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Letter From the Editor

Dear JSM Readers,

As I write this editorial, we are in the hustle and bustle of Thanksgiving preparations, anticipating the houseful of in- and out-of-town kids and, of course, our beautiful 2- and 10-year-old grandkids who make the day just a little bit sweeter.

Thanksgiving at our house is all about the sides. In fact, two kids don't eat meat anymore, which makes planning sides even more important. So, I asked the group a few weeks ago which sides they wanted. "All of them," they all replied! Of course. There are so many sides – dressing, green bean casserole, corn casserole, broccoli rice casserole, sweet potato casserole, mashed potatoes, rutabaga, carrots, deviled eggs – and this year, to give us a healthy option, roasted veggies. Let's not forget "Southern Living's" most delicious gravy that seems to take all day to make. Just a tablespoon full of each of these dishes and who even needs turkey?

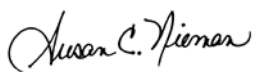
I am so thankful for my family – a loving husband, healthy, happy children and grandchildren – our writers, loyal advertisers, and a business that is appreciated by our readers and advertisers of our 18-year-old "Jewish Scene" magazine and our 99-year-old weekly newspaper, "The Hebrew Watchman."

This annual Tikkun Olam issue touches on the amazing programs of organizations throughout Memphis (and in Israel for IDF soldiers) who provide much-needed services to hundreds and thousands of people. We thank them for their ongoing efforts and wish them much success in the future.

I am most thankful for finally becoming a grandma at age 66 to Remi, who came into our world at age 8, and our sweet, little Miriam born in 2022. My world completely changed, as I am sure it has for many of you. Unlike my mom, Alice, who became a grandma at 45 years old, being 68 and running around after a 2-year-old is way more exhausting than I'd imagined. But I seem to be getting as much exercise as going to a gym during the days she spends at our house. I'll need it as I finish off all these holiday leftovers!

Thank you all for keeping Memphis Jewish journalism alive. My New Year's wish is that 2025 brings us all peace and health. See you again in February!

Shalom,



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Chanukah

Photo by Susan Nieman



Contributors



Originally from Sydney, Australia, **Rebecca (Bec) Brown** currently resides in Memphis after having lived in New York, Baltimore and Chicago. By day she works as a Jewish Communal Professional but started her career in the Fashion Editorial world as the Fashion Editor for several celebrity weeklies. In her spare time, she writes fashion, beauty, gift guide, and lifestyle editorials and is thrilled to now be contributing to Jewish Scene. Bec lives with her husband and three adorable children in East Memphis.



Shoshana Y. Cenker is a word & grammar nerd with 20+ years in creative services. She's the managing editor of a media publishing firm and runs her freelance communications business, as a content writer, editor, proofreader, copywriter, marketing consultant and wordsmith extraordinaire. She and her three kiddos – twin boys Aiden and Kivi, and daughter Lyla – happily live in her hometown of Memphis, with their pup, Memphis. ShoshanaAY@gmail.com



Debbie Rosenthal lives to travel and fortunately gets to travel for work. For 20+ years, she has visited unique destinations to explore the best of the best. Her expertise, personal touch, and specialized service ensure her clients' vacation experiences exceed their expectations.



Harry Samuels, author of "Beshert: True Stories of Connections" and "Crossroads: Chance or Destiny?" is a graduate of Washington University. He has devoted many years to volunteerism in Memphis, Tenn. He and his wife, Flora, have been married for 63 years and are the parents of Martin, William and the late David Samuels.

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Shlomo Pinkus delivers food to IDF soldiers.

An American Israeli's Chesed in Wartime

By Shoshana Cenker

As the war rages on in the Middle East, Israelis are continuing to offer incredible *chesed* (loving kindness).

Shlomo Pinkus is an American who made aliyah with his family 11 years ago. He's the global director for Epic, an organization that helps children who move to Israel acclimate through therapeutic mentorship. Now, Epic also helps kids and families with all kinds of war trauma – those who are displaced; whose family members have been killed; those dealing with suicide.

The Pinkus family lives in the northern city of Karmiel near the Lebanon border, where sirens are often sounded. A couple months into the war, a message went out to the community saying 400 *chayalim* (soldiers) had descended into Karmiel, and they needed food for Shabbos.

"I dropped what I was doing and went to the grocery – it was flooded with residents," explained Shlomo over Zoom. "Frum Jews – Charedim, wives, kids – filled the entire store, buying Shabbos food for these *chayalim* who were being housed on a local college campus. People even brought their own pots into the grocery for meat to make cholent. We all just filled grocery carts, emptying the store shelves."

