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BY RHODA GOLDMAN PLAZA

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Chicago, Chicago... by Maxene Kotin

I grew up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. It was not my favorite place (too provincial, I guess) but it was home. In my sophomore year at University of Wisconsin, I received a phone call to come back home, my Mother needed me. It sounded bad and I cried all the way home while on the bus. I arrived at a shiva house. My father had been in an automobile accident on his way home for Yom Kippur dinner. Not to be! A truck had veered off its lane into my dear Dad's car. He died the next day.

At shiva, a young (and handsome) man walked up to me and introduced himself as Merritt Kotin, a law student at Northwestern University. He was so understanding, helpful and at times humorous, just the thing I needed. We married a year later -- talk about good things happening from sad things.

We set up housekeep in Chicago, but did not stay long. Merritt took a position as an administrator on the House Rules Committee in Washington D.C. under Congressman Adolph Sabath. Wow! And I got a B.A. degree in English and journalism from University of Maryland. We enjoyed perks from Sabath like invitations to private celebrity parties and the White House. Another Wow!

We always felt D.C. was an interim place for us. After three years and with the administration change from Truman to Eisenhower, we happily returned to Chicago where we lived for nearly 60 years. We loved Chicago, including indulging my favorite Lou Malnati's pizza. During that time, our daughter Betsy was born. Once she started high school, I decided to open a business. I remade a bedroom into a neat office complete with typewriter, letterhead stationery. I became "Maxene H. Kotin and Associates, Public Relations." Success became my mantra.

Time moved on and my Mother died (at 104), and I decided our next move was to be to California, near daughter Betsy and family. Merritt wasn't so keen on the idea, as he was always

a Chicago guy. Little did he know that I had purchased two one-way tickets to San Francisco and we were moving to Smith Ranch, San Rafael. A new apartment and new friends. But my dear Merritt only lived for one year after an unsuccessful surgery due to a fall. So very sad. I lived eleven more years in Marin until 2021, when my landlord wanted to sell. So, I was off to another new home, Rhoda Goldman Plaza. I have enjoyed living here ever since. Friends, fun, activities, I couldn't ask for anything better. The local scenery is exquisite, the mountains and the trees are overwhelmingly gorgeous.

At 99 years old, I love San Francisco and will live here...to whenever. I look forward to my future, with my friends at Rhoda Goldman.



Natural beauty, Vibrant Culture, and Laid-back Vibes



Balboa Park, San Diego

San Diego is hands down one of my favorite places to visit. The city has a perfect blend of natural beauty, vibrant culture, and laid-back vibes. One of the best things about San Diego is its beaches, especially La Jolla Cove, where you can swim, snorkel, or simply relax by the ocean. The weather is incredible year-round, making it a great destination, no matter the season. Balboa Park, with its lush gardens and world-class museums, is another must-see. If you're a fan of animals, the San Diego Zoo is iconic, and the Safari Park gives you an even deeper connection with wildlife. I love the variety of food, too—whether it's fresh seafood by the harbor or tacos from a street stand, there's something for everyone. The city's energy is contagious, and it's the kind of place where you can recharge while having endless things to explore.



Sam Faye
Community Director

Joan Lurie

Joan was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa where she had a golden childhood filled with family and cape flora. Her parents were well-known locals with her father's family, settling in the 1880's and her mother, a champion lawn bowl player.

She attended the University of Capetown for her B.A. According to Joan, Capetown is the most beautiful city in the world (sorry San Francisco). Joan met husband Aubrey in her teens and they married after university during his medical residency. They had four children and a grandchild.

Aubrey's work took the Lurie family to Oxford and then to America, first to Alabama, then to Shreveport, Louisiana. It was like another planet; 34 years of Mardi Gras, football season, and music!

Joan and Aubrey were community volunteers. Joan was in charge of their temple's Onegs for 25 years. And they both ushered at every theater, symphony, opera and ballet in Shreveport. After retirement she and Aubrey moved to SF to be close to son Steven.



Joan enjoys reading and bridge. Before moving to SF, she belongs to 4 book clubs and was busy going to lectures and bridge tournaments. It is a wonder Aubrey had a hot meal. She is now looking for bridge partners here at RGP.

Taking the Waters

Semuc Champey is an indescribably beautiful natural monument hidden deep in the jungle near Lanquin, Guatemala in the Q'eqchi' area of Alta Verapaz. The name means “where the river hides under the stones”. The Cahabon river passes under a long natural limestone bridge – and then cascades through a series of limestone pools. The water is a light turquoise color and jungle orchids hang down. You can swim from pool to pool with the sound of the river echoing under the limestone bridge. A really magical place.

