



THE OLIVE PRESS

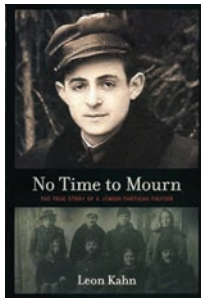
BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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Books Can Open the Door to the Possible by Judy Baston

When I'd ask my father about the Holocaust, he'd say, "Nobody's left...nobody knows anything...it's all destroyed."

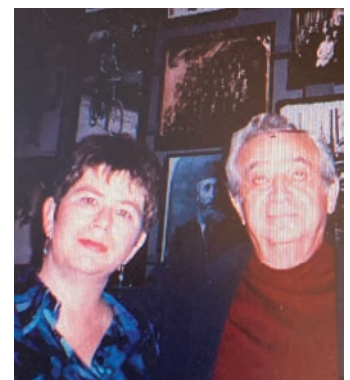
In early 1985, I watched the documentary "Genocide", with Elizabeth Taylor and Orson Welles narrating the stories of survivors. When I heard Taylor say, "The women and children of Eisiskes were being herded along the road by the Lithuanian police", at the bottom of the screen I saw, "Testimony of Leon Kahn".

Leon was my father's first cousin, the only survivor of the family, with whom we'd lost touch since my father's death in 1978. I called Leon in Vancouver and he sent me the book he'd written seven years before, "No Time to Mourn: a true story of a Jewish partisan fighter". The book is dedicated to a list of Leon's family members murdered in the Shoah, including I with the surname Bastunski— my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. And I found a photo of two first cousins I never even knew I had.

Leon was born in 1925 and spent 16 years in Eisiskes before the Einsatzgruppen mobile killing squad murdered almost all the town's Jews in September, 1941. Leon and his brother Benjamin eluded the roundup and hid behind a wall to witness the torture and murder of the town's women and children. He wrote, "'Don't look, Leibke,' Benjamin sobbed and pulled at me to make me leave the wall. I didn't want to look but I couldn't stop looking,," And as Leon looked, he saw my aunt Rivka and my beautiful cousin Sorke meet their tragic fates.

So clearly, this book disproved what my father had said to me. Not only Leon but other survivors of Eisiskes were left, and I reached out to them, including Yaffa Eliach, who 14 years later would write "There Once was a World" about Eisiskes.

Before I read Leon's book, I had what writer Max Apple called "cousin-hungriness in my bones." From the time I read Leon's book, and re-met Leon and his family, I felt more closely connected not only to my family's history but to Jewish history." I went to New York for annual meetings of the Eisiskes "landsmanshaft" to become close to people who know far more about my family than I did. I discovered thousands of birth, marriage, death and census records of the Jews of Eisiskes had survived in the Lithuanian Archives and helped coordinate their translation through LitvakSIG.org.



Judy and her cousin, Leon

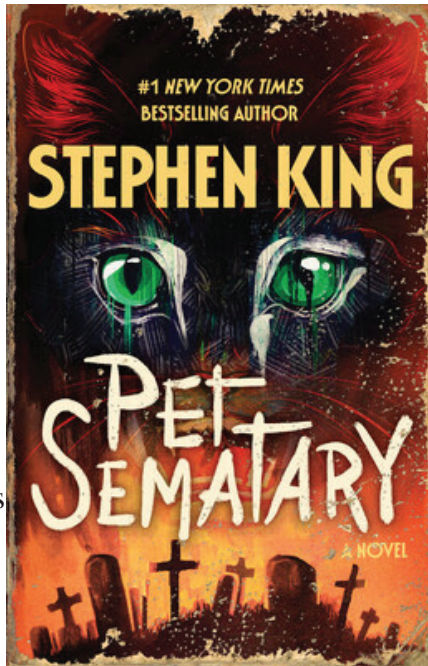
By now, hundreds of Holocaust memoirs and translations of town memorial books are readily available. And even if people aren't fortunate enough to discover their own family history in a cousin's book, they can find information they once thought unavailable.

