



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

January 2019

Upcoming services and events

Sunday, January 6, 2019, 1:00pm: Study session at the home of Rabbi Cohen. Bagels and coffee included, so a commitment is needed for planning. Please send a firm RSVP by the Thursday before this event to barbaracohen14@gmail.com. [Please note time change].

Saturday, January 12, 10:00am: Shabbat Service followed by coffee, tea, pastry and conversation.

Monday, January 14, 6:00pm: CAS Board Meeting.

Thursday, January 24, 2019, 9:00am – 1:00pm: People's Pantry at St. James Place, Great Barrington, MA. Generally 2 hour shifts: contact Walter Orenstein at <mailto:ptcpa2@roadrunner.com> to participate. If schools in Great Barrington are closed for snow ... so is the Pantry.

Saturday, January 26, 10:00am: Shabbat Service followed by coffee, tea, pastry and conversation.

Sunday, January 27, 10:15am: Book Group:"Dinner at the Center of the Earth" by Nathan Englander. Please contact Diana Richter at drpajama1@gmail.com for location of this meeting. Check for changes as this group occasionally changes the date or time.

This month's newsletter features:

- **The CAS Website and Newsletter for 2019**
- **The Chanukah Party**
- **Creative Arts Series at CAS**
- **Milchidika with Marty: "Does a Dog Sneeze?"**
- **Wendilah: A Personal Remembrance of Wendy Rabinowitz by Sonia Pilcer**
- **The CAS Book Group**
- **Keep Smiling! More photo memories by Don Victor**
- **January Yahrzeits**
- **January Donations**
- **Community Havdalah and Concert**

The CAS Website and Newsletter for 2019

As some of you already know, Andi and Jeff Goodman are in the process of transitioning to a new home in Charlottesville, VA. Andi, along with Donna Tukel, built our great website quite a number of years ago. Since that time, Andi has been a wonderful coordinator of our IT endeavors, constantly updating the website, publishing our email blasts, and keeping everything working smoothly and efficiently. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for her thoughtful input and hard work throughout the years.

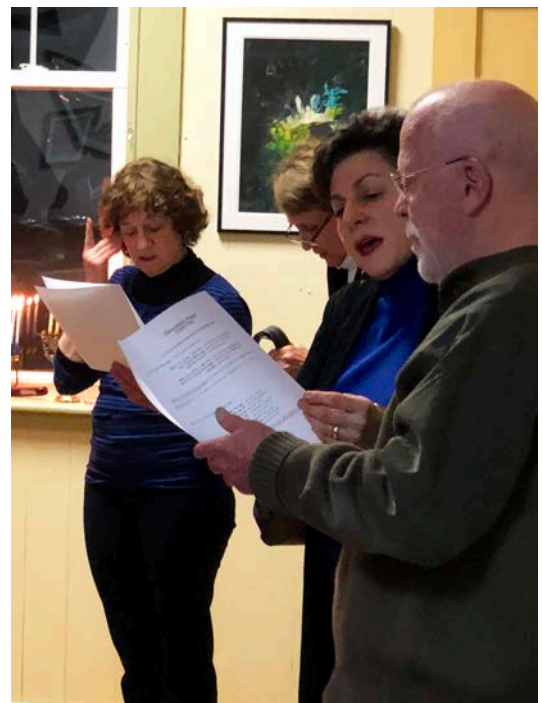
Beginning with this January newsletter, Arthur Hillman will coordinate both the website and newsletter, working with our editor, Vivian Scheinmann. Alison Adams-Weinberg will take over the design and distribution of our weekly email blasts.

Readers may notice that this new newsletter comes to you as a pdf document. This doesn't change the overall look and design very much when it is viewed on your computer screen. It does mean that you can print out a page or the whole issue in a quick and easy manner. It is also a great time saver that avoids duplicating efforts for those constructing each newsletter. In order to more efficiently coordinate the overall website with the newsletter, certain information areas each month (primarily the listings of Yahrzeits and donations) will now only be featured in the newsletter (links from those areas of the website will get you to the newsletter easily).

The Chanukah Party

A very successful 2018 Chanukah Party was held on Saturday, December 8th. For the first time ever, the celebration was held at the synagogue on North Street!

Trays of latkes were accompanied by many delicious vegetarian potluck dishes, as the second floor of our shul was illuminated by an array of menorahs.





Creative Arts Series at CAS

Engage your mind and involve your senses this winter

This winter CAS will present a series of talks, presentations and workshops by congregation members on a number of Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m..