As the store closed, Shlomo walked outside with the groceries, and a soldier came over, needing challah for Shabbos. "I told him that my wife, Elisheva, was baking challah right now, and we could go together to get it. He told me not to worry about it and walked away, continuing his search for challah."

While Shlomo finished putting the groceries in his car, the same soldier came back and let Shlomo know he'd found one challah, but of course, he needed two for *Lechem Mishneh*. "I went home, grabbed our challot and took them with all the groceries I'd bought for the *chayalim* to the college where they were staying."

That weekend, every single soldier was able to enjoy Shabbos thanks to the generosity and speed of the community. "Why do we do it," Shlomo said, "we do it because we're Jews."

And there's this: Every Thursday, Shlomo has driven north to bring hot food and other necessities to soldiers on army bases near the Lebanon border. "Some of these *chayalim* feel alone, so I stay for a few hours and schmooze," he explained. "They call me the 'Cholent Guy!' The soldiers are excited when I show up. Some *chayalim* are relaxing, some eat, some are exhausted and sleeping, others coming back from their mission are happy with the hot food and new socks they've returned to. They ask if I'm afraid to be there. I say, 'Where you go, I'll go. You're fighting for us, so I'm bringing you food and davening.'"

While visiting an army base, Shlomo was chatting with a friend – an IDF doctor who was concerned about his son, a fellow soldier, but couldn't text him because Hezbollah hacks cell phones. The doctor told Shlomo that his son's army unit was sent near the Syria/Lebanon border. Even though GPS doesn't work up there and it's really hard to get to, the doctor asked if Shlomo would take food to his son. Shlomo replied, "Let's do it!" Then he packed up food with his then 14-year-old son, Baruch Eliyahu, and headed out.

It was difficult following directions; there aren't paved roads after a certain point, just off-roading in fields with barbed wire. There are signs warning "Don't cross the line. Punishable by death." Shlomo, on his own mission of sorts, drove on.

At 1 a.m., Shlomo and his son still hadn't found the base. They thought about backtracking to where GPS would work to get them back on track and Baruch Eliyahu asked his dad if they

should just go home. Shlomo told his son, “If this was my son, I wouldn’t go home. We’re going to find them.”

Driving again, they stumbled on a path they hadn’t taken, past old broken buildings and a fallen tower. They spotted one lightbulb in the distance and drove toward it. Finally, they’d found the base straddling the border with Syria. It was 2 a.m.

Turns out the base, which was first used in the 60s, was underground. It had been closed and made into a museum. Baruch Eliyahu brought the food in and found Shlomo’s friend’s 19.5-year-old son.

“We were actually on the same flight as this soldier when we all made aliyah together! I gave him a big hug, sent regards from his dad, and of course, left the food,” said Shlomo. “When I got back to cell service, I texted his parents letting them know that he was OK, warm, and fed. The next day, the soldier sent me photos – he’d gotten up at 5 a.m. for a mission, enjoyed hot cholent and kugel for breakfast, kept warm on a portable burner. Bringing these chayalim such a small thing like hot food, which they enjoy tremendously and gives them good nutrition for their difficult jobs, is incredibly humbling and a joyous effort. I won’t stop.

“There’s lots of good happening in Israel; people caring for each other. In Israelis’ hearts and minds, there’s no right party, no left party – we are Am Yisrael Chai,” Shlomo continued. “The news tries to spin it saying it’s 50% right, 50% left. From what I’ve seen, most people are in the middle, as one K’lal Yisrael family with *achdut*, united for Israel. It’s beautiful to see.”



A hot delivery of schnitzel for chayalim on an IDF army base.

Hollywood Feed HAPPY Chanukah



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Meryl Rosen, Jeanne Alpert, Judy Royal, Lenny Goodman, & Jeanne Danziger preparing meals for Temple Israel's Temple Cares.

Memphis Shines with Acts of Loving Kindness

By Shoshana Cenker

'Tis always the season to do some good. Perhaps these *chesed* (acts of loving kindness) projects will inspire you to lend a helping hand.

Baron Hirsch Rosh Hashana Chesed Boxes

For more than 25 years volunteers at Baron Hirsch Congregation have prepared and delivered Chesed Boxes containing items to prepare a complete traditional Rosh Hashana dinner.

This year more than 30 volunteers of all ages delivered the Chesed Boxes to 90 families. Those who receive services from Wendy and Avron Fogelman Jewish Family Service and Jewish residents of Plough Towers were the recipients of these thoughtful packages.