Cover Art: "Rather Read" by Michael Sowa

The Book That Changed My Life

Reading *Pet Sematary* by Stephen King was the turning point that made me fall in love with books. Before picking it up, I didn't think of myself as much of a reader. But King's writing pulled me in right away. The small-town setting felt real, the characters felt like people I knew, and the sense of dread kept me turning pages long after I should have stopped. I wasn't just reading words; I was living inside the story.

What struck me most was how the book made me feel. The mix of fear, sadness, and suspense was powerful. I realized books could make me experience emotions just as strongly as movies or music. That was new to me, and it hooked me completely.



Now, I am an avid reader, and I like nothing more than exploring bookstores for the authors and subjects that I find interesting. We can learn so very much about our world and each other by simply reading.

As Emily Dickenson once wrote:

“There is no frigate like a book...To take us to Lands Far away.....”



Sam Faye
Community Director

Eva Daniel

Eva Daniel moved to RGP with her husband, Jacques Marchand, almost two years ago. She was born in Canada, where her family settled after fleeing Nazi Germany. Eva lived in New York for several years before making her way out to San Francisco where she met Jacques through a mutual friend. Jacques and Eva both had children from previous marriages (four in total) and are the proud grandparents of 10 grandchildren. They traveled extensively and loved seeing the world together.

Eva worked as a real estate broker for 45 years before retiring a few years ago. She also enjoys walking, flower arranging, and reading. Eva has been a member of a regular book club for almost ten years. The group reads mostly fiction and take turns hosting their monthly gatherings. They meet each December with three suggestions each and decide on book selections for the upcoming year. Eva is looking forward to welcoming them back to RGP for their October meeting!



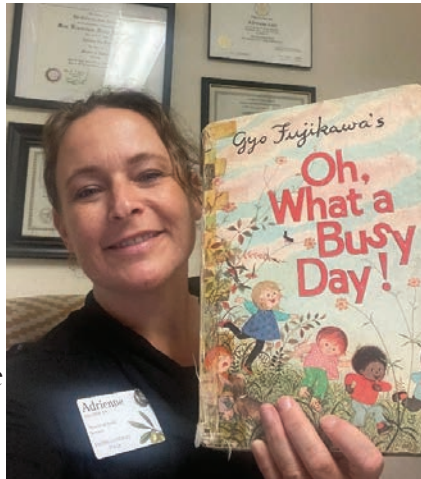
Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes
Director of Resident Services

Oh, What a Busy Day!

So many books have made an impression on me over the years – I love reading and also majored in English and French Literature as an undergrad.

When my daughter was little, I absolutely loved reading to her. We graduated from picture books to all sorts of classic children's novels. She and I have lots of favorites, but one in particular is: *"Oh, What a Busy Day!"* by Gyo Fujikawa.⁽¹⁾

When I was little (and again when Mina was little) I would pore over the detailed illustrations and imagine myself playing with all the little kids. They had adventures



outdoors and indoors – they took care of “a dear old woman in the lane”, romped in the mud, and recited poems. They also felt sad sometimes, or got in a fight – and then made up again. Gyo Fujikawa was Japanese-American, from Berkeley, and her family was sent to an internment camp in 1942. A 2019 New Yorker article describes Fujikawa as having created “effortless inclusion” in her books. “She stayed in tune with a child’s way of seeing the world. She also found a way to draw a better one.”⁽²⁾ The world she created in *"Oh, What a Busy Day!"* helped me imagine a better world as a child (and it still does).

Fujikawa, Gyo (1976) *Oh What a Busy Day!* New York: Grosset & Dunlap. (1)

Larson, Sarah (June 21, 2019) How Gyo Fujikawa drew freedom in children's books. *The New Yorker*. (2)

This is a photo of me with our battered and well-loved copy.



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN
Director of Health Services

A Life Long Companion

My first introduction to a coming-of-age novel that lit my heart ablaze was *Pride and Prejudice!* I had it on my summer reading list for school and fell in love with the detailed descriptive writing capturing the internal feelings of the characters. Most of the novel was resisting their true feelings. The experience of reading the book felt like it was running parallel to my developing emotional mind at the time.

