



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

June 2025

Upcoming services and events

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

Tuesday, June 3, 5:00-6:30 PM: Active Threat Security Training

Wednesday, June 4 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, June 6 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Saturday, June 7 at 10:00 AM: Shabbat Service with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Sunday, June 8, 1:00-3:00: Rain date - Jewish Community Day at High Lawn Farm

Monday, June 9 at 5:00 PM: CAS Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 11 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Monday, June 16 at 12:00 PM: Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom

7:00 PM: Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

Wednesday, June 18 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, June 20, 6:00-8:00 PM: Shabbat Across the Berkshires, at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire,
270 State Street, Great Barrington

Saturday, June 21 at 10:00 AM: Lay Led Shabbat Service with Kiddish to follow

Sunday, January 22 at 5:00 PM: CAS Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 25 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

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

This month's newsletter features:

Raising the Roof, The Catskills Comes to the Berkshires Gala

A letter from Reconstructing Judaism

Burial of Sacred Books

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

Notes from the May Board Meeting

Countering Active Threat Training (CATT)

Arresting Characters with Karen Chase

Summer Book Group

June Creative Arts Workshops

June Yahrzeits

June Donations

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Raising the Roof: *The Catskills Come to the Berkshires* Gala

Sometime over the past winter, a neighbor on North Street alerted the Congregation. She was watching squirrels jump in and out of the Shul. Uh oh! When we began the work to update our electrical system in the building, Doug Blume, our electrician, confirmed the gaps in the roof and found the insulation in the attic to be well chewed. We clearly had a problem.

Several roofing companies came and took a look. All had the same advice - the roof definitely needed replacing and so - the Development Committee went to work to try to find a solution. Linda Josephs, Sandra Flannery, Susan Weinstein, Debbie Slater, Marie Rudden and I put our heads together and the idea for the "The Catskills Come to the Berkshires" was born. Arthur Hillman provided magical imagery for us to use and solicitation information went to everyone in the Congregation. Barbara Janoff wrote an amazing history for the Playbill. You all stepped up! We added a skit to introduce the afternoon and music to bookend the award winning movie by Lex Gillespie. Michael Pizzi and Bob Shepherd provided music from the era of the Borsch Belt. Rabbi Rudin was our Master of Ceremonies and our Rabbi Emeritas, Barbara Cohen left us singing in Yiddish on our way out of the theater.

If that wasn't terrific enough, Bob from Barrington Bagels served a repast fit for the best hotels in the Catskills. We had a wonderful afternoon, raised enough funds to replace the roof and made friends along the way. A perfect solution to a difficult problem.

Joan Burkhard





Photographs by Debbie Slater

A Letter from Reconstructing Judaism



April 30, 2025/ 2 Iyyar 5785

Congregation Ahavath Sholom
15 North Street, P.O. Box 464
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Dear Friends at Ahavath Sholom,

Mazal tov from all of us at Reconstructing Judaism as you gather to celebrate your congregation's 100th anniversary! What a journey you are on! We want to send special greetings to your wonderful Rabbi Emerita Barbara Kipnis Cohen and to your Interim Rabbi Jennifer Rudin as they *kvell* with you over this major community milestone. And we hold in our hearts the memory of Ahavath Sholom's first spiritual leader, Rabbi Jacob Axelrod, z'l, who served the congregation for many decades.

For a century, Congregation Ahavath Sholom has stood as a beacon of community and tradition, occupying the oldest continually utilized synagogue building in Berkshire County since 1923. Through your thoughtful evolution from Orthodox roots to your Reconstructionist affiliation, you have remained true to your beautiful name—"Love of Peace"—while embracing the principles of egalitarianism and inclusion that define your community today.

Your congregation's ability to adapt and flourish through changing times, while maintaining deep connections to Jewish tradition and fostering partnerships throughout the Berkshires, exemplifies the resilience and vision that have sustained you for one hundred remarkable years. We're proud of you and proud that you're part of the movement!

To all the members, board, clergy and staff of Ahavath Sholom, we say *kol ha-kavod* on reaching the century mark together. May your efforts continue to bear fruit as you begin your second century, and may you go from strength to strength!

