

Now Leaving the Comfort Zone

An interfaith trip to Turkey reveals the costs of self-insulation.

By *Rachel Pomerance, Freelance Writer* Reprinted with permission.

I went to Penn for the Jews.

Sure, it's a great school in a colorful city. And I visited during Spring Fling, becoming dutifully enraptured by young adults delighting in the independence and indulgence of college life.

But I craved comfort.

Penn, the so-called "Jewish Ivy"—some 30 percent of its roughly 20,000 students are Jewish, according to Hillel—fit.

I came from Atlanta, specifically a part of the city (Newt's district) where I felt like an outsider for being Jewish. There was good reason. Parents at my high school organized "balls" for each grade in which one token Jewish girl was invited. It wasn't me. Not to knock the South: My mother and her parents were born and raised in rural Georgia, where they were beloved, even amid the subtle strain of minority status.

In any case, I was eager to release the burden.

To be sure, Penn boasts all types of students from all types of backgrounds.

But when I was there, and I suspect this remains, we self-segregated. The Southeast Asians had their own parties, as did the Latinos. The African Americans staked out a section of the dining hall at 1920 Commons. And the kids from Manhattan dressed in black.

At Penn, and in the years since, I sought out the Jewy Jews. People who, like me, feel a deep sense of Jewish identity and community. While that has been nurturing, insulation has come with a cost. I've only recently realized this, and it took an interfaith trip across the world to convince me.

Because of my work as a freelance journalist, the Atlanta World Pilgrims program brought me along on a 10-day trek through Turkey, to visit sites that are holy or historically important to all three "Abrahamic" faiths.

Led by an imam, a Baptist minister, and a rabbi, there were 30 of us—Muslims, Christians, and Jews, half of us black, half of us white, all of us active in our respective Atlanta communities. Forced out of familiar routines and places, we were on a mission to learn about other religions and, in the process, each other.

(story continued on page 2)



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Now Leaving the Comfort Zone, continued...

World Pilgrims, a model program being studied by other U.S. cities, aims to transform interfaith relations in Atlanta, and thus the city itself, through grassroots missions to destinations like Israel, Turkey, and Spain. This was its fourth.

What I learned undid many of my beliefs, subconscious or not, because I found great comfort and commonality with people from entirely different backgrounds from my own.

Much of this became possible through the experience of travel, which is bound to bond people through new adventures. We would haggle together with the Turkish vendors, who routinely clasp their heart when you customarily offer half the going price. We took in incredible glories of nature—the nearly technicolor turquoise of coastal lakes, lava-born rock formations that give the appearance of “fairy castles” in the central region of Cappadocia—and, by sheer good luck, a total solar eclipse.

In that instance we unexpectedly found ourselves in the precise spot where astrologists had been planning a visit for six years. Standing on a hotel balcony in Konya, we watched in enchantment, as the midday sky dimmed to black in minutes—setting off a surge of wind and a flurry of black birds circling in confusion—and just as quickly returned to a safe state of sunshine.

And many of us experienced (though not all together) the Turkish bath, a delicate and furious operation that gives the sensation of being washed both like a car and a baby.

On our tour bus, we took turns at the mic, talking about our impressions of the trip and, often, the personal hardships that paved our paths.

All of these elements helped us to see ourselves in each other and to forge friendships.

We stayed away from the sticky points—like Middle Eastern politics—saving that conversation until we returned with a level of trust in place.

We did.

I was recently covering the movement within the Presbyterian Church to consider dropping its holdings in companies that do business with Israel. It's a policy I've editorialized against as unsound and unfair, while its backers call it a morally responsible peace incentive. Among them, it turns out, is one of my closest friends from the Turkey trip.

Although her position disturbs me, I do take comfort in the fact that we built a foundation on which to hear each other's arguments.

There were moments on the trip—from the hilarious to the profound, sometimes both—that enabled such insights and friendships.

Like the serenity of sitting on the worn carpet of a mosque, watching my friends kneel and bend in rhythmic worship, the energy of a rousing Baptist sermon, and late-night laughter over the inane.

What's more, learning about other cultures gave me an even stronger understanding of my own Jewish identity among them. My rituals and heritage took on heightened value, and I felt a renewed appreciation for the complex and powerful bonds among my own people.

(story continued on page 11)

From the Founder

Ronni Solomon Abramson

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and I wish every one of you a happy and healthy new year. Instead of my typical column, Suellen and I came up with the following ten networking resolutions for the Jewish Professional Woman that you might want to add to your ever-growing list.