Jane Austen's novels continue to captivate readers across generations with their wit, social insight, and timeless themes. Her sharp observations of class, relationships, and personal growth still resonate today, offering both entertainment and thoughtful reflection. For many, her work like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Sense and Sensibility* have become lifelong companions, revealing new layers with each re-read.

"I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me"

-Jane Austin from Pride & Prejudice

Austen's heroines, known for their intelligence and independence, were ahead of their time and continue to inspire. Beyond the romance, her novels explore the value of character, integrity, and emotional maturity and grow with us.



Geoffrey Washburn
Director of Life Enrichment

Books Are Like Good Friends

And many of us have lived lives never without a good book tucked under our arm. And if you are a book lover downsizing can be tough.

Deciding what to part with can feel like losing a piece of yourself, especially when it comes to a beloved book collection. Books aren't just objects they have been with you, through every chapter of your life.

In fact working with my future residents I hear a frequently asked question, "would you take my books for your library?" which I always have to say no or we would be buried with toppling piles.

There are some wonderful SF places to give your books a new home.

- **Friends of the San Francisco Public Library:** You can drop off your books at their location but call to make an appointment. 415-522-8606.
- **The Children's Book Project:** If you have children's books, this non-profit ensures that every child, regardless of their family's income, can own a book.
- **Prisoners Literature Project:** This organization provides free books to incarcerated people across the country.
- **Book Wagon SF:** Accepts a variety of books and distributes them to communities with limited access to reading materials, including schools, community centers, and shelters.



Allison Rodman
Director of Sales & Marketing

The Torah: A Never Ending Source



*Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam
The Study of Torah is Equal to Them All*

What book changed my life? That question took me about 5 seconds to answer: The Torah! And wow, did it change my life!

But let me explain. I grew up with no Jewish education, with a single Jewish mother, who, herself had not had a Jewish education. It's a long story. My first experience with the Torah was reading it in a group. I turned the page as though reading a book written in English, not Hebrew, and claimed "My book is saying something different." (I was on the wrong page!)

I've come a long way since then. Our Torah makes up Part One of the Hebrew Bible. It demands to be read in partnership with community, to be discussed, to be challenged. It requires that we understand its ancient context as well as our current context. It offers us never ending millenia of discussions from Talmud, Midrash (commentaries) and Jewish mysticism that have been built upon it. It is a never ending source: a ground from which to learn how to live an ethical, spiritual life.

So to say it is one "book" is cheating: skimming over the entire Jewish endeavor, which is based on this one book. I came to love the endeavor; I couldn't get enough of it. And look what happened!



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky
Community Rabbi, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

First Place "Travels with Charley" By Bob Demchick

In 1939 John Steinbeck published "The Grapes of Wrath." By 1952 he had followed his masterpiece with "Cannery Row," "The Pearl" and "East of Eden." Then, after a ten-year hiatus, he released perhaps his shortest piece, "Travels with Charley" wherein he describes his adventures traveling the country with his dog, Charley. I don't know what it did for Charley, but it sure changed our life.

Phylis and I both read "Travels..." with great interest sparked by years of tent camping with our children. Later years found us spending time on our cabin boat on the Chesapeake. It was there one summer afternoon that our dockside neighbors described heading south in their Recreational Vehicle for the winters.

That sounded exciting and suddenly "Travels ..." reached out to us. Why not? We certainly didn't need the big house anymore. With the four kids off on their own we had been talking about finding kinder weather than we faced in Philadelphia.

So, the research began. We learned about recreational vehicles (and there was a lot to learn). Our marina friends had a fifth wheel trailer that hitched into the bed of their pickup truck much the way a commercial trailer connects to a tractor. Guided by their advice we visited the wonderland of pickup trucks, not a subject discussed in many Jewish households.

Then Phylis declared one day that she was ready to hit the road. Since we didn't have a dog, she agreed to take me. And the shopping began. Steinbeck's pickup camper would have been far too confining for full-time RVing. Our 34-foot fifth wheel, however, held everything a house had - except space. But we had a huge back yard.

