



THE JWC NEW MOON

Kislev 5766

December 2005

Kavanah:

A reflection by Laura Horowitz

As I write this, we have entered the month of *Cheshvan*. This month, which follows the holiday-packed month of *Tishrei*, is often referred to as "*mar Cheshvan*" or bitter *Cheshvan*, because of its lack of festival days. I have always felt that this is an unfair description. Everything in the Jewish calendar is there for a reason, and the placement of this empty month after the intense schedule of *Tishrei* is clearly a deliberate decision. And a wise one it is. *Tishrei* is a wonderful flurry of joy and inner reflection, spiritual and physical delight. But who can keep up that pace?

I think that *Cheshvan* is placed where it is so that we can absorb the experiences of the previous month. We have spent the last four weeks (or more, if you include the penitential month of *Elul*) experiencing quite a variety of deeply powerful emotions. Our souls need to rest and reflect. This month is our opportunity to review the lessons we learned during the *chagim*, to let them take root and begin to grow in our innermost selves. It's a period during which we can

most effectively use the skill known as *kavanah*.

Kavanah is translated as "intentionality". It is usually applied to prayer and is half of the equation needed to make davening meaningful. The other half is *keva*, the actual rote recitation of prayers. We need to bring both familiarity and intent to prayer in order to make the process work most effectively. But, as is usually the case with Jewish practice, what works for the synagogue works for the rest of life as well. Our task as Jews is to pursue *kedushah*, holiness, and that task follows us out the synagogue doors and into every moment of our lives.

So *Cheshvan* is a chance for us to think about how to hold on to the holiness we felt during the holy days of *Tishrei*. How can we maintain that focus as life with all of its demands and distractions recaptures us? The answer lies in the prayer skills we used during the reflections of the past month. During the *chagim*, we ask ourselves universal questions: what is the meaning of my life? How can I be a better person? Why do I make the

same mistakes over and over? And if we are successful in our prayer during that period, we emerge with a plan for improving ourselves. Then we run smack into reality and our resolutions falter as we struggle with the challenges of everyday life. It's not surprising—trying to decide where to buy gasoline or how to spend your leisure time by thinking about the meaning of life is like trying to walk in shoes that are four sizes too big for you. You just won't get anywhere that way. The answers we've found during our *Tishrei* meditations are too big to fit the little decisions we have to make every day.

Luckily, we have a tool to help us bring the answers down to size. That tool is *kavanah*. We can make our lives look and feel the way we want them to by bringing intentionality to the myriad choices we make in our daily lives. If we know that our goal is to make ourselves holier, we can come to our choices with direction and purpose. Making choices about what to buy, how to allocate our time, where to spend our money and so forth allows us to consider the values we want to bring to our lives. But too often we are rushed and pressured into making decisions we regret later.

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- Kavanah & conscious living
- Books worth reading per the JWC book group
- A new Hanukkah ritual: Chag HaBanot

Tzedakah Update:

1) Domestic Violence in Israel:

5765 (2004-05) Tzedakah Project: Haifa Women's Crisis Shelter

The JWC received the following letter from Dina Hevlin Dahan, of the Haifa Women's Crisis Center:

Dear JWC:

I am writing to thank you and the Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh for your donation.

These days as always the Shelter is full (8 women and 15 children). Right now, we are in the middle of the summer vacation, and the Shelter's staff is busy in providing the children a summer camp full of fun and enrichment.

Please convey to the Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh the Shelter staff's, women's and children's deep gratitude for your support and interest in our work.

With her letter, Ms. Dahan enclosed the following song/poem written by a former resident of the Haifa Crisis Shelter. It exemplifies the feelings of battered women who flee to a shelter.

I
"I" is a very complex word
... "I" has a right to live,
Has the right to say "I exist!"
And no one will shut it down again,
No one will silence it again,
I exist,
And I will survive,
I will express feelings,
I will experience,
And I can say STOP, ENOUGH, NO MORE!
I do exist
And I have the right to live!

