

# AT HOME

FOR RESIDENTS OF THE JEWISH HOME OF SAN FRANCISCO

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JUNE 2016



"A man's children and his garden both reflect the amount of weeding done during the growing season." ~ Anonymous

FATHER'S DAY, SUNDAY, JUNE 19

Enjoy Alexandr Smirnov in concert on this special day  
2:00 p.m., F1 rose atrium

# AT HOME

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AT HOME contents are for the benefit of residents of the Jewish Home. *At Home* is based on the tradition of free expression; submissions made by residents should be viewed as not necessarily representing the opinion, position or policies of the Home.

EDITING without approval of the author is a reserved right, due to space and time constraints. Only content written or submitted by those connected with the Home will be accepted.

staff editor: Ilana Glaun  
designer: Michael Wickler

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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## RESIDENTS' BIRTHDAYS

### JUNE CELEBRANTS

- 1 Fide Munoz
- 4 Mildred Orchid
- 6 William Drake
- 7 Solomon Nosovitskiy
- 7 Gaya Shifrin
- 8 Susannah Temko
- 9 Lazar Lifshits
- 11 Vitaliy Lisunov
- 13 Sanford Rosen
- 14 Eliazar Khasminsky
- 15 Renee Lieberman
- 16 Jeffrey Miller
- 21 Galina Sukhodolskaya
- 22 Faina Belkina
- 23 Stephen Heffner
- 26 Paul Abramovitz
- 27 Mila Mangan
- 29 Rudy Hooremans
- 30 Miriam Shomlo



May birthday celebrant and cake-cutter honoree Olga Kagan makes sure she cuts a good-sized slice of the beautiful chocolate cake (adorned with bright yellow piped flowers) for her fellow celebrants.

# RESIDENTS

## WRITE

### ADAPTED FROM *MEMORIES*

BY RUDY HOOREMANS

## 'B' IS FOR BIG SCHOOL

When I was six years old, I started *grote* (big) school. I never went to kindergarten or preschool; there wasn't such a thing in those days, especially since few mothers worked outside the home. There was already, however, the Montessori school that had a kindergarten, but that was mostly for the elite and very expensive.

My school was located on Galvanie Street, a two-story, brick, rather somber and staid building. Meneer Koppelman was the principal and my teacher was Juffrouw Kramer, a somewhat stout woman, the archetypal schoolmarm. Fortunately she was a very nice lady, because she remained our teacher until we entered the seventh grade. She always wore one of those large cloche hats that were fashionable in the late twenties and early thirties. She also had a red coat and red skirt, obviously her favorites, which she wore almost constantly. There was an assistant teacher, Juffrouw Rosenbaum, a young woman, recently graduated from college, whose main purpose in the class was to observe and learn. Occasionally Juffrouw Kramer allowed her to teach one of the lessons.

As we entered the classroom, the teacher assigned us our seats. The two-person wooden desks with attached benches were neatly lined up, and Juffrouw Kramer arranged us with the small kids



Rudy Hooremans

sitting in the front and the bigger ones toward the rear. Each side of the desktop had a depression to hold our pencils and pens, and in the top center was an inkwell with a hinged lid.

There were thirty-one children in the class. My best friend, Bobbie Bijl, was in it too. Here I met Keesje Rijers, soon to become one of my good friends. There was Tillie, who was fat, even in first grade, and Mimi, who, being one of the smallest in the class, sat at the first desk, right in front of the teacher. (Juffrouw Kramer had her peculiarities; she would regularly lay her feet on Mimi's desk, hand her a brush and have Mimi polish her shoes.) I don't recall any other names. There were many Indonesian children in the school.

Soon we became involved with the business of learning the proverbial three R's, and they took it really seriously in those days. We got our *leesplankjes*, little wooden planks with pictures in three rows with rails under them, on which we were to place wooden letters to match the pictures. I can still remember the first few words. *Aap. Noot. Mies. Wim. Huis.* Monkey. Nut. Mies (a girl's name). Wim (a boy's name). House. The teaching method was strictly phonetic.