L'shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rabbi Deborah Waxman".

Rabbi Deborah Waxman,
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth Rosen".

Seth Rosen,
Chair, Board of Governors

Burial of Sacred Books

On May 17th, at the home of Susan Weinstein, Congregation Ahavath Sholom held a ceremony to bury prayer books and other sacred items. CK Tree Work of Mt. Washington, donated equipment and time to create the grave. Congregants came to the Shul and helped to move many boxes to Sheffield. The books were carefully wrapped in white pillow cases and lowered to their final resting place. Rabbi Rudin conducted a lovely and respectful service reminding us of all the hands that created the history of each item being put to rest. In good and times of worry and stress, prayer books provided strength and guidance to those who turned to their words. Rituals are deeply imbedded in our history, We are most grateful to Susan for providing a beautiful location for us to gather and honor the journey of our sacred items.



Photographs by Debbie Slater, Sandra Flannery and Susan Weinstein

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

Regrets

For me, the second year of widowhood was worse than the first. The shock that had enveloped me in the beginning of bereavement had begun to thaw. Relief that my husband's suffering was over had faded. Regrets flooded me, and I relived them over and over again. Two isolated incidents in particular nagged at me. Or I should say non-incidents. Why had I refused to go riding with him at the stables he had discovered near our house? And what made me say no to his suggestion of a hot air balloon ride over the Hudson Valley?

In the second year of widowhood, especially in the early morning hours, these two particular self-recriminatory details of the ways I had failed him played over and over in my mind. Unacknowledged were the days spent at chemo, in doctors' waiting rooms, by his bed in the hospital; pouring over research for therapies, encouraging statistics, and foods to tempt his waning appetite. Unappreciated was the exhaustion that became second nature to me as I continued to teach four college courses, chair meetings, and write the textbook I had contracted to finish before he fell ill. Unregarded were the bedside buckets, the salves and gauzes, the saniwipes, and the daily charts I made to time his meds.

Time had collapsed in my memory. I racked my brain trying to remember *when* he had wanted to go horseback riding and hot-air ballooning. Was it before he got sick? Did I refuse his wish when our time together seemed as if it would go spinning on for many decades? Did I refuse during the time when I believed I had a right to say *I don't feel like doing that today*, when the understanding was *maybe tomorrow or next year*? Was it before he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer when nothing would be the same again? It must have been. It had to have been before that. After, neither one of us had the strength or will for anything but fighting the enemy.

When I had the courage to stay with my regrets over what I did and didn't do with and for Al, I recognized that a much larger remorse lurked below the surface. My main regret, the motherlode from which veined out all of my smaller, more manageable self-recriminations, was that I hadn't saved him. That's the one that grew loud in my sleep, the one that I stifled as soon as I began to detect its insidious questions that begged no answers. Why hadn't the doctors detected the cancer earlier? Why had I let him go by himself for his routine physicals when I knew how chatty and distracting he could be? Why hadn't I known when his symptoms changed from those of a healthy athletic man who pushed his body to extremes into the symptoms of a man incubating cancer in his lungs? Oh, I knew I was regretting the impossible, but I regretted it all the same.

Still, in the sleepless early mornings of that second year (and, yes, sometimes even now), I wish I had said yes to every wish and whim he had ever expressed every moment of our lives together. I imagine us waking early on a crisp fall morning and mounting our horses, the pungency of leather and steed, the steady clapping of hooves on mountain paths. I see us dismounting at the end of the trail, laughing at our aching thighs and bowed legs, eager for a hearty lunch. Or I change the scene entirely and picture us together in a basket strung to a giant stripped balloon, amazed at our luck, rising, rising together above the valleys, over the mountains, and into the clouds.

