



THE JWC NEW MOON

Tishrei 5773
September 2012

Thoughts in Anticipation of the New Year

by Malke Frank

Bruchot HaBaot – Welcome to the 20th year of the Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh, Inc. We began as a Rosh Hodesh group in August 1992 and soon realized that we wanted more than monthly meetings to celebrate the New Moon. In the summer of 1993 we became incorporated as a non-profit organization. Our mission was (and still remains) to create a community of women rooted in Jewish values and feminist ideals.

The women who participate in our programs come from a cross-section of the Jewish community. They may be actively involved in their congregations or be non-affiliated; be members of other Jewish women's organizations, and/or be involved in groups in the wider Pittsburgh community. What we share is a love of Jewish living and learning, the commitment to bring a woman's voice into those areas, and the desire to accomplish this together in community.

Way back in Pittsburgh in the 1990's, the JWC was the first Rosh Hodesh group. When we had our first women's Seder (which was also the first of its kind in Pittsburgh) in 1993, it was impossible to find a Cup of Miriam in any store. In 2012, these observances and ritual objects are an accepted and integral part of Jewish living.

Our tzedakah projects target Jewish women's groups in the United States and in Israel. Women of the Wall, The Jewish Women's Archive, Haifa Women's Crisis Shelter, Organization for the Resolution of Agunot, Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, Israel's Women's Network are several of these organizations. This year we are helping to support Mayyim Hayyim, the Mikvah Education Center in Newton Massachusetts.

Our calendar for the New Year is included in this newsletter. We hope that you will join us during the year to celebrate our 20 year milestone. As Jewish women, we have come a long way, baby!

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The JWC Website
is updated
with new resources,
including rituals and
celebrations developed by our
members.

See page 4 for details.

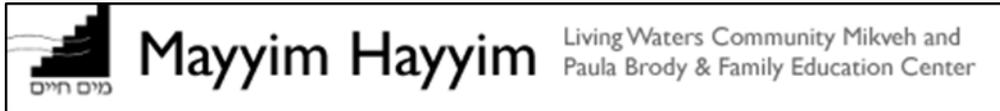


JWC PROGRAM CALENDAR: 5773 (2012-2013)

EVENT/THEME	DATE	TIME	PLACE
Tashlich	Sunday 9/23/12	11:00 AM	Nine Mile Run
Rosh Hodesh Cheshvan	Tuesday 10/16/12	Sent via e-mail	Your home
Rosh Hodesh Kislev Potluck and text study	Thursday 11/15/12	6:30 PM	Member's home TBA
Rosh Hodesh Tevet	Friday 12/14/12	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Rosh Hodesh Shvat	Saturday 1/12/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Tu b'Shvat Seder	Sunday 1/27/13	6:00 p.m.	Labor Zionist Center*
Rosh Hodesh Adar <i>The Two Female Faces of Purim: Esther & Vashti</i>	Sunday 2/10/13	TBD	With Beth El Sisterhood at Beth El
Rosh Hodesh Nisan	Tuesday 3/12/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Women's Pesach Seder	Sunday 3/31/13	6:00 p.m.	Labor Zionist Center
Rosh Hodesh Iyar	Wednesday 4/10/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Rosh Hodesh Sivan	Friday 5/10/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Rosh Hodesh Tammuz	Saturday 6/8/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Rosh Hodesh Av	Monday 7/8/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home
Rosh Hodesh Elul	Tuesday 8/6/13	Sent via e-mail	Your Home