"I"—what does the word mean?
For years, I did not know that "I" exists,
That "I" belongs.
...But there is a sound—a voice from within.
A voice screaming silently for so many years...
And then the sun shines, the door opens,
And yes! Yes! "I" am there!

There are those in Pittsburgh and elsewhere in the world who say that domestic abuse is not a Jewish problem. Women in Pittsburgh and in Israel know that it is.

2) Domestic Violence in Pittsburgh

5766 (2005-06) Tzedakah Project: The Pittsburgh Jewish Domestic Abuse Task Force Library

The Jewish Domestic Abuse Task Force was formed approximately five years ago as an initiative of Jewish Women's International (formerly B'nai B'rith Women) and currently meets on a monthly basis. The Task Force is composed of members or representatives of local Jewish organizations and synagogues and other dedicated volunteers who share a commitment to ensuring that Domestic Abuse/Domestic Violence in the Jewish community is discussed in a variety of contexts. Their express mission is to heighten awareness of Domestic Abuse in the Jewish community primarily through outreach and education.

Jewish Family and Children's Services has graciously offered to facilitate the Task Force by providing meeting space and a coordinator, Bari Benjamin (JF&CS psychotherapist), in addition to guidance and support for Task Force endeavors. Participating organizations and agencies on the Task Force include Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Jewish Women International, United Jewish Federation, Hadassah, Na'amat, National Council of Jewish Women, Jewish Family and Children's Services, Magee-Womens Hospital, Women's Place, Women's Shelter, Temple Emanuel, Women's Center and Shelter, Rodef Shalom Synagogue, and the Jewish Women's Center.

Outreach and education efforts in 2003-2005 include meetings with 17 rabbis to distribute the Jewish Women's International Rabbi Resource Guides on Jewish Domestic Abuse, video presentations for sisterhood programs, a presentation to the Women's Center and Shelter to sensitize them to issues unique to Jewish women who are abused, Breaking the Silence, a more extensive community educational program held at the JCC, and a series of Lunch and Learn seminars on various aspects of Jewish Domestic Abuse. Future Lunch and Learns are planned for

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JWC Tzedakah Over the Years

5760 (1999-2000)

Women of the Wall: Tzedakah money this year went to support the efforts of the women who braved taunts and rocks to claim the right to pray aloud, read the Torah, sing, and wear tallitot as Jews at Judaism's most sacred place—the Western Wall.



“From the beginning, the JWC has believed in the importance of supporting causes that benefit women in both the U.S. and Israel. We are committed to continuing this support.”
—JWC Board



5761 (2000-01)

Hilla BaGalil (Walking together for women's health): The first annual walk/run in Israel to raise awareness in Israel of breast cancer and other women's health issues. This event was co-sponsored by Pittsburgh and Baltimore UJF Voices 2000 Program. Women from these cities, including representatives from the JWC, and from the Karmiel/Misgav region marched together on October 19, 2000.



5762 (2001-02)

The Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance: The mission of this national organization is to expand the spiritual, ritual, intellectual, and political opportunities for women within the framework of halacha.

5764 (2003-04)

Women of the Wall (reprise): Still one of the most important issues to feminist Jews in Israel and abroad. We supported WoW again in their battles in the Supreme Court and Knesset to win the right to pray at the Wall.

5763 (2002-03)

A Business of One's Own—Economic Empowerment for Women in Israel: This organization provides microeconomic support for Arab and Jewish women in Israel to open their own businesses as they work toward the goal of economic independence.

5765 (2004-05): Haifa Women's Crisis Shelter and the Battered Women's Hotline—providing services in 5 languages to any battered woman in Israel.

5766 (2005-06): Jewish Women International and Pittsburgh Task Force Against Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community—additions to a resource library on domestic violence.

To contribute to our 5766 project, send a check to the JWC at the address below and note that it is for tzedakah.

