

Savvy Seniors

2020



Orlando USY'er becomes resident of Kinneret ... 46 years later and commemorates with Shofar blast

Michael Blaher moved into Kinneret Apartments on March 13, 2020. Two days later, in order to ensure the safety of Kinneret's residents from Covid-19 exposure, all public spaces in the building were closed and community events cancelled. While this wasn't "the welcome," he had hoped for, Blaher has a long history with Kinneret Apartments and was not easily deterred. For Blaher, Kinneret wasn't just a place to retire, it was returning to a place of his youth.

As a teenager, Blaher was very involved with his USY chapter at Temple Israel. He served on both the local chapter board as vice president for religious activities as well as the D'var Torah chair on the National board of USY. Between 1970-1974, Blaher remembers coming to Kinneret Apartments on Friday nights to lead services for the seniors who lived there. After leading services, the teens would run home to have Shabbat dinner and then meet up for services at Temple Israel where weekly 20-30 teens would gather for hours afterwards.

Blaher recalls how much

he and his friends enjoyed community service-oriented activities. "Helping the elderly at Kinneret was gratifying," he recalled fondly. "We liked being involved with community," he continued.

This past summer, Blaher volunteered to participate in the JFGO “Sound the Shofar” program. Along with other community volunteers, Blaher learned to blow the shofar through Zoom classes on the rules of the shofar and how to blow it. Initially, he was intimidated during the Zoom calls, but once he started practicing on his own, he got the feel for it and in that moment, he decided to commit himself to mastering the proper order for the High Holidays.

An avid learner, Blaher knows all the melodies for running a service including reading the Torah and Haftorah. As a student at Brandeis University, he learned to read the entire Purim Megillah. However, the several thousand-year-old tradition of blowing the ram's horn would be a skill that would wait another 43 years to happen. Blaher is living proof that Jewish learn-



Michael Blaher blows the shofar as Sharon Weil calls out the age-old blasts.

ing is a lifelong commitment and no matter the age, there is always something new to learn!

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, several residents gathered outside as word spread that one of Kinneret's own residents was going to be blowing the shofar. Undeterred by rain, the residents gathered outside with masks



Kinneret residents Stuart and Emma examine a very long shofar.

his lungs into a long final blast that brought joy and meaning to everyone in attendance.

Residents were delighted to be able to hear the shofar in person and enjoyed gathering for the first time in months. "I surprised myself on Sunday because I wasn't sure I'd be able to get the tones out clearly enough," said Blaher. "Once the first tone came out ... I became more confident," he continued. "I was so winded that I knew why I'd chosen the string instruments when I was younger and not the wind instruments!" he joked.

Blaher, unfortunately hasn't been able to attend services in person for many years now and hearing the shofar in person made a huge impact on him. His dream was to one day go to rabbinical school. "Blowing the shofar reconnects me to that dream," he said.

The simple ram's horn, a few short and then elongated blasts and through the power of tradition and memory, the residents of Kinneret and one of their newest residents, Michael Blaher, celebrated a thousand-year-old tradition in the very place where his Jewish journey began.

Cover photo

The lovely couple holding the “Living the Dream” sign are Norman and Doris Levitz, who made aliyah in their 90s from the United States to Israel. Read about “How to retire to Israel” on page 3B. The photo is by Tomer Malichi.



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JFS Orlando's little-known service — the RIDE program



Senior citizen Janice loves
RIDE.

One of the largest populations JFS Orlando serves is the low-income senior community. Its Pearlman Emergency Food Pantry for food assistance, its community rabbi for spiritual guidance to the unaffiliated Jewish community, and its mental health therapists for counseling in

a variety of areas are utilized by our Central Florida senior community.

One specific JFS program dedicated to seniors and disabled adults is the Reliable Independent Drivers for the Elderly program, better known as RIDE.

Janice lives in senior living apartments and is on a tight budget. She doesn't have a car anymore and was struggling to find reliable and affordable transportation to her doctor appointments. But one day, JFS Orlando's RIDE coordinator visited her apartment complex to offer the program to residents. Janice was so grateful. She said, "It was a gift from G-d. It saved our lives."

Through the RIDE program, JFS provides round-trip rides to vital medical appointments for qualifying, low income seniors or disabled adults. This in turn increases independence, promotes well-being, and

improves access to health-care. Program participants are entitled to two free rides per month within a 10-mile radius of their residence.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in RIDE, or you are interested in supporting the program, please contact us at 407-644-7593 ext. 249 or Audrey.Cohen@JFSorlando.org. (Please note: Due to high demand, the RIDE program tends to run on a waitlist. First-time riders should call at least three weeks before their medical appointment.)

Established in 1978 as a non-profit human service agency, Jewish Family Services of Greater Orlando provides social programs and services to individuals and families of all faiths in the Central Florida community. For more information on JFS and its programs, please visit www.JFSorlando.org or follow them on social media @JFSorlando.

Kibitz is the Oxford English Dictionary's word of the day

By Marcy Oster

(JTA)—The Oxford English Dictionary's online word of the day is kibitz.

The dictionary defines the verb as "To watch (a card game or card player) as

a spectator, typically while offering (unwelcome) advice or criticism.”

The second definition is closer to the one familiar to the Jewish community: "To chat, banter, or joke (with a person), esp. in a lighthearted

or informal manner; to fool around.”

The word comes from the German word *kiebitzen*.

The dictionary also offers several spellings, including kibitz, kibetz, kabitz and kibbitz.

How to retire to Israel

By Renee Ghert-Zand

JERUSALEM – For a growing number of Jews in the Diaspora, turning retirement dreams into reality also means realizing a lifelong dream of living in Israel.

Over the past decade, more than 6,000 Jews from North America and Britain have retired to Israel. In 2019, some 500 of 3,500 immigrants to Israel from North America were retirees. For some of these new “olim” it was the culmination of a lifelong Zionist dream. For others it was a practical move to be closer to children and grandchildren, or to enjoy their golden years in a warmer climate.

Regardless of motivation, the key to a successful retirement in Israel is careful advance planning, as well as an open attitude toward the challenges of entering a new stage of life in a new country.

“We have an amazing life here and are very happy, generally speaking,” said Sydney Faber, who retired to Jerusalem from London with his wife, Rose, 11 years ago. The couple have two children in Israel and two others living in New Jersey.

The Fabers credit their contentment in large part to their having made good decisions about important elements like housing, learning Hebrew and becoming involved in their community. Those choices, they said, made all the difference in building a happy retirement 2,000 miles away from where they had lived most of their lives.

While retiring to Israel may seem like a bigger step than retiring to Florida, many of the same considerations come into play. Here are some of the main issues to consider.

Financial planning

“Retiree olim need to think about how their lifestyle will or will not translate to Israel,” said Marc Rosenberg, vice president of Diaspora Partnerships at Nefesh B’Nefesh, the organization that assists with immigration to Israel from North America and the United Kingdom.

Rosenberg advises retirees to be realistic about the kind

of life they’ll be able to afford in Israel on passive income like pensions, Social Security and investments. (A sample budget on Nefesh B’Nefesh’s website can help retirees figure out their likely monthly costs.) For those with children or parents living outside Israel, retirees should remember to plan for the costs of flying back and forth to see them.

