



# Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

## THE CAS NEWSLETTER

May 2025

### Upcoming services and events

**Wednesday, May 7 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Monday, May 12 at 4:00 PM:** CAS "Raising the Roof" Gala/Fundraiser at the GB Triplex Cinema

**Wednesday, May 14 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Friday, May 16 at 5:00 PM:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, location TBD

**Saturday, May 17 at 10:00 AM:** Shabbat Study with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

**Monday, May 19 at 12:00 PM:** Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom

**5:00 PM:** CAS Board Meeting at CAS

**Wednesday, May 21 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Monday, May 26 at 7:00 PM:** Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

**Wednesday, May 28 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Friday, May 30 at 5:00 PM:** Kabbalat Shabbat/Shavuot with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, followed by a Potluck

**Sunday, June 1 from 1:00-3:00:** Jewish Community Day at High Lawn Farm, 535 Summer Street, Lee

***Note:** Unless indicated, all services & events take place at the synagogue at 15 North Street, Great Barrington*

### This month's newsletter features:

**The CAS May Gala: *The Catskills Comes to the Berkshires* on May 12<sup>th</sup>!**

**A lot of people have been working hard to make the Gala a success!**

**Portrait Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak, another great workshop!**

***Widow's Log*, the fourth in a series of writings by Barbara Janoff**

**Notes from the April Board Meeting**

**Join us for a ceremony to bury sacred books**

**May Creative Arts Workshops**

**Summer Book Group**

**Countering Active Threat Training (CATT) – Workshop coming in June**

**May Yahrzeits**

**May Donations**

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# CAS Raise the Roof Gala: *The Catskills Come to the Berkshires*

**Coming Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> – Tickets still available!**

On Monday, May 12, 2025, at 4 PM, our iconic 100-year-old synagogue, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, invites you to Great Barrington's Triplex Cinema to share in this historic restoration fundraiser and to bask in an afternoon of unforgettable sights, sounds, and tastes of the Catskills in the 1950s.

The event will feature an evocative screening of the documentary "The Catskills," by filmmaker Lex Gillespie. The Catskill Mountains in upstate New York or the "Borscht Belt", boomed with resort hotels and bungalow colonies, providing opportunities for all types of vacationers to escape the heat and crowding of urban areas. It was a haven for guests and performers excluded from many resorts at that time, including the most popular and up-and-coming Jewish and African American comedians and entertainers of the day.

The documentary will be followed by live entertainment by Michael Pizzi, founder of MPZ Productions, and accompanist Bob Shepherd, with a cameo singing appearance by Rabbi Emerita Barbara Cohen. A buffet of small bites, "a bissel the essen," Yiddish for 'something to eat,' catered by GB Bagel, will conclude the event. Ahavath Sholom's new permanent spiritual leader, Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, will emcee.

**"The Catskills Come to The Berkshires"**

Congregation Ahavath Sholom invites you to a Gala:

**FILM:** "The Catskills" a documentary film by Lex Gillespie

**FUN:** Live entertainment by Michael Pizzi & accompanist Bob Shepherd

**FOOD:** Small bites buffet by GB Bagel

**MONDAY, MAY 12 AT 4:00 PM**

The Triplex Cinema, Great Barrington

Raising funds for the preservation of 100 year-old historic synagogue

Tickets: Eventbrite

Information and donations: [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com)



Congregation Ahavath Sholom (Love of Peace), still in its original home at 15 North Street, Great Barrington, MA, was purchased to house the members of the newly formed community in 1923 and is the longest synagogue building in continuous use in the Berkshires. The building's aesthetic, reminiscent of the disappearing late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century Eastern European synagogue style, has been respectfully maintained over the years by careful repair and restoration.

Now in need of a new roof for its historic home, we hope to encourage the whole Berkshire community to attend this gala event by purchasing tickets at Eventbrite <https://thecatskillscometotheberkshires.eventbrite.com>. For information and donations to contribute to 'raising the roof' and securing this treasured landmark for its next 100 years, please go to [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com) or call 413 528 4197.



## A lot of people have been working hard to make the Gala a success!

Here is one of them! Zoe Jadow, age 7, the granddaughter of Joan and Dan Burkhard, working on a recent Gala mailing.





## Portrait Painting with Ilene Spiewak, another great workshop!

The latest Portrait Painting Workshop offered by painter, educator, art therapist, and CAS board member Ilene Spiewak, took place on Sunday, April 6th at 1:00 PM. Ilene volunteers her time for these unforgettable events. Here are some of the wonderful portraits that were produced (along with their equally wonderful creators)!



# *Widow's Log, a series of writings by Barbara Janoff*

## **The Best We Could Do**

*About suffering they were never wrong,  
The old Masters: how well they understood  
Its human position: how it takes place  
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along.*

W.H. Auden

May 3, 2014

Last week, as in years past, my college sponsored a day-long memorial for the victims of the Holocaust, Yom Ha-Shoah. The first ceremony was a recitation of some of the names of the dead. We participants, faculty and staff, were instructed to read the names slowly from a thick book of printouts and not to worry too much about mispronunciations of the Eastern European names.