February 24: Arthur Hillman, Professor Emeritus of Photography, Printmaking and Design, Bard College at Simon's Rock, will be showing and discussing the art and design work of Jewish graphic artists Ben Shahn, Leonard Baskin, Elaine Lustig Cohen, Milton Glaser, and Barbara Kruger, as well as his own work.

March 10: Ilene Spiewak, painter, therapist, and educator, will offer, "Still-Life Sunday," a studio workshop. "Things are whatever we imagine them to be. Engage yourself and your colors in an intimate conversation. Sting your senses and charge your paint with energy! Make your own still-life painting."

March 24: Barbara Janoff, Associate Professor of Writing and Literature, Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, will conduct a poetry writing workshop. "Writing poems is a process that begins with a willingness to listen to and observe our surroundings and to pay attention to the musings of our minds. This workshop will offer writing exercises designed to stimulate our imaginations and a variety of poems meant to inspire revisions. No formal writing experience necessary."

April 7: Linda Josephs, actor, theatre director and producer, writer of plays and screenplays, will offer, "I've Always Wanted to Act!" "If you always wondered what it was like being an actor here is your opportunity and it doesn't have to take years. In this two-hour workshop through stimulating fun and friendly exercises you will experience what it's like to be an actor. No preparation and no memorization required. Comfortable clothes recommended."

We'll be including more detailed articles about each presentation in future newsletters. Be sure to put these four unique winter events on your calendar and reaffirm that "The Creative Spirit Dwells Here!"

Milchidika with Marty: "Does a Dog Sneeze?"

Does a cow sneeze?

Or an elephant?

Why do we say "Gesundheit" or "God Bless You" after someone sneezes? But we don't say that when someone coughs.

How many times in a row do we normally sneeze?

I'll bet you've pondered these questions many a night, and as a result just tossed and turned in your sleep just thinking about it.

Well, here's some sleep relief.

Wishing someone well after they sneeze probably originated thousands of years ago. The Romans would say, "Jupiter preserve you." The phrase "God Bless You" was attributed to Pope Gregory the Great who supposedly uttered it in the sixth century during a bubonic plague epidemic (sneezing is an obvious symptom of one form of the plague).

There was an ancient superstition that when someone sneezes their soul escapes the body through the nose. Saying "bless you" would stop the devil from claiming that person's freed soul.

I couldn't find out why the soul doesn't escape when we cough. I think that when we sneeze it's a more violent act than a cough, and the soul is a little lazy and really doesn't want to leave, so it needs an "Ah Choo" to get out.

Now if you really want to impress your friends, instead of just saying "God Bless You" you might say "Gesundheit" in German; or Alhamdulillah" in Arabic which means "praise be to God." Some countries have special responses for children. In Russia, after children are given the traditional response "bud zdorov" (be healthy), they are also told "rosti bolshoi" (grow big). When a child sneezes in China, he or she will hear "bai sui" which means, "May you live 100 years".

We sneeze because we have a cold or an allergy, or being outside in the bright sunlight, or by smelling a strong odor. But there is another side to sneezing. In colonial days, men would carry little snuff boxes which contained bits of tobacco. A pinch of snuff stuffed into the nostrils could produce a sneeze on call; and developed into something people did in the middle of a conversation, as a sign of disrespect for the speaker, or what was being said.

Sneezing could also be used as a status symbol, showing that you were perhaps above the person and anything that they had to say. So, if someone said something that you disapproved of, or found beneath you or boring, you could show your pretentious disregard by getting out your snuff box and sneezing.

Today we do the same thing by taking out our cell phones to see if we have any messages or by checking our computer screens.

By the way, if there was something you really approved of, you might say "That's nothing to be sneezed at."

And finally, all animals and fish sneeze since it's an involuntary action. The fish supposedly do it to clear their gills. I can't imagine a scientist in scuba gear checking whether fish really do sneeze. But I guess it's true.

I would think that if you were standing next to an elephant who was sneezing, you had better be wearing a raincoat. That's got to be a lot of moisture coming out.

Lastly, I discovered that often when we sneeze, it's not just one sneeze. It's usually three in a row. I have a new hobby now. I count when someone sneezes to see whether it is just one "Ah-Choo" or really three in a row. Amazingly, it is often three times.

Now for a sneezing and coughing joke.

At a hotel restaurant, a man sees an attractive woman sitting alone at the next table. Suddenly, she sneezes, and a glass eye comes flying out of her eye socket. It hurls by the man, and he snatches it from the air and hands it back to her.