These days, many retiree immigrants split their time between Israel and their countries of origin in “snowbird” fashion, allowing for all kinds of creative financial arrangements. Prospective immigrants should seek the advice of an Israeli accountant who specializes in U.S. taxes about the implications of dual citizenship and dual residency. A financial adviser can help with financial planning and offer guidance for living within a budget.

Health care

Israel has universal health care. Retirees must pay into its National Insurance system, but the sum is minor compared to what most Americans are used to paying for insurance premiums and copays.

All Israelis must join one of Israel’s four HMOs, known as “kupot holim,” in order to receive medical services. While membership is covered by one’s National Insurance payments, the kupot offer optional higher levels of coverage for relatively modest additional fees. Many retirees also choose to buy supplemental private health insurance, which covers drugs not included in the medications made available by the Health Ministry as well as private surgeries, transplants performed abroad and other benefits.

Doraine Gilbert Weiss, who moved to Jerusalem from Los Angeles with her husband, Barry, recently underwent chemotherapy for breast cancer at Hadassah Medical Center.

“I couldn’t have asked for better or more personalized care,” Weiss said.

In addition to hospitals, Israel also a network of urgent care clinics in most cities, many of which are open 24/7.



Jonny Finkel Photography

In 2019, some 500 of 3,500 immigrants to Israel from North America were retirees.

Housing

Choosing your new home wisely is a key component of successful aliyah. Experts advise new immigrants to rent for at least a year or two before buying, mainly to make sure they choose the right location.

Many retirees automatically assume they will want to be near their children, but some find that living in suburban communities geared toward young families is not the right fit.

“They realize that living in Israel is different than visiting,” Rosenberg said. “When you are here for 10 days over a holiday, the grandchildren will be off from school and have lots of time for the grandparents. It’s a different story when they are in their usual routines.”

Older olim tend to gravitate toward cities with large “Anglo” communities and a plethora of social and cultural opportunities for English-speaking retirees, such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Raanana and Netanya. Many haredi Orthodox immigrants favor Beit Shemesh.

Housing will comprise the largest chunk of a retiree’s monthly budget. As with real estate anywhere, location determines price. Those moving from low-cost U.S. locales to expensive cities like Jerusalem might have to downsize homes or number of cars. It’s generally cheaper

to rent in Israel than in the United States but more expensive to buy.

Those seeking to move into a senior residence or assisted-living facility will find many options throughout the country offering accommodations, amenities and services comparable to North American standards.

A common question retirees have is whether to sell the U.S. residence they are leaving behind or rent it. That’s less an immigration question than a financial one best addressed to a financial planner.

Transportation

The upside of transportation in Israel is that the public transit system is very inexpensive and well developed. Buses inside and between cities run frequently, reliably and inexpensively, and seniors pay half fare. The train network is growing, including new high-speed rail service between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that has reduced travel time to 32 minutes. Taxis also are relatively inexpensive and can be summoned like an Uber using the Gett mobile phone app.

The downside is that private transportation is expensive: Owning and maintaining a car costs roughly double what it is in the States.

“If you can do without a car, you should try it,” said Hezy BenTzur, founder and owner of the iAnglo Auto Association, which assists English speakers in Israel

with the leasing, importing and purchasing of new and used cars. “Retirees don’t have the burden of having to commute for work, so I would recommend not taking the expense on if you don’t have to. It’s more cost effective to occasionally rent a car.”

Another thing to keep in mind is that cars are generally smaller in Israel, and that the Israeli car market includes makes and models unfamiliar to Americans. Best to do your research and choose appropriately.

Recreation, volunteering and learning Hebrew

There’s no end to the opportunities for retirees to get involved in their communities. Local community centers offer cultural events, educational classes and fitness activities for free or at a low cost for seniors. There are also private sports and country clubs, and golfing is available near Caesarea.

Some community theater companies put on English-language productions, and many plays and operas performed at major arts venues like the Charles Bronfman Auditorium in Tel Aviv and The Jerusalem Theater offer English supertitles.

Volunteer opportunities abound; the key is matching your interests to one of Israel’s countless nonprofit organizations. Popular choices include working with people with dis-

abilities at Yad Sarah, mentoring children and teens affected by terror with One Family, or preparing care packages and holiday meals at the Lone Soldier Center.

Some volunteer opportunities are geared toward English speakers, like English tutoring or working as museum docents. Most, however, require a working knowledge of Hebrew. Taking advantage of the free Hebrew lessons (called ulpan) provided by the government to new immigrants is a good idea.

Ricki Lieberman, who retired to Jaffa from New York in 2009, raises money for an Arab-Jewish women’s choir in Jaffa, volunteers with children of African refugees in South Tel Aviv and does political organizing.

“I grew up believing in democracy and Jewish values, so I am compelled to do what I can,” Lieberman said. “For me, my retirement is not a time to turn away.”

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with Nefesh B’Nefesh, which in cooperation with Israel’s Ministry of Aliyah, The Jewish Agency, KKL and JNF-USA is minimizing the professional, logistical and social obstacles of aliyah, and has brought over 50,000 olim from North America and the United Kingdom over the last 15 years.

This article was produced by JTA’s native content team.

Using this Yiddish word is an art that anyone can master

By Ellen Scolnic and Joyce Eisenberg

Way back in 1828, Noah Webster learned 28 languages in order to write his groundbreaking dictionary. But “kvell” was nowhere to be found among his 70,000 words. His family was surely proud, but it’s safe to assume that not one of them told him, “I’m kvelling.”

It took more than a century before the word kvell appeared in an English book. It wasn’t even a book, really: The 1952 Handbook of Familiar Jewish Words and Expressions was just 34 pages of useful words “for making friends with Jewish Merchants.” It was produced by Joseph Jacobs, the advertising company that came up with the idea for the Maxwell House Haggadah.

This was the time when American Jews were beginning to assimilate and little-known Yiddish words were turning up in mainstream

media. Writer/actor Gertrude Berg was starring in the original television comedy, “The Goldbergs,” which introduced audiences to a Jewish family in the Bronx. (As a frame of reference, that’s 65 years before Midge Maisel started doing standup comedy.)

When members of the tribe got into the dictionary business, kvell was on their list of essential words. Yiddish maven Leo Rosten, author of the groundbreaking 1968 reference book “The Joys of Yiddish” wrote that kvell comes from the German root “quellen, to gush or to swell.” Thirty years after Rosten, the Dictionary of Jewish Words defines kvell as “to burst with pride, particularly at the accomplishments and achievements of one’s children.” It uses kvell in this sentence: “Congratulations on your daughter getting into Harvard. You must be kvelling.”

Kvelling is not unique to

parents and grandparents; it’s just that children give you limitless opportunities to do so. This explains why refrigerators are plastered with Hebrew school Mensch of the Month certificates, glowing pre-K report cards and crayon drawings of a stick-figure family holding hands.

There is a fine art to kvelling. Kvelling is not boasting or bragging; it’s quieter. It’s the pride you feel when you witness your older child patiently helping the younger one finish a puzzle. It’s also the satisfaction you feel because it means they might have been listening to you after all.

True kvelling is not calculated; it happens in the moment, like when your kid rounds home plate and his teammates give him a high-five, or when your husband is called up to the stage for an award. Kvelling wells up until you burst with joy and pride. You just can’t help it.

Kvelling after the fact? That you should be mindful of, as delayed kvelling can sound an awful lot like bragging, and nobody likes the sound of someone tooting their own horn.