Each volunteer was assigned fifteen minutes to read aloud. I was the last to read, arriving after my morning class. The crowded cafeteria was buzzing with the students' conversations. It took me a minute to locate the speaker at the very back of the room. She was standing behind a podium with the microphone turned down low, so as not to interfere with the studying, texting, and talking of the students, a compromise, I presumed, with Student Affairs. I sat at a table beside the podium to wait my turn. Even in such close proximity, I had to strain to hear my predecessor's voice as she spoke the names and ages of the dead. The victims were children mostly, no older than seventeen, many much younger. As I listened, I watched the kids in the cafeteria. Most were utterly absorbed in their own business. It was, after all, the week after spring break and close to the end of the semester. The pressure on them was intense. They had projects to finish and finals to take. They had summer jobs to find and, for some, graduation and its afterlife loomed. Their minds were in the future, not the past.

A few students who sat near the podium looked up occasionally from their devices to eye the speaker for a quick moment before diving back into their personal screens. I wondered why they had chosen those nearby seats. They may not have had a choice, needing to take the only seats left in the cafeteria, the ones that the kids who got there first had avoided.

When my turn came to read, I stepped behind the podium and considered the final few pages in the book. All of the family names began with W. There were groupings of siblings or relatives who had shared the same last name. The speaker before me had read the age of each victim as a number, and I wondered if the kids in the cafeteria understood that these were children who had been executed. I had decided that when my turn came to read, I would say "five years old" instead of just "five" or whatever the age for each child, but somehow when I spoke I didn't deviate from the previous format. I was frustrated with myself for locking into a mode that had already failed to wake up this potential audience.

I stumbled many times as I spoke the names. My speech sounded too quick and monotonous to my ear. Those names should have been sung or chanted. Or echoed. Or cried. But I did none of those things.

In years past the ceremony had been held in the school auditorium. It may have been moved because of a conflicting event, but more likely the reason was low attendance or no attendance. I myself have skipped it in the past because I was too busy, too tired, or not in the mood. On this day, in fact, I felt somewhat self-congratulatory for participating. I tried to kick away that feeling and make room for something I approved of--solemnity or sanctity—but I lost the struggle. I had to make do with just showing up, standing, and speaking to an indifferent crowd.

On that day, something less than ideal had to suffice for us all. I, with my contradictory thoughts and conflicting feelings. The students, with their overwhelming projects and fears for the future, who had stayed put in the cafeteria. Here's the thing. Consciously or not, all of us absorbed some essence of those martyred children, aged one and four and seven and seventeen. Those children. We called them out by name, and their names washed over us. For that brief time, they connected us. It was the best we could do.

Barbara Janoff

*[Barbara leads the very successful online CAS Memoir Workshop]*

## Notes from the April Board Meeting

- Personnel changes: Barbara Janoff has resigned from the Executive Committee; the Board will consider her replacement at an upcoming meeting. Dan Burkhard has resigned from the Board but will continue to assist Arthur Hillman with finances. Joan Burkhard was approved by the Board to fill out the remainder of Dan's term. The Board expressed its great appreciation to both Barbara and Dan for their many years of dedicated service to the congregation.
- The Religion and Spiritual Life Committee is looking for someone with appropriate computer graphic skills to assist in making improvements to our Constant Contact communications.
- The Finance Committee has developed a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 of \$116,000. About two-thirds of this amount provides for the rabbi's salary.
- The Board has voted to spend \$15,000-\$20,000 for the replacement of the synagogue's roof. (The final amount will depend on the structural condition of the roof as determined by the contractor.) The Board also expressed appreciation to Jane Stepman for her continuing work on building repairs.
- The Development Committee has raised over \$50,000 this year. In addition to the \$40,000 gift from the Katsh Family Foundation for electrical work, other funding sources included the Hanukkah Pop-up Shop, as well as fees from classes offered in painting, Hebrew, and cooking.

## Join us for a ceremony to bury sacred books



**SACRED BURIAL**

Join us for a ceremony to bury sacred books  
and ritual items that are no longer usable.

In the Jewish tradition, we honor sacred texts and  
ritual items by giving them a dignified burial. We  
take a moment to recognize their significance,  
reflect on the memories they carry, and bid  
farewell as a community

Friday, May 16, 2025  
Kabbalat Shabbat at TBD  
Burial Ceremony  
Potluck Dinner

*Please respond to*  
[harperlsusan@gmail.com](mailto:harperlsusan@gmail.com)





## May Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at noon via Zoom. Shared readings and short writing exercises. Each of these sessions is stand-alone. Please RSVP to Barbara Janoff at [bjanoff1@gmail.com](mailto:bjanoff1@gmail.com). Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

*Barbara Janoff Ph.D. is retired from the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York in Manhattan, where she taught writing and literature. Her poetry and essays have appeared in a number of journals, including Communication Arts, Women's Work: The Journal of the Columbia College Women's Center and the Berkshire Review.*



*Photograph by Andrew Neel on Unsplash*

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, but at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Participants in the workshop can submit any images they would like discussed, regardless of subject matter or content, using phone or camera. They can also share their screen with the group. These workshops are stand-alone sessions, open to all. Please RSVP to [arthurhillman54@gmail.com](mailto:arthurhillman54@gmail.com). Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

*Photographer and printmaker Arthur Hillman has been exhibiting his prints for more than 60 years. He has delivered a variety of lectures and presentations on photography and printmaking, juried many exhibits, and was a founding member of the Berkshire Photography Group. He is Professor Emeritus, Photography, Printmaking and Design, Bard College at Simon's Rock.*



*Photograph by Caroline Forsman from the CAS Photography Workshop*

## Summer Book Group

Looking for a fun way to stay engaged this summer? Join our **Summer Book Group**—a relaxed, flexible way to connect!

