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Letter From the Editor

Dear JSM Readers,

Whether you receive a copy of Jewish Scene in the mail, pick up at one of 60+ locations or read it online at jewishscenemagazine.com, we love hearing from you!

And we thank our loyal readers who share our stories online through Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Many JSM readers also subscribe to our weekly newspaper, The Hebrew Watchman, which we acquired in 2021 from the Goldberger family who began the paper in 1925, almost 99 years ago in September.

We recently shared in The Hebrew Watchman an article describing the rising cost of printing, paper and postage. Thanks to a very generous donor, Jewish Scene remains a print staple of our Memphis Jewish community and nearby states.

I don't know about you, but I still love to hold a magazine in my hands. I already stare at a computer or phone screen for too many hours in a day. And I know people save our magazines for the memories of their weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs and stories about how their loved ones make a difference in communities.

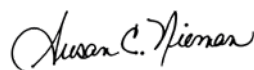
In what other Memphis publication would you see the smiling faces

of our Jewish children in Jewish day schools or summer camps making memories and experiencing unique opportunities? Where else would our senior population share their ongoing activities and highlight their amazing programs?

If you don't receive The Hebrew Watchman, you are missing out on even more local, national and Israel-related articles. You can subscribe to both publications by choosing from the dropdown menu at jewishscenemagazine.com/subscribe.

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Shalom



Susan C. Nieman - Publisher/Editor



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Ashley Vogel and Sam Teper

Photo by Rob + Deanna Photography



Contributors



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Steve Kaplan is a graduate of Memphis Hebrew Academy, Central High School and Memphis State University. He worked in the family business, Kay Furniture Showroom, Inc. in West Memphis, Ark., where he became president in the late 1970s. In 2017, he joined the Memphis Jewish Community Center as Adult Services Coordinator, where he leads the senior activities.



Melinda Lejman is a lifelong Memphian and Jew by choice. She and her husband are parents to three beautiful children and several four-legged fur babies. After a decade in the non-profit sector, Melinda now works as a freelance writer and contractor in addition to baking for her charitable dog treat company, Ruby Snacks.



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Ashley Vogel and Sam Teper took pre-ceremony photos on the Peabody Hotel rooftop and along the trolley tracks on their way to The Kent.

Jubilant Wedding Weekend Fills the Bluff City with Radiance & Bliss

By Shoshana Cenker :: Photos by Rob + Deanna Photography

Teamwork makes the dream work, as the saying goes, which is exactly what made Sam and Ashley (née Vogel) Teper's fabulous wedding weekend a memorable experience for all. Both were "heavily involved" in the planning. The happy couple was married in downtown Memphis at The Kent on Nov. 11, 2023, which also happened to be Ashley's dad's 60th birthday.

"I felt a little guilty," Ashley noted, due to the tragedy in Israel a month before. "But I was reminded that we need more simchas, more celebrations." In fact, to keep the country, soldiers, and hostages in mind during their joyous occasion, they hung an Israeli flag above their chuppah.

The foundation for Sam and Ashley's journey was laid back in 2018 – after visiting the sites with her cousin, Monte Eiseman, who was living in the Windy City at the time, Ashley decided to move to Chicago. With a design background, she was especially drawn to the iconic architecture.

As another saying goes, it's all about who you know: A mutual friend introduced Ashley and Sam, who's from Northbrook, Illinois. "We met during the pandemic in 2020, when there was nothing to do. So, we hung out. A lot," explained Ashley. "When I worked late, Sam cooked dinner."

All that precious time together solidified their bond, leading to their cheerful weekend wedding.



The chuppah was adorned with every shade of pink that Ashley and florist Kelly Freeland could envision.



Father-of-the-bride Scott Vogel celebrated his birthday among the wedding festivities.



Instead of signing a guest book, guests left voice messages in a pink phone booth.



The family and wedding party gathered for an intimate ketubah signing.



Thursday night, there was an intimate dinner with friends, grandparents, and some out of towners at Ashley's parent's house, including a wine, tequila, and bourbon tasting. Perhaps the most hilarious part of the whole weekend was when Sam had the highly sought-after opportunity to serve as Duckmaster of The Peabody Ducks. "My friends came to watch," Sam added with a smirk, "I had the cane, all of it."

With a Memphis wedding, Sam was particularly excited about hosting the rehearsal dinner at Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid. After a bit of convincing, all the parents were on board. It was a rousing success. From the Mississippi Terrace conference center and outdoor space, 225 guests, most of whom were out of towners, enjoyed a cocktail hour, buffet dinner, a few brief speeches, and some Shabbat details, while Sam's brother and best friend played fun, engaging hosts for the night.

"It went by so fast!" said Ashley in contagious, bubbly tone. "After the rehearsal dinner, we went to Silky O'Sullivan's on Beale Street, where we'd reserved a patio. We had drinks served in their huge 'Diver Buckets' and, of course, the goats were there, too."

For the wedding on 11.11, which is a special angel number in numerology, representing new beginnings, fresh starts, creativity, leadership, and spirituality, Ashley envisioned an enchanted, ethereal ambiance.

"I have an art design background, and I felt like the flowers set the theme, look and feel, and vibe – so that was very important to me," said Ashley, who spent five years curating an immersive Chicago museum and working at Archer Malmo in Memphis before that. "I wanted lots of greenery and every shade of pink. Our florist, Kelly Freeland, was amazing; we both had vision boards!"

Before the ceremony, their wedding party and immediate family joined in for the Ketubah signing. "It was a beautiful and intimate ceremony," shared Sam, who works in commercial real estate investments. "Plus, for a lot of my friends, that was the first time ever doing a Ketubah, so it was great for them to see that culture. It was such a special moment."

As 300 guests looked on, Temple Israel's Senior Rabbi Micah Greenstein officiated the ceremony. After 'Mazel Tovs' erupted, everyone indulged in a delicious dinner before letting loose on the dance floor. A terrific band played for part of the night, with some of the songs chosen by the couple, including a "hora mashup."

"Jim and I were elated to see our son, Samuel,

Simcha Scene

marry the love of his life, Ashley Rose,” said Sue and Jim Teper, Sam’s parents. “To witness such happiness is a joy for any parent! This was a day to remember, and to have all our close friends and relatives surrounding us with love was extra special.”