I love swimming out in nature and when I think about my favorite places, I focus on moments of swimming, snorkeling, and relaxing in water. The old-school expression of “taking the waters” makes sense to me.

Here at home, I sneak off sometimes to Harbin Hot Springs, north of Calistoga once a sacred site for the Pomo people that became a Victorian era retreat and then a hippie enclave. Even in urban areas, you can find areas of relaxation. It's all part of communing with nature and giving thanks to our amazing world.

By the time this is published, I will have returned from Tahiti, by the way – whose name translates to “surrounded by the sea.”



Adrienne Fair, MSN, RN
Director of Health Services

The RGP Recipe



Alta Vista Park

Many of our new RGP residents discover new favorite places after moving to 2180 Post Street...even in their 80's, 90's, and 100's!

A new city, new neighborhood, new places like; Jane the Bakery, Browser Books, Alta Vista Park. An unexpected new universe to explore and find daily joy.

Inside the walls of Rhoda they take pleasure in a sunlit corner or sit fireside to read a book (play a game on their phone). They can drop into the café and always find a friendly group to chat with. New friends who enjoy reminiscing about a life lived and love to spill the tea, discussing the latest.

Then there is the dining room! A place each day which is so very pleasant.

I do hear different reasons from the residents why RGP has become their new favorite place; the art shows, the flowers, the activities...but mostly because of new friends.

The recipe. You take a lovely space, add a big helping of delish food by Chef Tsitsi , sprinkle many interesting, genial people on top and Viola! A sweet and savory dish of daily delight.



Allison Rodman
Director of Sales & Marketing

Making a Difference

Mi she nichnas Adar marbeh simchah—

*One who enters the month of Adar,
that one's joy increases!*

Sundown Feb 16 marked the beginning of the Jewish month of Adar... early spring, with that universal human sigh of relief that we have gotten through yet another winter. In the Jewish tradition, we think: Purim! the holiday of mirth mid-way through Adar. A once yearly escape valve where we can poke fun at all we take seriously. These characters serve as simple archetypes that we can, with great humor, superimpose upon them the real political actors of the current moment in history in our “Purim shpiel.”

But amid all the hilarity, there is one line in the book of Esther that resounds to our core. Mordechai sneaks messages to Esther, telling her she must use her position with King Ahashveros to advocate for the Jews. She fears doing this, as it might cost her her life. Mordechai says to her: Who knows if it were not just for a time such as this that you have arrived at this position? (Esther 4:14)

There are moments past to present, where we made an impact for goodness and righteousness. Even now, in our old age, in a doctor's waiting room, or in the RGP dining room...where a thoughtful, considered intervention might make a significant change for the good. Who knows if the Holy One didn't put you in this place, at this time, to make a difference?



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky
Community Rabbi, Rhoda Goldman Plaza

The Life Enrichment Team is Growing

*Please bring your programming ideas
and places for outings to our team!*



Geoffrey W., Toby M., Sara F., Ellen O.,
Jill K., Joanne C., Erwin G.

The Rhoda Goldman Plaza Art Gallery Resident Art Show, 2026

OPENING RECEPTION
Sunday, April 12, 2:00 - 4:00pm
Food and beverages will be served

FOR MORE INFO

Call Allison 415.345.5072 or E-Mail AllisonR@rgplaza.org



RESIDENT ART SHOW

April 12 - June 24, 2026 | 2180 Post Street, San Francisco



RESIDENT OUTINGS



Barrel House Tavern:
Left to Right:
Toni B., Paula T., Ellie L.,
Jason A. Priscilla S.,
Judith R., Marc S.

Nick's Rockaway

Left to Right:
Connie M., Bonnie S.
Eileen S., Bonnie S., Connie M.



Cable Car Museum
Left to Right:
Alice Y., Jasmine B.,
Peter M., Paula T.,
Alice Y., Jara H.

Palace Hotel
Left to Right:
Celia and Paul C.
Phylis D., Rose H.



Academy of Science
Left to Right:
Jim P., Gianni C., Joan L.,
Judith L. Karen S., Phylis
and Bob D., Barbara B.,
Marsha K., Joan L. Alice Y.

RGP EVENTS



Tu Bishvat Event: Geoffrey W., Rabbi Me'irah, Paula T., Patty F., Paulette A., Judith R., Celia C., Toni B.