1. I will remember that there are over 56,000 Jewish women in Atlanta who are over age 21 and together we have the power and ability to help each other professionally and personally – better than any “old boys club.”
2. I will try to find more business and social opportunities for my connections to help them develop their business and personal life. (“You get what you give”)
3. I will remember that every social event is an opportunity to network and learn valuable information from others and about myself.
4. I will engage in networking activities and aggressively grow my network even if my current job does not require that I bring in business and/or I am not in a position to bring in business at this time.
5. I will remember that the people I meet do not have to be particularly “distinguished,” or “important” to pass on valuable information, to lead me to a great employment opportunity or to find a great hair stylist.
6. I will follow up with new people I have met.
7. I will be more assertive and direct when I need something from a connection rather than beating around the bush.
8. I will join JPWN if I am not a member, I will attend all JPWN events and I will tell all my Jewish female friends about JPWN!
9. I will remember that mentors and role models helped me attain my current position, and I will be a mentor and a role model to others.
10. I will seek opportunities to help others by complimenting them or by creating a positive buzz and strive to avoid “lashon harah” (gossip).

Hope to see many of you at the Judge Bernes event!

Ronni

Featured Jewish Professional Woman

15 Minutes with Simone Feldman

Simone Feldman is our 6th featured woman and a JPWN member. She is an architect in Atlanta specializing in residential renovation. Originally from Brazil, she moved here in the late 1970s. We took some time getting to know Simone better.

Q: What made you decide to become an architect and what inspires you artistically? I love the creativity part of what architecture involves. I love the changes, the interaction with the clients, finding out what is inside their minds, and making it reality. It's one of the greatest satisfactions I have. I like helping people create a vision and digging into what people want and putting the puzzle together. I am inspired artistically by the functionality of space, that is, what is the purpose of the space and what it will be used for.

Q: What was it like moving from Brazil to the United States and how did your family decide to move to Atlanta? On January 5th, it will be 28 years that I have lived here! Moving to the US was very challenging in the sense that when you are in your early twenties, "the future is now." I was very concerned about leaving my friends and my well known surroundings to start a new life not just in another city, but another country. On the other hand, I was going to be closer to my family, which has been moving to the US since the early 1950s. It was a sad and happy move. My mother has two sisters that already were here in Atlanta. I also have two sisters and at that time a brother living here, so Atlanta was the place. In addition, I had spent several vacations here with my family prior to our move. This made the transition easier.



*Simone Feldman, Architect,
S&S Design Consultants*

Q: Tell me a bit about your family. I have 3 daughters: one in college, one is a senior graduating from high school and we are awaiting college application responses, and a 14 year old eighth-grader. I've been married for 27 years to my husband, Steven, who is in the sales industry. We also have Jada, our energetic 2-year-old husky.

Q: What do you enjoy about the Atlanta Jewish community? I love the diversity of the different backgrounds. We all can learn from each others' traditions and history. I belong to Or Ve Shalom, a traditional Sephardic synagogue with a lot of different people from South America and Europe. It's a great thing to be exposed to so many different cultures.

Q: What were your plans for Hanukah and the New Year? We've had a quiet Hanukah because we have family coming from Brazil for the New Year. We have not seen them for about five years. I have an aunt, her husband, their son, his wife, and their two boys – all of whom will be staying with me for the New Year. Fortunately my home can accommodate everyone. We have a few sight-seeing events in Atlanta planned.

Q: What is a part of your life that you treasure? I think that I have been lucky to have raised my daughters and have a husband plus a demanding career in the sense that I'm dealing with people and their needs in a service business. It's been an interesting journey for the past 24 years. Family and career are both important to me. Of course priority is my family, but I have a tremendous passion for my career also. Sometimes I look back and think "How did I do all this?" but I feel that it is something that has been a strong part of my life – the marriage of my family time and my work time.

Five Tips for Becoming Financially Fit in 2007

By Junko Horvath

A Happy New Year to all! After spending money for buying a lot of gifts for Chanukah and the holidays, New Year comes. I hear from many people that January is a hard month to start a new year due to debts from the holiday season. We can make a New Year's resolution now and turn 2007 into a successful and prosperous year. Here are five tips towards a financially savvy year for smart women like you!

1. Set goals for 2007

Write down what you want to accomplish financially this year, how much money you would like to save this year in your retirement account, what kind of big purchase items do you want to buy this year, etc. Spend some alone time for a couple of hours at home or go to a coffee shop and think through what you really want to achieve this year.