Dues Reminder

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for 5766, please do so. Regular yearly dues are \$36, with \$18, \$54 and \$100 options also available. You may in-

clude an extra amount to support our tzedakah project if you wish. Send your check to the JWC, PO Box 81924, Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

Thank you!

Kavanah (cont'd from p. 1)

Our culture does not encourage reflection and deliberation in decision-making. Relentless advertising, the need to multitask, ever-increasing demands on our time and resources often lead us to do what's quickest and easiest rather than what's best. Using *kavanah* to make decisions allows us to seize control of our lives and do what is most reflective of our values.

This approach is being picked up in the larger culture as more people rebel against the lack of satisfaction they feel despite achieving material success. What we call *kavanah*, these people call "simple living" or "conscious living." The conscious living approach arose from the growing awareness over the past 20 to 30 years that although we are the most affluent society in history, our wealth has not brought contentment with it. Moreover, the ever-increasing flood of demands on our time and our money threatens to drown the entire planet. The website <http://www.simpleliving.net/> cites the following statistics:

*Rise in per capita consumption in the U.S. since 1970: **62%**

*Decrease in the quality of life in the U.S. since 1970, as measured by the Index of Social Health: **51%**

*Increase in number of new products between 1990 and 1997: **63%**



*Share of Americans reporting that they were "very happy" was no greater in 1994 than it was in 1957.

We have the power to refuse to live as producing/consuming machines.

We have the ability to break out of the tightening spiral of pressures that do not benefit anyone but the mega-corporations which would like to control our lives. As Jews, as human beings, our first responsibility is to search for *kedushah*, holiness, in our lives. That means that we are required to reject the values of the larger society when they conflict with Jewish values. And our most important statement of Jewish values begins "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." That is our mandate, our overriding set of priorities, simple and unconditional.

Let's be clear, though. Living with *kavanah*, living with *kedushah*, is not a punishment or a set of limitations. Judaism does not denigrate producing, getting and spending. Indeed, the rabbis saw work as a necessary activity to sustain communities and provide individuals with healthy ways to use our energies. Nor does our tradition encourage asceticism. We believe that God gave us a world overflowing with gifts, and we are commanded to enjoy those gifts fully. But we must also be ever mindful that we work and play with a goal in mind-to make our lives holy in all we do. For us, living with *kavanah* is a *mitzvah*.

As we move from the quiet month of *Cheshvan* into the hustle and bustle of *Kislev*, I encourage you to explore the website I cited above and do some exploring on your own as well. Living with *kavanah*, conscious living, will mean something different to each individual who engages in it. But the enterprise itself will enrich your soul. It can help you reclaim control over your time, your money and the way you use your resources. And when you come to make decisions about whether and what to buy, how many hours to work, how many activities you want to take on, I hope you will stop and give these decisions the

attention they deserve. Learning to use *kavanah* in our daily lives, stopping the rush to think and reflect, may feel strange at first. But the potential rewards are infinitely great--for us, for those we love, and for the entire world. *Chodesh tov!*

What we call *kavanah*, these people call "simple living" or "conscious living."

Thanks to contributors to this edition of the newsletter:

- Marilyn Asimow
- Malke Frank
- Laura Horowitz
- Stefi Kirshcner
- Miri Rabinowitz
- Mimi Reznik
- Lois Rubin

Have an idea for an article? E-mail Pat Cluss at clusspa@upmc.edu

Tzedakah Update (cont'd from p. 2)

...2005-2006 as well as another larger community event.

An important Task Force goal is to continue the development of a resource library focusing on Domestic Abuse/Violence available to the Jewish community. The collection is currently housed at the Na'amat office and

coordinated by Dee Selekman. The Task Force members are very appreciative of their designation as recipients of JWC tzedakah contributions for this year. The funds will be well utilized for literature and future programming needs. Todah Rabah!