In general, kvelling is cool — but be careful, and take heed of what the bubbes say: Kvelling too loud or proud can put you at risk of attracting the evil eye, which strikes when things are too good. Announcing that your son got straight A’s will only provoke the evil eye to make him get a D on his next spelling test.

One way to counteract this curse is to end your sentence with the Yiddish word “kineahora,” which translates as “no evil eye.” It’s the verbal equivalent of knocking on wood, as in, “Adam’s in kindergarten and already reading on the third-grade level! Kineahora.”

You can distract the evil eye with a good kineahora, but can you fool the evil eye with a

humblebrag? This is when you cloak your kvell in a qualifier. As Derek Thompson wrote in The Atlantic, a humblebrag is kvelling dressed in a kvetch: “I’m exhausted from Memorial Day weekend; it’s sooo hard to get out of Nantucket.”

Are you actually complaining that it’s difficult to get home from your fancy beach house? The humblebrag fools no one.

Facebook and other social media are prime real estate for the humblebrag: “I’m cleaning out my closet. Can anyone use any of my size 4 designer business suits?” Or, “We have a six-hour layover in San Francisco on the way to Maui. Can anyone recommend a restaurant near the airport?”

Most kvelling is individual, up close and personal. It’s you expressing pride in a child, spouse, sibling or friend. But there are other opportunities to kvell — read on for some key kvelling categories.

Communal kvelling

This is when your child has a small part in a bigger achievement — say, when you find yourself cheering wildly because the Purple Tigers won the T-ball game. Only one of the players is yours, but they all remembered to run to first base! Cheering them on builds camaraderie, and in this competitive world, it feels good to be on the same team, both literally and figuratively.

Communal kvelling is not exclusive to Jews. It extends to all the parents in the stands, the grandparents in the audience and everyone who’s clapping at the finish line.

As parents, you’ll have years of school concerts, report cards, birthday parties, track meets, school elections and mitzvah projects — all excellent opportunities for communal kvelling, as in “Michael was so cute as the third hamantaschen in the

Rita Bornstein — a pioneer in education



Dr. Rita Bornstein is pictured at Rollins College near the fountain that bears her name.

Growing up in New York City, Rita Bornstein loved to read stories about Eleanor Roosevelt and other women pioneers who challenged the roles society defined for them. In 1990, she joined the ranks of her heroes when she became the 13th president of Rollins College—and the only woman to ever hold that office. But while her presidency

may be Dr. Bornstein's best-known accomplishment, it's far from her first... or her last. As a student, Dr. Bornstein was led by a love of reading to earn her B.A. and M.A. in English literature from Florida Atlantic University. After graduate school, she decided to pursue a more hands-on field of study, and earned a Ph.D. in educational

leadership at the University of Miami. Leadership proved to be an ideal fit for Dr. Bornstein: She possessed a shrewd business acumen, a knack for organization, and unflagging determination. Not long after beginning her career, she brought those talents back to the University of Miami as an administrator, where she spearheaded the implementation of Title IX and gender equity policies. It was no easy task for a Jewish woman from New York, according to Dr. Bornstein; but she wasn't one to say no to a challenge. She traveled to schools across the Southeast, fighting for programs that would give women equal opportunity in fields like athletics, medicine, law and engineering. Later, she recalled: "If you can do that job, you can do anything." Throughout her career at the University of Miami and beyond, she earned a reputation for making waves and getting results. Eventually, that put her on the radar of the Rollins presidential search committee. Dr. Bornstein's presidency represented many "firsts" in Rollins College's 135-year history. She was a woman; she was Jewish; she was a mother of two. She also didn't follow the traditional academic path to the presidency — she had never served as a dean, a provost, or even a professor. Nevertheless, she became one of the most respected leaders in the college's history. "Rollins lacks only the

financial resources to become one of the top-ranked colleges in America," said Dr. Bornstein in her inaugural address. "We will be unrelenting in pursuit of the resources necessary to support the flourishing of excellence, innovation and community... to design a college for tomorrow, anchored firmly in the proud traditions of the past." Dr. Bornstein went on to make that vision a reality. Her most critical achievement was The Campaign for Rollins, an ambitious fundraising project that raised \$160.2 million for academic programs, scholarships and development. Overall, the college's endowment more than quintupled over the term of her presidency. Using those resources, Dr. Bornstein transformed Rollins from the ground up — sometimes literally. The college built, expanded and renovated more than two dozen facilities in the largest "building boom" since the 1960s. She also implemented rigorous new standards for faculty evaluation and student admissions, which raised Rollins's academic profile nationwide. Previously ranked the

sixth regional university in the South by the U.S. News and World Report, Rollins College earned first place in the last year of Dr. Bornstein's presidency—and has held that ranking ever since. She has received honorary doctorates from Florida Atlantic University, the University of Central Florida, and Rollins College, as well as numerous other awards and recognitions. At the end of her presidency, she was named "Citizen of the Decade" by the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce, and was recognized as Rollins's first president emerita. Dr. Bornstein has authored numerous journal articles and several books on leadership in education, including: "Legitimacy in the Academic Presidency: From Entrance to Exit"; "Succession Planning for the Higher Education Presidency"; and "Fundraising Advice for College and University Presidents: An Insider's Guide." A prolific speaker, she has addressed audiences throughout the country on the critical role of campus leadership. Although retired, Dr. Bornstein hasn't left the world of education behind. At The Mayflower, the Winter Park senior-

living community where she now resides, she pioneered an academic discussion forum called The Forum for Ideas. The forum hosted community members and current and retired Rollins professors to speak on topics including the future of books, medical innovation, politics, and the philosophy of happiness. "There's no question that lifelong learning is really a way of keeping seniors vital and feeling alive," says Dr. Bornstein. "Connecting with others in an academic setting is revitalizing. For a lot of people here, it's very refreshing to have access to experts in higher education." Over the last few months, Dr. Bornstein has stayed busy drafting a memoir about her tenure as president of Rollins; mastering sudoku puzzles; videoconferencing into academic discussion groups; and serving as a board member for the Winter Park Health Foundation, the Dr. Phillips Center and the Parkinson's Foundation of Central Florida. "The best way to keep your mind stimulated is to learn," she says. "That's what I tell anyone who says they're lonely or bored — learn something new!"

Cats, Hemingway, and his wives



His four wives: (l-r), Hadley Richardson, Pauline Pfeiffer, Martha Gellhorn, and Mary Welsh.