Then came writing. Juffrouw Kramer stood in front of the class, showing us how to hold the pencil between the thumb and index finger of the right hand, with the other fingers neatly aligned with them and the ball of the thumb resting on the desk

or paper surface. Then she came around to each of us to adjust our hands. After having practiced this position for a few days, we were shown how to move our hand either up or down. We were given a notebook with lined pages, four lines to each row, each row consisting of a pair of lines one whole space apart, and the other two lines one half space above and below. Then came weeks of practicing upstrokes and downstrokes, all supposedly perfectly aligned, before we could connect them or even think about letters.

It was several weeks before we were allowed a giant step: We were given nibs for our pen holders and were shown how to insert the nibs into the holders, lick our pen tips and dip them into the now-filled inkwell.

Arithmetic proved to be no less tedious. Weeks of chorus-style chanting: One plus one is two; two plus one is three; Juffrouw Kramer with a ruler in her hand keeping time as if she were an orchestra conductor. The same method was employed to drill the multiplication tables into our heads later on. I must confess it was effective, because to this day I still instantly know that seven times nine is sixty-three, or nine times forty-three is 387.

Geography was one of my favorite subjects. We started with the geography of The Netherlands, our homeland. We took imaginary train trips to and from the farthest reaches of this tiny country and memorized the names of all the cities, towns, villages and hamlets, the rivers, lakes, creeks and other notable features along the routes. In later years I loved to learn about foreign countries, even though that, too, consisted mainly of memorizing the names of cities, rivers and mountains.

History teaching was pretty much in the same vein, memorizing names and lots and lots of dates. They soon came out of my ears! Who *cared* about the precise dates all those historic events took place and the related personages lived and died? Of course, one should have a sense of time relationships in order to understand the world's developments, but the social and political circumstances related to the events and how they related to the present were not part of the curriculum.



Ellen Marks-Hinkle

## REFLECTION IN MOTION

BY ELLEN MARKS-HINKLE

I have multiple hues of light dancing all over my ceiling, walls and room.

The colors are so beautiful. They could decorate a peacock's plume.

The crystal I have helps these fancy multicolored dots reflect from the summer days. To the eye, this phenomenon is so much to amaze.

The reflection in motion is visible until the late afternoon.

Goodnight, moon. Good morning, sun.

My two children, Caroline and Danny, had to have the book *Goodnight Moon* read to them at least once or twice each evening before bedtime.

## FUDGE, AKA FUDGIE

BY ELLEN MARKS-HINKLE

Fudge was our second German shorthaired pointer. (Katy was our first.)

