



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

September 2023

Upcoming services and events

Wednesday, September 6 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Barbara Cohen via Zoom

Saturday, September 9 at 7:00 PM: Selihot Service at the synagogue

Monday, September 11 at 5:30 PM: September Board Meeting via Zoom

Tuesday, September 12 at 7:00 PM: Photography Workshop via Zoom

Wednesday, September 13 at 10:00 PM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Barbara Cohen via Zoom

Wednesday, September 13 at 12:00 PM: Memoir Writing Workshop via Zoom

Friday, September 15 at 7:00 PM: Erev Rosh HaShanah at Berkshire South Community Center

Saturday, September 16 at 10:00 AM: Rosh HaShanah at Berkshire South Community Center

Wednesday, September 20 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Barbara Cohen via Zoom

Sunday, September 24 at 7:00 PM: Erev Yom Kippur – Kol Nidre Service
at Berkshire South Community Center

Monday, September 25 at 10:00 AM: Yom Kippur Neilah at 5:30 PM followed by Break Fast
at Berkshire South Community Center

Wednesday, September 27 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Barbara Cohen via Zoom

This month's newsletter features:

High Holy Day Services

Yom Kippur Food Drive

Elul in the Pool

Nosh and Drosh

Our Genealogist in Residence: Keren Weiner

Save the Date - *I, Teresa de Lucena*: How We Built the Book

Karen Chase and Paul Graubard Exhibition

***Pearl*: a story by Linda Josephs, written for the CAS Memoir Workshop**

September Creative Arts Workshops

September Yahrzeits

September Donations

Advertisers and Sponsors

High Holy Day Services

Please join Congregation Ahavath Sholom and Rabbi Barbara J. Cohen for High Holy Day Services at Berkshire South Community Center, Crissey Road, Great Barrington. The High Holy Days at CAS are a chance for self-examination, meditation, and spiritual renewal. All taking place in a warm and welcoming environment.

Erev Rosh HaShanah, Friday, Sept. 15, 7:00 pm

Rosh HaShanah, Saturday, Sept. 16, 10:00 am

Kol Nidrei, Sunday, Sept. 24, 7:00 pm

Yom Kippur, including Yizkor, Monday, Sept. 25, 10:00 am

Neilah at 5:30 pm, followed by a potluck break fast

[Masks are optional for all services]

REGISTRATION: Members and non-members please register for each service you wish to attend by clicking the "RSVP" buttons on our website. For CAS members, the cost of High Holy Day registration is included in your membership. Non-members are always welcome. Non-member guests: \$200 per person for each holiday or \$350 for both holidays. Member family guest: \$100 per person for each holiday or \$150 for both holidays.

YIZKOR INFORMATION:

It is a High Holy Day tradition to make a donation in memory of loved ones for Yizkor. We ask that you donate a minimum of \$10 for each name. Yizkor payments can be made on our website. Submit all Yizkor names to arthurhillman54@gmail.com. If no changes from last year are necessary, simply indicate "same" in your email message.



Yom Kippur Food Drive

Our monthly food collections have been very successful. The People's Pantry in Great Barrington was thrilled to receive fifty-three cans of tuna in July. Hopefully we have matched that with our August peanut butter donations.

We are designating September as our gathering month in preparation for our Yom Kippur food drive. **Shopping bags will be available at both Rosh HaShanah services.** Please consider filling them with a variety of groceries (that are not past their expiration dates). **The bags will be collected at the Yom Kippur services.** Please fill these bags with a generous number of items, Shanah Tovah.

Elul in the Pool

On Saturday, August 25th, a large group gathered at Linda Joseph's home for our annual Elul in the Pool event. Water is the traditional element of cleansing, and, like the mikveh, we use the water to focus attention on the act of transitioning...this time to the High Holy Day preparation month and the work of self-examination.

Rabbi Barbara "looks forward every year to walk this path with you as we journey toward Erev Rosh HaShanah together."



Nosh and Drosh

Our monthly study sessions have been renamed **Nosh and Drosh**, a term that was used for many years for a weekday gathering of torah study upstairs at the shul. Please consider joining us for these sessions - and bring something to eat if you want (no meat please) - and we'll nourish ourselves with words of Torah and the wisdom each of us brings to the study table.



Our August 5th Nosh and Drosh session

Our Genealogist in Residence: Keren Weiner

Sit with an experienced genealogist and discover new information about your family history.

Keren Weiner, a genealogist with 19+ years of experience assisting families with family history research will work with you, in real time, to find documents for your family. With you as co-pilot, she will guide you to the sources where you are most likely to find results. Various databases at her disposal will be used to solve mysteries, break through brick walls, or simply get a start as you walk in the footsteps of your ancestors. The records discovered will be saved to a thumb drive you can take home, save, print, and share with family.

Keren is offering this service for our congregation members with the request that a one-time donation be made to Congregation Ahavath Sholom in the amount of \$100 for this genealogical journey.