By Marilyn Shapiro

Ernest Hemingway loved cats. I knew the minute I walked into his former house in Key West. Despite the beautiful day and the open windows, the smell of felines permeated every room. Our tour guide Doug introduced us to Gloria Swanson, Rudolf Valentino, and Betty Grable, three of the 40-plus six-toed cats that roamed the grounds. All were descendants of his first polydactyl cat, Snow White. I also love cats. Our family always had one or two when I was growing up. We had to give away two Siamese beauties when we realized that they were using the space under the claw-toothed tub as a litter box. Most of the time, however, the cats stayed with us until they disappeared. My favorites were Romeo and Juliet, the former renamed Rebishka when "he" delivered a litter of kittens on my bed while I was sleeping in it. When our children were young, we were given a stray that we named Fluffy. She died of feline leukemia three years later. By this time, it was obvious that Larry was allergic. This didn't stop me from adopting two more. "The children miss Fluffy," I told Larry. Salty, the orange tiger, was more loving than his misnamed calico sister, Cuddles. He especially loved Larry, who



Many of the cats at Hemingway's home in Key West.

sneezed and sniffled every time Salty sat on his lap. One evening, before Larry left for a synagogue board meeting, he gave me an ultimatum. "Find a new home for Salty or find a new husband." Soon after he left, I got a phone call from my friend Diane, who is even more allergic than Larry. "The kids brought home a stray kitten," she said. "Could you please take it in until you

can find it a home?" I couldn't say no. Larry came home that night to THREE cats. Fortunately, I didn't need to find a new husband. A co-worker immediately adopted Pumpkin, and a few days later another friend adopted Salty. We were back to a one-cat household. To no one's surprise, Larry became Cuddles' favorite hu-

Hemingway on page 7A



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Love in the time of retirement

By Marilyn Shapiro

Ah, young love! This is the time in life where two individuals cannot get enough of each other. Each moment away from one another is agony, and even when they are together in the same room, there is a desperate need to touch and hold and talk. Their wish is to share every waking moment together.

Yes, my husband and I were like that once. We met, we courted, we married, and we spent the next 36 years of our lives juggling our relationship with children, jobs, and outside commitments.

Then, Larry and I retired, and we got our wish. We were together 24/7, but we weren't young anymore. As a matter of fact, living under the same roof resulted in a period of major adjustment.

Please don't get me wrong. I love my husband dearly, and I am so grateful that we have had the opportunity to retire in good health. It is just that, well, love in the time of retirement may test even the closest relationship.

Our first battle took place soon after Larry retired. We were in the kitchen, cleaning up after dinner. As was our usual routine, Larry was putting away the leftovers while I was putting the dirty plates in the dishwasher. He looked over while he was closing the refrigerator door and offered, "Here, Marilyn, let me show you how to load a dishwasher."

I stopped mid-dish and stared at him. "What do you mean by that?"

"You're not doing it right. I can show you how to do it properly."

"So you mean to tell me I have been loading this thing WRONG for the last three decades?"

"Yes, my way is much more efficient!" We had a brief, spirited discussion as to whether he wanted to accept my tried and true way of doing it or if he wanted to wash dishes on his own for the rest of our married life. Thankfully, he saw it my way.

The second conflict occurred six months later when I retired. I planned to set up my calendar and some files in our home office. When I tried to find room on our computer desk, not an inch was available. "Larry," I said, "do you think you can organize all those piles on the desk so that we can share the space?"

"I retired first!" was his response. "I already claimed the desk. You will need to find another spot."

Initially, I managed to carve out a few inches of blank oak, but it wasn't worth the fights that ensued when I moved any of his piles, which he referred to as his "filing system." I eked out a two-inch crevice between the computer and the printer that allowed me to prop up a few folders. It took three years to have the sense to get my own laptop so I could have the flexibility to work on any surface in the house.

Over the next few months, we played an uneasy game of adjusting. Larry spent a great deal of time following me around closing cabinet doors and drawers I continually left open, a bad habit I had had my entire life. I learned to accept the fact that he was king of the

television remote. He could watch several television shows simultaneously, including a couple of basketball games, reruns of The Big Bang Theory, and a showing of a favorite movie. I found this tolerable as long as I was multi-tasking on the couch—doing a crossword puzzle, checking emails, reading a book, and cutting coupons—while he ruled the remote. My annoying habit cancelled out his.

I am not the only person who has experienced post-retirement angst. One friend, whose son had been in a playgroup with our son over 30 years earlier, told me that her husband had acquired this overwhelming need to be with her wherever she went. Grocery shopping, dropping off mail at the post office, running to the drug store for a prescription, was now regarded by Steve as a two-person outing. "If Larry isn't busy," Fern suggested, "maybe we can arrange a weekly play date between our two husbands. Then I can get out of the house by myself for a couple of hours."

My friend Judy commented that only after they were both retired did she realize how 'uber-organized' her husband was. A week before they left for their two-month stay in Florida, Judy was haphazardly stacking clothing on her bed and throwing cosmetics and toiletries into a bin. Charlie strolled into the bedroom and opened up his file marked "Florida." It included a detailed list of everything he needed to pack, including the number of pairs of socks, shirts, and shoes he was bringing. Another list included restaurants in Naples, with notes on ratings and menus. He even planned their drive down to Florida in minute detail: He had researched hotels and restaurants en route on Trip Advisor, printed out weather forecasts from weather.com, and created a chart of estimated travel times between stops from Google maps. "He researches

every single detail and isn't willing to leave anything to chance," Judy said. "It's driving me nuts!"

Quite a few of my friends have commented that their retired husbands, who managed people all their working life, feel the need to manage their wives. "Marty loves to come up with projects," Melanie shared with me over coffee. "He suggests these projects on a weekly basis, pointing out, for example, that the linen closet needs to be reorganized or the bookshelves in the fourth bedroom need to be cleaned out. Of course, Marty is the idea person. I am the person who is expected to implement his projects."

When I talk to couples about adjusting to retirement, I find that the wives are much more forthcoming about their experiences. The men I spoke to, for the most part, were oblivious.

This is not just part of our generation. Joanne, a friend from North Dakota, remembered mediating a fight between her in-laws. After many years of farming acres of wheat and soy, the husband had decided to help his wife with her vegetable garden. While they were cutting up potatoes for planting, he insisted that each potato mound have five eyes. The wife explained that she had always limited the mounds to three eyes. When he tried to drag his daughter-in-law into the discussion, Joanne demurred, saying, "I am sure it all depends on the year." Joanne said, in the end, they decided on four eyes, a nice compromise.

Compromise — the bottom line as two people learn to live their dream, to spend most of their time together. Maybe love is relearning give-and-take and embracing each other's quirks.

My favorite piece of advice came from a man who held a high position in the federal government for many years before he and his wife retired. "I get to make the big deci-



sions," he explained. "Who should run for president of the United States. Whether or not we should go to war with Syria. And she makes the less important decisions, such as where we live, what we eat, with whom we spend our time, when and where we are going on vacation. It works out really well for us." As I hope it works out for all the retired lovebirds I know and love.

Marilyn Cohen Shapiro, a resident of Kissimmee, Fla., is a regular contributor to the (Capital Region N.Y.) Jewish World and the Orlando Heri-

tage Florida Jewish News. She is the author of two compilations of her stories, "There Goes My Heart" (2016) and "Tikkun Olam" (2018). Both books available in paperback and e-book format on Amazon. Her blog is theregoes-myheart.me.

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65th birthday brings key decisions regarding healthcare

(StatePoint) — Your 65th birthday is an important milestone. That’s when you become eligible for the federal Medicare health insurance program.

Medicare is a popular, affordable health insurance program for Americans 65 and older, and those under 65 with certain disabilities, providing hospital coverage (Part A) and physician visits (Part B) to those who qualify. But it can be complicated. To decide what coverage is best for you, take inventory of your current and future health, work and economic standing, including your personal preferences and goals.

Here are a few tips to consider from Cigna, which serves hundreds of thousands of Medicare customers nationwide.