Member News

Mazal tov to *Monica C.* who has recently completed her certification for the Sh'liach K'hilah program. This program trains lay leaders to lead services, conduct lifecycle events, teach, do (a little) pastoral care, and otherwise assist congregational rabbis. Some students in the program come from congregations that don't have rabbis at all; others (like Monica) are from large congregations with multiple rabbis, but it still makes it easier for one of those rabbis to delegate tasks to the Sh'liach K'hilah without needing to do a lot of oversight. For more info about the program go to this website: <http://urj.org/worship/shliach/>. Monica would be happy to talk with anyone local who's thinking about the program.



What's new?

BABIES...

Mazal tov also to *Barbara B.* and Howard A. (and Max and Simon) who welcomed Evelyn Shira (Chava Shira) to their family in early October.

BABIES...

Another hearty mazal tov goes to *Arin K.* and her husband Ryan on the birth of their first child, Gabrielle Jayne (Gavriella Yaffa) in mid-September. Congrats also to Savta (Grandma) *Pat C.*

AND MORE BABIES!

Congrats also to Grandma *Elizabeth G.* on the birth of her granddaughter Abigail Dahlia (Dahlia Alta).

We were also saddened to learn about the death of *Arin K.'s* father, Norman L., of New Castle, PA, in late October. We know this is a difficult time for Arin and our thoughts are with her.

From *Carol S.*: I just received my insurance license and will be starting with Combined Insurance Co as soon as the license shows up in my mailbox. Of all the many, many things I've done, that I NEVER, EVER thought I'd be doing, selling supplemental insurance has to be right up there at the top! My family gets such a kick out of the fact that, of all his grandchildren, I'm the one following in my grandfather's footsteps.

We like to know what is happening with our members. Call Pat Cluss (412) 421-2219 with your news or e-mail us at jwcpgh@yahoo.com.

Rabbi Miri Gold Makes Strides Toward Recognition for Reform Rabbis in Israel

Reprinted with permission from *Connections*, the Association of Reform Zionists of America's online e-newsletter: 10/28/05; 25 Tishrei, Volume 1, Issue 77.

Currently, there are hundreds of Rabbis on the payroll of the Israeli government.



Not one of these Rabbis is from the Reform or Conservative movement, nor are any of them female.

Rabbi Miri Gold, of Kibbutz Gezer, hopes to change all this with a petition to Israel's High Court of Justice to become Chief Rabbi of Kibbutz Gezer.

Rabbi Gold has served as the spiritual leader of Kibbutz Gezer for the past twenty years. She was ordained by the Hebrew Union College of Israel in 1999. She runs the Shabbat services and prepares kibbutz members for life-cycle events. Peter Weiss, head of the Gezer Regional Council sees her as the ideal candidate for the position of Head Rabbi of the Gezer community and, with the legal aid of the Israel Religious Action Committee (IRAC) helped submit the petition to the High Court.

On Tuesday, September 20th, 2005, the petition was submitted to the High Court. The question of "Who is a Jew?" has evolved into the question of "Who is a Rabbi?" The coming months will bring to bear many questions about the validity of Reform Judaism, as well as the role of women in Judaism. Rabbi Gold had the following comments for *Connections*:

"This case has already raised aware-

ness among those Israelis who, although they pay taxes to the government for religious needs, never gave much thought to the fact that a community has the right to choose its rabbi. Many people here have commented positively. As a result of this publicity, more and more Israelis will understand that Reform and Conservative Judaism are mainstream choices for the majority of North American Jews, and for many other Jews around the world. This will help combat the propaganda spewed by the Orthodox establishment in Israel that Reform is a "cult" dangerous to the Jewish people.

