

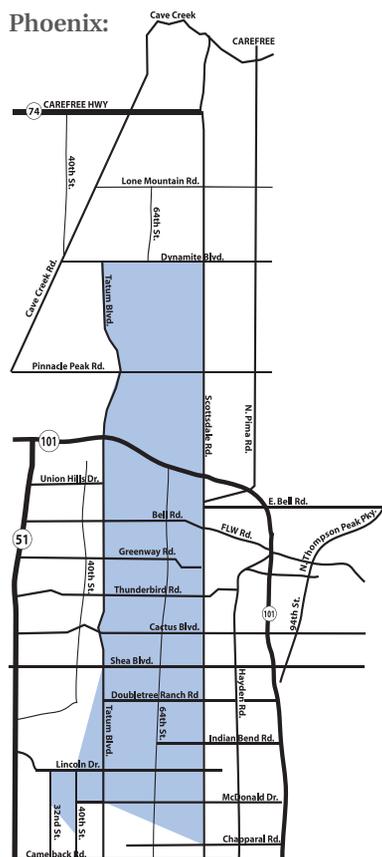
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Dear Readers,

Gregarious. Focused. Strong willed. Stubborn. Definitive. Charming. Independent. Assertive. Knows her own mind.

Moves faster on all fours than most do on two feet.

Can scamper up a flight of stairs in record time.

Gives you a *look* with those big brown eyes and four pearly white teeth. Sparkles with what appears to be a “phony” smile.

Is too young to know phony – so it is adorably real.

Some little ones let you know when they don’t want something you’re trying to feed them. They’ll lock their jaws. Or, turn their heads away.

This little lady will push your hand aside. And – if you don’t *get it* and dare to try yet *again* she’ll deck you – pushing your hand away with such force that the food flies right out of it – into your face or onto your chest. Her way of saying, “What part of *I don’t want it* don’t you understand?”

She knows her own mind and ain’t nobody gonna change it. No way. No how.

If she so wishes, she could be president one day.

Has a whole year passed *already* since that fateful phone call? “We’re on our way to the hospital. Court’s in labor.”

Have I been a grandmother *that* long? Have I ever been anything, but?

I am “Glammie.” Not “Grandma” or “Nana” or “Grammy.” Those simply don’t cut it. Nor does “Bubbie” – the affectionate name bestowed upon elderly Jewish grandmothers.

I don’t wish *anyone* to ever think of

me as elderly. Not even when I *am!*

Last week in New York the one who will someday *call* me “Glammie” if she can ever pronounce the letter “L” (or whatever she chooses) – celebrated the FIRST of her First Birthday parties!

Yes, you read that correctly. This was the FIRST of her First Birthday parties. Her Daddy’s family in far eastern Long Island gathered to fuss and fete and pass Miss Oakley around like a football. There were no fumbles – but an abundance of interceptions!

Oak thrived on the paparazzi surrounding her. Great-aunts and -uncles, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and a few family friends thrown in. All with digital cameras – flashes flying. She mugs for the cameras. She babbles constantly – expressing her opinion of the goings-on. “It’s all about *me* and I *love* it!” she *would* say if she had any words as yet other than “hi” and “dada.”

Why is it they always say “dada” before they say “mama”? Mama’s the one who bore the blood, sweat and tears – literally and figuratively – bringing them into this world!

A New York “City Kid” – the noise factor and throngs of people didn’t faze her a bit. Queen of the hop. She waved and said, “Hi!”

To everyone.

Repeatedly.

Not your typical wave, mind you. A wave more befitting the Queen of England – or a Miss America. Lots of rotating wrist action – as if flaunting an invisible ball in her hand. Brilliant child.

Unique.

Mine.

The SECOND of her First Birthday parties will take place two weeks post FIRST First Birthday party in New York City – for extended family on our side – predominantly New Jerseyites – and friends of the Little Miss’s parents and their legions of teeny tiny not taller than your knee angel babies.

“Hope’s going to New York again,” you ask? Yes I am. Nephew Adam once remarked that I fly cross country more often than most people go to the supermarket. That’s what those of us get who have relocated far from our roots.

CITYVIEWS

I wonder. If she has two birthdays every year – will she be eligible for college in nine years? Social Security in half the time of the rest of us? Will there still *be* Social Security when she reaches the appropriate age?

I never observed so intensely with my own daughter the myriad of developmental changes that I do with my granddaughter. I am continually astounded by her development.

You mean she’s not the *only* one clever enough to discover the toilet seat and how to open it?

Becoming a grandmother was magical. Watching her transition from “baby” to a literal step away from “toddler” is yet another passage. How my mother must have marveled at the development of *my* baby – *her* granddaughter – Oakley’s mother – as *she* developed. What a miracle is this journey.

And there’s the pride in seeing *my* baby juggling motherhood and career so evenly. Balancing work and family.

She’s a far better woman than I was, I’ll tell you that!

She is even keel. Capable. Organized. Loving.

And most of all – she has not forgotten who *she* is.

Now, I’ll tell you a secret: On my last night there, as I put our strong little Oak into her crib she doth protest. Contrary to “orders,” I scooped her up and lay down with her on my chest. As she burrowed under my skin and into my heart she fell into a deep sleep. Angelic and content.

I held her a little while longer. Savoring my special time with her.

Shhhhhhhhhh...don’t tell Mommy! We don’t want to get Glammie in trouble.

Warmest Regards,

Hope H. Ozer
Publisher