Creativity was needed to contend with a noise ordinance, which meant the band’s music had to stop at 11 p.m. “My mom had the fabulous idea of a silent disco!” beamed Ashley. “There were two music channels to choose from, and over half our guests had never done it before – it clearly was the highlight of the night for everyone, the best!”

Other distinctive details included a “unique cocktail hour experience” with a sushi table, an Eat Your Art Out sign, and mini paint cups and brushes for soy sauce. Instead of signing a guest book, guests left voice messages in a pink phone booth; there was an amazing floral wall with hands holding flutes of champagne; and the “awesome” groom’s cake was a bucket of golf balls tipped over.

“Ashley and Sam’s wedding day was incredibly special. The sun was shining brightly, and the weather was perfect for a November fall day,” noted Stacy Vogel, Ashley’s mom. “We spent the entire evening with all our family and friends we each love the most, in the magical setting of Ashley’s dreams, each detail handpicked by Ashley and Sam. The night was a tribute to life and love, and the beginning of the beautiful world Ashley and Sam will create together.”

“The wedding day was magical and filled with so much happiness,” added Scott Vogel, Ashley’s dad. “The most special memory was me and Stacy walking Ashley down the aisle to Sam. My mind was racing through all the memories of holding her for the first time to this moment when a new chapter in life begins for Ashley, Sam, and both families. Ashley and Sam are a great couple, like two unique puzzle pieces that fit together perfectly to form a new picture. Stacy and I are blessed with a wonderful family and meaningful friendships that made this day very special.”

The festivities wrapped up with a brunch at the Belz Museum of Asian & Judaic Art on Sunday. Happily settled in Lincoln Park, Ashley and Sam are thoroughly enjoying newlywed life together. “From ducks to Bass Pro to the wedding, what a wild roller coaster!” expressed Sam. “The whole weekend was very special, with all our family and friends celebrating with us.”

“It was so nice to be surrounded by everyone, I really tried to be present. I just loved the flowers, and we’re so happy with the photos,” added Ashley. “I LOVE being married!”



The Vogel/Teper family.



The floral wall featured hands holding flutes of champagne.



An Israeli flag was hung above the chuppah to keep Israel, its soldiers and the hostages in mind.

Planner: Sheril Greenstein, Shindigs by Sheril

Florist: Southern Bloom

Photographer: Rob + Deanna Photography

Videographer: Message in a Bottle Productions

Dress: Birenzweig

Glam: Taylor Welch (Hair) and Alicia George (Makeup)

Food and Bar: Robin Joyce

Bride Cake: Frost Bake Shop

Groom Cake: Sprinkle Me Silly

Band: The Entice Band

Silent Disco: Tiger City DJs

Guest Book: At the Beep



After 11 p.m. guests enjoyed a silent disco.



The groom's cake.



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Jamie and Azi wed under the chuppah on the Peabody Hotel rooftop.

Cross-Country Match Leads to a Beautiful Marriage

By Shoshana Cener :: Photos by Rob & Deanna Photography

How do two people who live on opposite sides of the country find each other, date, then later stomp a glass in wedding bliss? You could say it's because of their emunah in Hashem (faith in G-d), with a bit of modern technology mixed in.

Memphian Jamie (née Levy) was living in New York City, while Azi Farr was in California, where he was born and raised. The two matched on a dating app in November 2022, began to get to know each other long distance, then met in person a month later. "Azi flew to New York for our first date," Jamie explained, "and the rest was history."

A new chapter in that "history" was written on October 15, 2023, at The Peabody Hotel in Memphis. "My mom wanted to give us a perfect day – she had a vision for this wedding and executed it to perfection," said Jamie. "Every detail was meticulously thought through with me, Azi, and our wedding planner."

The weekend began with Shabbat dinner,

lunch, and seudah shlishit for out-of-town guests downtown at the Hilton. On the wedding day at the groom's Tisch, the mothers of the couple broke a plate together – the traditional act symbolizes the couple's commitment to one another. Some say it represents mother-child ties and an acknowledgment that soon their children will be feeding each other. Others say it strengthens the idea of commitment, since the plate can never be put back together.

After the moving Bedekin ceremony, guests gathered for the rooftop chuppah, which was beautifully adorned with soft white flowers and greenery. Azi and Jamie chose to participate in an interesting Jewish custom: not seeing each other for seven days before the wedding. Finally, Jamie walked down the aisle to see her



choson (groom) for the first time in what felt like the longest week ever. “Our first look was a really beautiful moment,” Jamie shared, “we truly missed each other!”

Formally husband and wife, dinner and dancing with a fabulous band followed in a gorgeously decorated ballroom in the round, for perfect views of the dance floor from every angle. Lush greenery and white flowers appeared to hang from the ceiling, drape off tables and the mechitza (partition), and stand in tall elegance as centerpieces, with candles enhancing the navy tablecloths.

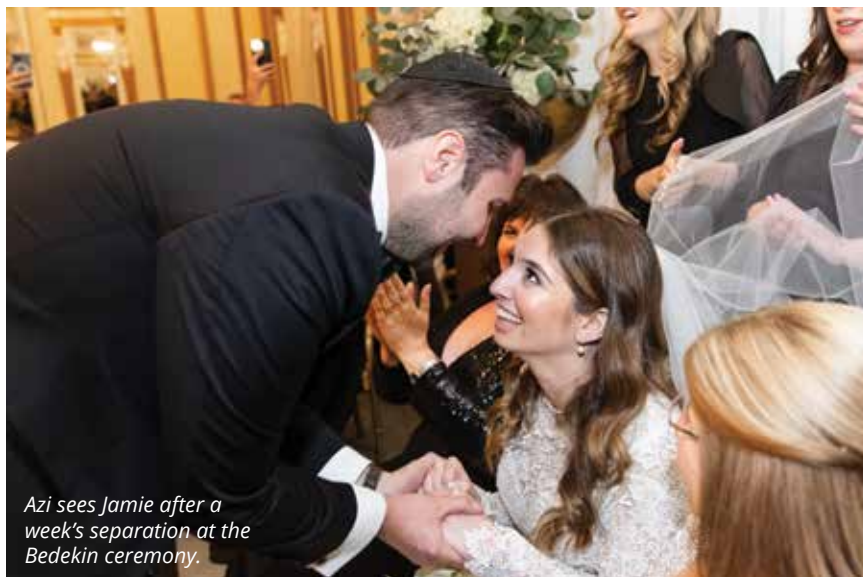
“Jamie and Azi’s wedding was absolutely magical thanks to The Peabody Hotel and our planner, Einat Loskovitz. Every detail was taken care of, and the whole day ran as smoothly as you could hope. It was such a beautiful day – from getting ready all together to the Tisch to the Bedekin and into the beautiful ceremony on the roof – we couldn’t have asked for a more special day!” said Julie and Marshall Levy, Jamie’s delighted parents. “Everything was perfect! The rain stopped on queue for a beautiful ceremony, and then we all had a wonderful time dancing the night away! We’re especially thrilled with the wonderful son-in-law that we have gained. He’s a perfect addition to our beautiful family. We were proud and excited to see our baby daughter getting married to such a nice guy. We can’t imagine ever being any happier than we were that day.”