2. Make a plan of how you can achieve your goals above

Once you write down what you want to achieve financially, think of how you can make it happen for each goal you listed above. Are they achievable goals? Think through each one. You may have listed one of your goals for 2007 as maximizing your 401K while you saved only one third of your goal in 2006. Where would the money come from to make the additional contribution? If one of your goals is to buy a \$40,000 car this year, how much of a down payment would you be making and how much would the monthly payment be? Again once you set your goals, you have to make a plan as to how you will achieve them.

3. Make a monthly and yearly budget for 2007

Some financial advisors say not to make a budget since it's almost impossible to live within your budget. I disagree. Unless you know how much you are spending monthly, how can you figure out your entire financial situation? Take control of your finances. I am not saying that you should record all of your spending to the penny, but it's better to know how much you are spending/saving and to make a budget for 2007. By making a budget, you will be surprised how much more you are spending than you actually think. So, don't make your budget very tight. Leave some room for unexpected expenditures.

4. Monitor your budget weekly and review your spending monthly

Put in your calendar which day of the week you would spend one hour to input all of your spending into Quick Books, Quicken, etc. Also do the same for your monthly review. Don't review it whenever you want to, schedule time it in your calendar and make an appointment with yourself to do so.

5 Tips for Becoming Financially Fit in 2007, continued...

5. If you haven't done the following in the recent years, make this year the year to take action and secure your financial future:

- Have you thought through when you want to be financially independent? What's your plan to achieve that goal? How much should you save monthly from now on?
- Have you reviewed all of your investments recently? Are your portfolio properly diversified? Are you taking too much or too little risk to achieve your long-term goals?
- When was the last time you updated your wills? Are there any changes you should make in your wills such as guardians, trustees, co-trustees? Do you have the same kind of relationship with these people as before?
- Have you reviewed your risk management recently? Do you have an adequate amount of protection in case your spouse passes away, you or your spouse becomes disabled, or any other catastrophe?
- How many years do you have left before your children go to college? Do you have enough savings in 529 plan's for each of your children?

Have your financial plan completed and have a long-term plan for your future. If you can't figure these things out by yourself, hire a financial advisor and get professional opinions. It's the same thing as hiring other professionals such as a business coach, a personal trainer, physician, etc. No matter how smart you are, it's not efficient to figure everything out by yourself. Smart women know the importance of delegation and use their time on something they enjoy and is worthwhile.

Determine to have a successful year financially. Without a strong will, it's hard to achieve your goals. I wish every one of you a rewarding 2007!

Junko Horvath, MBA, CSA is a registered investment management consultant from Legacy Advisors, LLC which is a federally registered investment advisory firm (www.legacy-advisors.com). Junko can be reached at: Junko.Horvath@Legacy-Advisors.com or 404.459.2592.

STARTING OFF A HEALTHY NEW YEAR

By Sheryl Westerman and Lauren Barkan

Set goals for 2007

It is another New Year and 58% of Americans have made a resolution to lose weight... again. The big question is, how? Most of you have probably already tried all of the diets in a book, buying pre-packaged foods, taking supplements and nothing has worked long term. Believe me, I've been around the weight loss block for many years, and here are some effective and simple strategies that will help you achieve your goal to be thin:

1. *Keep a food journal* - record what you eat, when you eat, where you eat and how it made you feel. This is the best tool to stay accountable. Of course, you must be honest and write every bite, lick and taste down for it to be effective! The food journal will be useless if you hide, and remember that you're only cheating yourself!

2. *Learn to eat like a child* - teach yourself to stop eating when you're full and eat when you're hungry, like a toddler does. Consistency is key. Try to eat at the same time and the same portions every day to train your body to be hungry those times and feel full after the same amount of food.

3. *Know your triggers* - eliminate all temptations from your house. Everybody is different and has different likes and dislikes. Know what your trigger foods are and avoid them for at least 30 days. It usually takes that long for your body to accept change both physically and mentally. If you can last 30 days without your favorite food, you will see that your cravings will actually lessen.

4. *Pace yourself* - don't go longer than 4-5 hours without eating. That is about how long it takes

most foods to digest, which means that if you wait any longer to "re-fuel," your metabolism will start to drop and so will your blood sugar. At this point, it is harder to have self-control and it will be more difficult to eat something healthy.

5. *Balance the budget* - food is not free, and if you "overspend," you'll wear the difference. Treat calories like dollars and know your limits. Any calories burned through exercise should be treated like a savings account, to which you only deposit and only withdraw in an emergency.