"This is so embarrassing," the woman says, as she pops her eye back in place. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you. Let me buy dinner to make it up to you. May I join you?" He nods.

The woman is a stunning conversationalist, stunningly pretty, and the man finds that they have a lot in common. He gets her phone number and says, "You are the most charming woman that I have ever encountered. Are you this nice to every guy you meet?"

"No," she replies. "You just happened to catch my eye."

And the coughing joke.

A father and his ten-year-old son are walking the streets of New York City. The kid is spinning a 25-cent piece in the air and catching it between his teeth. As they are walking someone bumps into the boy at just the wrong moment and the coin goes straight into his mouth and lodges in his throat.

He immediately starts choking and going blue in the face and Dad starts panicking, shouting and screaming for help.

A middle-aged Jewish man in a black suit and white shirt, wearing a yarmulke is sitting on a bench reading his newspaper and sipping his cup of coffee. At the sound of the commotion he looks up, puts his coffee cup down, neatly folds his newspaper, gets up from his seat and makes his unhurried way across the street. Reaching the boy, the man takes hold of the kid and squeezes firmly but gently. After a few seconds the boy coughs up the quarter, which the man catches in his free hand.

The man walks back to his seat, picks up his coffee and newspaper without saying a word.

As soon as he is sure his son is fine, the father rushes over to the man and starts effusively thanking him.

The man looks embarrassed and brushes off the thanks.

As he is about to leave, the father asks one last question, "I've never seen anyone do something like that before--it was fantastic--what are you, a surgeon or something like that?"

"No" the man replies, I work in Jewish fundraising. Getting people to cough up is my business."

WENDILAH: A Personal Remembrance of Wendy Rabinowitz by Sonia Pilcer



"Vessel of Light: Sarah, Queen of Light"
Weaving/Mixed-Media Assemblage by Wendy Rabinowitz



Wendy Rabinowitz
Photo by Susan Geller

As some of you might already know, on Tuesday, December 11, Wendy Rabinowitz, 72, died in a car crash several miles from her home in Pittsfield.

What you might not know is what a luminous presence she was in the Berkshires, and beyond.

Wendy Rabinowitz, or Wendilah, as she liked to be called, was a gifted artist, whose deeply spiritual work was also political. “All art is a healing,” she wrote. “A *tikkun olam* to creation.” Tikkun olam refers to the Judaic concept of human action that repairs a broken world.

I am thinking of her exhibit “Women At The Wall: A Call for Peace” at the United Nations. It was an extraordinary vision: an eight foot interactive assemblage of weaving and copper, handmade paper, glass beads, wood, ceramic, papyrus, abalone, a prayer shawl and stone. Wendy provided small blank scrolled papers for viewers to respond. They left over 3,000 messages of peace. The plaque was exhibited widely including at the Hancock Shaker Village. I originally met Wendilah when I first moved to the area. She asked me if I’d join her to see her show “Imoteinu (And Our Mothers),” which was based on the voices, power and wisdom of the ancient Jewish Matriarchs. I remember her images of the feminine “outlaws” of the Old Testament: Lilith and Hagar. Wendy was steeped in religious study, but never sanctimonious. As her friend Susan Solovay, an artist and hypnotherapist, has written: “Wendy had an impish, mischievous playful side that wove beautifully with a deep seriousness. She cared about what is important in life: compassion, art, justice, spirituality.”

The two of us along with Wendy, Marilyn Kalish, Mary Gendler, Joy Dronge and a few others were part of a group of Jewish Women Artists, who met regularly for several years and shared our work. We called ourselves the Bollabustehs. Barbara Newman, a filmmaker, wrote this: “She took on and fought for all she believed in – the health of the planet, peace, human rights, love, equality, and the family of humankind... I always knew that when she showed up, she’d be wearing jewel-toned colors to match her brilliant, light-filled spirit. She wove her magic into everything: her art, her friendship, the way she lived her life.”

Wendy’s friends and teachers were numerous. She had been a student of the famed Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, founder of the Jewish Renewal Movement, in Israel, who helped shape many of her ideas as well as Rabbi Arthur Waskow and Rabbi Everett Gendler.