The Levy and Farr families were especially grateful for the outpouring of Southern hospitality they received from the amazing kehilla (community) over the weekend.

“The Memphis Jewish community is incredibly warm and hospitable. We truly could not have had such a beautiful wedding without their love and support throughout our wedding weekend,” noted Azi. “We leaned on the community to help provide meals for our out-of-town guests and to make our Shabbat services in downtown Memphis so easy and comfortable.”

With a flawless ceremony and reception, guests might be surprised to learn that there was a bit of a dress emergency before the chuppah. “The zipper on my wedding dress fell off while I was getting ready for our big day!” Jamie remembered. “But thankfully, my amazing friends saved the day – they found some thread and sewed me into my dress!”

“When we learned that our son, Azi, became engaged to Jamie, it was a double thrill. First, we could not have wished for a more lovely, kind, intelligent, and sweet daughter-in-law, and second, it gave us the opportunity to finally see Memphis!” added Harvey and Elizabeth Farr, Azi’s grateful parents. “As music enthusiasts, just being in Memphis was a dream come true. And making the wedding even more memorable was the gorgeous Peabody Hotel and the extraordinary band. The wedding felt like the perfect day. We



Azi sees Jamie after a week's separation at the Bedekin ceremony.



Julie helps Jamie prepare for the ceremony.



look forward to many more trips to Memphis to visit our new family, Julie and Marshall Levy, their three other daughters, and, of course, with our son and his new bride, Jamie."

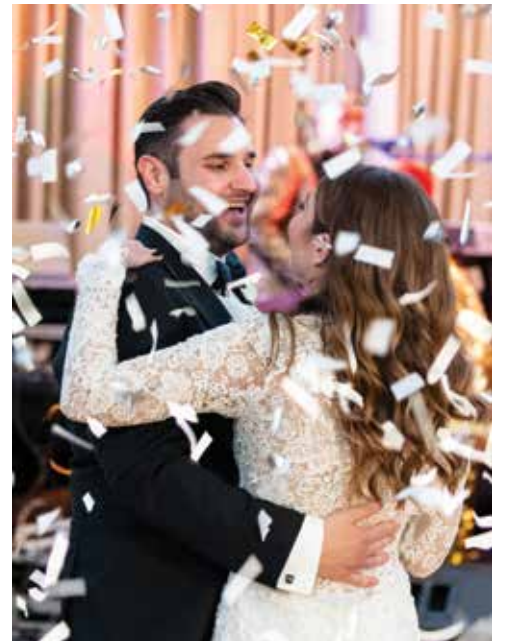
Now, the joyous newlyweds are sharing their lives together in West Los Angeles, near Beverlywood. Azi went to UCLA for undergrad and George Washington University in Washington, D.C., for law school. He practices political and election law at a firm in downtown Los Angeles. Jamie graduated from Landers College for Women in Manhattan with a bachelor's in marketing/management. She had been living in New York for eight years and was working as a manager at B&H Electronics in Midtown Manhattan when they two met. Mazel to the happy couple and both wonderful families!



Marshall and Julie walk Jamie down the aisle.



Mothers, Elizabeth and Julie, share in a tradition of breaking a plate.



Photographer: Rob & Deanna Photography
Videographer: Message In a Bottle Productions.
Florist: L & Jay Productions
Venue: Peabody Hotel
Party Planner: Eventful Party Planning
Caterer: The Peabody (They do kosher!)
Linens: Elegant Chair Solutions
Invitations: RSVP
Dress: Kleinfeld
Band: The SoulSations of RAM Entertainment
Photobooth: ILO Photobooth
Hair: Taylor Welch
Makeup: Alicia Lee
Seating Chart: Create10Me Designs
Calligrapher: Rachel Fisher
Rentals: White Door Events



Wendy's Transformation

By Susan C. Nieman

When Eli Ostrow met Wendy, an American Bulldog, at Memphis Animal Services it was the perfect match. "All the other dogs at the shelter just barked at me, but she came up, kissed my hand and then acted super playful," he said.

Memphis Animal Services was his first choice, "because they are a great organization, and I'd been following them on Instagram," he said.

Wendy's name came to him when he stopped to grab a burger on his way home from the shelter.

Wendy is a survivor of heart worms. "When I first adopted her, she weighed 29 pounds and was

nothing but bones," said Eli. "Her transformation has been unreal."

Tidbits:

Most Love

She is super loving, sweet and protective. My favorite physical features are her giant elephant-like ears.

Pet Peeve

It's adorable and annoying but she has to roll around in grass every five minutes on a walk or she acts mad.

Treats

Once a week Eli scrambles eggs for Wendy. And of course, she loves the cow bones from Hollywood Feed!



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JENNIFER ROBERTS: Memphis's Senior Go-To Volunteer

By Susan C. Nieman

If there is a Senior Adult event happening in Memphis, I'll bet you run into Jennifer Roberts either manning a booth, helping with an activity or just mingling throughout the crowd.

"I love this demographic," said Jennifer. "They have so much to teach us, and so many stories to tell. I have learned a ton from the seniors I interact with on a daily basis."