"Our members, both young and old, were very excited to volunteer their time and efforts to prepare these boxes for families all over Memphis. The teen and pre-teen helpers, as well as the adults, were very excited and motivated knowing they were helping these families to enjoy a more meaningful holiday," said Dr. Irv Cherny, chairman of this year's program.

The project has generously and gratefully been assisted by the Joseph and Lyda Chesed Fund of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis.

To donate and/or participate in upcoming Chesed Box programs, please call the synagogue office: 901.683.7485.

Chesed Is a Team Effort at Beth Sholom

The 11-member Beth Sholom Synagogue Chesed Team takes its meaning to heart. The team ensures there is ongoing support for those who need it and infuses love in everything they do. And they love what they get back.

"I have become more aware of the challenges faced by others, which makes me more appreciative of the blessings we have," said team member Francine Brown. "The act of giving back and contributing gives me a sense of gratitude. It allows me to reflect on and appreciate the good things in life, which includes participating in kindness and helping others in need."

A core service of the Chesed Committee is the Caring Calls program, coordinated by Kathie Fox. Volunteers reach out to mourners at specific times during the full year after the death of a loved one: at the end of shivah, at the conclusion of shloshim (the first 30 days of mourning), at the six-month mark, and at the first *yahrzeit*. There is also a Meal Train, organized by Tresha Mandel, to fix meals for ill congregants and mourners during their time of need.



Kivi, Aiden and Lyla Cenker volunteer at Pantry Packers on a summer trip to Israel.

Volunteers regularly call and visit more than two dozen congregants who are mostly restricted to their homes, an effort led by Sarah Siegel, who heads the Chesed Team. As volunteers' schedules allow, the team has begun to visit a few homebound congregants on their birthdays and arrange to bring in lunch to enjoy Jewish holidays and Shabbat together.

But it's not just congregants in need who feel the warmth emanating from Beth Sholom's Chesed committee.

"We feel that Chesed should extend beyond the most vulnerable members of the congregation," explains Siegel. "Every congregant deserves to experience kindness." Chesed Team member

Peshie Chaifetz suggested the team take a first step to reach out to the entire congregation by sending holiday greetings to all at Passover, Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah.

To volunteer or reach out for help, please contact Erica Mosley, Beth Sholom office manager, at erica@bsholom.org.

B'nai Mitzvah Chesed Project

In February 2024, twins Aiden and Kivi Cenker had their b'nai mitzvah. As part of their simcha, they thought of chesed projects that would be impactful. After some discussion, Aiden decided to collect English books for kids in Memphis and Hebrew books for kids in Israel. Kivi collected dental supplies. Little did they know when they planned the projects just how important they would become in Israel.

On the back of their b'nai mitzvah invitation was information about their collections. They immediately began receiving donated items. People dropped them off at their house or had them delivered from Amazon. Friends' dentists event sent in donations. The response was humbling and overwhelming, in the best way.

The boys schlepped three large tote bags filled with the items on their family trip to Israel this past summer. Visiting an army base and a displaced family, they hand-delivered the donations to those in need, who then helped distribute the dental supplies to more chayalim (soldiers) and kid's books to other displaced families.

Back in Memphis, Aiden and Kivi delivered 600+ kid's books to two important organizations aiding children and families: Hope House and Porter-Leath.

"It made me feel really good to give all the donations to people who needed it," said Kivi. "It was really meaningful to give dental supplies to soldiers and books to kids who were displaced," added Aiden.

Kosher Food Pantry Chesed Project

During the High Holiday season in October, Yaakov Shlomo Karp woke up one morning and decided to start a food drive. The word got out quickly after his dad posted the chesed project on the Memphis community's WhatsApp thread.

"It's pretty impressive," said his dad, Rabbi Noach Karp. "When his mom, Miriam, got out of bed that morning, he'd already decorated a box and said we need to put it out to collect food for people in need. It was totally his own idea. ... He just wanted to do this mitzvah!"

The community responded, dropping off useful, shelf-stable items. Yaakov Shlomo then delivered all the donated

items to the Peggy E. & L.R. Jalenak, Jr. Food and Baby Pantry at Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service. Kol HaKavod, Yaakov Shlomo!

Thanksgiving Bat Mitzvah Chesed Projects

Celebrating her bat mitzvah over Thanksgiving weekend 2024, Lyla Cenker embarked on two chesed projects: collecting items, like leashes, toys, and collars, for furry friends at the Humane Society of Memphis & Shelby County and encouraging monetary donations to Pantry Packers in Israel.

