

## HOUSTON SALONISTAS!

In 2005 when Susan Weidman Schneider broached the possibility of Lilith Salons in Houston, my biggest fears were (a) that no one would come, and (b) that no one would say anything. Both fears were groundless. And it's been commented more than once that the energy in the room is almost palpable every time.

Luckily, we average about 30 verbal, well-read women (with strong opinions!) at each salon. They come from all branches of Judaism, and many are unaffiliated with Jewish organizations or synagogues. We meet in the evenings at different homes, and if too much time goes by between sessions, people want to know when the next one will be. Their emails make me feel that these wonderful human beings really want to meet and talk about issues that matter—and to learn more about the magazine—as well as each other. After attending two sessions, women new to LILITH are urged to subscribe.

Our meetings are as varied as the participants. Each time we focus on topics that have been, or are about to be, covered by the magazine, such as reproductive rights, verbal abuse, mental health and mental illness, friendship, and, most recently, Jewish women and their mothers. At our next meeting we will discuss eating disorders among Jewish women. We range in age from 30-somethings to eighty-year-olds—and we have a lot to say to each other! (So much for my fear that no one would talk!)

Although we always have a facilitator, it doesn't take long before the group takes on a life of its own. We invite a resource person, someone expert on the evening's topic, in case we get too far off-base or need more information.

In spite of the size of our group, everyone talks freely and discussion is meaningful. We laugh a lot and do our share of eating and celebrating. Not long ago, for example, we concluded with a 30th birthday party for LILITH, highlighted by a cake that said LILITH LIVETH! As a door prize we gave the winner a copy of the magazine's first cover, signed by Susan.

It amazes me that after each Salon I receive enthusiastic emails from some of the attendees and names of women they would like to be invited to the next one. Perhaps more important, I'm told of friendships that have begun as a result of our sessions.

The Houston Salonistas are here to stay!