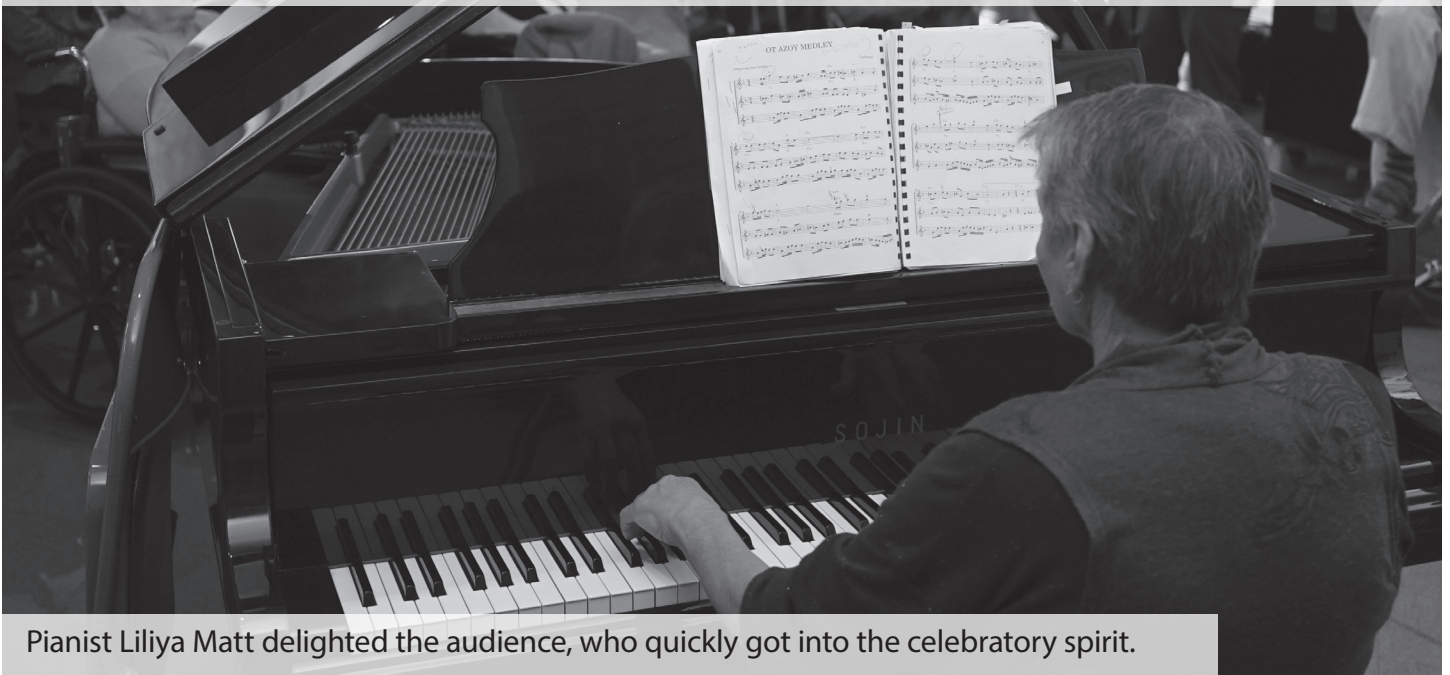
He had chocolate-brown dreamy eyes that sparkled and twinkled, which rhymes with his full name, which was Fudgsicle John Hinkle.

This 55-pound dog slept with our daughter, Caroline, until she turned numb and decided sleeping with Fudge was not so much fun.

# HAPPENINGS AT HOME

## YOM HA'ATZMAUT – ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

Sixty-eight years young! And celebrating at the venerable 145-years-and-counting Jewish Home! In honor of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the holiday that commemorates the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948, residents gathered in the lobby of the Goodman Building to clap, sway, and dance to the swinging sounds of klezmer music.



Pianist Liliya Matt delighted the audience, who quickly got into the celebratory spirit.



Victor Lin gave his violin a grand workout. Olga Lavault was amazing on the accordion.



Jean Flores's playing of the clarinet brought Susannah Temko (left) and Daniel Silverman onto the dance floor.



## KINDNESS AWARD

In appreciation of their good service to the residents, the Council of Residents conferred the Kindness Award on representatives of the San Francisco Public Library, Excelsior Branch. Smiling her delight at being the recipient of this recognition is librarian Daniela Yew standing at the top of the table, at which are seated (left to right) Council president Edie Shaffer, vice president Ellen Marks-Hinkle, and treasurer Claire Shor.



## THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND

### BEA ARTHUR, THE GOLDEN GIRL WITH THE RAZOR-SHARP WIT

*"I'm 5-feet-9, I have a deep voice, and I have a way with a line. What can I do about it? I can't stay home waiting for something different. I think it's a total waste of energy worrying about typecasting." – Bea Arthur*

Actress and comedienne Bea Arthur was born Bernice Frankel on May 13, 1922, in New York City. Known for her sharp wit, Arthur first attracted notice for her performance in the off-Broadway production of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1954. She continued to find success performing on stage – originating the role of Yente the village matchmaker in *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1964, and winning the 1966 Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Vera Charles in *Mame*. She reprised the role for the 1974 film version.