On their family trip this past summer to Israel, the Cenkers volunteered at Pantry Packers, packing food boxes. Each year, the organization feeds 34,000+ Israeli families facing food insecurity.

"Pantry Packers was great! When I think about it, I have plenty of food, but some people don't. So, it felt nice to help other people have food for every meal," said Lyla. "And I really love animals, so I wanted to do something nice for them too."

Temple Cares

Temple Israel prioritizes the well-being and care of its members through various initiatives. "In times of need – whether facing temporary challenges, illness, accidents, or loss – it's comforting to know there are people who genuinely care," said Aida Nozick, Temple's associate executive director. "That's where Temple Cares comes in. This dedicated volunteer group reaches out to provide support, comfort, and love when it's needed most."

A key initiative is the meal delivery service during the holidays. For over 20 years, in partnership with Temple's Sisterhood, Temple Cares has provided free meals and snacks to over 35 congregants. "During the High Holy Days, Chanukah, and Passover, we prepare and deliver more than 70 meals to our members," Aida explained. "For many, these meals bring nourishment and comfort during difficult times, whether they are dealing with the loss of a loved one, recovering from surgery or childbirth, or supporting our shut-in members."

Temple also offers over 100 special treat bags, including apples, honey, and hamantaschen, to Jewish residents living in Plough Towers, Opus, Town Village, Kirby Pines, Royal Retreat, Belmont Village, Germantown Plantation, Brookdale/Dogwood Creek and Story Pines.



Baron Hirsch volunteers who prepared Rosh Hashana Chesed Boxes.



Yaakov Shlomo Karp collected donated food items for the FJFS Kosher Food Pantry.



Sarah Siegel and Melissa Reyna at a Chesed mailing party sending Rosh Hashanah greetings to Beth Sholom members.



Cenker family with donated items for Israeli soldiers and displaced kids.

If you're interested in volunteering or know someone who could benefit from one of these meals, please reach out to Rebecca Fox: Rebeccaf@timemphis.org or 901.761.3130.



Teri with her husband,
Larry Graber.

INSPIRING LIVES

Teri Graber: Lifelong Educator & Dedicated Swim Instructor

By Shoshana Cenner

Memphian Teri Graber has devoted her life to helping children – in classrooms and swimming pools.

After earning her bachelor's and master's in education from then Memphis State, she began working while attending law school at night. Teri graduated second in her law class and briefly worked as an attorney in a local firm.

Her passion for helping children came calling, though. As a special education instructor in what was then Memphis City Schools (MCS), she taught kids with autism. "I loved working with those kids," Teri said fondly, "and I enjoyed my legal work too."

Using her law degree, she expanded her work with MCS to include mediation and in-house legal counsel. "I worked with

outside attorneys in the litigious aspect of special education, including hearings and trials," she explained. "It was often about parents and the school system disagreeing on how appropriate services were going to be implemented."

One moment, in particular, was quite memorable at school. "I had an individualized behavior merit system in my classes for students with autism – it was all recorded on a board in the classroom. With a certain number of merits, kids got to choose a treat from the prize box filled with toys and candy. It was a very effective method. One time, a child didn't have enough merits and got pretty upset. I noticed that his mom happened to be watching through the door window, and she began crying," remembered Teri. "Hers were tears of joy, though. It was the first time her



Teri and the newest
addition to the family.

child had shown emotion in that way."

As she built a stellar reputation for her legal and MCS work, Teri became well-known as the go-to person in the Jewish community when kids needed special education services. "I helped parents gain access to connections and resources and became instrumental in getting meetings set up," said Teri. "I loved it, helping those families and kids was my calling."

Many of Teri's school students also overlapped with her swimming lessons, as she taught them, children with different disabilities, and countless other kids, recognizing the mental and physical benefits.

Teri's love of water began as a young child. "My dad was a lifeguard at the old Memphis Jewish Community Center



(MJCC) in Midtown. Once I got my foot in the pool, that was it. Swimming just came naturally to me — I swam competitively as a kid, starting at age 8. Breaststroke was my best, and I did win lots of medals and trophies,” Teri recalled with a humble smile. “I wore a bathing suit most of the time growing up, and I used to have swim practice before school. Back then goggles weren’t encouraged, and my eyes were always burning!”