6. *Drink water* - water is the key ingredient to your metabolism. You need a minimum of 64 oz of water every day to burn as many calories as your body possibly can. Decaffeinated tea or coffee and no-calorie flavored water are the only substitutions for water.

7. *Look for hidden calories* - Watch out for coffee drinks, alcohol, sauces or hidden fats and always watch your portion control.

8. *Exercise alone doesn't work* - 500 calories = 1 pound. It can take up to 2 hours in the gym every day to lose 1 pound a week, but substitute water for the 2 regular sodas or sweet tea you drink every day and you can save yourself those 500 calories to lose 1 pound. Obviously, the combination of exercise and dieting is best, and the most effective way to lose weight and keep it off.

9. *Nothing tastes as good as thin feels* - always remember this statement. You don't want to wake up the next morning and regret what you ate the night before.

Recipe for Minestrone Vegetable Soup From Sheryl Westerman's **LIGHT AND HEALTHY COOK BOOK**

1 can V8 juice small (spicy if preferred), 1 can tomatoes (8 oz), 3 cups water, 2 vegetable bouillon cubes, small pack mushrooms, 2 yellow squash, 2 zucchini, 2 medium onions, 2 turnips, 1 parsnip, 2 leeks, 2 cups either carrots or butternut squash, green beans, okra, celery, Italian parsley

Place vegetables in pot (quantity depends on how thick you want the soup)

Add pepper, salt, garlic, fresh or dried oregano, basil

Add canned tomatoes, V8 and vegetable bouillon cubes (1 cube for each 8 oz of water)

Cook till vegetables are tender and serve as is or blend to a smooth soup

EXCHANGES: free

Sheryl and Lauren provide nutrition and weight loss counseling in Sandy Springs.

For more information, call 404.257.9001.

JPWN Fundraising Variety Entertainment Book of Atlanta – **ON SALE NOW**

What is the Variety Entertainment Book of Atlanta? This book comes out twice a year and is packed with “buy one, get one free” coupons for hundreds of great Atlanta restaurants. Golfing, Parking and Atlanta Symphony coupons are also included. These books are perfect as birthday or anniversary gifts, business incentives and client “thank you’s”.

How much does the Book cost? (Pick-up arrangements are available if you'd like to avoid shipping charges.)

Bonus: Buy the current book now, which goes from Jan. 1- July 31st and you'll also get the last book which is still good until January 31, for free.

1	\$18/book + \$2 shipping
2	\$18/book + \$4 shipping
3-4	\$16/book + \$5 shipping
5-10	\$15/book + \$7 shipping
11-49	\$13/book + \$9 shipping
50-99	\$11/book + \$9 shipping
100 or more	\$10/book + \$9 shipping

A portion of each sale will go directly to JPWN to help cover future programming costs. Contact Jessica Strauss-Hurwitz at 404.308.0064 or jstraussurwitz@gmail.com for more details or to place your order.

Save the Dates...

January 10, 2007

Judge Debra Bernes

Judge, Court of Appeals of Georgia

The title of Judge Bernes' presentation is "Life is not tried... when you're standing outside the fire". During this presentation you will learn how Judge Bernes decided to run for public office and her views on judicial elections.



http://www.jpwn.org/bio_judges.htm

The event will be held at Powell Goldstein, LLP. One Atlantic Center, 1201 W. Peachtree Street, Fourteenth Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Registration will begin at 11:45 a.m. Connect, Learn and Lunch will be 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Member Online Registration - \$25

Non-Member Online Registration - \$35

January 22 - 28, 2007

Coming soon... The 7th Annual Atlanta Jewish Film Festival! Thirty-one films are being shown from January 22 - 28, 2007 at the Regal

Atlantic Station and Lefont Sandy Springs Cinemas. Visit www.atlantajewishfilm.org for film descriptions, to purchase tickets, or to volunteer. Call Stacey Geer with any questions - 770.730.9959



January 25, 2007

Book Club

The World to Come by Dara Horn (in paperback)

This event will be held at Ronni Solomon Abramson's house. 2471 West Madison Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30360

Please RSVP to info@jpwn.org to reserve your spot. Space is limited. The cost is free for both members and non-members.

March 6, 2007

Emily C. Sanders

Ms. Sanders will speak on Financial Planning and Investment Strategies for Women.