1. Timing is important! Medicare has a seven-month window around your 65th

birthday called the Initial Enrollment Period. It begins three months before your 65th birthday and extends three months past your birthday month. Enrolling outside this window could result in higher premiums on Medicare Part B for the rest of your life.

If you’re still working, your path forward depends on the size of your company. If you work for a company with fewer than 20 employees, generally, you must sign up for Medicare at 65. If you work for a larger company, you can keep your company’s plan and enroll in Medicare without penalty later—usually when you retire—or enroll in Medicare immediately. However, by switching, your spouse could lose coverage if they’re currently on your company’s insurance.

If you’re not working and you’ve already filed for Social Security, the process is much easier. You’ll automatically be

enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B when you turn 65. Sometimes called Original Medicare, this doesn’t include prescription drug coverage.

2. Original Medicare doesn’t cover everything. Original Medicare covers hospital and physician expenses, but there are cost-sharing requirements and limits on what’s covered. Consider how you’ll cover things like dental, vision, hearing and pharmacy. You can buy supplemental plans, or you can buy a Medicare Advantage plan (also known as Part C), which covers everything that Medicare does and provides additional benefits, including, in many cases, prescription drugs (also known as Part D).

3. You have many options. With Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement (also known as Medigap), and Prescription Drug Plans, there are many

choices to make. Understanding your budget, health needs, doctor preferences and lifestyle will be important in making the best choice for you.

4. Get help. For more information, call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. Or visit the Medicare Plan Finder website at [medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare). Find local assistance through the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at www.shiptacenter.org. You can also contact individual Medicare plans. For instance, you can learn more about Cigna plans at www.cigna.com/medicare. Consult your benefits administrator at work and talk with friends and family members who’ve been through the process.

5. Use it. Know your available benefits. Find out about



wellness checks and preventive screenings needed for your age and health status, and get them. Take advantage of Medicare Advantage extras, like gym memberships, to actively engage in your health and well-being.

As you turn 65, it’s impor-

tant to do your homework regarding health insurance. However, if you find out that the plan is not the right fit, all is not lost. You can make changes during Medicare’s Annual Election Period, which occurs every year from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7.

5 ways seniors can safeguard against cyber criminals stealing their identity

As the use of personal computers and cell phones has grown over the last two decades, identity theft has surged. One study found that over 14 million consumers were victims of identity fraud in 2018, and that their out-of-pocket costs totaled \$1.7 billion.

Seniors have been particularly vulnerable in recent years to online scams and telemarketing tricks. Unfortunately, another negative effect of COVID-19 has been scammers targeting seniors and the elderly by developing coronavirus hoaxes that prey on fears of the virus.

The growing problem of identity theft for all age groups makes it vital for consumers to develop a strategy to protect their devices, and those of their loved ones, although no

system is perfect, said Chris Orestis (www.retirementgenius.com), a senior care advocate known as the “Retirement Genius” and president of LifeCare Xchange.

At a minimum, no one should give out their Social Security number to a stranger and should never click a link in an email from an unknown source. But cyberthieves have many ways to steal your identity, invade your computer, or raid your bank account and credit cards. What should you do to protect yourself from these scam artists and criminals?

“First, it’s important to understand that identity-theft protection services don’t actually stop identity theft,” Orestis said. “There is no fool-proof way to stop identity

theft from happening; there are just too many different types of valuable information and avenues for cyberthieves to hack them.

“The Federal Trade Commission actually prohibits identity-theft services from using the word ‘prevention,’ and if a company is promoting that as part of their service they should not be trusted. But regardless of any service you might use, no one can be disengaged from protecting their own identity. It’s important to take care of your identity and credit health with smart and regular maintenance, just like you do with your physical health.”

Orestis offers a five-step plan to help protect your identity:

- Register for fraud

alerts. “You want these alerts on credit cards and bank accounts so you can be notified quickly of any suspicious activity on your accounts,” Orestis said. “With fraud alerts, data security companies and financial services will text, email or phone you if there is a suspected security breach, or if they detect spending on a card or account that doesn’t align with your spending habits or your location.”

- Review accounts regularly. Vigilance of your identity protection means you should go over your monthly bank and credit card statements and review online account activity weekly. “Immediately notify your bank or credit companies if you detect fraudulent activity,” Orestis said. “Either freeze your account or

cancel your card. If you believe there could be a problem with your credit, you can place a credit freeze by phone with each credit agency’s customer service line.”

- Monitor your credit reports. Orestis said monitoring credit reports from Experian, Equifax and TransUnion is another way to find discrepancies that may indicate fraud.

- Don’t leave a paper trail. “It’s a good idea to get rid of physical private records and statements that include personal or financial data,” Orestis said. “Identity thieves get into mailboxes and trash. They can use receipts to piece together your personal data, so it’s smart to shred those and avoid any kind of paper trail.”

- Create strong passwords. Orestis suggested

mixing upper and lower-case letters with numbers and symbols, and to avoid using the same password for every account. “Not having a strong password on your smartphone or computer is like leaving your house with the front door wide open,” Orestis said. “Identity thieves are counting on people to use the same or similar passwords for their electronic devices and financial accounts. Mix up your passwords, and change them whenever you suspect an account has been compromised.”

“Identity theft and cyber security are a very real threat in today’s internet-connected world,” Orestis said. “We all live online and are exposed to a lot of risk if we don’t do the right things to protect ourselves.”

Financial independence for women before it’s too late

By Leah Miller

Is there a meaningful difference in the way men and women consider money? There is, according to a study published in a recent issue of Social Indicators Research.

Women associate money with love and emotion, according to the research, while men are twice as likely to link finances to independence and power. While the differences are not mutually exclusive, researchers hope the general findings will help people better understand their relationship with money, which may lead to better-informed financial decisions.

“Also, it’s helpful to remem-

ber that, historically, women haven’t had control of their own financial destiny; and that includes many women who are retired today,” says Leah Miller, a financial and Medicare expert, and CEO of Red Anchor Wealth Management (www.redanchorretirement.com).

“Despite the fact that women control most of the economy today and tend to be the CFO of most households, many continue to get the short end of the stick — especially when it comes to retirement. Women live longer and are often the ones to find out that they’ve outlived their money.”

Speaking directly to women, Miller offers context on

how to face emotionally the stress of financial planning for retirement.

- Make the most of your time on this Earth. A long life shouldn’t be a bad thing. If you’re married with a husband, you’ll likely enjoy many years together sharing Social Security, a pension or IRA income and other sources. However, much of that money won’t be there should you outlive your husband. Many women may be prone to avoiding thoughts of life after their spouse moves on. While that may be romantic in a sense, Miller says, it is highly impractical if you’re trying to live a long and fulfilling life.

- Money keeps women up

at night. People don’t like to think about the things that cause them pain. For women, the stress of an uncertain financial future is a huge pain. While there is a way to feel much better about this uncertainty, millions of women avoid troubleshooting this latent and palpable stressor. It’s like someone who is desperate to lose weight but is too afraid to step on the scale.

- Anxiety is worse than actually taking care of the problem (getting started). If you are the family chief financial officer, then abstracting a future budget is an easy step to start with. The important goal of retirement planning is to craft an income stream

that will sustainably support your needs, so start accounting now. Make a balance sheet that includes your savings account, retirement accounts, 401(k) plans, investment real estate, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, annuities, cash value life insurance and other assets. Then break it down further by pre-tax and post-tax accounts.