In her early teens, Teri began offering swimming instructions at the MJCC, in Midtown then. She rode her bicycle there. She explained that there’s actually a Biblical edict to teach kids how to swim, so they can protect themselves. The sages advise that it’s one of the essential elements for setting up children for a successful life. That attracted a lot of religious Jews to take lessons. And when families struggled with finances, Teri would accommodate, offering hefty discounts.

Teri also enjoyed teaching swimming with her sister, Suzanne, for many years, which was “a lot of fun.” In addition to offering swim instructions at the MJCC, Teri taught at country clubs, the YWCA, and people’s houses all over Memphis – from the Jewish community to affluent non-Jews. When teaching at public pools, others would take note, and her business quickly expanded. Her phone rang off the hook; she never had to search for clients, they always came to her. Teri’s taught many hundreds of kids how to swim over 30 years and only just recently hung up her suit and goggles.

“I absolutely loved giving swim lessons; loved being with the kids and in the pool,” said Teri, who enjoys watching swimming during the Olympics. “I wanted to make sure they could be safe in the water, but also have fun and enjoy.”

Teri’s been active throughout the Memphis Jewish community, in BBYO as a teen and serving on the boards of Baron Hirsch Congregation and the MJCC. Teri and her husband, Larry, have been married for 30 years; they have a beautiful, blended family of five children and 10 grandkids.

“I really want to thank the community,” said Teri with sincerity. “I want them to know how grateful I am for opening their pools to me and trusting me with their kids – in the water and the classroom.”



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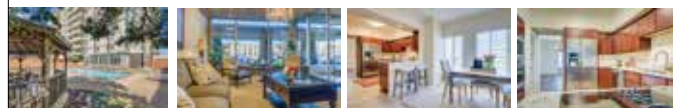
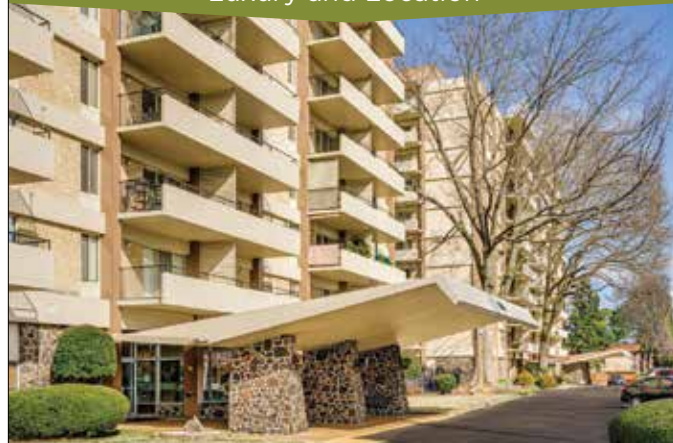
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In 1998 at their 50th wedding anniversary: Ruth Diamond with her late husband, Karl Diamond, and their children Marcia Diamond of Falls Church, Virginia; Sharon Charlop of Jerusalem, Israel; Fred Diamond of Cambridge, England; Madelyn Gordon of Memphis, Tennessee.

RUTH DIAMOND Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

*By Ruth's daughter, Marcia Diamond, with contributions from her other children.
Photos by Plough Towers' resident photographer Al Streicher*

"I can't believe I'm this old!" Ruth Diamond has been saying this for the past five years at least. Not because she feels younger, but because she is surprised to have survived so long.

One hundred years sees many tragedies. Illnesses take her sister, Helen Weinrib, her best friend, Ida Kilstein, and her husband, Karl Diamond. Not to mention the horrors of the Holocaust she lived through as a teen, from Bialystok ghetto to Majdanek, Plaszow, and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. To this day, having known starvation, she finds it very difficult to waste food and has thrifty habits similar to many Americans who lived during the Great Depression. Her children (and their spouses) and grandchildren have all learned "the Bubby-scrape," getting every last bit of food out of a jar or bowl.

Ruth rarely spoke of these war-time experiences, not even when her children asked about the numbers tattooed on her arm from the notorious Auschwitz death camp. In contrast, Karl would speak

publicly when he had the opportunity as he felt it imperative to raise awareness of the brutal inhumanity of the Nazis and their antisemitic enablers in Poland where they both grew up. Almost all their immediate family members, young and old, were murdered or perished during this dark period. Ruth did provide a brief interview with the Tennessee Holocaust Commission for a Holocaust Remembrance project that was on display with her photo at the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in 2016. Her story also appears in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. She and Karl were founding members.