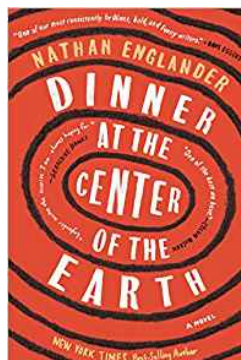
One more caveat: family. Wendy celebrated family life. Her partnership with Jeff Borak, arts editor of the Berkshire Eagle, was legend. Although they met in their 40s, theirs was a romance. Wendy and I once went together to the Boston Museum of Art where she picked up a puppet for Jeffilah, as she called him. I looked at it curiously. “Oh, we sometimes like to talk through puppets.” A very unusual spirit. And she was inordinately proud of her daughters, their husbands, and her grandchildren.

“Life was an adventure for Wendy,” Susan Solovay concluded. “Just too short for the rest of us – we are not ready for her to go.”

This article first appeared in the December 14, 2018 Viewpoints section of The Berkshire Edge

The CAS Book Group

The book group will meet on Sunday, January 27 at 10:15 a.m. to discuss *Dinner at the Center of the Earth* by Nathan Englander. Robin Berson will lead the discussion of this spellbinding thriller, spy novel, and love story. It’s been called Englander’s most electrifying work.



Keep Smiling! More photo memories by Don Victor



Nancy Cohen, her daughter Miranda,,Sonia Pilcer and Anita Bakst



Beala Schiffman and Claire Mayers



Beth Harlan, Joan Sussman and Linda Josephs

January Yahrzeits

Bella Axelrod	Tevet 25 5721	1/02	Frances Letofsky	Shevat 07 5769	1/13
Robert Scheinmann	Tevet 25 5729	1/02	Pauline Spiegelman	Shevat 08 5760	1/14
Diana Uttal Ruiz	Tevet 25 5747	1/02	Larry Hillman	Shevat 09 5722	1/15
Paul Broverman	Tevet 25 5748	1/02	Robert Cummins	Shevat 09 5730	1/15
Hy Radin	Tevet 27 5755	1/04	Diane Rausch	Shevat 10 5752	1/16
Rabbi Jacob Axelrod	Tevet 28 5746	1/05	George Shimmin	Shevat 12 5713	1/18
Arthur John Rothstein	Tevet 29 5752	1/06	Dan Bongini	Shevat 12 5765	1/18
David Victor	Shevat 01 5732	1/07	Miriam Karp	Shevat 13 5695	1/19
Kenneth Tukel	Shevat 02 5766	1/08	Fannie Kaplan	\Shevat 13 5737	1/19
Al Alson	Shevat 03 5777	1/09	Jeff Axelrod	Shevat 19 5775	1/25
Abraham Raflowitz	Shevat 04 5719	1/10	Irving Krantz	Shevat 21 5765	1/27
Arthur H. Kahn	Shevat 05 5761	1/11	Max Gans	Shevat 22 5733	1/28
Melvina Shimmin	Shevat 06 5756	1/12	Louis Radin	Shevat 23 5703	1/29
Harry Moskowitz	Shevat 07 5743	1/13	Meyer Osterweil	Shevat 23 5719	1/29
			Celia Fink	Shevat <u>25 5750</u>	1/31

January Donations

In honor of our son Steve becoming a volunteer fireman in his Long Island community

Donald and Barbara Barron

In honor of Richard and Diana Richter

Arthur and Susan Peisner

High Holidays

Ellen Robins

Annual Year End Financial Appeal

Ellen Axelrod

Joan and Dan Burkhard

Lisa and Eric Chamberlain

Joel Cohen and Cathy Elkin Cohen

John Slote and Nancy Cohen

Sarah Cohen

William and Sandra Flannery

Paul Graubard and Karen Chase Graubard

Nettie Hammond

Arthur and Louise Hillman

Linda Josephs

Wendy Mazursky

Debra Nodiff

Ruth Nodiff

Irene Goldman Price

Richard and Diana Richter

Barbara Rubin

Chuck and Karen Schader

Marcie Setlow and David Scribner

Brenda Butler and Ilene Spiewak, "Thank you for another wonderful year"
Alison Adams and Stephen Weinberg
Keren Weiner

Community Havdalah and Concert

COMMUNITY WIDE
HAVDALAH & CONCERT
Featuring



Join us for a special community-wide Havdalah and Concert featuring Pizmon, a Jewish a cappella group comprised of students from Columbia University, Barnard College, and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

SATURDAY, FEB 2 at 7:15 P.M.

hosted at
Temple Anshe Amunim
26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, MA

Free. All are Welcome.

Sponsored by

Berkshire
Minyan



Congregation Ahavath Shalom

Members of the year - a gemstone for the State



Congregation Beth Israel

חבורת בית ישראל



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

