

GOOD·OLD·DAYS®

The Magazine That Remembers the Best • September/October 2026

OUR **Favorite** SUBJECTS

Remembering the Classes We Enjoyed the Most

**REAL
STORIES**
From
**REAL
PEOPLE**

**Starring
Moments**

Our Time In
The Limelight

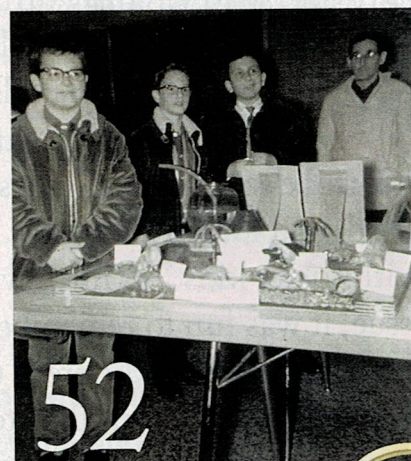
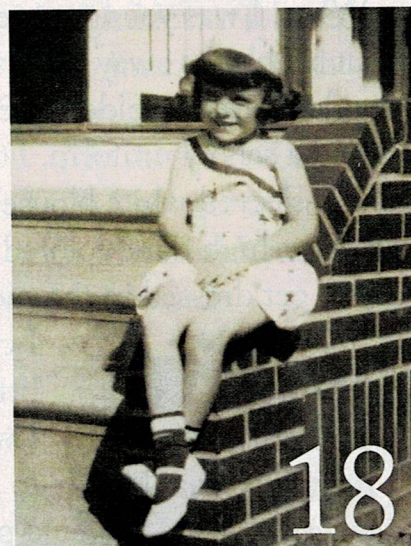
Here's the Key!

The First Apartments
And Houses We
Called Home



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JOIN IN ON
THE Fun!

Find the keys hidden in this issue and then let us know you found them! Post on Facebook (but don't list the page number) at <https://www.facebook.com/GoodOldDaysMag/>.

We will announce the hidden location in next month's Editor's Letter. Be sure to play along!

Back-to-School Shopping With Izzy the Tailor

A knish and a tape measure do go together.

By Joe "Kirsch" Curcio

More than a half-century after my Catholic grammar school days, a rainy September morning still brings back the unmistakable echoes of Sister David's classroom welcome:

"Please hang up your coats, place your galoshes in the wardrobe, and stand in place for the Pledge of Allegiance and morning prayers."

That same rainy day pitter-patter also brings back memories of the dreaded back-to-school outfit shopping trips to Herzog's—the "husky kid" clothing store in my Brooklyn neighborhood. It also gives me an abrupt reminder that I've apparently been on a diet since at least 1967.

At Herzog's, the ever-present Izzy the tailor was there with a tape measure draped around his collar and a nubbin of soap in hand to mark the legs of my pinned pant cuffs. Ever the "kibitzer," joking and babbling and more than willing to offer advice to my father on where we could get "a beautiful pastrami on rye, a delicious knish and a nice cold Dr. Brown's cream soda."

This neighborhood family-owned clothier specialized in back-to-school chubby kid-wear for us unique husky, burly, stocky boys who were most likely destined to a future of slip-on loafers and a morning regimen of statins.



Joe in his dark blue suit from Herzog's.

Normally, this pre-school fall splurge would begin with my father and me stopping at Moe's who still sold pickles out of a wooden barrel on Havemeyer Street. That was usually followed by the two of us splitting a giant hot dog from Gottlieb's over on Roebling—who, according to Izzy, made a brisket so tender "even bad news could wait."

Mind you, none of this really helped very much with the fitting of the back-to-school garments or the eventual required letting out of my new black trousers.

In reality, this trip should have been simply buying some black pants, a few crisp white collared shirts and a couple of green clip-on ties. But by the early 1970s, St. Cecilia's, like many Catholic grammar schools, began shifting away from strict uniform policies and inching toward more relaxed styles.

Most of my friends, who shopped at regular stores like Sears and Woolworth, were now getting to choose red and yellow blazers, avocado-colored shirts and platform shoes. I, on the other hand, inevitably ended up at Herzog's getting a very dark blue suit and those shiny black shoes usually reserved for the deceased at a wake.

To this day, carrying the baggage of being the kid who hadn't seen much of the high side of the seesaw, I still go with the "widow-at-a-bar-mitzvah" black-on-black look. The only time I dabble with color and fashion is when I put on those snazzy Italian-guy socks, which incidentally go very nicely with the shiny black wake shoes.

Still today, after many Septembers and back-to-school shopping trips, I've come to be content with my conservative wardrobe—and with the realization that the apple—or perhaps the knish—didn't fall far from the tree.

You see, here I am some 50 years later on this rainy fall morning, still in

Brooklyn and just a few blocks away from my alma mater—wearing a fairly conservative dark blue sport jacket. Avoiding any treacherous tangles of dangling shoelaces, I am comfortable in a pair of black slip-on Skechers. And I am realizing that those back-to-school shopping trips weren't so bad after all.

Other than having to stand there on that creaky wooden platform listening to Izzy and my father debate the "snap factor" of a good kosher frankfurter versus a stick of Sicilian salami, back-to-school shopping was an enjoyable, cultural and educational experience! After all, it was during those shopping trips to Herzog's that I learned there is, in fact, a direct connection between the cured meats, kosher potato-based products and Jewish-owned haberdasheries.

Now, as I assess my Good Old Days memories of back-to-school shopping, one thing I recall is that they were delicious! ♦