Barbara Janoff
4/2/11

[Barbara leads our very successful online CAS Memoir Workshop]

Notes from the May Board Meeting

- The Religion and Spiritual Life Committee has set the dates for all upcoming services through this coming August. They will next begin work on developing a calendar for the coming year.
- The Development Committee noted that the Catskills in the Berkshires Gala was a resounding success, raising approximately \$50,000. The event generated positive publicity for CAS in both the *Eagle* and the *Edge*, and several attendees made inquiries about the synagogue. It's not realistic to assume, however, that the congregation can mount such a large event every year, and so other means of fundraising must also be considered.
- The Building Committee reported that a deposit for work on replacing the roof has been paid. It's expected that the project will begin in June and that the final cost will be around \$20,000.
- The synagogue's *sukkah* is in poor condition and is difficult to put up. Consideration will be given to the purchase of a new collapsible *sukkah* that will be easier to work with. The price of a 10' x 20' model would be around \$1000.
- The Security Committee will bring Andrew Hoffman to CAS on June 3rd to offer instruction on what to do in face of an active threat. He has also recently submitted an 83-page document assessing the synagogue's vulnerabilities which can be used as the basis for possible grant application.
- A draft contract has been sent to Rabbi Rudin for her review. Both the Board and Rabbi Rudin hope to have a completed contract by the end of June.

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/>



June Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Monday, June 16th 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. 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 Jess Bailey on Unsplash

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, June 16th, 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. 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 Barbara Janoff from the CAS Photography Workshop

Arresting Characters with Karen Chase

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**A POETRY READING FEATURING
KAREN CHASE & MICHELLE BLAKE**



This poetry reading is an ode to Wharton's Arresting Characters. Following a brief reading of "Artemis to Actaeon" (1902), contemporary poets Karen Chase and Michelle Blake will read newly published works.

JUNE 18, 2025

|

5:30 PM

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Tickets: \$15 / \$10 for Mount Members

Questions? Please email:
programs@edithwharton.org

INFO AND TICKETS AT EDITHWHARTON.ORG

Summer Book Group

There's no better time than the summer to read a great book! This summer at CAS, we'll be reading three very different and compelling titles. After reading each book, we'll gather in person at CAS to enjoy a meal and discuss the book. You can read one, two, or all three books. There will be additional opportunities to talk about the books on Zoom.

A SUMMER OF GREAT BOOKS & CONVERSATION

CONGREGATION AHAVATH SHOLOM



JUNE 6, 2025 / SHABBAT DINNER &
CONVERSATION FOLLOWING SERVICES
THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBLICALLY,
A.J. JACOBS

JULY 13, 2025 / BAGELS & CONVERSATION
JUDAISM AS A CIVILIZATION: TOWARD A
RECONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE,
RABBI MORDECAI KAPLAN

AUGUST 23, 2025 BAGELS & CONVERSATION
WHO BY FIRE, WHO BY WATER: UN'TANEH TOKEF,
RABBI LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

June 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
Irving Adams	Sivan 9 5769	6/1/2009	6/5
Howard Kanner	Sivan 11 5756	5/29/1996	6/7
Carol Edmonds	Sivan 17 5778	5/31/2018	6/13
Ferdinand Rosenberger	Sivan 17 5702	6/2/1942	6/13
Bonnie Greenstein	Sivan 21 5723	6/13/1963	6/17
David W. Goldman	Sivan 25		6/21
Jason Cohen	Sivan 25 5773	6/3/2013	6/21
Eileen Muriel Geffin	Sivan 26 5742	6/17/1982	6/22
Ilbert Stahl	Sivan 28	6/7/1975	6/24
Marion Cohn	Sivan 29 5774	6/27/2014	6/25
Jim Secundy	Tammuz 1 5754	6/10/1994	6/27
Murray Paikin	Tammuz 4 5734	6/24/1974	6/30

June Donations

In memory of Sidney Weinstein & Daniel Eisenstein
Susan Weinstein

In memory of Skip Hood, Philip Geffin & Eileen Geffin
Linda Geffin

In memory of Irene Linder
Tina Linder

In honor of Jamie Horwitz
Carol Neuberger

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 Gala and the “Raise the Roof” campaign

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Jim & Lisa Cramer

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Paula K. Almgren, Esq.

One West Street
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tel: 413-637-5075
fax: 413-637-5077
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