Valentine's Day Party: Eileen S., Jane G., Herlinda C.



Center Stage with Kids from Shupin Community: Jacques M., Marilyn M.



Tech Time With Sai and Bonnie S.

Award Winner Lurie Anniversary Joan L.

"Thank U" Gram for Alayna!

Old Love, New Love

by Jane Cutler

It WAS a dark and stormy night, with rain lashing against the windows and dense fog rolling in from the ocean. My friend and I decided to go to my favorite restaurant - Firefly, in Noe Valley - for an early dinner.

The tables for two against the front window all were close enough for us to hear one another's conversations. On my right was an older couple. The woman, next to me, was conservatively dressed and tightly permed. Her companion was a tall, nobly handsome, white-haired man with broad shoulders and a twinkle in his eyes. He leaned toward her and said, "That opal that you like so much? I'm having it set into a ring for you."

She looked pleased. "And what can I do for you?" she said. He leaned back, spread his arms, and sang, "You can't give me anything but love, baby!"

I burst out laughing.

"You know that song?" he asked.

"I do. My dad used to sing it."

A few minutes later, he excused himself and wove his way across the crowded room.

She leaned toward me. "He's an amazing man. He's ninety-six, and he can still do everything. He even drove us here tonight!"

It was about six months later that I saw them again, at Firefly. This time, they were too far away for me to greet them. But not too far for me to see that they both wore shiny gold wedding bands.

*I am all the **places**
In which I've left
My **heart**.*
Marina Sofia

A Special Light

by Cathy Fiorello

If you were born in Brooklyn, no matter how deep the roots you put down somewhere else, you never leave home. Looking back with others who shared that time and that place, the characters who shared our classrooms and our playgrounds are still vividly recalled. Pete Hamill, the quintessential New York journalist, said Brooklyn has a special light. I have lived in its glow for many years, and carry it with me wherever I go. It's also been said that Brooklyn is a borough of friends. Wherever we live, wherever we travel, we find each other.

Many of the people who had an impact on my future crossed my path in Brooklyn: Mrs. Babb, my eighth-grade English teacher, who gave me the tools I would need to practice my chosen craft; Miriam and Sarah, wives of the owners of the Jewish bakery where I worked after school. That's where I learned that people's differences fade with familiarity.

We were a community of optimists when there was nothing promising to look forward to but our dreams. Over the years, an extraordinary number of those dreams have come true. I burst with pride every time I read a "Born in Brooklyn" notation in the bio of an acclaimed achiever. The borough we struggled in during the Depression proved to be fertile ground for inspiring notables of the future. No longer in the shadow of Manhattan, its strident neighbor across the East River, Brooklyn's claim to fame came late, but it is here to stay.

The row of stoops on Second Street, where I lived, looked different at dawn than it did at twilight. We always made it home from school or the library before dark, the last rays of that special light seeing us home safely.

Paris, Africa, New York! Oh my! by Jane Goldsmith

My first favorite place is Paris, France where I lived in my twenties. I made friends with locals who all had cars, mine was a VW bug. Every week we left Paris for a destination for a long weekend together.

My second favorite place is Africa. South Africa, my favorite country. On one hiking trip we saw gorillas and an elephant walked around my tent. I did not know it until the next day when I saw the giant footprints. I also love New York, where I lived for a year on the upper West Side, near the deli Zabars. I saw Broadway shows and had a great time.

Magnifiek, Fenomenaal, Wonderbaarlijk by Gianni Colamarino

My favorite place in the world is Amsterdam. The people are so helpful, the Indonesian rijsttafel (rice table) restaurants are wonderful. The national museum of the



Netherlands, the Rijksmuseum has one of my favorite paintings, The Night Watch by Rembrandt. And the city canals are so pretty. Here I am holding my painting of The Prinsengracht ("Prince's Canal") the most beautiful of all.

Down The Shore by Marc Sternberger

No fooling, my favorite place is actually in New Jersey! Specifically, "Down the Shore" in Ship Bottom, Long Beach Island. For as far back as I can remember, it has been my definition of summer. When I was a child, my family



would rent a house for a few weeks every August and we would reluctantly pack up for home and school on Labor Day (aka the end of summer).

I couldn't wait for the smell of the sea air and Coppertone, the feel of warm sand under my bare feet, the crash of the waves. A few heavenly weeks of building sandcastles, surf fishing, swimming, saltwater taffy and sunburn. As I got older, it meant quiet time to read and think and walk on the beach and appreciate the planet earth.