A guest appearance on *All the in Family*, Norman Lear's groundbreaking situation comedy, led to Arthur's first television series. Audiences loved her character, Maude Findlay, the outspoken liberal

cousin of Edith Bunker. The spin-off series *Maude* ran for six seasons, starting in 1972. The show began with Maude moving to Washington, D.C., to serve as a member of Congress. With its strong female lead, it was a timely program, picking up on women's rights and issues of the era. The show didn't shy away from controversial topics, including abortion. The well-regarded comedy won Arthur her first Emmy Award in 1977 for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series. She had been nominated three times for *Maude* before her big win.

It would be seven years until Bea Arthur found another smash television series. This time she played Dorothy Zbornak, a divorced older woman living with friends and looking after her mother on



*Golden Girls*. Set in Miami, the comedy followed the lives, loves, and misadventures of these women. The ensemble included veteran performers Betty White and Rue McClanahan, who had worked with Arthur on *Maude*. Estelle Getty played Arthur's mother, despite the fact that the two were around the same age. The show had the distinction of being one of the few series in television history to feature a cast of actresses over the age of 40.

A hit with television audiences, the cast of *Golden Girls* also garnered praise from critics and peers. During its seven-year run, all four stars won Emmy Awards for their work on the series. Arthur received the Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in 1988. Although the show ended in 1992, it remains popular in syndication.

*"I didn't know I was that vibrant, I just love being alive, and I love people, and I find something wonderful every day."*

After *Golden Girls* ended, Arthur made a few guest appearances on television, including *Malcolm in the Middle* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. She also toured with her own one-woman show, *And Then There's Bea* in 2001. In 2002, she appeared in *Bea Arthur on Broadway: Just Between Friends*, which earned her a Tony Award nomination for Special Theatrical Event. She lost out to Elaine Stritch, who ironically had been up for the role of Dorothy on *Golden Girls* along with Arthur.

Outside of acting, Bea Arthur was a strong supporter of animal rights and an activist for AIDS-related causes. Thanks in part to her generosity, an 18-bed home for homeless LGBT youth (and named in her honor, the Bea Arthur Residence) opened in New York City.

Arthur was married twice and had two sons with second husband Gene Saks. The couple was married in 1950 and divorced in 1978. Arthur died at her home in Los Angeles April 25, 2009, of cancer. She was 86.



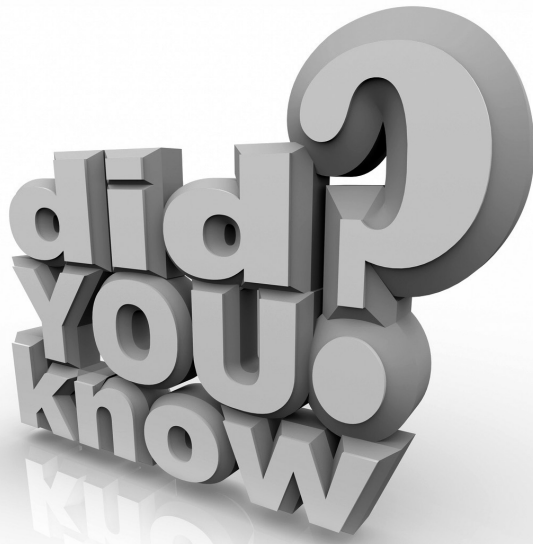
## **"B" LIST: SOME FACTS ABOUT BEA ARTHUR AND THE GOLDEN GIRLS**

Before finding a career in front of the camera, Bea Arthur had a very different job title, that of United States Marine. She was one of the first members of the Women's Reserve before World War II. She worked for the military as both a typist and a truck driver. On her volunteer application she listed her active hobbies as hunting with a .22 caliber rifle and a bow and arrow.