To schedule an appointment with Keren, email her at kweiner2@gmail.com

“Sitting together, we located documents I had never seen before. This renewed interest in the family history, stimulated memories and sharing, and gave me the idea to look further – for myself and generations to come. During the process Keren explained how to “mine” the documents for information. She also provided some historical context. It was a revelation, and it was fun.”



Save the Date – *I, Teresa de Lucena: How We Built the Book*

I, Teresa de Lucena: Reflections on the Trial of a Conversa is the result of a unique collaboration between a translator, an artist and a rabbi who joined forces and their respective talents to tell the story of Teresa de Lucena (1467-1545), a woman who faced the Spanish Inquisition twice.

Join author Ellen Kanner, illustrator Annie Zeybekoglu and Rabbi Barbara Cohen of Congregation Ahavath Sholom for a conversation about their work on Sunday, October 22 at 2:00PM at Congregation Ahavath Sholom, 15 North Street, Great Barrington. Using examples from the book, they will illustrate the interplay between text, interpretation and design and lead what promises to be a lively conversation about the creative process, book arts and Jewish tradition.



Ellen Kanner and Annie Zeybekoglu working on their book

Karen Chase and Paul Graubard Exhibition

KAREN CHASE/PAUL GRAUBARD at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts
28 Renne Avenue, Pittsfield, MA September 1-29, 2023

Karen Chase is an abstract painter. Paul Graubard paints narrative, visionary works. Their paintings could not be more different. They are married. This show highlights their individual pieces and one collaborative piece.

The Opening Reception will take place September 1 from 5:00-7:00 (Gallery will stay open until 8:00) during [First Fridays Artswalk](#). Gallery hours are Wednesday-Friday, 11am-3pm or by appointment. (413-637-0505) The gallery will also be open on Saturday, September 9 during the Mural Festival from 12-3pm.

Paul began to paint about 25 years ago, giving up his practice as a psychologist. At this point, museums in the U.S. and abroad collect Graubard's work. When he started painting, the first thing he did was buy a big roll of white paper, then went to the hardware store to buy a can of black paint. With that paint and paper, he made *Emma's Matzoria*, which will be on display for this show. It is based on his childhood memories in Passaic, NJ. It has never been shown before.

The author six books of non-fiction and poetry, Karen has a collection of essays called *History Is Embarrassing*, coming out next March. Here's a quote from *Artist Statements*, one of the essays:

"Lil Block, my mother, was an accomplished abstract painter. She chose never to show her work. Painting was personal, the larger world irrelevant. I grew up in a household where making art was as natural as climbing a tree or setting the table.

Every Saturday when I was four years old, my mother took me to New York City on the train to take art lessons in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Looking out the window at the water as the train crossed the Harlem River was thrilling. It meant we were getting close. I can still smell those jars of red, yellow, and blue paint sitting on the oversized wooden easels. I have been making art since then." Karen's abstract paintings are characterized by motion, the result, she believes, of her childhood polio.

For a previous show at The Lichtenstein, The Chase/Graubard Show in 2021, the couple collaborated on a large piece which was silently auctioned off to benefit the Clinton Church Restoration. This summer, Paul and Karen visited the inside of the church and were both excited and inspired to try another collaboration. The piece, *The Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church, Great Barrington*, will be on display and the focus of another silent auction to benefit the [Dubois Freedom Center](#) (previously known as Clinton Church Restoration). The silent auction is available in person at the Lichtenstein or contact slemme@cityofpittsfield.org for information on how to bid on the item.



From Emma's Matzoria



Night Sky



The Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church, Great Barrington

Pearl: a story by Linda Josephs, written for the CAS Memoir Workshop

1985 and New York City was still a gritty city. Yes, sushi restaurants and yuppie wine bars were opening in offbeat neighborhoods and rents were rapidly going up. But graffiti and litter were everywhere, Bernie Goetz still dominated the news, and the homeless, or the “street people” as we called them, seemed to increase with each day.

My office was in midtown, 28th and Fifth. I had the best job in the world, and one of the perks was that I didn't need to be in the office all day (an unusual benefit for that era). I could roam the city at will, as long as I produced a successful season of products. This gave me the freedom to really get to know the city and its “street people.”

I first met Pearl on a clear fall day. She was sitting on a folding chair under the awning of a building just off the corner of 28th and Broadway. Her clothes looked old but of good quality and they were put together with a genuine flair. For a brief moment, I thought she might be an older woman waiting for the bus but reality gripped me and I acknowledged to myself that she was one of the homeless. I guessed that she was in her 60s but knew that street living could have added decades to her appearance. She was not begging but I wanted to give her a few dollars. I decided to say hello before handing her money. Smiling, I asked how she was. “Fine,” she replied. I asked if she needed anything. “What you got?” she said. “What do you need?” I asked. I don't remember her exact words (it was a lengthy response) but she was so funny and ironic that I was completely enchanted. Pearl was a cross between Apple Annie and Oscar the Grouch.