Jennifer hadn't planned to become involved with senior services, it was quite accidental.

She graduated from the University of Tennessee Center for Health Sciences in Memphis with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. After about 10 years in the dental industry, and starting a family, Jennifer was working parttime so she could be around for her children. The perfect opportunity popped up at the MJCC where she was then working in the preschool and camp.

"The Adult Services director was put on bedrest during her pregnancy in 2007," she explained. "I was tapped to step in. After returning from maternity leave, she moved away when her twins were four months old, and the rest was history. I wasn't interested in the adult programming or the arts programming, so then-MJCC director Barrie Weiser and I created a part-time job as the Senior Adult Coordinator." She remained in that position until April 2017.

"All my senior knowledge over the past 17 years has come from on-the-job training and a lot of continuing ed!" she exclaimed.

These days Jennifer wears many different hats in the world of senior adults as well as other Jewish and Memphis-area boards.

She is currently the chair of the Memphis Jewish Federation's Senior Collaborative, which has representatives from all the shuls, community members, clergy and Jewish agencies. "I love being part of this group," she said. "Each agency speaks about events for seniors that are happening in town. We are all cheerleaders for all the agencies and want outstanding programming and widespread publicity for these programs for all area Jewish seniors."

She's a longtime board member and former vice president of Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab and serves as the Home's Golf Tournament volunteer co-chair with her friend, Judy Moss. She was recently awarded the Aaron Brenner Distinguished Service Award in April 2024 at their annual meeting.

Jennifer delivers senior meals for the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman JFS at the MJCC and drives seniors and special needs adults to appointments and events.

She joined the Hillels of Memphis board in 2011 when her older child went away to college. "I'm so proud of the new building and the growth of Hillel on both the Rhodes and U of M campuses," she said.

Jennifer also divides her time among the greater Memphis community



Jennifer (right) with
Plough Towers
Executive Director
Leigh Hendry.



Jennifer attends
one of the many
senior activities.



Jennifer attends a Jewish
Foundation of Memphis event.



Jennifer mans a table at the MJHR Golf Tournament with volunteers.

having served as the board president of Creative Aging where she still serves as a board member and volunteer.

“Creative Aging (www.creativeagingmidsouth.org) is a wonderful Memphis-area nonprofit that provides music and the arts to seniors in places they live and gather,” she explained. “We contract with over 120 local musicians and artists who are paid for their time. We serve seniors in four counties and visit over 100 venues. We are on track to have over 1,700 performances this year, countless art classes and more! I can be found several days a week travelling from senior center to senior community to synagogues, etc. visiting with the seniors while they enjoy a performance or a class. The biggest challenge I face is deciding where to go and who to listen to!”

“I have built a rapport with those seniors,” she said. “I also like visiting new communities and making new friends. I wish there were more hours in the day.”

She is a volunteer with 901 POP, a nonprofit that repurposes flowers from events, such as weddings, and distributes to folks in their living facilities. She can be found volunteering at Senior Day at the Zoo, Senior Day at the Delta Fair and at the Senior Expo as the Agricenter.

Jennifer is also a Lion of Judah with Memphis Jewish Federation where she serves on the events planning committee. She was a former ASBEE sisterhood president and has served on numerous boards throughout the years.

“One of my favorite days was assisting a Creative Aging artist at a community in Olive Branch. I was there basically to wash paint brushes, snap a few pictures and help the artist,” she said. “The participants, ladies in their 80s and 90s, were painting and chatting. The conversation turned to high school. They were talking about marching band, cheerleading, glee club and cafeteria food!”

Jennifer gets calls weekly from seniors with questions, or from their family members. “I have a huge network of professionals I refer folks to,” she said. “I love making a difference.”

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Madelyne (front, far right,) and Jay, (top, 2nd from left) on a MJCC Prague/Budapest trip on the Danube River.

Madelyne Daneman: Tenacious, Innovative, Artistic Mom with a Huge Heart

By Shoshana Cenker

A loving family, lifelong Baron Hirsch Congregation member, and a fulfilling career dedicated to the Jewish community are some of the many wonderful ways to describe Memphian Madelyne Daneman.

Born to Esther (née Strauch), from Memphis, and Lou Rafael, from Brooklyn, they met when Esther went to work in New York, living with her Great-Aunt Lilly. The happy couple ended up back in Memphis and married in 1939 at the original Baron Hirsch (BH) on Washington Avenue in the historic Pinch District downtown.

In 1940, Madelyne came into the world; her brother, Charles, followed in 1945. While Lou worked downtown with Sam Fortas, the siblings had a lovely childhood growing up in the Bluff City. Madelyne attended Christine School, Vollentine Elementary, Snowden and Central High School. When Baron Hirsch moved to Vollentine Avenue in the 1950s, her family continued attending services and volunteering there.

"In the late 1950s, I married Eddie Robbins (OBM), and we had three daughters, Shelley, Leslye, and Audrey, who are all now very accomplished women and were close growing up and still are," said Madelyne, who exudes class and poise. "Eddie ended up getting a scholarship to study social work at the University of Tennessee at Nashville, so we moved there for two years."

Then, the family moved to Atlanta, where Eddie worked on the staff of Camp Barney Meditz at the Jewish Community Center and Madelyne worked at the camp as an arts and crafts specialist. Five years later, the Robbins family moved to Houston.

"Mom was so progressive. Back when she'd work at Barney Meditz, she



Mother/daughter trip with Shelley, Audrey and Leslye.

ran the 'Art Shack.' I remember her creating projects for some of the boys who weren't into sports or were kind of quiet wallflowers – she wanted them to have a creative outlet. One project was a 'Buddy Stick.' The group walked in the woods, and each camper chose a stick. Back in the Shack, they'd take the bark off, then use a special tool to burn their names into it and their friends would sign it, so they'd have a nice camp memory," remembered Audrey warmly. "She was way ahead of her time and has always been a planner with an unwavering positive attitude. We always had something to do as kids. She truly understands relationships and taught me and my sisters how to be good moms and good people – and that's being passed on to her grandkids."

When Eddie and Madelyne divorced in 1970, she and the girls moved back to Memphis. (Eddie died in 1987.)