- Don’t take your estate for granted; beware the pre-Medicare timeframe. Some women have it better than others, but beware of overconfidence, because you can fall ill anytime. For example, the average couple who retires at age 62 will spend \$17,000 out-of-pocket on health care each year until they enroll

in Medicare. And, that’s basically the cost of the premium, so even in good health the price is very high. A nice nest egg in combination with other assets can be depleted rapidly with insufficient Long Term Care insurance.

“Some of these considerations may be unpleasant, but what’s the alternative?” Miller says. “Don’t bury your stressful feelings. Instead, do something about it. You’ll feel better and you’ll be better off as you move forward.”

Leah Miller is CEO of Red Anchor Wealth Management, (www.redanchorretirement.com), a client-focused firm that tailors plans to individual and family needs.

Top tech to bring with you on your next outdoor adventure

(StatePoint) — Hitting the trail for a hike is good for the mind and body. Fortunately, there are still plenty of opportunities to get out and do so this fall. As you plan your next outdoor adventure, consider supporting your journey with the following tech tools and gear:

- Lighting your path: The

sun is setting earlier these days, but that doesn’t mean you don’t want to pursue the same long hikes you enjoyed all summer. Maintain top visibility and light your way safely with a hands-free headlamp. Today’s headlamp models offer hybrid energy options, battery life reader features and are lightweight, making

them easy to stow somewhere handy in your daypack and wear when needed.

- Keeping Time: When you’re out on the trail, it’s easy to get distracted by logistics and miss out on the beauty of your surroundings. Wearable tech however, can give you the information you need to simply relax and en-

joy those breathtaking vistas and fall foliage. The rugged, waterproof outdoor watches in the Pro Trek line from Casio provide altimeter, barometer, thermometer and compass metrics to help you seamlessly stay on top of your location and local weather conditions.

- Easy does it: Weighing in at only a few pounds, an inflatable

chair or couch makes for an easy addition to your day pack, and one with huge payoffs when it’s time to take a load off for a picnic lunch. The latest designs offer better ergonomics, easy inflation and breathable materials for optimum comfort.

- Fill ‘er up: A mini water filtration system can lighten your load substantially, free-

ing you of the burden of having to carry all the water you’ll need throughout the day. Just be sure that your route will take you past streams or other water sources so you can refill and filter on-the-go.

With the latest tech and gear, you can enjoy those crisp autumn days to the fullest before winter sets in.

How to reduce your recovery time after a tough workout

(StatePoint)—MoreAmericans are investing their time and energy in the pursuit of fitness these days, with the percentage of people belonging to gyms and health clubs nearly doubling from 2000-2017, according to Statista. Beyond casual workouts, participation in extreme sports and endurance events has grown exponentially in the past 25 years. Whether you’ve recently started exercising, are ramping up your efforts or have always been an avid sports enthusiast, you’ve probably dealt with soreness and fatigue after a tough workout. While rest days are critical

for athletes and exercisers of all levels, no one wants to be sidelined for too long and lose their momentum. To turbocharge your recovery process and get back into the game faster, consider these techniques:

- Complete a dynamic warm-up: Before physical activity, perform a dynamic warm-up to wake up muscles and get oxygen and blood flowing. Take your body through its full range of motion with effective moves, including high knees, butt kicks, forward and sideways leg swings and shoulder rolls.
- Consider CBD: With a similar molecular structure

to the naturally occurring endocannabinoids produced by the human body, cannabidiol (CBD) sports supplements can assist with your preparation, performance and recovery, according to research. Check out the hemp-derived, custom-formulated supplements from Champions + Legends, which offers a portfolio of products used by some of the world’s most elite athletes to help keep them training, performing and recovering at a high level, including James Harrison, a two-time Super Bowl champion, Hafþór “Thor” Júlíus Björnsson Gregor, an Icelandic

strongman, deadlift world record holder, and “Game of Thrones” actor, rock climbers, Adam Ondra and Tommy Caldwell, CrossFit athletes, Sara Sigmundsdóttir and Pat Vellner, and Jay Glazer, football insider and MMA trainer. “There is a big difference between just taking the day off and consciously recovering,” says Sonny Mottahed, founder and CEO of Champions + Legends. “Better recovery means you can train harder next time.”

- Know your limits: While strength and endurance gains can only happen if you push your limits, it’s important to remember that improving

athletic performance is a gradual process. Be mindful of your current strength, endurance and flexibility and learn to distinguish between normal soreness and discomfort, and pain that could be a sign it’s time to slow down or take a break.

- Cross-train: The same type of exercise day in and day out can make you more susceptible to physical and mental burnout. Cross-training will not only give you an edge in your main sport, it can also help you recover faster.
- Foam roll: You don’t need a big budget or much time to receive the positive benefits of a deep tissue massage. Give

yourself the spa treatment at home. Post workout, foam roll to reduce tension of large muscle groups and targeted areas. The harder the foam roller’s density, the deeper into muscle tissue you can go. You may find it helpful to have multiple rollers to choose from, depending on the muscle area and your level of soreness that day.

- Refuel rapidly: Good nutrition is essential for swift recovery. Be sure to refuel quickly after tough workouts to aid muscle repair. You only have one body, so treat it well. Seek out the tools and knowledge you need to fully recover, faster.

Tips to take a safe and affordable fall road trip

(StatePoint) — As American families continue to track developments of the pandemic, many are opting for regional travel experiences this fall. For some, a road trip to a national park or quaint town might provide just the right combination of taking in the fall scenery while traveling in a way that limits contact with others. However, even road trips close to home can incur their fair share of expenses, which is something many Americans are looking at more closely these days. To watch your spending on the

road, consider the following trip tips:

- Plan your route carefully. Opting for a closer destination can eliminate hefty gas expenditures and wear and tear on your vehicle. For example, if you’re on the East Coast, consider the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina for breathtaking views. Similarly, if you reside on the West Coast, you might want to think about a drive along the Pacific Coast Highway to enjoy the beautiful ocean scenery.
- Look for deals on accom-

modations. If you’re taking a multi-day driving trip, hotel stays can begin to add up, especially in larger cities. Try to find accommodations in less densely populated areas along your route, which can include motels or even alternative accommodations such as vacation rentals. Accommodations metasearch site trivago is a great option to search for lodging deals: www.trivago.com.- Ensure flexibility. Over the past few months, flexibility when booking travel went from being a “nice to have” to being a must. The world moves

quickly, so ensure that your travel plans are able to move with it. When you are booking your accommodations, it’s important to compare deals with free cancellations. Knowing you can change your plans will offer you peace of mind. Sites like trivago provide full visibility into flexible choices, indicating whether each deal in the search findings allows for free cancellation.

- Save gas. When it comes to filling up the gas tank, a bit of comparison shopping can go a long way. Consider gas stations a bit farther from main highways. Sometimes, it

pays to go off the path a bit or wait for the next rest stop. Free apps also exist that provide real-time gas comparison data based on your current GPS. You can also improve your fuel economy by keeping your car well-maintained and your tires properly inflated.

