley Sherman, chair, Young Judaea; Barbara Spack, chair, Youth Aliyah; and Deborah Kaplan, chair, Jewish National Fund.

At the end of the session, there were plenty of tears when former Young Judaeans Amitai Cohen, was surprised in a “This Is Your Life Moment.” His younger sister Maya, whom he hadn’t seen in months, appeared out of the audience, stepped on stage and gave him a hug.

Cohen participated in the Young Judaea Year Course in Israel, then made Aliyah, and joined the IDF and fought in the Lebanese War with his best friend Shai Van Gelder, who followed the same path and was also present at the Plenary.

Throughout the session, delegates were moved, entertained, educated and thanked by the young people, who showed first hand the importance of Hadassah’s support.

The session’s young host was Ido Benvenisti, who in real life is a Young Judaea Shaliach. He interviewed each young man and woman, who shared their experiences with the audience.

Shira Sarusi, one of the students from Ramat Hadassah Szold, sang “Le Chulam Amen.” The other youths were Nissim Ohana and Faina Yousim, students at Hadassah College Jerusalem, Vitali Ostapetz, student, Hadassah Neurim Youth Village, and Melissa Eddison, who participated in the Young Judaea Year Course in Israel.

While each young person had a unique story, all expressed their deep appreciation for how Hadassah had made their dreams come true.

What do you think the future holds for Hadassah?

‘I see Young Judaea continuing to take steps as a leader in Zionist education. It is our responsibility to prepare the next generation to serve as powerful advocates for the state of Israel and proud proponents of Jewish culture.’

Dafna Michaelson
President, Denver Chapter

‘I see medical research as a crucial element of Hadassah’s future. As a state-of-the-art facility and a symbol of peace, Hadassah Hospital will continue to serve as a powerful driving force for everything that we are able to accomplish together.’

Kim Martin
Huntington Valley, PA

‘As a third generation Life Member, I see a future for Hadassah that is forever tied to family tradition and legacy. I hope to see my children and grandchildren take on the work of this remarkable organization.’

Alison Hirshorn
Chicago, IL

‘I think that Hadassah will always provide a means to create personal connections between women. We have the ability to share our voice, to be more than we ever dreamed we could be as an individual. I will leave Convention inspired, empowered, and renewed.’

Marlyn Diaz
Encino, CA

‘I see Young Judaea continuing to take steps as a leader in Zionist education. It is our responsibility to prepare the next generation to serve as powerful advocates for the state of Israel and proud proponents of Jewish culture.’

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Youth takes the stage

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‘Thank you, Hadassah’

“I give American youth a taste of Israel and teach them that Israel is their yerusha (inheritance),” said Ido Benvenisti, a Young Judea Shaliach and moderator of the “Youth Takes the Stage” Plenary. “I’m in the business of keeping young Jews Jewish.”

“Year Course played the biggest role in me making aliyah,” said Amitai Cohen, former Young Judaean. “Why shouldn’t I go to the army and participate like everyone else?”

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“Without Year Course I don’t think I would have done my bat-mitzva,” said Melissa Eddison, Young Judaean. “You really helped me strengthen my Jewish identity. All Hadassah women did a humazing mitzva building this.”

“HCJ is the only place I can get my degree of environmental science,” said Faina Yousim, a student at HCJ. “I’m grateful to the Hadassah organization for making my dreams come true.”

“My instructors at Hadassah Neurim Youth Village are my second parents,” said Vitali Ostapetz, a student at Hadassah Neurim. “Everyone here gives a small part of themselves and together we create a family.”

“Seeing people like Hadassah women and knowing you can touch other people’s lives really changed me,” said Nissim Ohana, a student at Hadassah College Jerusalem. “I hope one day to help people as much as you helped me.”