"Marty Kraar hired me to work at the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC) as a children's and senior adult worker. I loved working with them all; I said I always wanted to make it better by the time I become a senior adult," she said with a chuckle. "And in 1972, I went back to school at what was then Memphis State for my Bachelor of Professional Studies. I spent 36 years working at the MJCC, including as camp director for many years."

Madeline's next marriage, to Howard Atkins (OBM), ended after 16 years. She later dated Jay Daneman (OBM), who had moved from Chattanooga, for eight years. Neither was in a hurry to rush to the altar, but when they got there, they were happily married for 20 years. Jay passed away in 2020.

"Jay and I loved to travel, especially on Princess Cruise Lines," said Madelyne, who must have figured out the secret to a healthy long life – she looks at least 20 years younger than she is. "After I retired in 2006, we continued to travel, and I still do. I'm going to California this summer and Morocco in the fall. My daughters have been so helpful since I retired; if I need anything, they're right there. We've done a few trips together. My daughters are everything to me."

Madelyne makes sure to stay active – physically and socially, which she credits for her longevity and good health. She works part time at Dazzle, exercises weekly at the MJCC, walks with a neighbor regularly, visits with friends, and is even auditing classes at the University of Memphis with friends. "We don't have tests or papers to write or homework," she shared, "we just learn, and I'm really enjoying it."

A book lover, Madelyne enjoys diving

into Danielle Steele and historical books. She's also always been interested in art. Madelyn's taken courses from a park commission, as well as a watercolor course in Houston. In Memphis, she created posters and flyers for the MJCC. Her creative artworks – drawings, black-and-white ink, and watercolors – began with people, then she segued into scenery, especially trees. She and her daughters have some of her original art in their houses.

"I'm so proud of my mother in all that she accomplished in her professional life of 36 years at the MJCC. She was an integral and essential part of the staff, as well as the community at large," shared Leslye Robbins. "One friend of mine called her 'a local legend.' The way people lovingly talked about her when I was young helped me see her as a committed, enthusiastic, talented, energetic, and incredibly skillful woman who helped shape the Jewish culture of the MJCC. I was grateful to have such a strong and beautiful role model and can only imagine how many lives she touched because of her dedicated work."

Madelyne continues to live a passionate life of gemilut chasadim – performing acts of loving kindness. She's been a longtime board member of Baron Hirsch and volunteers there consistently – she and Jay both received the Louis Turetsky Chesed Award from BH; she serves on the board of Creative Aging and attends its events; and while working with senior adults, her committee helped start Plough Towers with Jack Lieberman. "I remember screaming for joy when we got the grant to develop Plough Towers!" she recalled with her radiant smile.

"When the four of us moved back to Memphis in 1970, Mom pulled up her bootstraps. She wasn't a professional woman yet, but she needed to support her three daughters. So, she went to the MJCC – a place where she could add value and use her talents, where she was comfortable as a religious Jewish woman. She was such a good organizer, a trait that came from her mom, which was passed down to me and my daughter. Mom and I even started college around the same time, while she was taking care of my sisters. She's always been a hard worker," said Shelley proudly. "Our great-grandmother, grandmother, and mom also taught us the importance of giving – in time and resources – to our Jewish community. And Mom instilled the importance of keeping a kosher home and being Jewish, which she learned from her parents. That's how she raised us; it was all a huge influence on my life, which we've shared with our own kids."



Madelyne with her parents, Esther and Lou Rafael.

Madelyne is still happily living in the Germantown home she bought back in 1976. "It was brand new, and half the street wasn't even built then!" she remembered fondly. "Barrie and Enid Weiser live down the street; I have good neighbors who keep an eye on me. I just love this house and do yard work when I can."

"Nanny" to her seven wonderful grandchildren, she visits them as often as possible. Shelley is married to Reed Landau, they live in Memphis and have two adult children, Harper and Ethan. Leslye is married to John Pomeroy, they live in Nevada City, California, with their two sons, Aaron and Gabriel. And Audrey and Greg Siskind live in Germantown and have three daughters, Eden, Lily, and Noa. Til 120+, Madelyne!

Family fun fact: Madelyne's parents were very dear friends of my grandparents, Harvey and Bede Yaffe. "Uncle Lou" was my dad, Dr. Sherwin "Butch" Yaffe's godfather, and held him as the sandek at Butch's bris. The Rafael and Yaffe families spent significant time together, creating invaluable memories.



Residents enjoy a day at the Peabody while watching activities director Johnnie Murphy act as honorary Duckmaster.

Plough Towers Peabody Hotel Outing

By Vicki Woods

This spring, 26 residents and staff left the confines of Plough Towers and ventured into downtown Memphis to watch our own Johnnie Murphy become the honorary Duckmaster at the Peabody Hotel.

Through a very generous gift from a donor, we were able to rent a limousine bus from Tennessee Limousines, enjoy the morning in the Peabody lobby, and then have lunch at the historic Arcade Restaurant. It was an exciting excursion for all involved. Even life-long Memphians may not know the history of this daily event. Read on to find out more.

The Peabody Duck March is a tradition of this hotel that began in the 1930s by the then-general manager, Frank Schutt. It all started when Schutt and his friend, Chip Barwick, spent a weekend hunting in Arkansas. Upon their return, the two had a little too much whiskey and thought it would be hilarious to put some of their live duck decoys in the fountain of the hotel. Back then, it was legal for hunters to use live decoys.

Three small English call ducks – Peabody, Gayoso and Chisca, named for the three hotels owned by the Memphis Hotel Company in 1933 – were selected as test subjects, and the reaction from guests and passersby was complete enthusiasm. The rumor is that the ducks were not the first residents of The Peabody's lobby fountain; supposedly, turtles and alligators briefly swam in its water in the 1920s.

Then, in 1940, Edward Pembroke, a bellman at the hotel, offered to help deliver the ducks to the fountain each day. As a former circus animal trainer, he taught them the now-famous Peabody Duck March and became The Peabody Duckmaster. He served in that capacity for 50 years.