- Buy a National Park Pass. Chances are that if you’re planning to take in the great outdoors, you’ll find yourself in one of the nation’s 2,000 federal lands. If your route passes through more than one site, consider purchasing a National Park Pass. For \$80, it covers entry and parking

fees for one vehicle of up to four people for an entire year. With many parks resuming operations and reinstating entrance fees (usually around \$25 per park), the pass is a convenient investment well worth the cost. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

As you make your plans, remember that states and jurisdictions are following different health guidelines and are at different stages of reopening, so prepare with a little research. Most importantly, have fun and enjoy the gorgeous scenery along the way.

Yiddish

From page 3A

second row in the Purim play. I was kvelling.”

Communal kvelling must be discreet. Remember not to wave, whistle or hoot; you must not do anything to embarrass your child or draw attention to your kvelling. And don’t kvetch about the kid who sings too loud. Kvetching cancels kvelling.

Distance kvelling

This is when you hardly know the achiever but are still so proud of their accomplishments. Distance kvelling is the kind of kvelling that you just stumble upon—after all,

this isn’t about being there for someone you know.

For example, you’re in synagogue one Saturday and the bat mitzvah girl walks up on the bimah. You don’t recognize her but still find yourself tearing up during her speech; you didn’t know that her grandfather was a Holocaust survivor. You’re kvelling over how poised she is.

Or you’re at the library and come across a student concert in the meeting room. The clarinet soloist is so skillful for a sixth-grader. You played an instrument all through school, but you never got a solo. You’re kvelling – and

relieved – when the child plays the final note and the applause starts.

You distance kvell because you can relate: You’ve been through a similar experience; you can imagine how the parents feel and how much effort the child put in. You share in their pride of accomplishment.

Tribal kvelling

This is when you take pride in the accomplishments of a fellow Jew. You never met Ruth Bader Ginsburg, but along with thousands of other Jewish women, you kvell when she got a good medical report, and you kvell when she walked into the Supreme Court.

We kvelled when we watched Tiffany Haddish’s bat mitzvah video: “She even read from the Torah — she was so enthusiastic!”

You do this because we are one tribe – and a minority one, at that. The actions of one of us reflects on all of us. When they do good, we feel good.

The opposite of tribal kvelling is cringing when a fellow Jew gets in trouble. Bubbles have been known to comment on a news report of a corporate embezzlement: “Oy. I hope when they catch the guy, we don’t find out that he’s Jewish.” Of course, there’s a Yiddish

word to describe this communal cringe: shanda, which means means scandal or shame. Bernie Madoff is the poster child for a shanda.

Retrospective kvelling

This is when you look through your kids’ baby albums, old Facebook posts or your high school yearbook and relive the kvell-worthy moments. This reminiscing can stir up not only nostalgia and longing, but joy and gratitude.

Add retrospective kvelling to your self-care routine. You did yoga today, ate a healthy grain bowl for lunch and the kids are down for the night.

Now it’s time to pull out those baby albums! You were a superhero that day; you were amazing. Look at the love in your husband’s eyes. See your parents kvelling over their newborn grandchild. See the person you were before you knew how it would all turn out. It’s turned out well. You’re doing fine.

Kvelling never gets old. That’s why we suggest taking plenty of photos and videos of all the amazing, one-of-a-kind family moments. You’ll just be ensuring lots of future kvelling.

This story originally appeared on Kveller.

Hemingway

From page 4A

man. The two of them often played cat ball. Larry would roll up a piece of aluminum foil, skid it across the floor, and Cuddles would bat it around the house. When she was 14 years old, our beautiful cat disappeared one night and never returned. (A friend ‘consoled’ me with the suggestion that Cuddles was “fox food”). We found cat balls for months. Ten years later, while in the process of installing a new dishwasher, we found no less than 20 of them in the briefly emptied space.

By this time, we realized that all of us were allergic to cat dander, but I never have lost my love for them. When I visit a house with cats, I can’t wait to pet them and hear that wonderful purr. So at the Hemingway House, I petted each one that got within arm’s reach. At one point, I also loved Ernest Hemingway, so much that I completed an independent study on him and

his writing in my senior year at University at Albany. “The Sun Also Rises,” “Farewell to Arms,” “Old Man and the Sea” — I admired his sparse style, his characters, and his complex search for the masculine ideal. I was, as I have shared with readers before, young, naive, sometimes clueless.

It was not until many years later that my opinion of the author changed. Reading his novels and other material about Hemingway from a more mature eye, I saw more clearly the man behind the myth — a narcissistic, heavy drinking male chauvinist. As Bernice Kert stated in “The Hemingway Women”: Hemingway could not truly sustain any of his four marriages. “Married domesticity may have seemed to him the desirable culmination of romantic love, but sooner or later he became bored and restless, critical and bullying.”

His relationship with his third wife, the American journalist Martha Gellhorn,

clearly demonstrates these characteristics. Resentful of her long absences as she pursued international stories, Hemingway protested, “Are you a war correspondent or wife in my bed?” The final straw for Gellhorn (and mine!) was when she learned that Hemingway had convinced Charles Coughlin, her editor at Collier magazine, to send him to the European front instead of his wife. In her excellent novel “Love and Ruins,” Paula MacLean describes Gellhorn’s reaction to the betrayal. “You could have gone to any magazine in the world, absolutely any of them. I didn’t know you had such a cruel streak in you.” Gellhorn found another — albeit more dangerous — way to the front and divorced him soon after. Hemingway also has been accused of being antisemitic. As Mary Dearborn writes in a 2017 article in The Forward, the author’s letters were laced with “nasty remarks about Jews.” She states that in his

first novel, “The Sun Also Rises,” his character Robert Cohn is described as an obnoxious individual, a “kike” and a “rich Jew.” Although some critics have given his writing as expressing the “fashionable antisemitism of the 1920s,” I now find his treatment of Jews in his novels to be disturbing. Should I stop reading Hemingway’s novels? No. If I boycotted every classic that contained antisemitic references, I would have to shelf huge chunks of English literature including Shakespeare, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Charles Dickens. Even Phillip Roth has been accused of perpetuating

Jewish stereotypes in his literature. The list gets longer if I add on other classics that demonstrate other racial and ethnic slurs. So, I will continue to read Hemingway and other renowned authors with a little less enthusiasm and a little more critical eye. And maybe, in the future, I will have on my lap while reading,

a lovely Balinese or another of the seven “hypoallergenic” breeds known to produce fewer allergens than other cats. In a tip of the hat to my favorite Hemingway wife, I will name my new love Marty. Take that, Ernest!

Marilyn Cohen Shapiro, a resident of Kissimmee, Fla., is a regular contributor to the

(Capital Region N. Y.) Jewish World and the Orlando Heritage Florida Jewish News. She is the author of two compilations of her stories, “There Goes My Heart” (2016) and “Tikkun Olam” (2018). Both books available in paperback and e-book format on Amazon. Her blog is theregoesmyheart.me.



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How Ruth Bader Ginsburg went from the Notorious RBG to Ruth the Tzaddik

By Josefin Dolsten

(JTA) — Many Americans have been paying tribute to the popularized version of Ruth Bader Ginsburg — the feisty workout-devoted octogenarian Supreme Court justice who had morphed in the past decade from admired legal trailblazer to beloved feminist pop icon, the subject of a Hollywood biopic, a documentary, “Saturday Night Live” sketches and late-night interviews, not to mention T-shirts, mugs and bobbleheads.

But as word of her death spread Friday in the first few hours of Rosh Hashanah, it became clear that many Jews were mourning something spiritually deeper. For them, the Notorious RBG had become Ruth the Tzaddik.