*Labor Zionist Center, 6328 Forbes Avenue in Squirrel Hill

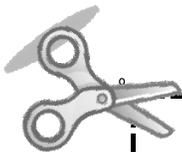
JWC TZEDAKAH PROJECT FOR 5773



Mayyim Hayyim is a mikveh--a ritual bath--and much more. Founded in 2004 in Newton, MA by Anita Diamant, well-known author of The Red Tent, Mayyim Hayyim is "a threshold into Jewish life—a place where the spiritually diverse needs of 21st century Jews are met by reclaiming the ancient tradition of immersing in the mikveh." Mayyim Hayyim makes mikveh accessible and meaningful for the full diversity of the Jewish people. It is a resource for learning, spiritual discovery, and creativity where women and men of all ages celebrate milestones like weddings and b'nei mitzvah; where conversion to Judaism is accorded honor and dignity; where survivors of trauma, illness or loss find solace; and where women can explore the ritual of monthly immersion on their own terms. Mayyim Hayyim provides 1400 immersions and over 110 education programs every year, art exhibits, national consultation services, and volunteer opportunities and training. Jews from around the US and Israel routinely stop at Mayyim Hayyim to tour, learn, and immerse.

Board Member Barbara Baumann accompanied a close friend to Mayyim Chayyim as part of a ritual marking her friend's recent divorce. Barbara affirms the beauty and meaningfulness of Mayyim Hayyim's healing waters. We are pleased to support this organization's efforts this year.

A short video on the organization's website beautifully describes the innovative, inspirational and educational opportunities created at Mayyim Hayyim: www.mayyimhayyim.org/Resources/Video.



Help the JWC support Project Mayyim Hayyim:

Here is my check for \$_____ for this year's JWC tzedakah project.

Mail your check to: JWC, P.O. Box 81924, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

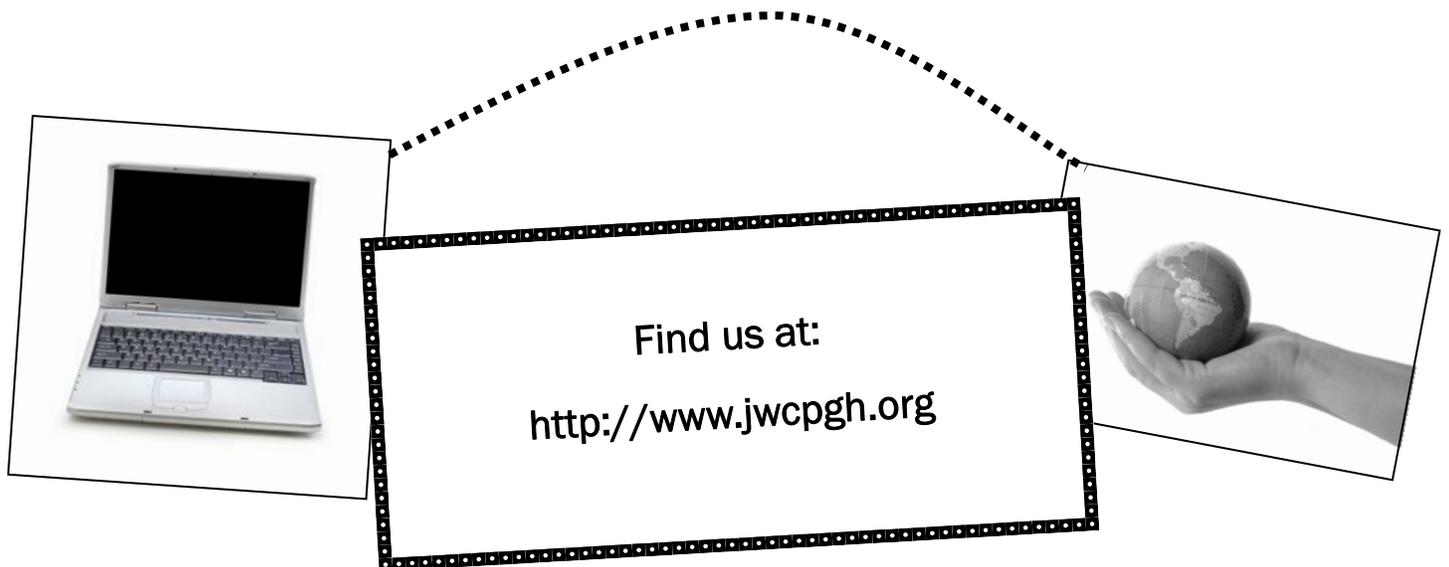
● Check out the updated and expanded JWC Website!