Now, in order to keep Pembroke's legend alive, the ducks still visit the lobby fountain at The Peabody at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. each day. The lobby of the grand hotel is filled with guests each day to see this unique event. When the Peabody ducks are off-duty, they live in their Royal Duck Palace on the hotel's rooftop. The marble-and-glass structure features its very own fountain with a bronze duck spitting water. It also includes a small replica of the hotel, where the ducks can nest in a soft, grassy yard.

There are currently five North American mallards living in the fountain at The Peabody Memphis. The ducks do not have individual names, and each team of Peabody ducks lives at the hotel for only three months. They then return to the farm, where a local farmer raises them, free to live as wild ducks. The Peabody Memphis recognizes its resident waterfowl as wild animals and does not domesticate the ducks or treat them like pets.

Did you know all of that? In addition to being treated like royalty during the visit, we were gifted a duck-headed walking stick, a specially created Peabody rubber duck, and a proclamation claiming that:





Whereas, the daily march of the world-famous Peabody Ducks is a time-honored tradition, begun in 1933 and attended by countless visitors, and Whereas, the care and protection of the Peabody Ducks must be attended to on a daily basis and can only fall to persons of high standards and great distinction, and Whereas, you are such a person, be it resolved that Johnnie Murphy has been chosen Honorary Duckmaster.

“Going upstairs to the rooftop with the ducks and being presented with the honorary proclamation was amazing! I was at a loss for words,” said Johnnie. “Before coming to work at Plough Towers, I could never have imagined loving a job as much as I do. I got paid to herd ducks into the lobby of the Peabody – I could never have dreamed that.”

Resident Sam Sansone stated that he enjoyed mingling with the residents and the total strangers that he met that day. “Seeing all of the children starry-eyed as they watched the ducks come down the red carpet was awesome.”

Again, this trip was made possible because of generous donors who contributed to The Plough Towers Fund, which can be used for special events. Renting a limousine bus is beyond the usual activities' budget, but special donors made it happen.

“We are grateful for those who contributed, those to participated, and those who worked behind the scenes to make this a great experience for our residents,” said Plough Towers Executive Director Leigh Hendry. “I was especially excited to get to be a part of this fun day out, where we made memories we will never forget”



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Seniors Enhance Their Lives and Others' Through Volunteering

By Audrey May

We know volunteering makes us “feel good” but numerous studies also document the link between volunteer activities and increased physical and mental health for seniors.

One study conducted by the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research looked at the impact of volunteering for almost 13,000 American adults aged 50 and over. The study found that participants who volunteered 100 or more hours a year “had reduced risk of mortality and physical functioning limitations, higher physical activity, and better psychosocial outcomes.” Positive psychosocial outcomes included greater sense of optimism and purpose in life, and less depression, loneliness or isolation.

In addition, other research points to volunteering as a way to prevent cognitive impairment as we age. In other words, volunteering can help us live longer and feel better while we do it!

Seniors make up a large portion of our volunteer corps at the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service, the social services arm of the Memphis Jewish Community Center. Some of our senior volunteers have generations-long connections to Memphis, while others are recent transplants to the Memphis area. We are grateful for every one of them, their skills and enthusiasm!

While we welcome adults of all ages to our volunteer programs, seniors in particular bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to volunteering. Many are motivated by a desire to “give back” to the community that has gifted them and their families with so much. Seniors volunteer for many reasons.

These can include:

- Helping others
- Learning something new
- Meeting new people
- Making a difference
- Sharing your skills
- Doing something meaningful for the community
- Serving as an example of Jewish values to the next generation
- Having fun

Right now, our greatest volunteer needs at the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service/MJCC are:

- Drivers who can drive Jewish seniors and Jewish adults with disabilities to/from appointments, shopping and programs here at MJCC. This is to augment our very busy Shalom Shuttle transportation service.
- Volunteers who can assist staff in packing up donated fruit or produce on Thursdays for distribution to client households.
- Volunteers to help with registration and check-in for Pickleball Palooza, September 25-29.

Whatever your motivation, senior volunteering is an awesome way to find meaningful engagement in the “third stage” of life!

For more information about volunteer opportunities with the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service at MJCC, please contact Audrey May at amay@jccmemphis.org or 901-767-8511.

“The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.” ~ attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt



Sara Slovis and Francine Brown



Margie Steinberg



Sara Kaplan



Everett Pidgeon and Mark Zukor

Creative Aging Enlivens Lives

By Jeff Hewlett

Beginning its third decade of building connection, community and creativity through music and the arts, Creative Aging's program participation exceeds all prior years and demand continues to expand. "At the same time," says Executive Director Mia Henley, "the community's understanding of the arts' beneficial impact in older adults' lives is growing."

The idea that being involved with music and the arts can improve a person's mood may sound like common sense today (extensive research now supports the physical and emotional health benefits of regular arts engagement), but it wasn't always so clear. In 2003, when Meryl Klein founded Creative Aging with the dream of making music and art accessible to Memphis-area older adults, the idea was new. Beginning with five communities and a few committed artists, Creative Aging now serves older adults in more than 100 public and private locations through three unique programs. Music, art, dance, and theater inspire seniors from Whitehaven to Millington, Bartlett to Parkway Village, Germantown to downtown Memphis.

Creative Aging credits its many community partnerships for its wide-ranging locations and excellent programs. Partner organizations include Memphis Public Libraries, the Brooks and Dixon Museums, Collage Dance Collective, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Theatre Memphis, Tennessee Shakespeare and many others. In addition to these arts and cultural institutions, Creative Aging works with over 120+ individual musicians and teaching artists who play, perform and teach.

Singer Candace Mache, commenting on a recent performance in a nursing home: "This lively crowd was singing along, dancing in their seats, and having a ball. They wanted a 'nightclub' style performance, and we delivered!"

Arlington Senior Center Director Elizabeth Equi values artists' interaction with participants: "The band took time to talk to the members after their performance. People got up and danced to the music, and if they couldn't dance, they were tapping their toes and clapping in their seats!"

Hands-on arts workshops develop creative skills and build confidence. Dana Beech, Director of the McWherter Senior Center, commented: "It was the first time many of our participants have worked with pottery. The artist made each participant feel like they were the best artist in the bunch."

"Offering dynamic performances and helping participants develop artistic skill is vital to our programs," says Henley, "but offering people connection is even more important."