One of the most beloved rituals on *The Golden Girls* was the communal sharing of cheesecake. The girls often satisfied their sweet-tooth late at night while sharing their problems and giving each other sage words of wisdom. Over 100 cheesecakes were eaten during the taping of the show. Although Bea Arthur certainly indulged on-camera, off-camera she detested the dessert.

Bea Arthur tired of the show after five seasons. Producers coaxed her into staying for two more before she finally decided to step away for good, causing the series to ultimately end.

Estelle Getty played the oldest character on the show, but in real life she was over a year younger than her on-screen daughter, Dorothy, played by Bea Arthur. It took the makeup team 45 minutes before every taping to transform a youthful Getty into her aged on-screen counterpart.



## A SMALL ASSORTMENT OF TINY TRIVIA

SOURCE: *THE BEST BOOK OF USELESS INFORMATION EVER*, NEIL BOTHAM & THE USELESS INFORMATION SOCIETY

Thirsting for knowledge: A mere 2 percent drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page.

Fingernails are made from the same substance as a bird's beak.

Our big toes have two bones each, while the rest have three.

The body uses more than 70 muscles to say one word, and 300 muscles to balance itself when standing still.

The song *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* was written by George Graff and Chauncey Olcott, and composed by Ernest Ball. All three were Americans and reportedly had never visited Ireland.

While filming *The Wizard of Oz*, the dog Toto was paid \$125 per week.

The Eiffel Tower shrinks six inches in winter.

Award-worthy: The first Best Actor Oscar went to Emil Jennings in 1929 for his movies *The Way of All Flesh* and *The Last Command*. He didn't turn up to accept it.

When Orson Welles won the Best Screenplay Oscar for *Citizen Kane* in 1941, it wasn't a popular choice. The audience booed.

William Shakespeare died in 1616 at the age of 52, apparently from an infection after eating spoiled herring. Unlike most famous artists of his time, he did not die in poverty. When he died, his will contained several large holdings of land. In fact, Shakespeare began dabbling in property development at an early age. At 15, he bought the second-most prestigious property in all of Stratford, The New Place, and later doubled his investment on some land he bought near Stratford. These investments may be what afforded him enough time to devote to his plays.

## TRUISMS & LIFE OBSERVATIONS

SUBMITTED BY DANIEL HOEBEKE, SR.  
DEVELOPMENT & GIFT PLANNING OFFICER

Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.

A man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool, so I gave him a glass of water.

I'm great at multitasking. I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.

Doesn't expecting the unexpected mean that the unexpected is actually expected?

Take my advice; I'm not using it.

I hate it when people use big words just to make themselves sound perspicacious.

Hospitality is the art of making guests feel like they're at home when you wish they were.

Every time someone comes up with a foolproof solution, along comes a more talented fool.

Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

There may be no excuse for laziness, but I'm still looking.

Women spend more time wondering what men are thinking than men spend thinking.

Give me ambiguity or give me something else.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

Is it wrong that only one company makes the game Monopoly?

Women sometimes make fools of men, but most men are the do-it-yourself type.

The grass may be greener on the other side but at least you don't have to mow it.

I like long walks, especially when they're taken by people who annoy me.

I was going to wear my camouflage shirt today, but I couldn't find it.

Money is the root of all wealth.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

## THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

It is with a heart filled with nostalgia and gratitude for the amazing Communications duo of **Ilana Glaun** and **Michael Wickler**, for their exquisite "take charge" of *At Home* many years ago, that the Jewish Senior Living Group Communications team passes the oversight of this newsletter to our **Activities** teammates, who will undoubtedly do a terrific job when they take on this endeavor in July.