We hope you don't think that we at the JWC are technologically challenged, because we definitely are not! We created our website with the assistance of member Aya Betensky a number of years ago. This past year, we decided that we finally needed to finish our pages that had been "in development" for awhile. Aya, alas, was retiring, but she put us in touch with Anne Jackson of Jackson Information Design. Anne has worked with us over the past 6 months to complete the web pages we originally envisioned with Aya and to suggest design updates and ways to make the website more user-friendly.

We are very, very excited to announce that our newly upgraded website is available for viewing! To our original pages, we have added:

- New rituals created by our members to mark important life cycle events such as: weddings, baby namings, and brit milah ceremonies
- Examples of our rosh hodesh rituals and an explanation of why Jewish women celebrate the advent of the New Moon
- Our tzedakah projects over the years, including our current one
- Our program calendar for 5773 (2012-13).

We hope you and others will go to our website to find out about woman-focused aspects of Jewish life, to find resources for your own life cycle and celebratory events, and to find links to other web-based resources that will help you integrate Jewish feminist content into your celebrations and family events.



Barbara Shuman was recently elected the President of the Agency for Jewish Learning (AJL) here in Pittsburgh. Mazal tov, Barbara!!

Lois Rubin and her husband Ira are kvelling both that their granddaughter, Maya Devorah, became a Bat Mitzvah on May 19, 2012, and that their daughter Beth received a Fulbright Scholarship for research and teaching in Guatemala in 2013. In addition, Lois will present a paper on aging in the poems of Alicia Ostriker, Linda Pastan, and Maxine Kumin at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Oakland, CA, in November.

Mazal tovs (tovim??) also go out to JWC members **Malke Frank** and **Pat Cluss** on the births of their grandchildren— Sarah Yuval (Malke) and Clifford Jacob or CJ (Pat). Mazal tov also to the children's parents: Michal Frank and Derek Molliver and Arin and Ryan Keough!



Sydelle Pearl's new children's book, HOPE SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA: THE STORY OF A CHILD, A PAINTING, AND A PRESIDENT has been published by Twin Lights Publishers. Aside from the publisher's website and Amazon, the book is available locally at Awesome Books, 929 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh (downtown), the Carnegie Museum of Art gift shop in Oakland, and the Penguin Bookshop in Sewickley. Sydelle is also so happy to announce that there will be a playreading of her late mother's play, WE ARE ALL PEOPLE, at the August Wilson Center on Monday, September 10th at 7:00PM. Admission is free. The play is a drama about a black family and a white family who live in the same tenement in Newark, NJ during the racial riots in 1967 and how they forge a friendship.



Marian Hershman has some new grandchildren. Emmett Dean was born March 15, 2012. He is the brother of Serafim, born January 15, 2011. Needless to say their parents, Larry and Tiffany Hershman, are busy!

Karen Morris's son Adam had his bar mitzvah on June 23, 2012, at Beth El congregation, an event that was a wonderful simcha for Karen's family.

Support the JWC with your 5773 dues:

- \$18 _____ Reduced dues
- \$36 _____ 1-year Basic Membership
- \$54 _____ 1-year Supporting Membership
- \$100 _____ 1-year Special Friend

I am adding \$_____ to my dues for this year's tzedakah project, Project Keshet.

Mail your check to: JWC, P.O. Box 81924, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

JWC Annual Women's Pesach Seders—19 years in 2012!