Often, I would walk to the beach before dawn and sit on a bench at the top of the sand dune and watch the day begin. Usually, alone except for the seagulls, ospreys, sandpipers and occasionally another early riser with a surf rod and bucket.

To this day if I want to calm myself, lower my blood pressure, and bring peace to my mind. I close my eyes and sit on that bench.

My Favorite Place* Bob Demchick

I've been asked my favorite place.
Could I pick a single space?
Where I would like to settle down;
In which country or what town?
I know when through my brain I comb
For me there'll be just one home.

The continents visited numbered six.
With forty countries in the mix.
The world's great sites were in our sight.
We did it all with great delight.
Seeing enough to write a tome,
I knew I'd settle in my only home.

Though I have lived in many places,
As through this world we'd roam.
I have looked on myriad faces,
From Tokyo to Rome.
We've stayed in varied structures but,
I've dreamed of just one home.

There were times we stayed with friends
or lived in fabric houses.
We watched at times with great dismay
as others shed their spouses.
Though life was not at all times chrome,
I've always wanted just one home.

My mind went rambling time to time
And cobbled in this man's poor poem;
To put in words this sort of rhyme.
What's rattled through my loving dome:
When you are near my life's sublime.
When you are near I'm always home.

*Originally written as "HOME."
Published with permission of my bride.

Ari asks the Residents: "What's your Favorite Local Place?"

Bonnie S. -- "Fillmore St. where I like the shop".

Eva D. -- "Lovely Kimbell Park, because of all the kids and dogs. I watch them at the playground which is so well maintained. And Good Café at Bush and Fillmore; with their delicious pastries, very good coffee, and the quiet".

Jacques M. -- "There are two of them. One is right outside the gates of RGP, recessed ledges to sit on where you can ogle beautiful ladies. Number two, Peets at Fillmore and Sacramento where you can watch the world go by."

Jane G.-- "Nearby, I like the Kabuki Theater, for movies and lunch."

Herlinda C. -- "The Kinokuniya bookstore at Japantown."

Jim P.-- "The library, the tennis courts, and Goodwill for my Hawaiian Shirt Collection."

Joan L. -- "Across the street, Hamilton Park. Where my grandchildren play."





Residents

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 5 Henni K. | 15 Herlinda C. |
| 7 Marguerite E. | 25 Jennifer L. |
| 7 Lynn R. | 27 Gianni C. |
| 15 Nancy K. | |

Staff

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 2 Joanna N. | 21 Jun Y. |
| 4 Laura S. | 21 Hung D. |
| 7 Anu T. | 22 Merlyn C. |
| 9 Thi Hai V. | 24 Erlinda N. |
| 9 Maria M. | 27 June B. |
| 12 Donald C. | 27 Selena Z. |
| 13 Samson L. | 29 Victoria R. |
| 15 Ruilan C. | 30 Peifen L. |
| 15 Huizhen Z. | 31 Peggy C. |



Honor a Birthday

Celebrate the birthday of a friend or loved one with a gift in their honor to RGP! With a tribute gift. JFCS will send a card with your greeting by email or postal mail.

*To make a gift online, donate.jfcs.org/rgp
Or gift envelopes at the RGP Front Desk.*



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

Hla Yee, Housekeeper

We are proud to recognize Hla Yee as our March Employee of the Month for her exceptional dedication, attention to detail, and always giving a positive attitude and respect to our residents and to her colleagues.

Hla has been a Housekeeper for Rhoda Goldman Plaza since November 2023. Her commitment to maintaining the standard of cleanliness and generosity to others has not only enhanced the comfort and safety of our residents but has also inspired her colleagues.

Always willing to go the extra mile, Hla consistently delivers great hospitality characteristics, promptly responds to residents’ requests, and does so with a warm smile that brightens everyone’s day. She was recently recognized twice in the month of January by our residents in our “Thank you Gram”. Hla’s hard work and professionalism truly embody the values of our team.



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



Residents enjoy the classic Legion of Honor art exhibitions

The jewel of the San Francisco's assisted living communities. Rhoda Goldman Plaza (RGP) was founded in 2000 as a not-for-profit community based on Jewish principles. Named in loving honor of Rhoda Haas Goldman as a tribute to her lifelong humanitarian service. Unsurpassed RGP is where our residents age extraordinarily with benchmark amenities and services at the ideal address. Culture, stimulating range of activities, outstanding care services, light filled apartments, homemade cuisine. Call 415.345.5072 to learn more, rgplaza.org