



# THE OLIVE PRESS

BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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## Our July theme for the Olive Press is “Favorite Family Stories”.

We all have little stories about a family pet or a singular event that happened many years ago. The stories pop up again and again at the family dinner table when with you gather with your siblings or kids.

And when the story is told, even for the 100th time, we are bathed in the light of family belonging.

Allison Rodman  
Director of Sales & Marketing



Comments regarding the Olive Press are welcome  
Email: [Arodman@rgplaza.org](mailto:Arodman@rgplaza.org)

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# "A Boy and His Dog"

## By Jane Cutler

When my son, Aaron was nine or so, he became very interested in death, as many kids do at that age. This led him to think about and believe in reincarnation.

One Sunday, an acquaintance of ours who was living in Oahu, a psychiatrist, dropped by. He had become, he said, a Zen Buddhist. He and Aaron got into a conversation that quickly turned into death, and to reincarnation. The two of them huddled in the living room. And this is what I overheard:

Aaron: When I come back, I am coming back as a dog.

Friend: You can't.

Aaron: Why not?

Friend: Because you can't come back as something lower. You're already a human being. Dogs are lower than humans. You will have to come back as a higher kind of human.

Aaron is silent, considering.

He stands up, looks long at the still-seated man, and says firmly, "if I can't come back as a dog, I am not coming back!"

Then, with all the dignity a nine-year-old boy can muster, head up, eyes straight ahead, he marches out of the room.

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Cover Art: Boy and His Dog by Jillian Mazur

## Meet Our New Community Director, Sam Faye

**J**FCS and Rhoda Goldman Plaza are extremely pleased to welcome our new Executive Director, Sam Faye. Sam's Senior Living career spanned over 20 years. This includes several wonderful years in the North Bay at the prestigious Varenna campus Sonoma County where he was the opening Executive Director. Prior to returning to the Bay Area, Sam spent time working in Southern California where he "opened" communities for Oakmont Senior Living, Westmont Senior Living, and Cogir USA. His diverse background includes expertise in Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Dementia Care.

Sam enjoyed a fulfilling hospitality career with assignments in Albuquerque, New Mexico as well as stint on the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Sam called Key West, Florida home for several years before moving out west.



Originally from Massachusetts, Sam also lived in South Florida for many years.

Sam is relocating from Orange County California to join us here in San Francisco. Sam has been married for 24 years and has one daughter. In his spare time, Sam enjoys reading, jogging, pickleball, hiking, watching movies and most of all eating!

## Jane Goldsmith



**J**ane Goldsmith moved into RGP in 2023 and has been active in our community since she arrived. Originally from Washington DC, Jane moved to the Bay Area to be closer to family in 1971. She completed her undergraduate studies at Radcliffe College where she majored in Russian Studies. She then went on to earn her PhD in Clinical Psychology from The California School of Professional Psychology. She worked in a clinical setting and eventually went on to own her own practice. Jane found the person-to-person interactions she had in the therapeutic setting to be particularly fulfilling. She practiced for about 45 years before retiring when she turned 80.

Jane loves music. In addition to attending our concerts, she participates in the new RGP chorus, The Mazel Tones, and sings with the SF Choral Society. You may also hear her playing the piano on the second floor. Jane likes to stay active in the larger San Francisco community, both through RGP outings and with her extensive network of friends and family in the area.



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes  
Director of Resident Services



## The Family Physician

Meet Dr. William Leonard Fair (my grandfather). He and his brother were raised on a farm near Chillicothe, Missouri by their aunt after their mother died. In high school, he played baseball on an American Legion team nicknamed the "Terrors", placing 2nd in the state in 1941. Yogi Berra was on the first-place team!

Leonard was awarded a purple heart and bronze star for his service during WWII, injured in Okinawa. He went to med school at Duke on the GI bill, becoming a Family Physician.



Returning to Chillicothe, he made house-calls out in the countryside and was known to be generous in his billing practices, sometimes taking produce or eggs in payment. He was a great listener and told me that his patients usually needed to talk with him, more than they needed a new medication.