For nearly thirteen years we traversed the continent ultimately settling in San Francisco. When John Steinbeck's name arises, most folks probably think first of "The Grapes of Wrath." That certainly makes our list - in a strong second place.

Books That Changed Your Life?

Linda Knab

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

I love the Simon and Shuster illustrated books of the classics. Louisa's writing just pulled you in. I read the book three times when I was 10 and wanted to be Jo and become a writer.

Mary Swope

Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

I loved all the characters like Mad Hatter and entering the fantasy world down the rabbit hole.

Shirley Yawitz

Sephardic Flavors: Jewish Cooking of the Mediterranean by Joyce Goldstein

I love to read cookbooks and Joyce's many cook books are favorites. Also The Joy of Cooking and the Harpers Collins series of many different cuisines 1000 Recipes.

Marc Sternberger

The Front Runner by Patricia Nell Warren

For me the book that affected my life as a young person was The Front Runner, which I read in my early 20's. It was the first book that had a positive description of a gay person.

Rennie Lindner

Mountains beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder

It contributed somewhat to redirecting my career later in life.



Libraries: The Gateway to the World of Books

By Max Robinowitz



Photo of Max's Hometown Library

When I was 4 ½ years old, my mother and my 6-year-old sister invited me to visit the local public library with them. While they had taught me the alphabet and how to read a lot of names of things, I was not yet a fluent reader. The library would open a new world for me. Our library had a large children's collection with a bay window and an upholstered bench that was very inviting to sit on and browse while one could decide which of the many titles would be this week's choice to take home. I was thrilled to learn how the library worked. With my newly issued library card I could take home 4 books and pore over them for 3 weeks and come back for another round of adventure. Books would become a major joy in my life. Reading a book is like a privileged conversation with the author's thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and imagination. Books hold mankind's collective experiences wrapped up in often beautiful packets.

Throughout my personal life I have been a bibliophile-book worm. I have always had a list of books to read that is longer than I will have the lifetime to read. That's ok because it guarantees that I will never be bored. I agree with the Chinese scholar that "when you read books you live more than one life". Long dead authors continue to be with us.

When asked which book is my favorite, I would have to say all of them. There must be a universal urge for people to want to tell their stories. Not everyone has the talent to write down these stories, but there are enough potential and actual writers to think and share these brain waves in books, journals, diaries, blogs and even scraps of paper from a prison camp. Somewhere, sometime, somehow there is someone else who is our literary doppelganger. There is the joy of reading a book on one's own and expanding the ideas of the author with a new audience. Finding these new insights and deeper understanding are priceless.

*Another wise proverb is,
the faintest ink is more lasting than the most retentive mind.*



Eileen and Jane enjoying a swing at Ghirardelli Square Park



Outing to
Ghirardelli Square

Left to Right:
Ellie L. Jane G.,
Priscilla S. Joan L.,
Eileen S., Aubrey L.,
Ellie L. Karen S. Peter M.

Mission Rock
Lunch Outing

Left to Right:
Connie M., Ellie L.,
Shirley Y., Jane G.,
Peter M., Judith R.,
Bonnie S.





Rabbinic Intern Jen, Rosh Hashana Services



Eva D. and Lydia W.
Who gets the protea?



JFCS
Canine Corps
visits RGP

Ruthie G.
Jim P.



Mode to Code:
Training our seniors to
be safe with AI



Chef Perriesha
Grillin' for the Labor Day BBQ



Joanna:
Celebrates with her team,
Housekeeping Week

Meet WenHao Sun!

Joining us through end of the year is student intern, Wenhao Sun. Wen is a working on his Master Degree in Gerontology from San Francisco State University. You will see him helping with Life Enrichment, Health Services and Sales and Marketing.



Wen's original educational goal was Linguistics but after working in a skilled nursing facility for year, as a social worker he changed his goal to helping seniors.

Wenhao is from southern China and has been pursuing his studies in America since 2014. He loves reading novels and going to see films.