In the United States and locally, people over 65 will soon outnumber those under 18, yet ageism and agist policies negatively impact expectations regarding the importance of older adults' quality of life. Creative Aging's programs help participants avoid isolation and provide forums that inspire creativity and build community.



Steve Johnston performs at senior event.



The concert series entertains Memphis-area audiences.



Youth groups assist in a Mural Event at Plough Towers.

Aaron Brame, teaching at the Benjamin Hooks Central Library, noted: "Our class of 17 has grown into a thriving community in which we read literature and then discuss the works through various stimulating in-class activities. The participants make connections to their lives and to other works of literature."

Andrea King, Adult Services librarian at the Cordova Branch Library, reflected on the positive impact classes have on participants' social outlook: "Everyone was very encouraging of one another and left in great moods" following the branch's Women in Art painting course.

"We are grateful for the community's interest and support," says Henley. When asked what's next for Creative Aging, she simply replies "More!"

What are you waiting for? Sign up today to receive Creative Aging's emails about upcoming events and classes. Learn more at creativeagingmidsouth.org or call 901.272.3434.



Eugenia in her early 20s.



Eugenia with Martha, an old high school friend and fellow resident.

Finding Home and Community in an Unexpected Place

By Jasmine Williams

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) has cared for many seniors in our community, but we always hope to leave a lasting, positive impact on each of our residents whether it is big or small. But often, it's challenging to measure that impact until we hear a story like Eugenia Levitch's, until we hear directly from our residents what receiving care at the Home has done for them and their family.

Eugenia grew up in Charleston, Mississippi, with her mother before moving to Memphis, Tennessee. She had a fairly normal childhood and life until she met Arthur Levitch – she felt as if it was love at first sight! The pair eloped on July 3, 1947, with dismay from her mother. Eugenia's mom wanted her to have a real wedding, and they did a few years later, but Arthur and Eugenia would always count the third as their anniversary date. They were married for more than 65 years and would proudly raise three daughters, Marilyn, Ginger and Gail.

We spoke with Gail who gushed about her mom and all of her accomplishments, "My mom was an artist, a seamstress, a singer, a master gardener – everything! My mom made everything out of nothing. My and my sister's rooms were decorated with her watercolor paintings, pillows she'd stitched, and every holiday we wore new dresses that she'd made us. We never wanted for anything.

"She also taught us how to cook, how to clean – Mom was a fantastic cook, and she never left the house not dressed to impress," continues Gail. "Her and Dad always looked put together and fashionable. They were the best parents, so sweet, so kind, and always humble."

While Eugenia never wanted to leave her house and flower

garden in Germantown, her children always knew this was where they wanted her to be when the time came. Eugenia has been connected to the Home even before she was a resident, as Arthur, her late husband, and her brother were both residents at the Home. She has lived at the Home for eight years and has never shied away from sharing her appreciation and gratitude for Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab.



Eugenia and her late husband, Arthur.

We interviewed both Eugenia and Gail regarding their experiences with the Home. The conversation was light-hearted, fun, and we could tell that they both were thrilled to share. Eugenia was hesitant at first to come live at MJHR, but through the connections with other residents and staff she's truly blossomed. Eugenia excitedly invites families that are looking for long-term care to, "Come on in!" Gail, her daughter, expressed that she loves how the staff makes the family feel included in Eugenia's care and how they encourage socialization from resident to resident. Through this encouragement, Eugenia was able to reconnect with an old high school friend, Martha, who lives right across the hall. The two friends are nearly inseparable, and you will often find Martha

in Eugenia's room chatting or both of them heading to an activity. Live music events at the Home are Eugenia's favorite, which makes sense considering her singing background. In high school, she was a member of Young America Sings.


Many leaders at MJHR have visited Eugenia, following her own invitation to them, to hear her compliments and acknowledgments of their impact on her life and the community. Eugenia called on both the current President, Mitchell Lansky, and Executive Director, Bobby Meadows, for a discussion. Meadows recounts, "I get teary-eyed every time I tell the story of my visit to Ms. Levitch's room. She called for a meeting with me! Which was very different than her typical casual and friendly nature. She invites me into her room all the time for a chat, but I could tell this was different."





He continued, "She expressed her sincere gratitude to me for the care she's received over the past eight years and was adamant that the Home needs to remain strong and sustainable in perpetuity. She said that it needs to be here for people who need it most, that's of the utmost importance."

Stories like Eugenia's remind us why we care, why we continue this work even when it's challenging, emotional, or hard. Day after day, care after care, person after person, we know that these acts of chesed make the world a better and stronger place.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information: www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving.

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Baron Hirsch Hosts Monthly Kol Rena SoShuls Luncheons for Jewish Seniors

Baron Hirsch invites those age 64 and older to participate in the congregation's next Kol Rena SoShuls program, a Sept. 4 luncheon at the synagogue (400 South Yates Road) featuring delicious kosher food and musical entertainment provided by local musicians through the non-profit agency, Creative Aging. The event begins at noon.

Baron Hirsch's Kol Rena SoShuls luncheons are held almost every month throughout the year. The lively music and friendly atmosphere give local seniors a chance to see and meet friends, while enjoying a good meal and singing along to familiar and fun music.

Membership at Baron Hirsch is not required to attend. Admission costs \$5 and can be paid at the door. Guests are asked to make reservations in advance by emailing gwen@baronhirsch.org or by calling the synagogue office at 901-683-7485.

The Kol Rena SoShuls Fund at Baron Hirsch is a tribute to the memory of Rena Loskovitz, who was an active and dedicated member of the congregation. The fund was generously established by Rena's children and their spouses – Dr. Lewis and Debra Loskovitz, Myrna and Myron Thomas, and Sandra and Dr. Ben Beatus – to help Baron Hirsch serve the needs of Jewish seniors in Memphis.



Seniors enjoy lunch and entertainment from Creative Aging.

MJCC Seniors Have a Variety of Options for Learning and Socializing

By Steve Kaplan

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club has terrific ongoing programs throughout the year. Regular programs start at 12 p.m. following lunch.