One of his patients wrote to me: "I was a single parent in the 60's, forced to drop out of college and feeling so much shame, but your grandfather helped me, never judged me. He helped me to survive and make my life better."

My Grandpa had a great sense of humor, and an uncanny ability to wiggle his ears. At the end of his life, when he was bed-bound, we wondered if he could still hear us talking. That's when he wiggled his ears, sharing his great sense of humor literally until the very end.



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN  
Director of Health Services

## Our Story is Our Legacy

The first paragraph of the Amidah prayer, the basic prayer of every Jewish service, begins: Blessed are you, our Holy One, and Holy One of our ancestors; God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Leah and God of Rachel. We remember the names, and then, we begin to remember the stories associated with the names. Stories of trials and tribulations, triumph and defeat, pride and humiliation, joy and pain, each a chapter of learning the vagaries on the road to wisdom.

In another prayer, we ask for help to "understand, to perceive, to listen, to learn, to teach, to keep, to do and to uphold" the teachings from the stories of our tradition. This should be our response to our family stories. Each of these words seemed so important to me, that I painted them.



After my mother died in my niece's home, with much family present, her great grandson said, "Grandma has really set the bar on how we are going to die in this family!" I could almost physically see a family story developing that would be told through the generations as a precious loving gift. What is left after we are gone but our stories? Which ones have you received, and how did they affect your life? What stories are you bequeathing to those who come after you?



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky  
Community Rabbi, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

## The Caring Legacy of Norma and Joseph Satten z”l

**N**orma and Joseph Satten dedicated their lives to improving the well-being of those most in need.

Married for 65 years, the couple raised three children—Neal, Debby, and Sara. After moving to San Francisco, Joe, a highly regarded forensic psychiatrist and clinician, oversaw psychiatric care at Mount Zion Hospital and, following their merger, UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion. Norma, who had served as Kansas’ first Director of Health Planning, guided the city’s public health response to the AIDS epidemic.

Norma generously shared her wisdom and expertise as a member of the Jewish Family and Children’s Services (JFCS) Board of Directors. She played a central role in envisioning and planning Rhoda Goldman Plaza.



After Norma’s death, Joe moved into Rhoda Goldman Plaza, benefiting from the warm community she had helped bring to life.

Today, the Joseph & Norma Satten Endowment Fund at JFCS—established by Norma and Joe and added to by their children—continues the couple’s legacy of compassion by supporting long-term care that allows vulnerable elders to live with dignity and comfort.

*Barbara Farber is the Director of Development and Planned Giving at JFCS. For information about legacy giving, please contact her at 415-449-3858 or [BarbaraF@jfcs.org](mailto:BarbaraF@jfcs.org). Or visit [www.jfcs.org/give](http://www.jfcs.org/give).*

**“How we spend our days, are of course, how spend our lives.” Annie Dillard**

**S**tories have tremendous power. They offer lessons and history, but they are also the way that we stay connected to those who are no longer with us. During RGP memorials, we take the opportunity to share stories about the resident who has passed. Not only is this a meaningful way for our community to remember the resident, but it gives their family a glimpse into how we knew their loved one. It is a gift to hear stories about someone you love for the first time, perhaps to see sides of them that you didn’t know, and to know that they impacted more lives than yours.

I find myself so grateful to observe the bookends of life each day. Residents generously share their stories with me and the insights they have gleaned from many decades of experience. At home, I see my kids take on countless firsts and share in their many delights and frustrations. I know that I will never be able to remember all of the wonderful things about this particular time of life, so I am making a conscious effort to tell these small stories to friends and family now as well as to write them down so my kids have them in the future.



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes  
Director of Resident Services



# Bird Watching at Golden Gate Park



The famous bird outing!



Jim using the telescope to find birds



Deborah, Paula S., and Paula T. learning to use binoculars



Jane and Priscilla take a break for the camera



Alice at drag bingo!



Chef's Demo "Cocktails" with Priscilla, Mary, and Sharon



Rose showing off her rock



Fred's rock painting class



Eileen and her rock



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# Sam's Welcome Party



Paulette



Q and David



Ruthie



Fred and Sam



Adrienne and Tim



Mike and Betty



Paula and Judith



Tallulah and Jim



Barbara and Sam



Lydia's catus in bloom



Charlie and Hannah tech support!