“The village has helped me tremendously,” said Shira Sarusi, a student at Ramat Hadassah Szold. “It’s not only that we’re being taken care of, we’re learning to take care of ourselves. I know now I’ll succeed.”
Combating global anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is on the rise around the world, according to three speakers at a Tuesday session, “Anti-Semitism Recycled,” with Joy Pollack, Esq. national vice president, presiding.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Andrea Levin, executive director of the Committee for Accuracy in the Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), and Judea Pearl, UCLA professor and president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, offered their unique perspectives on the topic. A common theme was the strong link of today’s anti-Semitism with anti-Israel and anti-Zionism.

“While we Jews are the first enemies of the Islamic fundamentalists, their real objective is to end Western Civilization,” said Hier. “And in the not too distant future they will be able to introduce a nuclear anti-Semitism.”

Levin leads CAMERA, which monitors and challenges perceived anti-Semitic and anti-Israel news coverage in the print and electronic media, including the Internet. She described the use of Natan Sharansky’s “3D Test of New Anti-Semitism” in evaluating whether a news story has crossed the line into anti-Semitism:

- Does the media ‘demonize’ Israelis as Nazis or apartheid supporters?
- Does it “delegitimize” Israel’s fundamental right to exist?
- Is there a “double-standard” in which Israel is criticized for actions ignored with other nations?

She showed excerpts from a CNN special, “God’s Warriors,” that was rebroadcast with changes as a result of CAMERA’s active lobbying.

“Defaming Israel and Jews cannot be accepted journalism in the United States of America,” said Levin.

Pearl, whose son, Wall Street Journal reporter, Daniel Pearl, was kidnapped and murdered by Pakistani terrorists, gave his own personal message: “I am a professor, a man of equations, drafted into the role of speaker who promises to fight the hatred that took my son’s life for the rest of my life.”

Pearl visits campuses as a “dialogue speaker,” meeting with Jews, Muslims, Christians, faculty members, as well as campus administrators. He talked of the strong anti-Zionist sentiment found in the dark corners of campus life.

“I am a professor, a man of equations, drafted into the role of speaker who promises to fight the hatred that took my son’s life for the rest of my life.”

All the speakers urged the audience to be vigilant and take active steps in their local communities to prevent and report instances of anti-Semitism. Pearl also requested that people participate in the Daniel Pearl World Music Day on October 10, and in the spirit of Danny’s love of music and commitment to dialogue, bridge the differences among people.

Treasurer’s Report

National Treasurer Marcie Natan on Monday presented the Treasurer’s Report for fiscal year 2007/08:

ANNUAL & LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES $1,891,000
HEALTH EDUCATION GRANTS 97,000
INVESTMENT INCOME 8,100,000
FUNDRAISING TO SUPPORT HADASSAH’S WORK IN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. 88,097,000

GRAND TOTAL $98,185,000
Delegates explore the pursuit of happiness

Through Torah study, memory exercises, and insights from learned rabbis, delegates took part in “The Pursuit of Happiness, a Tuesday session with Belle Simon, deputy coordinator, Hadassah International, presiding.

It is common to think that money can buy happiness, said Rabbi Sherre Hirsch, of Sinai Temple, Los Angeles. “In the movies, material wealth will bring you elusive happiness – the more the merrier. But even if you are making a living, you are failing to make a life.”

So how does one achieve happiness? According to Hirsch the key is creating a meaningful life. “When you are part of something that gives you meaning, you live better,” she said. “Being a part of Hadassah gives you meaning and a feeling of purpose and gratitude.”

Rabbi Harold Kushner, of Temple Israel, Natick, MA, suggested another road to happiness. He used the example of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, seeing the Jews worshiping the golden calf, and shattering the tablets to explain how to achieve happiness. Moses, seeing his dreams broken, didn’t give up. Instead, Moses went back up to Mount Sinai and wrote down God’s words. “When life compels you to give up one of your dreams,” Kushner said, “don’t stop dreaming. Get a replacement dream.”

Rabbi Laura Geller, of Temple Emanuel, Los Angeles, continued the Torah studies with readings from the Zohar, which stated that God told the soul to elevate the body through reciting 100 blessings a day.