On a personal note: To my teammates Ilana – for your leadership and creativity behind content, and to Michael – for your classy and eye-catching graphic designs over the years, on behalf of our residents, patients, volunteers and staff, I thank you wholeheartedly for producing a great publication while meeting production deadlines month after month, year after year. Your outstanding work has benefited hundreds of readers and contributors, and made us very proud as an organization to have such a quality communication vehicle to peruse and share.

To all who have contributed to *At Home* content, we thank you for your enthusiastic participation.

Here's to progressing onward in new and different ways, and with continued success.



Sherie Koshover  
Chief Advancement Officer



# OF RESIDENTS

Council president Edie Shaffer called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. and introduced the officers in attendance.

Mediatrix Valera read the minutes of the previous meeting, which were approved as presented.

The names of residents who had passed away since the last meeting, as well as those newly admitted, were read.

Treasurer Claire Shor gave the financial report. There was \$5.00 in deposits and \$0 in withdrawals, bringing the balance to \$300.71 in the checking account and \$10 in petty cash.

The members were reminded that copies of the Residents' Bill of Rights as well as the Theft and Loss Prevention Procedures are always available to residents, and that copies are on hand at all Council meetings.

## FOOD FORUM

Food Forum minutes were distributed.

## OLD BUSINESS

David Nigel will be invited to do a presentation as part of the annual Summer Arts Festival.

## NEW BUSINESS

In appreciation of their services to the residents, the Council gave the Kindness Awards to Daniela Yew and Bart Admonius of the SF Library, Excelsior Branch. Daniela graciously accepted her award, and the one on Bart's behalf, as he was not able to be present at the meeting.

Daniela presented details of the library's Summer Reading Program and invited the residents to join the outing to Lake Salt in June.

Ellen Marks-Hinkle suggested resident outings this summer. Mediatrix announced that there will be an outing to Davies Symphony Hall in June and to a Giants game in July. She added that the Summer Arts Festival will open on June 1 with a resident art show.

The Jewish Home will be a precinct at this year's primary elections on June 7. Residents may choose to vote or drop off their absentee ballots in the Frank Family Lounge.

Kyle Ruth-Islas, resident programs director, informed the residents that the rehabilitation center in the Goodman Building will be remodeled. He also announced that those interested in the Kindle project will be given training on July 17.

## RAFFLE WINNER

May Shain was the lucky winner of this month's raffle.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Recorded by Mediatrix Valera  
*Recreational Programs Director and Council Secretary*

CUT HERE



## BRAVO! EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH NOMINATION FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

nominate \_\_\_\_\_

for the Bravo! Employee of the Month Award for the month of \_\_\_\_\_

- Performs "beyond the call of duty" to improve service to the residents, or the quality of the Jewish Home's image.
- Exemplifies professionalism and dedication to excellent service by putting forth the extra effort.
- Makes outstanding contributions of significance to the Jewish Home to fulfill its mission/vision.

I feel he/she should receive the award because:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMIT THIS FORM** to your recreation coordinator by the 1st of the month for the following month's award consideration. Or you can place it in the nomination box located at the self-service area in the H.R. department, 1st floor, B-building, or hand-deliver it to the H.R. department, or e-mail it to [mdeguzman@jhsf.org](mailto:mdeguzman@jhsf.org).

*Bravo! is generously underwritten by Jewish Home supporters Dana Corvin and Harris Weinberg.*

# BRAVO!



## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

### JUNE

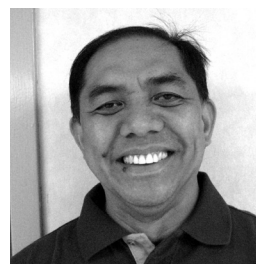
WHAT STAFF AND/OR RESIDENTS AND PATIENTS WROTE IN THEIR NOMINATIONS:

### JOSE LOBOS, COOK



Jose goes out of his way to assist co-workers when they need help. He is also very thorough when training new employees and assisting with education and department orientation. He actively participates in employee meetings and in-services, and often assists his co-workers in understanding the material. He is always prepared for his shift, has meals ready on time, and is very knowledgeable about food safety. His dedication and commitment to excellence is second to none. He can always be counted on to cover open shifts. He has a positive attitude and this radiates out and influences all those around him. He constantly projects a warm and cheerful disposition and is always welcoming to new staff. His willingness and patience to field questions and help out others, even when he is under a deadline, is invaluable. He is a true team player and a credit to the department and the Jewish Home.

