It’s autumn. Already. And time rushes by.

For me, the summer didn’t rush. It flew! At warp speed. And so did I. Back and forth to New York City. Three times in four months – vying for the “Grandmother of the Year Award.” Good thing we had stockpiled frequent flyer miles.

And here we are. October.

The weather cools. The energy that was sapped from my body by the summer’s heat, a six-year-old for almost a month and hand surgery has returned. I remember to breathe – to reflect on the memories made.

After all, when it comes right down to it, it is all about memories. Isn’t it?

As early as January, the “what do we do with a six-year-old for ten weeks in ‘The City’” discussion had begun with LD Courtney. LH and I suggested that Oakley attend sleep away camp. In the East, for economically comfortable families (and even for those who have to pinch pennies!) it is not unusual for children to go away for four, six or even eight weeks. Heaven knows her mommy could use a respite!

Oakley was not interested. Unequivocally, undisputedly, undeniably NOT interested.

Oak had a plan: She enthusiastically proposed that she “attend ‘Glammie/Poppy Camp.’”

“It’s too hot in Arizona in the summer,” I replied.

“But, it’s nice in Flagstaff,” she retorted. “We’ll go to the lake house. We can swim. And we can play games at Peter Piper Pizza, and we can go to Bookman’s and buy lots of chapter books for me to read so I can be smarter, and we can bond and have lots of quality time together! That would be really cool!”

Where do kids get this from?

“...so I can be smarter? ...and we can bond and have lots of quality time together?”

Quite an argument.

We are pushovers. LH and I proposed a one week visit. Oak countered, “How about a month?” We agreed to two weeks. She made it three.

Tough negotiator.

The deal, if you’d call it that, included attending day camp for two of those weeks to give Glammie and Poppy a break. There is an enormous difference between plan and execute. Even with the best laid plans, as Gershwin said, “It ain’t necessarily so.”

In July, a quick round trip to bring Oakley to Arizona for “Glammie/Poppy Camp.”

A quick stop overnight in the Valley and then we boogied up to Flagstaff first thing in the morning. A weekend of total immersion followed by two weeks of day camp. Piece of cake.

No so fast, missy!

We had signed Oak up for two, one week camps. The first camp was pretty much a bust and we pulled her out by the middle of the third day. So, lots of swimming and games at Peter Piper Pizza – and crafts at the community center where Glammie made a really fabulous bracelet. Oh right, Oakley made some neat stuff, too!

The second one was the Arizona Diamondbacks Baseball Academy Camp. It takes place in Flagstaff only one week per year. We lucked out. This she absolutely loved. The program was well structured, the coaches were professional athletes and quite easy on the eyes, if I do say so myself. What’s not to like?

We’ve already been informed that she’s coming to “Glammie/Poppy Camp” next summer again and going back to the DBacks camp.

I have never been so exhausted. Making memories is hard work.

We’re still working on sleep away camp!

On our last night cuddling together (my most favorite thing) before she headed back to New York, as her little body rolled over in bed and “schnoogled” up to me, wrapping one tiny arm around my neck and stroking one of my arms with her other hand, she whispered, “Old people’s skin is so soft.”

Swell.

These were not the six little words I wanted to hear from my six-year-old granddaughter. How about, “I love you so much, Glammie!” Or, “Can I stay with you forever?” Or, “You are the bestest Glammie in the whole wide world.” O.K. That’s ten.

Nope. “Old people’s skin is so soft” is what I got.

“Mine is so hard. I like yours better,” she continued.

All things come to she who waits, I thought. I am officially an “old person.” In her eyes. Not. In Mine. In mine, I’m still hovering somewhere around 40.

At that moment – once I got over the “old people” declaration – I flashed back to 1949 when I had “schnoogled” up to my grandmother. Babba was an elderly woman. She was probably no more than 65, but in those days she was elderly – both in physique and spirit. As she placed my little head on her bosom and stroked my hair lulling me to sleep, I remember thinking that her skin was so very, very soft.

I smiled as a tear ran down my cheek.

I knew some day I’d turn into my mother. But my grandmother? Holy moly!

And time rushes by.

Making sweet tears. Making memories.

Hope H. Ozer is founder and Publisher Emeritus of CITYSunTimes. Her monthly columns previously written as “Publisher’s Pen” range from personal – some humorous, some poignant – to observations on life, and continue to be one of CST’s most enduring features.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I loved Hope Ozer’s article in the September edition of CITYSunTimes. I haven’t laughed that hard in ages! I could picture our elegant Hope trying to get her pants up in the ladies room. I had an issue with my thumb a few years ago, and I can attest to the trials and tribulations of not having the use of an opposable thumb. I learned to do a lot of things left handed until it healed. It’s amazing what we take for granted until we no longer have it. I have a whole new appreciation of my thumb.

My friend Sue recently tripped and fractured her arm. Like Hope, Sue likes to look her best, so is not happy to be sporting a cast. She got a black cast and was going to decorate it by gluing on pieces of turquoise and some glitter. When she read Hope’s article, she was thrilled that cast covers exist. I suspect Sue will also be the proud owner of several cast covers. Much easier than what she had planned and provides variety! Hope was kind enough to supply the website for Sue, who also found the article hilarious as well as informative.

Thanks, Hope, for the laughs and the website.

– Lyn Hitchon