Delegates then paired up, and discussed what saying blessings meant to them. According to Geller, blessings give one a sense of gratitude and acknowledgement of God’s presence in one’s life.

In summary, Hirsch and Geller agreed with Kushner’s statement that “The goal of life is the pursuit of holiness. Happiness just shows up as dessert.”

Sandra Goldstein, chair, American Affairs/Domestic Policy, leads an interactive grassroots advocacy workshop Tuesday that focused on Hadassah’s VOICE, “Vote Impact through Community Education.” VOICE challenges every Hadassah unit in the country to lead its community in a non-partisan activity that educates voters on key issues: U.S.-Israel relations, countering the Iranian threat, health care reform, and energy and the environment.
Meeting the HMO professionals

Delegates had an opportunity to “Meet the HMO Professionals” at a Tuesday session with Annette Sondock, chair, HMO, presiding. Talking with attendees are Dr. Yoav Mintz, above, and Professor Avi Rivkind, right.

A Young Women’s Mission Reunion: participants who took part in YW trips to Israel since 1996 gathered Monday for a group photo.
Authors tell of spiritual journeys

Three authors led Hadassah delegates on their personal spiritual journeys at Tuesday’s “Writer’s Studio” session, with Helena Bral, co-chair, Local Committee, presiding.

Dinah Berland had been estranged from her son for seven years when she stumbled on a prayer for a mother whose child was abroad in “Hours of Devotion,” a book first published in 1866 in German by Fanny Neuda. “Six weeks later my son called me,” she explained.

Berland devoted herself to creating a new verse adaptation of “Hours,” which she renamed “Hours of Devotion: Fanny Neuda’s Book of Prayers for Jewish Women.” She added, “Everything we do in life has a meaning; even if at the time we many not know that meaning.”

Maggie Anton was raised in a secular household and reached adulthood with little knowledge of her Jewish religion. In 1992, she began studying the Talmud in a class taught by feminist theologian Rachel Adler. She became intrigued with the legend that the daughters of the great medieval scholar, Rashi, studied the sacred texts in an era when women were traditionally forbidden to study. “Something possessed me,” said Anton, who in 2004 published “Rashi’s Daughters, Book I: Joheved.”

When Sissy Taran’s husband of 30 years, Bernie, died suddenly of a rare form of stomach cancer, she was devastated. “I struggled to find any meaning,” Taran said. “I had no idea how to write a book, but somehow I knew that was the way out of my depression.” Taran first collaborated with her rabbi, then found her mother’s own writings before finally publishing, “The Sun Will Shine Again,” a woman’s journey through loss.

The session ended with a variety of practical advice for the many writers in the audience, including finding the appropriate agents and publishers by browsing bookstores for likeminded books, and using vacation time to visit sites or cities connected to the book they want to write. All three authors also stressed the importance of deadlines as a way to stop procrastinating.

Ellyn Lyons, chair, Hadassah College Jerusalem

Spending a day at HCJ

Hadassah members toured Hadassah College Jerusalem (HCJ) without ever leaving Los Angeles. The essence of HCJ was brought to the Tuesday afternoon session, “Hadassah College Jerusalem: Experience a Day in the Life.”

The room was decorated with scenes from HCJ: culinary students gathering around a bubbling pot; an optometry student checking a patient’s eyes; the beautiful HCJ campus. The back of the room had a table where members were given a brief eye exam and could examine biological slides under a microscope.

“We want to give you a sense of what it means to be a participant in that great adventure,” said Ellyn Lyons, chair, HCJ.

Members had a chance to meet two HCJ students: Faina Yousim and Nissim Ohana. Then, Dr. Zachi Milgrom, HCJ vice president, conducted a mock admissions interview for Ohana, showing how the college looks at the potential of each applicant, not just grades. “We look at the person, not only the numbers,” explained Milgrom.

HCJ’s goal for its students is a practical one: the ability to get a job. President Nava Ben-Zvi was proud of the fact that all courses have a practical application. “We are working hard to give people a toolbox that holds more than the subject matter,” she said.