### NOEL MENDOZA, CNA



Noel's dedication to the residents is outstanding. He provides highly qualified care and, at the same time, he is wonderful person who not only helps residents but his co-workers. G5 P.M. staff can rely on him at any moment. He is doing an amazing job. He is loved by residents and they worry about him if he has a day off and they do not see him at work.

## KNOW WHAT TO PRAY FOR

One day, Joe, Abe and Lou were hiking in a wilderness area when they came upon a large, raging, violent river. They needed to get to the other side, but had no idea of how to do so.

Joe prayed to God, saying, "Please, God, give me the strength to cross this river."

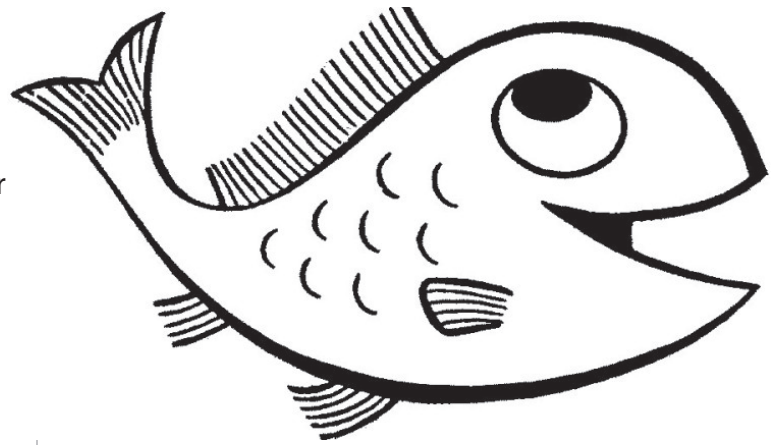
Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs and, although he almost drowned a couple of times, Joe was able to swim across the river in about two hours.

Seeing this, Lou prayed to God, saying, "Please, God, give me the strength and the tools to cross this river."

Poof! God gave him a rowboat and, although he almost capsized the boat a couple of times, Lou was able to row across the river in about an hour.

Abe had seen how this worked out for the other two, so he also prayed to God, saying, "Please, God, give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross this river."

Poof! God turned him into a woman. She looked at the map, hiked upstream a couple of hundred yards, then walked across the bridge.



## TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Solly and Max were describing their fishing expeditions with great relish.

"Once in Florida," said Solly, "I caught a fish so huge it took three men to shlep it in!"

"That's nothing," scoffed Max. "I once caught a lamp, with a date engraved on it, 1492, when Columbus discovered America!"

"Big deal," said Solly. "My fish weighed 150 pounds."

"Yeah? Well, the lamp I caught was still lit."

Nose to nose, they stared each other down until finally ...

"Listen, Max," said Solly. "How about we make my fish five pounds and you put your light out?"



## HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

A magician was working on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean. There was a different audience each week, so the magician allowed himself to do the same tricks over and over again.

There was only one problem: The captain's parrot, Shmulik, saw the shows every week and began to understand what the magician did in every trick. Once he understood that, he started shouting in the middle of the show.

"Look, it's not the same hat!" "Look, he's hiding the flowers under the table!" "Hey, why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?"

The magician was furious but he couldn't do anything; after all, Shmulik was the captain's parrot.

One day the ship had an accident and sank. The magician found himself astride a piece of wood, in the middle of the ocean. Of course, Shmulik the parrot was by his side.

They stared at each other with hate, but did not utter a word. This went on for several days.