"We are turning to the Supreme Court out of our belief that Israel is a democratic state. We are demanding recognition of the need for liberal community rabbis where it is appropriate for the community."
—Rabbi Miri Gold

We are turning to the Supreme Court out of our belief that Israel is a democratic state. We are demanding recognition of the need for liberal community rabbis where it is appropriate for the community. I am asked that my de facto position as rabbi of Gezer, and as one who serves many people in the Gezer Regional Council area, be recognized by the State and that I receive compensation as do the sixteen other rabbis in the region."

JWC Member Publishes Book

Connections and Collisions: Identities in Contemporary Jewish-American Women's Writing, an anthology of essays about Jewish women writers, is the first collection to focus on what it is to be a woman and a Jew and to explore how the two identities at times support each other and at times collide. Lois Rubin, member of the JWC, is the book's editor and contributed two essays to the book, which was published in June. The book reflects the tremendous output of writing produced by Jewish women as a result of the women's and ethnic identity movements in the 1970s. Prior to that, literature by Jewish women was not abundant or well-known; the Jewish writers that received attention were almost always men. Contributors were college professors, mostly Jewish and mostly female, from universities throughout the country.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part describes beginnings: Cynthia Ozick, the first prominent contemporary Jewish-American woman writer and an essay on the creative development of seven Jewish women writers. In part two, essays about Tova Reich, Allegra Goodman, Rebecca Goldstein, Anne Roiphe and Nora Gold emphasize *collisions* between women's aspirations and Jewish tradition. Essays in part three, about Marge Piercy, Grace Paley, Joanne Greenberg, Irena Klepfisz, and Starhawk show Jewish women *connecting* to their heritage and reinvigorating it with their own perspectives.

Connections and Collisions is available in the JWC library and in local bookstores.

Chag HaBanut:

The Festival of the Daughters

By Rabbi Jill Hammer; reprinted from www.ritualwell.org.



Chanukah menorah, or use a special second menorah for the Festival, and ask all of your family members to take a role in lighting the candles.

- Light the first candle in honor of Judith and all Jewish women heroes throughout history.
- Light the second candle in honor of women heroes that you admire (name names).
- Light the third candle in honor of women teachers and spiritual leaders whom you know (again, name names, including relatives and friends).
- Light the fourth candle in honor of Jewish mothers and grandmothers, including your own.

Chanukah, the festival of lights, has special resonance for women. Some legends say that the women did the work of rededicating the Temple with unusual zeal. Other stories say that women have a connection to Chanukah because of Judith, the heroine of the Book of Judith. As an apocryphal book of the Bible, the Book of Judith has exactly the same status as the Books of the Maccabees, which tell the story of Chanukah. Judith is a Jewish woman who single-handedly saves her people by killing an enemy general. Jewish tradition (without much historical basis but rather because of similarities in the two stories) associates this victory with the Maccabean revolt. Judith, frequently depicted on medieval menorahs, is one of Chanukah's most proactive female heroes. More than that, Judith represents the heroism of women throughout Jewish history. By celebrating her, we remedy the neglect of Jewish heroines.

In North African countries, the seventh night of Chanukah, Judith's night of triumph, was set aside as Chag haBanut, the Festival of the Daughters. Chag haBanut falls on the new moon of the Hebrew month of Tevet, which is the sixth or seventh night of Chanukah. (Chanukah is the only Jewish holiday that straddles two months. Rosh Hodesh, the celebration of the new month, is classically a women's festival.) In countries such as Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, a variety of customs surrounded Chag haBanut. One tradition was that women would come to the synagogue, touch the Torah, and pray

for the health of their daughters. Mothers would give their daughters gifts, and bridegrooms would give gifts to their brides. Girls who were fighting were expected to reconcile on Chag haBanut. Old women and young women would come together to dance. There might be a feast in honor of Judith, where participants would eat cheese to remember Judith's subterfuge (in the story, Judith feeds the enemy general salty cheese to encourage his drinking of wine so that she can kill him once he has passed out), or women might take food from a ritual meal of Talmud scholars and give it to their daughters as protection from harm. There was also a custom of passing down inheritances on Chag haBanut.