<http://www.sandersfmi.com>



March 22, 2007

Book Club

The Book TBD

Info TBD

September 6, 2007

Connie Glaser

"An Upbeat Look at Differences in Communication Styles between Men and Women and Strategies for Women to Become Even More Effective Communicators.

www.connieglaser.com/AboutConnie.html



Person, Place or Thing... Announcements

Rayna Jones, formerly Corporate Counsel with The Home Depot, is now with the law firm of Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C. where she specializes in labor and employment law. Ms. Jones can be reached at rayna.jones@ogletreedeakins.com or 404.870.1832.

Stacy Edelstein Hyken has recently joined Arnall Golden Gregory, LLP where she is part of the Real Estate Practice Group. Stacy is assisting shopping center owners with their leasing matters, as well as advising businesses on their contract matters. Her new contact information is stacy.hyken@agg.com or 404.873.8142.

Jessica Strauss-Hurwitz, formerly Senior Graphic Designer at MeadWestvaco Packaging Systems LLC, has gone out on her own to become a Freelance Graphic Designer. Her specialties include print design, Flash animation, web design and video editing. Mrs. Strauss-Hurwitz can be reached at 404.308.0064 or jsh1@jshousedesign.com.

JPWN congratulates these women who were selected to participate in the American Jewish Committee's Berman Leadership Institute: **Ronni Solomon Abramson, Pamela Alexander, Suellen Bergman, Renay Blumenthal, Randi Drake, Marci Fried, Michelle Leven, Laura Markson, Jackie Naggar, and Marci Schnur.**

The Berman Leadership Institute was established to teach emerging Atlanta Jewish leaders in their 30's and 40's about the American Jewish Committee and to engage these leaders in key issues that reflect the AJC Mission:

- Ensuring Jewish continuity and strengthening Jewish life
- Building support for Israel and protecting the security of Jewish communities around the world
- Combating anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry
- Building inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding

The Berman Leadership Institute provides a comprehensive introduction into one of the premier Jewish organizations in the world. With more than 2000 local members and donors, the hallmark of AJC's Atlanta Chapter is building bridges of understanding within the Jewish and general communities. The Atlanta Chapter takes a significant leadership role in interfaith, interethnic, international and intra-Jewish affairs in metro Atlanta.

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January, "named after the Roman god Janus, whose two bearded faces look in opposite directions, is an appropriate name for the month in which people reflect on the past but look toward the future."

~from To the Shore Once More by Frank Finale

Person, Place or Thing continued...

**We congratulate these women selected to be in the 2007 Glass Leadership Institute Class:
Lauren Estrin, Gillian Fierer, Rebecca Goldstein, Joanne Haimovitz, Sandi Karchmer Solow, Shari
Magnus, Jaclyn Platten, Jessica Strauss-Hurwitz and Lisa Zier**

The ADL Glass Leadership Institute:

Founded in 1999, the Anti-Defamation League Glass Leadership Institute has become one of the most respected leadership programs in Atlanta. The Southeast Region ADL office was one of the first to offer the program, which is now active throughout the country, creating a network of dynamic leadership.

The Glass Leadership Institute was designed to educate emerging and established Jewish community leaders on ADL issues and engage them in strategies for confronting some of the critical challenges facing the Jewish people today. Participants address front-page topics on the ADL local, national and international agenda and are given the opportunity to meet with and learn from elected officials, members of the law enforcement community, representatives of ethnic and interfaith groups and ADL staff.

The goal of the program is to provide a broad exposure to the Anti-Defamation League's programs and resources and create a cadre of committed leaders who will become involved in ADL's mission to PROTECT, INVESTIGATE and EDUCATE!

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In part, the ease of the trip can be credited to the commonalities among the three monotheistic religions, and the fact that this was a self-selecting group of open-minded folks.

But I am not so stuck in its kumbaya afterglow as to forget there is evil in the world, much of it spawned by the differences among us. Not to mention the conflicts that arise from the best of intentions.

But knowing each other makes solving them with civility that much more likely.

For my part, the diversity of people I came to know and respect gave me a new sense of optimism and possibility, helping me trade suspicion for openness.

It's tough to overcome our reflex for segregation. Maybe we identify as Southerners, who can insult you without you realizing it, or as Northerners, who can insult you in a way you can't miss. Or we're Jewish or black and defensively expect someone to type us. Whether it's our gated communities, or our religions or the place we work out, we quarantine ourselves out of fear or habit.

We won't all travel to Turkey on an interfaith mission. But we can and should put ourselves in cross-cultural situations. Because peace and understanding spread slowly, one connection at a time.

This article originally appeared in the Nov/Dec 2006 issue of The Pennsylvania Gazette and has been reprinted with permission.