After a week Shmulik the parrot finally said, "Okay, I give up. What did you do with the boat?"

## ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Itzik Cohen stopped at his local Jerusalem gas station to fill his tank and buy a soft drink. As he stood by his car to drink his cola, he watched two men work along the roadside. One man would dig a hole two or three feet deep and then move on. Then the other man would come along behind him and fill in the hole. Man number one would then dig another new hole further up the road, which man number two would then fill in. The men worked right past Cohen, digging another new hole, then filling in the hole, further and further along the road.

"I can't stand this," Cohen said eventually, walking toward the men.

"Hold it, hold it," he said to the men. "Can you tell me what's going on here with all this digging and refilling?"

"We work for the Israeli government and we're just doing our job," one of the men said.

"But one of you is digging a hole and the other fills it up. You're not accomplishing anything. Aren't you wasting the taxpayers' money?"

"You don't understand," one of the men said, leaning on his shovel. "Normally there are three of us: me, Shmuel and Chaim. I dig the hole, Shmuel sticks in the tree, and Chaim, here, he puts the dirt back. Now, just because Shmuel's sick doesn't mean that me and Chaim can't work."

## IN MEMORY

ANNA BRACKEN

February 1, 1940 to April 28, 2016

SARAH EDWARDS

October 19, 1931 to May 19, 2016

RAFAEL PATSEVICH

April 11, 1929 to April 28, 2016

OLGA VAYNSHTEYN

September 22, 1922 to May 1, 2016

# RESIDENTS

## WRITE

### THE ATTRACTIONS OF ARLES

BY SUSANNAH TEMKO

In the early 1950s, my parents, Becky and Allan, moved to Arles for a while from Paris. That way Allan could write the *Horizon* article as a break from *Notre Dame of Paris*. Like Marseilles (or *Massalia* in Latin), Arles became a Phoenician port. Only this time, the Phoenicians had ventured up the Rhone River to trade. The Romans followed, conquering them in 123 BC. They named it *Arelate*. Arles is the French version of the Provençal “arle.” In 1981, its Roman and Romanesque monuments became UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

While *Massalia* sided with Pompey the Great (106-48 BC) against Julius Caesar (100-44 BC), *Arelate* supported the brilliant and at times cruel Caesar. His *Gallic Wars* are still required reading for Latin students. His first rule was to know your territory. And it's right there in the first line: “Gaul is divided into three parts.” Like Allan, I took Latin from eighth through twelfth grade, then French in college.

On the way back to Rome from conquering Gaul with his army in 49 BC, Caesar was aware that crossing the shallow Rubicon River in Northern Italy constituted treason to the senators of the Roman Republic. So he declared “*alea iacta est*” – the die is cast. Caesar was now on his way to making himself dictator of Rome. Like Pompey, he was assassinated.



Susannah Temko

All this historical gore seemed remote in sunny Arles. Allan and Becky decided we would see a Provençal bullfight in the elliptical 90 AD Arles Amphitheatre. I asked why we were not going to see “a real bullfight” – like the ones on posters. They showed the picadors teasing and torturing a hefty bull. They wore it down, so the matador could mortally stab it between the shoulders with a sword. Becky said those were Spanish bullfights. Then she told me they took place in Arles. I really wanted to see one with the costumes and cloaks as well, but Becky said, “You’ll see other action today.” Sure enough, out ran a lighter, younger bull, who looked around. Within minutes, Provençal bullfighters in white shirts and pants ran around with special tools to remove the red ribbon on the animal’s forehead for a prize. One succeeded, then jumped with the others over the elliptical fence to safety. After running after a few men, the bull calmly sauntered out through the door. I had the feeling he’d seen this before.

After the Provençal bullfight, we went to a Roman cemetery where the parents encouraged us to get inside the open marble sarcophagi to play dead. Sometimes the lids were lying right by, but there were no skeletons. For some reason, we all found this incredibly funny.