Author and book critic Ruth Franklin quickly captured the sentiment in a tweet shared thousands of times and liked by more than 200,000: “According to Jewish tradition, a person who dies on Rosh Hashanah, which began tonight, is a tzaddik, a person of great righteousness. Baruch Dayan HaEmet.”

Nina Totenberg, the NPR Supreme Court correspondent and Ginsburg’s friend, eschewed her usual legal analysis for a religious explanation.

“A Jewish teaching says those who die just before the Jewish new year are the ones God has held back until the

last moment bc they were needed most & were the most righteous,” Totenberg wrote in a tweet shared more than 40,000 times. “And so it was that #RBG died as the sun was setting last night marking the beginning of Rosh Hashanah.”

Those interpretations may have reflected a loose interpretation of Jewish texts, but the sentiment behind them reflected Ginsburg’s evolution from staid jurist to pop culture icon to spiritual figure.

That evolution was fueled first by a cohort of bloggers, biographers and filmmakers — mostly Jewish, meaning that Ginsburg’s deep and abiding Jewish values came through loud and clear in her pop culture depictions. Then it found a ready audience among the majority of American Jews for whom Judaism and progressive political values are intertwined.

Rabbi Emily Cohen of New York’s West End synagogue had almost finished leading virtual services from her home in Brooklyn when a message popped up in the gathering’s Zoom chat room: “RBG is dead.” After announcing the news, she led the more than 120 worshippers on Zoom in a special recitation of the Mourner’s Kaddish.

Cohen, who was just 6 years old in 1993 when Ginsburg became the first Jewish woman to serve on the nation’s highest court, sees parallels between the jurist’s long career

of standing up for the rights of women and minorities and religious leaders from Jewish history.

“Like many prophets, she was willing to say the uncomfortable things even when she was in the minority,” Cohen said. “The notion of ‘I dissent,’ the notion of standing up, even knowing that she is not going to have the majority rule in some cases, the notion that she was still willing to stand up for what was right is very powerful.”

At first glance, the evolution of Ginsburg into a spiritual figure might be more surprising than her emergence as a pop culture phenomenon. But it was clear from a visit to her court chambers — with a painting of the biblical precept “Tzedek, tzedek tirdof,” or “Justice, justice you shall pursue” — that like the majority of American Jews, she saw a clear throughline from the Torah to her legal work and political values, however secular or cultural a Jew she might have been in her practices. And as several Jewish leaders pointed out, the timing of her death undoubtedly helped fuel the religious imagery.

“How can one not find resonance and meaning that [she died] on the holiest day of the year, as we are entering this period of teshuvah, which is in essence a Jewish affirmation that the brokenness in the world and the brokenness of a person isn’t necessarily

the state that needs to be, that repair is possible, that teshuvah, that repentance is available and that redemption can come,” said Rabbi Jonah Pesner, the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. “So on the one hand it was a tragic loss as Jews have faced loss for 5,000 years and, on the other hand, people immediately began reading meaning into it.”

Even though Ginsburg was not a religious leader, she shared many similarities with Judaism’s famous rabbis, Pesner added.

“Rabbi means teacher, so at its core before there was even a notion of clergy, the rabbis were the guardians of Jewish wisdom and they were charged with transmitting Jewish values and Jewish traditions to students of the next generation,” he said. “That’s exactly what RBG, the Notorious RBG, whether it’s the Ledbetter v. Goodyear dissent, or the Shelby v. Holder dissent or an enormous body of work, she will go down in human history and in Jewish history as a ‘rav l’Yisrael’ and a ‘rav le kol haolam,’ a teacher to all of Israel and to all of the world.”

At least one Ginsburg fan felt uncomfortable at the theological arguments that spread widely on social media following her death.

“There does seem something a little remarkable about the timing of her death, so people want to be able to understand that calling her a tzadik or tzaddeket and framing it around what it means to die on erev Shabbat, erev Rosh Hashanah feels like a way to make sense of something,” said Rabbi Hara Person, the head of the Reform movement’s Central Conference of American Rabbis.

“The narrative of her being an extra righteous soul is very appealing, very compelling, but it leads to a theological place that I’m not totally comfortable with, which is to say that it kind of positions God more in the role of a master puppeteer. ... I don’t really subscribe to that in that literal way,” Person said. “I think it’s fine for us to call her somebody who was unique and for whom we should feel grateful and really held an incredibly unique place in our national life.”

The conversation this week might have looked different



had Ginsburg not died on Rosh Hashanah, said Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, which organized a rally in honor of Ginsburg’s life on Saturday that drew thousands to the steps of the Supreme Court.

“I think the fact that it happened on Rosh Hashanah was a moment where at least Jews were thinking about our faith and our background in a different kind of way,” Katz said. “I don’t know what the conversation would be had it not been Rosh Hashanah, but I’m glad that we are talking about her this way.”

June Brown — a true mensch



June Brown helping to deliver High Holiday gift bags to residents.

By Susan Bernstein

“When looking for a senior facility to move to, my granddaughter called the Jewish Pavilion who suggested Oakmonte Village or Cascade Heights because of the significant Jewish population that resided at each site,” said June Brown, a resident of Cascade Heights in Longwood, who moved to Orlando four years ago from Bayside Queens, New York.

The decision to move to Cascade Heights offered her the access to a balcony (which she enjoyed having back in New York), coupled with the friendly staff and Jewish programming, and so the decision was made.

Brown credits the Jewish Pavilion for making this decision an easy one and continues to praise the Pavilion for fostering personal ties that she has nurtured during the past four years. She appreciates the calls that she receives from Jewish Pavilion volunteers, Shirley Schoenberger and Nancy Price. Coincidentally, Brown knew Nancy’s sister back in New York and was visited by her when she was in Orlando. Brown also recalls the special bond she made with Walter Goldstein, z”l, who asked her to tutor a boy for his bar mitzvah, which led to her volunteering at Winter Springs Elementary School with special needs children.

Cascade Heights has

also benefitted from having Brown, who is 98, as a resident. She always offers a helping hand. When the Jewish Pavilion delivered 50 high holiday gift bags to her building, Brown volunteered to deliver the bags to her fellow residents. She took the time to knock on each door, wait for the resident to open the door, wish the residents a happy New Year and give them their goody bags.

“She is a true mensch and a remarkable role model for us all. It is difficult for most of us to keep up with this energetic and bright lady,” said Nancy Ludin, Jewish Pavilion CEO.

Brown loves to volunteer and while living in New York, she gave her time to the Volker Arts Museum in Queens and 40 years at Long Island Jewish Hospital. During her time at the Bay Terrace Jewish Center in New York, Brown was approached by the rabbi who asked if she ever had a bat mitzvah. Having quit Hebrew school when she was a child because there were no other girls in her class, Brown had to admit that she never had this opportunity. So, at the age of 65, Brown, along with several other women, read from the Torah and became b’not mitzvah.

Brown has had a truly interesting life and has met many famous personalities through her work as an interior designer (working for Hermione Gingold, the Whitneys, and Willie Mays); and as a travel agent/tour director (booking tours for Connie Frances, Tony Martin and Perry Como).

Brown has been a loyal participant of Shabbat services at Cascade Heights, conducted by Jewish Pavilion volunteers, and looks forward to the time when these programs can resume in person.

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