### Here's how it works:

- We'll read **one book each month** (June, July, and August).
- **Meet up once a month** to discuss the book—we'll keep it casual and conversational.
- **Each book and discussion is independent**, so feel free to join **one, two, or all** of the groups—whatever fits your schedule!
- **Read on your own time**, then gather to share thoughts and insights.

Whether you're a lifelong bookworm or just looking for a reason to read more this summer, we'd love to have you.

## Countering Active Threat Training (CATT)

**Tuesday, June 3, 5:00-6:30 PM at the synagogue**

CATT teaches the principles of responding during an active shooter (or active threat) event.

The goal of the training is to provide participants with a better understanding of active threats and lifesaving response options. Simply put, training and exercise provide critical skills that save lives.

CATT is led by Andrew Hoffman of Secure Community Network. We will be joined in the synagogue by members of Berkshire Minyan who would like training but do not have a space of their own.

<https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/empowering-communities-through-training/training-catalog/catt/>

## May Yahrzeits

**"Much of our experience of divine goodness, grace and love has come to us through those whose lives have touched our own."**

	Hebrew Date	Secular Date	This Year
Frances Schmetterling Innerfield	Iyyar 06 5769	4/30/2009	5/4
Susan McGreevy	Iyyar 8 5782	5/9/2022	5/6
Muriel F. Goldman	Iyyar 8 5757	5/15/1997	5/6
Joseph Fisher	Iyyar 09 5731	5/4/1971	5/7
Helen D. Rawitz	Iyyar 09 5753	4/30/1993	5/7
Sidney Weinstein	Iyyar 10 5780	5/4/2020	5/8
Louis Levine	Iyyar 17 5733	5/19/1973	5/15
Mae Osterweil	Iyyar 18 5772	5/10/2012	5/16
Daniel Eisenstein	Iyyar 24 5758	5/20/1998	5/22
Gunther Richard	Iyyar 25 5759	5/11/1999	5/23
Helen E. Schenker	Iyyar 26 5759	5/12/1999	5/24
Risa Graubard	Iyyar 26 5775	5/26/1995	5/24
Irene Linder	Iyyar 26 5760	5/31/2000	5/24
Manuel Kessman	Iyyar 26 5753	5/17/1993	5/24
Hilda Krasner Radin	Sivan 1 5777	5/26/2017	5/28
Johnine Cummings	Sivan 2 5752	5/31/2022	5/29
Henriette Waller	Sivan 04		5/31



# May Donations

## **In loving memory of Elaine Adams**

Alison Adams-Weinberg

## **In memory of John Gellert**

Barbara and George Gellert

## **In honor of Deborah Slater**

Naomi Berger

## **In support of Rabbi's cooking class**

Linda Geffin

## **Passover Donation**

Karen and Chuck Schader

## **In support of the Creative Arts Workshops**

Barbara Barron (Photography Workshop)

Ross Bettinger (Memoir Workshop)

Caroline Forsman (Photography and Memoir Workshops)

Bruce Frishkoff (Memoir Workshop)

Linda Geffin (Memoir Workshop)

Arthur Hillman (Memoir Workshop)

Carol Killian (Memoir Workshop)

Shirley Ripullone (Memoir Workshop)

Stephanie Sloane (Memoir Workshop)

Michele Waldman (Photography Workshop)

## **In support of the upcoming Gala and the "Raise the Roof" campaign**

Paula K. Almgren, Attorney at Law

Balanced Rock Investment Advisors

Barbara Barron

Berkshire Mountain Chiropractic

Rabbi Jennifer Rudin and Dr. Jeffrey Bornstein

Jerri Buehler (In honor of Sandra and Bill Flannery)

Carlson Propane

Bart Samuel and Rosalyn Cohodas

Linda Eagle

Sandra and Bill Flannery

Happy Nails & Spa

Elaine Friedman

Joseph B. Gellert

Elaine Goldstein

Goldstein Subaru

Stuart Greenberg

Arthur and Louise Hillman

Linda Josephs

Michael Kadri

Howard Kessler

Midtown Electric

Paul and Sarah Muscat

Lawrence and Karen Peltz

Sonia Pilcer

Railroad Street Collective

Robert Rausch (In memory of Diane Schechter Rausch)

Karen Reber (In honor of Deborah Slater's birthday)

River Studio (Patricia Purdy and Andrew Devries)

Don and Arlene Shapiro

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