Though today we know very little

Sephardim in North Africa set aside the seventh night of Hanukkah, Judith's night of triumph, as Chag haBanut, the Festival of the Daughters.

about this holiday, it nevertheless seems important to reclaim this authentic women's tradition for our own time. There are a number of ways that Jewish women and their families can reclaim Chag haBanut, "The Festival of the Daughters." Here are three home rituals Ma'yan suggests for celebrating women during Chanukah.

I. Candlelighting

On the seventh night of Chanukah, hold a special candle-lighting ceremony in honor of the Festival of the Daughters. Use your hanukiah, your

- Light the fifth candle in honor of all Jewish girls.
- Light the sixth candle in honor of your family. (This candle can be special for daughters, or you can have the candle represent the whole family, men and women, boys and girls.)
- Light the seventh candle in honor of the Shekhinah, the indwelling presence of God that is in every person (in Jewish mystical tradition, the Shekhinah is depicted as female).

The JWC Book Group

By Stefi Kirschner

We've all studied History, but what about HERstory?

For thousands of years men have been writing our history, sharing their own observations and often telling us what we were thinking, doing and perhaps even feeling. However, right here in Pittsburgh, a group of extraordinary women have gotten together to read and discuss our own Herstory.

Thanks to an initiative undertaken by Lois Rubin, our group of women meets approximately every 6 weeks, alternating in each other's homes, to read and discuss books in paperback written by Jewish women. The group has been meeting since 2001, accepting the challenge to locate books on subjects that are appealing to all. Reading short stories, poetry, Yiddish literature, novels, non-fiction, fiction, whatever...we have discovered some great literature while proudly supporting diverse women authors.

Many of us were brought up with the notion that on a rainy or snowy day, there is nothing better than curling up with a good book. In our group, we have learned that while great books are incredible, it is often the ones we don't like that keep us talking and analyzing for hours. We have learned that while a book is our wonderful friend on a day or evening at home, the personal friendships we have made and cultivated last far longer

than the memory of the writings in the book. We share simchat, good stories, good times, and most of all, we have spent hours laughing together over a cup of tea.

A few members have moved away while new members join our group. A common mellifluous thread, hard to describe but easy to feel, keeps the discussions lively. Just imagine a group of women all talking together, sometimes at the same time, jumping in and about, covering many subjects, (multi-tasking as usual). Then we finally settle down for the serious discussion that leads us down a new road of discovery, gathering more insight into our Herstory. Sometimes we also learn about things in ourselves we have long forgotten.

May our moments together continue to be a blessing to all and may we continue to share our Herstory with others.

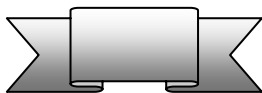


Following is a partial list of the books we have read:

- Enormous Changes at the Last Minute - Grace Paley
- A Weave of Women - E.M. Broner
- Deborah - Esther Singer Kreitman
- Moonlight in the Avenue of Faith - Gina Nahai
- Reading Lolita in Teheran - Azar Nafisi
- The Road to Fez - Ruth Knafo Setton
- Burnt Bread and Chutney - Carmit Delman
- Romance Reader: Growing Up in America - Pearl Abraham
- There are Jews in My House - Lara Vapnyar
- Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers - edited by Irena Klepfisz
- 10,000 Lovers - Edit Ravel
- From A Sealed Room - Rachel Kadish
- The Seventh Beggar - Pearl Abraham
- The River Midnight - Lillian Natal
- Fugitive Pieces - Ann Michaels
- Mazel - Rebecca Goldstein
- Bee Season - Myla Goldberg

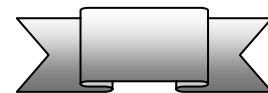
If you are interested in learning more about the book group, contact Stefi Kirschner at skirschner@cs.com

FYI: JWC Board Members 5766



Malke Frank, President

Mimi Reznik, Treasurer



Barbara Baumann, VP & Membership

Pat Cluss, Secretary & Newsletter

Programming Update

ROSH CHODESH TEVET

Thursday, December 29
7:30 PM, Labor Zionist Ctr.