Ruth and Karl met after WWII in the Displaced Persons Camp in Bamberg, Germany, and married in June 1948. They started a new life together in the U.S., arriving in Memphis in 1949. Other "Greeners" (new Jewish immigrants) became their closest friends and family. Who else could possibly relate to what they had endured? Their children, collectively "the Second Generation,"



Rabbi Joel Finkelstein joined Ruth's 100th birthday celebration



Ruth and her beautiful children on her birthday.

never knew grandparents; few had aunts, uncles or cousins. Ruth and Karl found comfort and community at the massive Orthodox Jewish Baron Hirsch synagogue on Vollentine Avenue. The Greeners bought homes, started businesses, raised children, and celebrated together every holiday and happy event.

Ruth, Karl, and their four children, born between 1949 and 1964, lived in houses on Stonewall, then on Monticello Drive, then on Rich Road across from what was then Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth Synagogue, where they were very active in social and volunteer events. The couple traveled together over the years to many lovely destinations, usually General Electric-sponsored lavish trips related to Karl's Diamond Appliance Center business, including Switzerland, Hawaii, Spain, and a synagogue-led trip to Israel.

Ruth enjoyed the experiences although she really did not like to travel and was always happy to return home. She was very much a homebody, cooking and sewing and caring for her family. She

once shared that when she was a youngster, and she had a choice of electives in school, she chose dance, while her more sensible older sister chose to learn sewing. Her sister became an accomplished seamstress while Ruth, self-taught, largely made do with patching and alterations as needed by a growing family. Dance was a choice she said she regretted. But into her aging years it is evident that she had been strong and flexible and that remaining physically active brings her joy.

After Karl died in 2004, Ruth knew she wanted to move to Plough Towers. She was done with raking leaves and other yard work. She was thrilled to move into her one-bedroom apartment in 2007. Ruth was also done with cooking and baking – no more wonderful breads (challah) or cakes (jelly rolls, banana cake, coffee cake) or cookies.

She now prefers other ways to stay busy. She likes to be helpful to friends and neighbors; in her home she had been a devoted caretaker to her sister and then to her husband during their years of illness. Receiving help, on the other hand, does not come easily to Ruth. She has always been fiercely independent. On one occasion after she had been grocery shopping, a generous bystander at the Plough entrance where she was getting out of the car with her bags, offered to help carry her load. Ruth refused to accept the help, and grandson Alex, who had been driving her, remarked about the Good Samaritan, “Rookie mistake.”

Ruth can be found at Plough morning exercise classes three times a week, the regular PB&J sandwich-making events, and for years enjoyed the weekly knitting group until her hands became too arthritic. The kids and grandkids hope to live long enough to use all the knitted scarves, hats, and blankets that Ruth has sent to them. Now, Bingo and bunko games at Plough and Wheel of Fortune on TV are her favorite pastimes.

In honor of Ruth’s 100th birthday, her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, traveling from England, Israel, Hungary, New York, Virginia and Oregon, planned an in-person days-long celebration in Memphis with her favorite activities, foods and friends.

The grandchildren, in Ruth’s honor, gifted Plough with a new electronic Bingo game where the numbers are displayed on a big-screen TV so those with hearing impairments can see the numbers as they are called. This was unveiled at Ruth’s Birthday Bingo Bash in September. All Plough residents and staff were invited to the event, sponsored in part by her friends at the former Anshei Sisterhood.

Ruth’s family also sponsored a special Shabbat Kiddush in her honor at Beth Sholom in September. The week ended with a private party at the home of Ruth’s daughter and son-in-law, Madelyn and Kent Gordon.

As the Jewish saying goes, “May she live to be 120!”

CROSSROADS: Chance or Destiny?

By Harry Samuels

This collection of connection stories is a follow up to Harry’s first book, *Beshert*, which Jewish Scene readers enjoyed years ago. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

All of us have the ability to experience the synchronicity that is often the result of reaching out to others. ~ Harry Samuels

THE COFFEE SET

As told to Harry Samuels

Aviva Garfine

While on a trip to Florida in 2005, my wife and I visited an impressive commercial development in West Palm Beach called City Place. One of its most attractive stores, Ahava, is an outstanding Judaica shop.

While browsing in their extensive book department, I told the saleslady, Aviva Garfine, that I had written a book called “Beshert.” I asked if they would be interested in stocking it. After I had explained the basics of the book, she said, “Tell me one of your stories.”

When I had finished, she introduced me to their book buyer who agreed to stock my book. Later, Aviva shared the following personal experience: Two years ago, while on a trip to Israel, I fell in love with a most unusual Turkish coffee set. It was displayed in the front window of a Jerusalem shop, but it was the Sabbath and the store was closed. I returned the following day, but the store was still closed. As we were leaving the next day, I abandoned the idea of obtaining it. Recently, an employee of a local agency that helps arrange missions to Israel called.