Join Team RGP and JFCS for The Walk To End Alzheimer's

SF Walk to End Alzheimer's is Saturday, October 18th

Join Team Rhoda Goldman Plaza/Jewish Family and Children's Services

Meet us at Bayfront Park, Mission Bay at 16th St and Terry A Francois Blvd

Registration at 8:30 AM

Ceremony at 10:00 AM

Walk at 10:30 AM

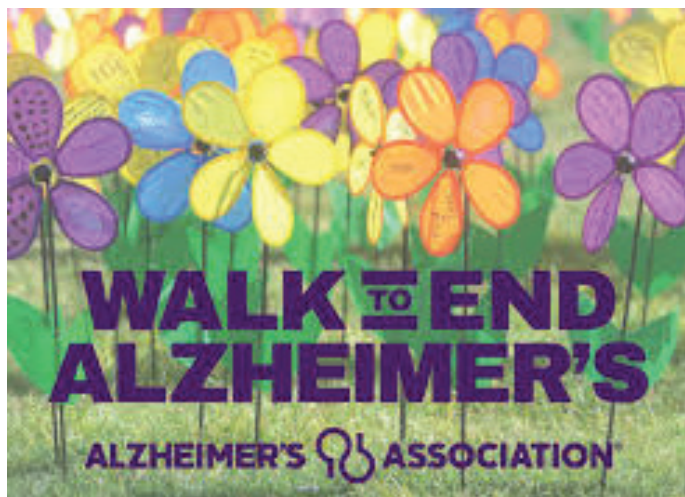


You can Join our Team

1. Team website https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2025/CA-Northern-CaliforniaandNorthernNevada?team_id=998326&pg=team&fr_id=18454
2. Forms are with Charlie
3. Geoffrey will be taking the team by bus

If you are not walking but wish to Donate

1. Sign up for the Team and contribute online
2. Forms are with Charlie.



BIRTHDAYS



Residents

4	Paulette A.	21	Carl K.
4	Dalia F.	27	Arlene M.
18	Ellie L.	27	Syed H.
19	Sam K.	27	Aubrey L.

Staff

2	Maria M.	22	XingZhen H.
3	Maggie S.	22	Jorge M.
9	Dileen C.	23	Rijal N.
11	Joanne C.	23	Rosalie L.
12	Hong Bing R.	24	Sol V Q.
18	AJ D.	24	Rafaela T.
21	Judith W.	27	Tsitsi H.
		27	Amor K.



by Rennie Lindner

Dry mouth from aging conditions and medications can lead to serious dental issues and if left untreated. To ease symptoms, options include All Day spray, Biotene or ACT lozenges, available online or in pharmacies. For severe dryness, ask your doctor about Aquoral, a prescription oral spray to help restore moisture. Plus stay hydrated!



The Olive Press

A theme focused monthly newsletter for RGP.

Contributions from RGP staff, residents, and guests.

Production Team; Managing Editor, Allison Rodman.

Copy Editor, Charlie Karam.

Comments are welcome. allisonr@rgplaza.org

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Roxana Cruz, Front Desk Attendant

Roxana Cruz has been a Front Desk Attendant at RGP since April 2023. Though originally from Houston, she has lived in the Bay Area since her early childhood. In addition to working full time at RGP, she also works full time as a marketing specialist at an affordable housing



property in the SOMA area. Her work in supportive housing helps folks experiencing homelessness find permanent housing.

Growing up, Roxana dreamed of becoming an architect. She is currently taking classes to pursue

her B license for general contracting. She hopes to use her passion for interior design, experience in property management, and general contracting license in a business in the future.

She is grateful for the many lessons that she has learned and the support she has received from residents and staff during her time at RGP. She credits one of our residents for encouraging her to pursue her B license. Roxana is inspired by the stories of hard work and determination of many of our residents, saying that they have helped her mature. She has seen the importance of family and friends in her work at RGP and has grown closer to her family in the past few years.

Roxana has two children, a 22 year old son and a 17 year old daughter. In her earlier years, she enjoyed racing cars with her siblings!



Elizabeth Wyma-Hughes

Director of Resident Services

2180 Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

415.345.5060
rgplaza.org

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



RHODA
GOLDMAN
PLAZA

175

YEARS

Jewish
Family and
Children's
Services

L'Shana Tovah!