Hanukkah candle-making:
The role of light and time
in women's lives.

ROSH CHODESH SHVAT

Sunday, January 29
7:30 PM, Location TBD

Biblical women's midrash
(commentary) with Rabbi
Sharyn Henry

TU B'SHVAT SEDER

Sunday, February 12
6:00 PM, Labor Zionist Ctr.

Join us for a tasty and
schmoozy Tu B'Shvat Se-
der with a JWC twist.

Sukkot with the JWC by Malke Frank

"You shall live in booths seven days;
all citizens in Israel shall live in
booths." (Leviticus 23:42)

On October 20, members of the JWC celebrated Sukkot together. As we have done for many years, we gathered in the sukkah of Laura and Mike Horowitz and performed the rituals of the chag. Reciting the blessings, waving the lulav and etrog, and inviting our ushpizot, our female guests. Women from our own lives, together with women from history, entered the realm of our physical and spiritual

space. We discussed the Biblical women depicted on the beautiful poster which hangs in the sukkah each year. Our celebration continued with the dinner meal, a potpourri of food prepared by each of us for all of us.

"As no part of the date palm is wasted—its dates being eaten, its young branches used for ritual blessing,

its fronds for covering a sukkah, its fibers for ropes, its leaves for sieves,

its planed trunks for roof rafters—so are there none worthless in Israel:

some are versed in Bible; others know Mishnah; some are masters of aggadah (sacred storytelling & homiletic interpretation of the Bible);

others do good deeds; still others promote social equity; . . . "

[A midrash from Numbers Rabbah 3:1 written c. 1150-1200 C.E.]

An Inspiring Fall Shabbaton by Miri Rabinowitz

On Shabbat Noah we gathered for our 2nd Annual In-City Shabbaton and what a splendid Shabbat we shared. The day started with a leisurely gathering in my kitchen, enjoying hot drinks and a nosh, and of course, lots of catching-up and kibitzing. Taking advantage of the glorious sunny and warm November morning, we pulled chairs onto the porch and Malke began the "formal" program. We greeted the new month of Cheshvan and moved into a sing-along of classic Israeli folk songs centered on the themes of stormy weather and lullabies. Together we read a charming children's book, Noah's Wife: The

Story of Naamah (by Rabbi Sandy Sasso). In this story when God tells Noah to bring the animals of the world onto the ark, God also calls on Naamah, Noah's wife, to save each plant on Earth. Naamah sets off to every corner of the world, discovering a fabulous array of growing things, and gathers all the seeds. She fills a room on the ark with every type of plant (even dandelions!). Then, after 40 long days and nights on the ark, the most important part of Naamah's work begins - repopulating the Earth with all the plants. Afterwards we moved inside to prepare lunch, and our lunch hour extended to 2 hours.

Needless-to-say we had a typical JWC delicious spread of treats! A favorite activity of the day was the art project inspired by the "Story of Naamah". From her garden Nancy gathered seeds, leaves, grasses - a potpourri of colors, textures and shapes. Each of us made a collage celebrating the beauty of the season. As the afternoon rolled into evening we wound down our Shabbaton with Havdalah, hugs and a promise to do this again, soon. What a wonderful way to celebrate the spirit and beauty of Shabbat.



Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh

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Phone: 412 422-8044
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TO:



The JWC Mission:

The Jewish Women's Center is a community of women of all backgrounds that provides educational opportunities and spiritual experiences rooted in Jewish values and feminist ideals. The JWC is a supportive environment for broadening our knowledge and involvement in Jewish life. The programs and resources of the JWC create opportunities for Jewish women's learning, leadership, spiritual growth and ritual practice.