“There’s a young man in Palm Beach who’s never been to the Holy Land,” she said. “He’d like to travel with us, but he can’t afford the cost. Would you be willing to help him?”

I told her that I would pay for his trip with one stipulation – that he not be given the name of his sponsor. A month later the mission director again called me.

“The gentleman returned from the trip,” she began; “he was extremely impressed with both the trip and your generosity,” she continued. “I would appreciate your stopping by my office to pick up a note of thanks and gift he brought for his benefactress.”

My curiosity turned to amazement as I unwrapped the container and found the Turkish coffee set.



Overlooking Lisbon

A Luxurious Voyage on the Windstar Legend

Fine Dining, Impeccable Service, and Unforgettable Destinations *By Debbie Rosenthal*

Sailing on the **Star Legend** is an unparalleled experience that combines intimate luxury, exceptional cuisine and remarkable ports of call. My recent journey aboard this boutique yacht marked my third time with Windstar Cruises, and once again, it surpassed every expectation. From the lively pubs of Dublin to the sunlit vistas of Lisbon, every day of this adventure was more fun than the previous.

Gastronomic Delights at Sea

Windstar Cruises is celebrated for its culinary excellence, and the **Star Legend's** dining offerings elevate their reputation. The menu in Amphora, the main dining room, changes nightly, and features a James Beard Foundation chef's special recipe that brings local flavors to their dishes inspired by the countries the ship visits. In selected ports (where included) guests may be part of the experience by joining the chef when he buys food in the local markets. For a more intimate dining experience, the yacht offers Cuadro 44, a Spanish-inspired venue that redefines tapas cuisine. The rich array of Spanish wines, hearty sangria, and expertly crafted small plates made it my favorite restaurant on board. Equally captivating was Candles, a romantic terrace venue offering hand-cut steaks and fresh market seafood, just a couple of the delicious offerings. Both of these premium options are included, a refreshing departure from the extra charges typical on larger cruise lines. Perhaps the culinary highlight of the voyage was the signature deck bbq, a unique culinary experience at sea and a fabulous party under the stars.

Exemplary Service: Warmth and Precision

The hallmark of Windstar's small ships is their attentive service. The **Star Legend** carries fewer than 312 guests, enabling a remarkable 1:1.5 staff-to-guest ratio. The crew's commitment to hospitality was evident in every interaction, from the warm smiles that greeted us each morning to the intuitive attention to detail that ensured our comfort. It's no surprise Windstar was named Best Boutique Cruise Line by "USA Today" for 2024 and garnered the Best Service Award from Cruise Critic in 2023.

The staterooms on the **Star Legend** also reflect this level of excellence. With spacious living areas, walk-in closets, and luxurious French balconies, the accommodations are designed for both relaxation and indulgence. The thoughtfully arranged public spaces, such as the Yacht Club, enhance the intimate atmosphere. Perched at the ship's bow with panoramic sea views, it became my favorite spot for a morning latte, a light afternoon lunch and a date with my book on a sea day.

Exclusive Access to Enchanting Ports

Windstar's smaller vessels allow access to hidden gems that larger ships simply cannot reach. This voyage was a curated journey through history, culture and natural beauty. Our itinerary included extended stops in iconic locales, enabling deeper exploration.

- **Mont St. Michel:** This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a marvel of medieval engineering. Rising dramatically from tidal sandbanks, the Gothic abbey offered an awe-inspiring glimpse into the artistry and resilience of the 10th century.
- **Pont-Aven:** Strolling through this quaint Breton town, with its picturesque port and vibrant art galleries, was like stepping into a painting by Paul Gauguin himself, whose art was inspired here. The charming streets and local boutiques were irresistible.



Debbie and David pose at Mont St Michel.



Debbie Rosenthal is your luxury travel advisor with over 22 years experience specializing in luxury cruises, small groups and bespoke land vacations, all-inclusives, and villa rentals.

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Boarding the Star Legend.