“Whatever profession you study, it’s a profession that can lead you into the workplace. What we give is a certificate that is a door opener.”
Your husband or your refrigerator?

Do you like your refrigerator more than your husband? That was one of the humorous questions Rabbi Shmuley Boteach – a talk show host and author – posed in Tuesday's session, “From Advice to Consent,” with Marlene Post, honorary vice president, presiding.

Boteach had his audience in stitches as he talked about everything from happiness to sexuality to the American man. He asked attendees to raise their hands if they needed a man – then saw more hands go up when he asked if they needed a refrigerator. It only shows, he quipped, “GE brings good things to life.”

In a more serious vein, Boteach, the author of “The Broken American Male: And How to Fix Him,” noted that men and women are increasingly unhappy. He cited a Washington Post study that said one-third of doctor’s quarters of all divorces are initiated by women.

Boteach blamed men, who come home from work, plop down in front of the television and refuse to make an emotional connection with their wives. “A man who doesn’t love himself cannot love his wife or inspire his children,” he explained. “American men believe their worth is tied only to how much money they make, and being a good husband and father is not enough.”

Boteach urged American men to live by Jewish values, including a new definition of success, based on being a good husband, father and member of one’s community.

“The greatest Jewish value of all,” he concluded, “is to do the right thing when no one is looking because it is right.”

Tips on growing great Jewish girls

It’s never been easy being a girl, and today’s young women are no exception. However, the “Growing Great Jewish Girls” session on Tuesday offered a ray of hope.

Author Peggy Orenstein (“Waiting for Daisy”) and Linda Altshuler, director of the Hadassah Foundation, made presentations, with Trisha Margulies, board member, Hadassah Foundation, and coordinator, Hadassah International, presiding.

Speaking to an audience of women of all ages, Orenstein said recent studies indicate that young girls are experiencing new pressures and as well as deepening old ones. “Girls are out-performing boys in school, dominating school leadership positions, and participating in sports,” said Orenstein. “But they also feel paralyzed by a pressure to be perfect – that is, kind and caring, dressing right, smart, thin, and doing right.”

Orenstein underscored the importance of “wise women” role models to be present in the lives of young girls. “I’m not just talking about the celebrities,” Orenstein added. “I’m talking about each one of us taking the time just to be there.”

Altshuler tied in the empowering aspect of women-to-women by describing the work of the Hadassah Foundation, which was established in 1998, and supports social change projects concerning Jewish women and girls in Israel and the United States.

She pointed to the Foundation’s many success stories including “Go!GoGo!” a program that encourages girls’ participation in athletics as a means to develop self-esteem. It’s a program that Hadassah chapters can start in their local communities. She also showed a short video, “Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!” This two-year self-esteem and Jewish identity curriculum is for girls in grades 6-8. One young girl in the video confessed, “When I am in Rosh Hodesh, I can just be myself.”
Speakers at Tuesday workshops

Barbara Spack, chair, Youth Aliyah/Children at Risk, in center, with Youth Aliyah students Shira Sarusi, Ramat Hadassah Szold, left, and Vitali Ostapetz, Hadassah Neurim Youth Village. Spack moderated the Tuesday session, “A Rainbow of Dreams.”

Mayor Beth Krom of Irvine, California, makes a point at Tuesday session, “Young Women’s BYOL,” with Ellen Steinbert, chair, Young Women, presiding. Krom talked about how her Hadassah experiences helped lead to success in life.

Gilad Millo, Los Angeles Israel Consul for Media and Public Affairs, makes a point at Tuesday session, “Israel Branding: A Strategic Approach to Enhancing Israel’s Image,” with Howard Kaplan, president, Hadassah Associates, presiding.

At Tuesday’s “Recipe for a Great Bulletin!” session, Renee Albert, chair, Hadassah Bulletin, presents award to Phyllis Sperry and Lynn Saxon, Boca Raton, FL, for their bulletin.