Every weekday, Monday through Friday, there is a senior lunch at 11:30 a.m. This delicious kosher lunch comes from the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab kitchens. The cost is only \$2 per lunch. The only requirements are the person must be 60 or over and not get the daily meals from MIFA or Fogelman Jewish Family Service. Lunches must be reserved by calling the front desk of the MJCC by 1 p.m. the weekday before at 901-761-0810.

The MJCC Bus provides pickup service to seniors, provided they live within a certain distance from the MJCC. The cost is only \$2 roundtrip. Call Steve Kaplan 901-259-9220 for more information.

On Monday and Wednesdays there is either a program or fieldtrip. The program can be a speaker, a round of Team Trivial Pursuit, a mini concert, or some other fun program. The complete schedule for the current 90 days is always in the current "MJCC Scene," published every quarter. The fieldtrips have been varied. This year MJCC seniors have toured the renovated Downtown Central Train Station, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Temple Israel, Baron Hirsch Synagogue, Downtown Old Jewish Memphis including "The Pinch," and many other local places of interest.

One Wednesday per month, nine months out of the year, August – May, seniors enjoy the MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon. The luncheons feature entertainment provided by Creative Aging. Entertainment may consist of

a solo singer or musician, duo or trio. There is a catered kosher meal, served by the employees of the MJCC. The room is decorated by a nice core group of volunteers who regularly dress up the room with white tablecloths and beautiful themed centerpieces to make the room festive. There were over 70 people in attendance at the last luncheon. The cost is only \$5. Reservations are required by calling the MJCC front desk, 901-761-0810.

There are also classes for seniors, open to the public, which run roughly every 90 days. The two most popular are Bridge and Mah Jongg lessons. These classes have been taught by the same two people for years and consistently fill up. Visit the MJCC website at jccmemphis.org for more information or call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator.

Every quarter there are special programs catering to seniors, usually in the evenings. These programs are informative and open to the public. Past classes include Decluttering your Home, Social Security Rules and when to file, and other programs of interest to seniors. The MJCC is also home to the Hadassah Book Club, which meets the second Tuesday of each month. See the MJCC Scene or website for upcoming books and schedule.

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club has a little bit of everything for seniors, from lunch and field trips to informative programs to help senior adults and to socialize.



Bridge classes.



Mah Jongg classes.



Festive Monthly Senior Luncheon.



Classes and entertainment.

Lyla performs at Shelby Farms Park during the annual Walk to Cure Arthritis.



DEFYING GRAVITY:

Lyla Kay's Journey from Juvenile Arthritis to Aerial Acrobats

By Melinda Lejman

Unless you or someone you know suffers from juvenile arthritis, it may be surprising to learn that it affects approximately one in 1,000 children under the age of 16. Living with juvenile arthritis means coping with daily pain and stiffness, making physical activities challenging. But Bornblum second-grader Lyla Kay is not letting it get in her way of pursuing her passion for aerial acrobatics.

Lyla and her family's journey with arthritis began when she was just 15 months old. "She wasn't sleeping well, she was waking up crying, and she was in constant pain and discomfort," recalls Larissa Kay, Lyla's mother. In addition to pain and discomfort, she also suffered from recurring fevers.

At first, Lyla's parents thought the symptoms may be due to a virus or teething, but it went on for so long that they soon realized they were dealing with something more complex. Her pediatrician recommended that she be seen at the children's hospital in Minnesota, where the family was living at the time, and they were referred to a rheumatologist who works with children.

After a series of tests and a process of elimination, she was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) and began treatment. "I was so relieved when we got the diagnosis because even though it sounded really scary, at least we knew what we were dealing with," says Larissa.

Seven-year-old Lyla has overcome the once debilitating pain thanks to her doctors in Minnesota and the care she now receives from her specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn. A testament to her spirit and determination, she has been learning aerials acrobatics at High Expectations Aerial Arts.

"Lyla is such a sweet and hard-working kid! She brings so much joy to our youth performance troupe, and I have loved watching her learn, get stronger, and blossom as a performer," shares Sarah Bolton, owner of High Expectations Aerial Arts. "I think because of what she has already gone through at such a young age, she has an inner strength that is quite amazing to witness. I can't wait to see how she continues to spread her wings and take flight!"

For the past two years, Lyla has also helped to raise funds and awareness about juvenile arthritis with her and her family's involvement in the Walk to Cure Arthritis, an annual fundraiser hosted by the Arthritis Foundation in cities across America. This year, she was also named the 2024 Juvenile Honoree and gave a special aerials performance during the event held at Shelby Farms Park.

"Lyla is an extraordinary little girl who doesn't let living with arthritis hold her back. After being diagnosed at an early age she has inspired others to keep moving and living YES! even with arthritis," says Kelsey Johnson, associate director of the Arthritis Foundation.

"When it came to choosing an honoree for this year's 'Walk to Cure Arthritis' it was an easy choice to have her represent the Juvenile generation of Arthritis Warriors," Kelsey continued. "She performs and dances in aerial silks and motivates me and others to keep pushing toward our goals. We are lucky to have Lyla as part of the Arthritis Foundation community."

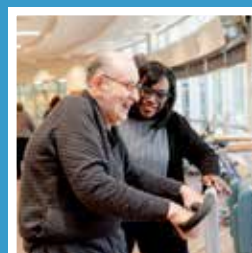
In the world of aerial acrobatics, where grace meets bravery high above the ground, Lyla is defying expectations and overcoming challenges with a spirit that soars beyond the heights she achieves.



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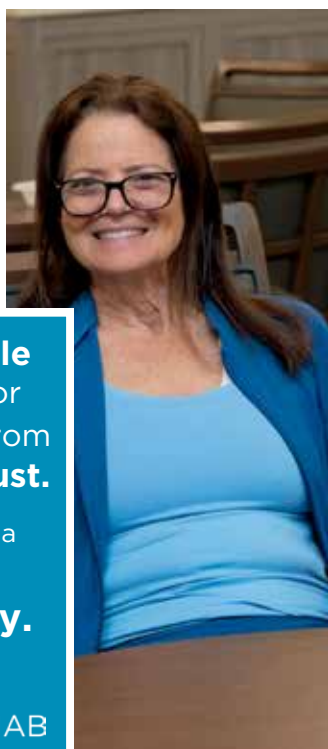
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