### Camels and the Casbah by Maxene Kotin

**M**y family story is a laugh.  
My husband Merritt and I went on a trip to Morocco, a very picturesque country in northern Africa, whose beauty I shall always remember.

We went shopping in the souk (bazaar) with its blaring music, scents of traditional food cooking, and stalls filled with lots of stuff to buy. While I was looking at a beautiful handmade leather shoulder purse, just perfect to use for the rest of our trip to Spain and Italy, I called to Merritt who was looking at silver kitchen knives. We were prepared to negotiate (because that's what you do we were told) with the owner wearing a heavily encrusted mid length coat and fez (perfect for a costume party I thought) when he turned to Merritt, pointed at me and said, "I'll give you 2 camels for her" probably never having seen a blonde woman.

I momentarily panicked and frantically said to my husband, "Let's get out of here quick", envisioning being captured in the Casbah as I had seen in a movie...



Later that night while dining at the hotel restaurant, I laughing said to Merritt, "You know what comedian Jack Benny would have dryly said to wife Mary in response to the 2 camels deal?

"Wait, wait let me think about it!"

And this is what our family and friends still remember and laugh about, our trip to Morocco.

### Growing Up With Art and Culture by Mary Swope



Mary Swope and her brother

**G**rowing up as a child my father, Isaac Swope, had a love for different cultural events and entertainment. He wanted to make sure that our family were exposed to the different forms of entertainment like theaters and shows. I've always had a love for art and drawing, ever since I was able to pick up a pencil. My family has always encouraged me to do so.

After I graduated from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, I was lucky enough to land a job as a library assistant at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It was a beautiful and large museum. Because I was able to open the museum in the mornings, I was there before any other patrons were able to walk in. Walking through the museum as if it were my own house.

As I walked through the museum, I remember the days when my father was still taking us to cultural events. Even now, I have a love for photography and art!



## Afikomen Surprise by John Dellar

It is a Passover tradition in our family for the leader to break the sheet of Matzo (the Afikomen) into many pieces and hide it for the grandchildren to find and receive a cash prize. As many of you know, my daughter Lauren visits from Jerusalem twice a year. On a recent visit, she was making the guest bed and as she reached from between the sheets and blanket, out came a piece of Matzo! She started laughing, knowing it was from the previous Pesach. She is still hoping to collect her prize!



## The Time that Gefilte Fish was served in the Matzah Ball Soup by Lauren Dellar

An often re-told family favorite is the wonderful story of one of my father's childhood Passover seders. His mother had prepared the regular lineup of traditional dishes and had instructed the (non-Jewish) woman helping her in the kitchen to place the matzah balls in the hot soup just before serving. At the appointed moment, the woman presented the dish in a fancy terrine. However, instead of fluffy matzah dumplings floating atop piping hot chicken soup, guests were surprised to see gefilte fish in their bowls. For the uninitiated, there was no discernible difference between the two: one is round, the other is oval; both seemed the same to this lovely well-intended helper. Needless to say, everyone had a great laugh as the diners swiftly moved on to the brisket course.

## Charitable Acts and Timing by Max Robinowitz

At age 16, my grandfather Solomon was drafted into the army of the Russian Empire and served 6 years basically living on bread and water to maintain kosher laws. When he was released from active duty he returned to Slonim, Belorussia, his hometown, married Chana Leah Cohen and they started their family of 6 children. When Chana Leah was pregnant for the seventh time and my father was in utero, the Russians returned with a draft notice for Solomon. Chana Leah was the sweetest, most gentle person I ever met in my father's family.

When her family of origin learned of Solomon's plight, one of her unmarried first cousins gifted Solomon the cousin's newly issued passport to America along with a fully paid steamship ticket to New York.

That angel cousin stayed in Slonim and was killed years later by the Einsatz Gruppen. In 1904, Solomon emigrated to High Point, NC where several of his lantzmen were living. Although it took him nine years to earn sufficient funds to bring his wife and seven children to America, in 1913 he succeeded just in time before the onset of World War I closed down opportunities for immigration.