- **Bordeaux and St. Emilion:** Bordeaux, a unique port where the ship overnighted, dazzled with its architectural splendor and culinary prestige of over 50 Michelin restaurants, boasting more protected buildings than any French city outside Paris. Our day trip to St. Emilion, a medieval village nestled among 900 vineyards, was a feast for both our eyes and palate.
- **Porto:** One highlight was the visit to Porto, where port wine has been made since the 17th century. The big houses loom spectacularly over Vila Nova de Gaia, so grand they look as if they might have their own militias. It is somehow unbelievable that you're allowed in, let alone that once inside you can do what you like, treat it as an educational experience with a tour, or more like a bar. The two sides of the river are completely different, both most sees. Porto is a star city, and I can't wait to go back spending more time leisurely walking (albeit straight up at times!), sipping port and shopping in the historic old town.
- **Lisbon:** This seven-hilled city charmed us with its vibrant districts, from the narrow winding streets of historic Jewish Alfama to the bustling markets and elegant boulevards. A tuk-tuk tour brought its 2000-year-old history and unique architecture vividly to life.

Looking Ahead: A Star in the Making

Excitement abounds for the upcoming Star Seeker, Windstar's latest addition, set to debut soon. With only 224 guests, this new yacht promises even greater intimacy and luxury. Innovations include an expanded Watersports Platform, new dining venues and serene suites designed for relaxation. Destinations will include the Caribbean, Alaska and Japan, broadening the horizons of Windstar's legendary experiences.

The Ultimate Small Ship Experience

Whether your dream destination includes the scenic fjords of Norway, the ancient ruins of Greece, or the sunlit coasts of the Mediterranean, Windstar Cruises offers an unforgettable way to explore the world, exemplifying the very best of boutique cruising—gourmet dining, impeccable service and exclusive access to extraordinary destinations.

For more details about Windstar Cruises or to plan your bucket list journey either by sea or land, contact **Debbie Rosenthal at Dream Vacations** by calling 901-682-5600 or visiting www.drosenthal.dreamvacations.com.

WINDSTAR
CRUISES



Jewish quarter in Lisbon.



St Emilion



Winter Fashion

By Rebecca Brown

It's officially sweater weather in the South! This season, outerwear has never been so tactile and fun, and the key to layering is to play with textures, color, and prints to create intrigue. Sequinned skirts and matching sets with metallic finishes are perfect for a night out while jewel tones reign supreme on statement coats and frocks. As spring is for florals, fall and winter are for check and tweed – dashing plaid, sparkle tweed two-piece combos and houndstooth too! Suede continues its popularity as a favorite winter fabric, and faux fur, textured leathers, and animal print amp the sass. Below, our round-up of classic winter staples that will see you through the season, Chanukah parties, and beyond. You're welcome!



Terez: Ombre
Quarter Zip
Sweater in Navy
\$350



Atlerre: Groovy Green Point Slide + Gold
Twiggy \$275



Sympl: Vergara Tote \$149



Rails: Goldie Top in
Gunmetal \$148
Rails: Liana Pants in
Gunmetal \$198



Talbots: Midnight
Sparkle Tweed
Jacket \$209
Talbots: Midnight
Sparkle Tweed
A-line Skirt \$119



Marc Fisher LTD:
Lannie Boot in
Brown \$299



Talbots: Bicolor Italian Melton Wool
Blend Coat \$399



J Crew: Collection
Lady Jacket in
Croc-embossed
Leather \$698

The Rewards of Pet Parenting

By Shoshana Cenker

Before this issue went to print, the Cohens lost their 4-year-old Golden Doodle. Sandra still wanted to share their story.

Sandra and Harris Cohen enjoyed the company of their two fur babies: a 4-year-old Golden Doodle and a small white kitty.

Timing is everything, of course: The Cohens happened to find a breeder near Memphis who had a Golden Doodle puppy up for adoption, "so the timing was right," they said. The pup was "named Harrison by the breeder, and since we already had a Harris in the family, we decided to keep the name – 'son of Harris,'" said Sandra.

Their cat was a different story. She ended up coming to their backdoor on a blazing hot 97-degree day this past July.

"I took her in to give her food and water," Sandra said. "I considered sending her back out after the heat broke but decided to keep her. She's all white with a black tail and looks like (and perhaps is) a unique breed called a Turkish Van. We therefore decided to name her Vanessa."

Sandra grew up in New York City, where most families rented small apartments and virtually no one had pets. "I always wondered what it would be like to have a pet like a dog or a cat, and now I know!" she said happily. "Although it can sometimes be a lot of work, it's also very rewarding. I think there's a lot we humans can learn from our animals."

Most Love

I loved that Harrison was so loyal and followed me wherever I went. I love how the cat curls up in my lap and purrs when I pet her.

Fave Toys

Vanessa loves to kick a small red ball.



Sandra and Harris take Harrison for a walk.



Vanessa



Harrison



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