In 1993, the JWC was a pioneer in Pittsburgh in adding a third seder at Pesach that celebrated the contributions of Jewish women to the Exodus and to modern Jewish life. Many organizations in our city and nationally now routinely offer women-focused seders. Our first Women's Pesach Seder celebrated *Shifra and Puah, Yocheved and Batya, Miriam, and the Unnamed* at a time when women's role in ancient and modern Jewish life was rarely acknowledged except in specific, traditional ways. At our 18th annual Women's Seder in 2011, in a haggadah themed *Women's Haggadot Retrospective: How We Have Evolved Over the Years*, we took time to look back to 1993 and to various other times between now and then, asking ourselves "Are our lives the same or different? How are they different? What has remained the same?" and we asked how the Jewish world and the larger world around us have changed and not changed.



In April, 2012, we held our 19th annual Women's Pesach Seder. It was a blessing for us to have a haggadah lovingly (and politically) prepared, as always, by Laura Horowitz and to have our own Julie Newman leading the singing during her Pesach break from cantorial school at Hebrew College in Boston. In our haggadah this year, Laura prompted us to think about the season from the point of view of redemption in these troubled times. She asked us to consider:



*wandering in the desert, so easy to feel
alone*

*We all need to know redemption from a
hand stronger than our own*

*From a hand stronger than our own,
from a hand stronger than our own.*

We hope to see you this spring at what will certainly be a joyous 20th anniversary of our Women's Pesach Seder!



Tashlich and Shalechet 2012 at the JWC

From its beginning in 1992, The Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh has been observing the ritual of Tashlich/Shalechet to mark the beginning of our year. Our location has changed from the lily pad pond in a cemetery to the fish-filled pond at a college to its present location at a flowing stream in a park. Our numbers may be 4 or 10. However, each one arrives with crumbs or flower petals and leaves with a sense of personal and communal intentions for the coming year.

Tashlich and Shalechet both have the same Hebrew root letters: shin-lamed-kaf.

In tashlich, we cast out, metaphysically transferring our wrong-doings to bits of bread; in shalechet, we shed, as trees drop their leaves in autumn. Rather than viewing this ritual as throwing the "bad" things into the water, we are instead like trees, shaking free of what has dried up and is no longer healthy or nourishing to us. Shalechet is a feminine noun, and for us women, the concept of letting go is a part of our natural on-going cycle.

Tradition teaches that tashlich is a cyclical ritual. When we throw the pieces of bread into the water, they are eaten by the fish and recycled back into the food chain. The act of shalechet follows a similar process. The fallen leaves fertilize the soil around the tree, helping new plants and trees to sprout in the spring. Thus, what is no longer useful, what we shed or cast off, can become sustenance to something else. What each of us would like to release for ourselves might be exactly what another person is looking to bring into her life.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 11:00 a.m.

AT NINE MILE RUN STREAM

Please bring breadcrumbs or flower petals.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO ENTERING THE NEW YEAR WITH YOU

There are two ways to get to Nine Mile Run:

1. Follow Forbes Avenue towards Regent Square and make a right onto Braddock Avenue. Make a right onto Hutchinson. Follow this street until you see the sign for Frick Park. Make a right into the park, go down the hill, and park in the far end of the parking lot. We will meet in the parking lot at 11:00 a.m.
2. Go up Forward Avenue past Allderdice High School toward Beechwood Blvd. Cross over Beechwood and continue down Forward (now called Commercial Avenue). You will pass the entrance to Summerset and the Irish Centre (both on your right). At the very bottom of the hill, there are two small gravelled parking areas on the left. Pass the first one and continue a little further down the road to the second one and park. Follow the path going from the parking area into the Nine Mile Run area. The creek is on the right. Keep walking until you see us. If you get to the soccer field, you have gone too far.

JWC helps bring Anat Hoffman to Pittsburgh

Anat Hoffman visited Pittsburgh on April 30, 2012. She is the director of Israel Religious Action Center that campaigns and lobbies for civil rights and women's and is the founder of Women of the Wall. While in Pittsburgh, Anat gave a talk at Temple Rodef Shalom. The Jewish Women's Center was one of the organizations that helped to bring her here to share her story about the state of women's rights in Israel.



Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh

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[We're on the web:
www.jwcpgh.org **]**

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.