## The Sharing of Story

**M**y workday here at Rhoda Goldman Plaza is punctuated with tours for inquiring potential residents. As we walk and talk I ask, “what is important to you”? And then the stories spill out. The conversation goes off on many side trips that tell me about a life lived, which is such a delight. Often we laugh at story-end of a particularly humorous human experience. I feel like I have entered some kind of magical portal built by my imagination, of who they were in their young 20’s and excited about their future.



This is the beginning of my affection and connection with the people who choose RGP. It is all about their stories, their wild tales, the comedy and tragedy we all share.



Allison Rodman  
Director of Sales & Marketing

## STILL WITH ME by Bob Demchick

**T**he kids had gone, they'd left the house  
And yet they were still there  
My thoughts of them while miles apart  
Meant I will always care.

As each had started a new life  
On his or her own course  
They leave with me who stayed behind  
An overwhelming force.

I was so proud to see them thrive  
On roots I superintended.  
And yet how could I not be sad  
To know a time had ended.

And I am sure in years to come  
Now that we've moved away  
The ones who bought the place from us  
Won't feel the thoughts that stay.

They'll never know the lawn's bare spot  
Was really second base.  
Or realize the use we made  
Of each and every space.

And they won't hear the music played  
Of every different kind  
Or see the children growing up  
While filling up my mind.

Independence was my gift to them  
Each learning to be free.  
But understanding is the mighty  
Gift they gave to me.

I think of them, where they have gone  
Each grown up now and wise.  
And as I do I can't hold back  
The tears that fill my eyes.

I know they had to go away  
Although I'd wished they'd stayed.  
The pleasure they have given me  
Can never be repaid.

But even though they've gone away  
My love for them still grows  
For I still have their mother in  
Whose eyes that love just glows



*Residents*

3	John D.	19	Eileen S.
4	David C.	21	Marilyn M.
12	Marilyn M.	22	Jacques M.
15	Carolyn R.	26	Robert M.
17	Joyce G.	27	Janice O.
18	Bob D.	29	Fred W.
18	Sara S.	31	Celia C.

*Staff*

6	Steven T.	15	Qinjie F.
6	Monique L.	16	Mary V.
8	Kyin S.	16	Luisa I.
6	Marilyn P.	18	Thomas H.
8	Elizabeth W.	20	Rubie R.
8	Yen Soon S.	21	Leah L.
12	Carmen M.		

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“The family is one of nature’s masterpieces.”

– George Santayana

“Rejoice with your family in the beautiful land of life.”

– Albert Einstein

“If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.”

– George Bernard Shaw

## Victorino Fabros, Caregiver

Please meet caregiver Victorino Fabros who has worked at RGP for five years. You may not have met him yet, because he works primarily on our overnight shift which runs from 11pm to 7:30 am. Victorino has a kind and caring rapport with residents and co-workers. The night shift says that he is always ready to help and to train new employees as well. He is flexible, working on any floor and any shift (morning, evening, or overnight). Victorino is originally from the Philippines (Manila and Isabela) and he has two children in the Philippines who are in high school and college.



Victorino loves hiking, traveling, and flower arranging. He is also completing his esthetician’s license. He says that his interest in wellness and caring for others brought him to RGP and that he loves working here.



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN  
Director of Health Services

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A DIVISION OF JEWISH FAMILY  
AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
RCFE #385600125



Yellow River, 2002 by Laura Ryle



LA Stripes, 2002 by Claudia Shearer

## RGP Art Gallery

### Threaded Connections: Contemporary Art Quilts by Laura Ryle and Claudia Shearer

This show of contemporary art quilts celebrates the creative connection between two sisters and the visual dialogue between their stitchery. The sisters are daughters of current RGP resident Carol John and the late Walter John.

Artist Talk Saturday, August at 9th at 1:30pm

Ongoing Exhibit Open to the Public | June 30th to October 8th

RSVP for Artist Talk: [AllisonR@jfcs.org](mailto:AllisonR@jfcs.org) | 415.345.5072