As the months went by, I frequently made it a point to stop and chat with Pearl. She was secretive about her life and did not like too many personal questions. Mostly she spoke about her love of languages, literature, and theatre. It was obvious that she was well-educated. She once mentioned doing research at Columbia but never elaborated. Pearl had very clear and definite opinions about current events and was always reading something, a newspaper or an old magazine. She spoke French and Spanish and quoted Shakespeare. Her home base during the day was 28th Street. I would sometimes see her foraging cigarette butts, spearing them with the point of her umbrella so she wouldn't have to bend over. I didn't know where she went at night. She wouldn't say but made clear that she hated the shelters. All I really could do, short of adopting her and whisking her home, was to provide sandwiches and some money so she could buy cigarettes.

Then one day Pearl just disappeared. None of the locals knew where she was. I went to the police department where I was politely dismissed. I didn't even know her last name.

Ten years later I was retired from my New York life and living with my husband Tom in the Berkshires. We had joined Congregation Ahavath Sholom and I volunteered for one of its outreach programs, visiting the nursing home for Shabbat services conducted by Don Victor and Simon Weinrib. These were non-traditional services; mostly Simon would sing, tell stories, and recite a few blessings while Don and other volunteers would pass out the Challah and grape juice. Although most of the residents were not Jewish they apparently all enjoyed the music.

The first afternoon I participated, the service had already started when I walked into the activities room. Simon was at the piano and Don was singing with him. The room was crowded but I immediately noticed a familiar face in the corner, singing along to Shabbat Sholom. It was Pearl. Like most of the residents, she was in a wheelchair.

During the blessing I offered her a piece of Challah and introduced myself. She didn't remember me. I asked her how she had gotten to the Berkshires but she wouldn't say. She looked old and feeble but was still feisty with a quick wit.

I asked some contacts at the nursing home about Pearl. I found out that she had been placed there because the home was required to accept a small number of destitute individuals and somehow, Pearl's case had made its way through the system. I didn't learn much else about Pearl except that her last name was Meyer and she had a diagnosis of schizophrenia. She had been at the nursing home for about a year and had trouble fitting in. She yelled at the nurses and did not interact well with the residents. Her eyesight was going so it was difficult for her to read which added greatly to her frustration.

I began visiting Pearl a couple of times a week. As soon as she saw me, she would have me wheel her outside to smoke, her one joy in life. Pearl would often ask me to buy her cigarettes and although I told her I didn't feel right about that I would always give her some money. She called me a hypocrite and said that as soon as I left she would give the money to one of the orderlies to buy her smokes. She declared that I could be saving her the trouble if I just brought them myself. Apart from the cigarettes, the only other thing she asked was that she be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

I visited Pearl for about a year and became her advocate, although she never showed me any affection or appreciation. We continued our ritual of sitting outside while she smoked. I would listen as she sang in French and sometimes German. She quoted James Joyce and Tennessee Williams. Pearl was one of the most fascinating people I have ever met. On the eve of Rosh HaShanah, Pearl passed away. There was nothing more to do for her except try to fulfill her last wish. Our wonderful congregation arranged to have her buried in the Jewish cemetery in Great Barrington. Simon, Don, a few of the nursing home staff and I attended.

I still visit Pearl and sometimes put a cigarette on her grave.

If you would like to comment on Linda's story, please contact her at ljosephs23@outlook.com

September Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13th at noon. 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.

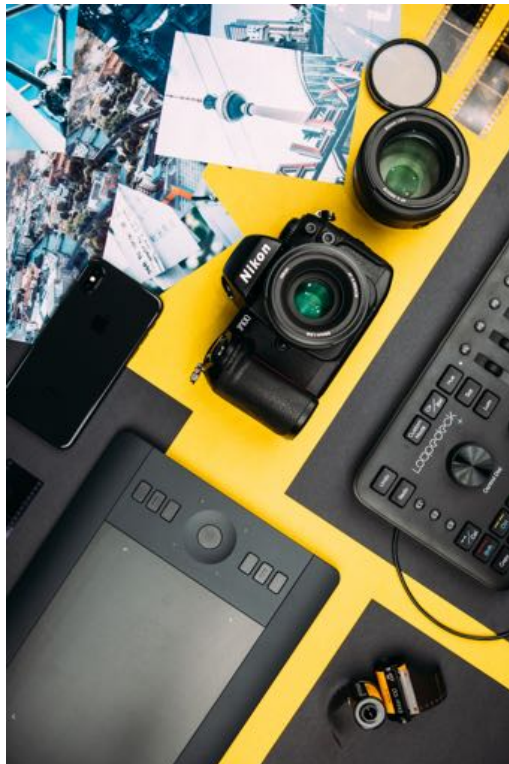
Barbara Janoff Ph.D. recently retired from the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York in Manhattan, where she taught writing and literature. Her poetry and essays have appeared in a number of journals, including Communication Arts, Women's Work: The Journal of the Columbia College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



Photograph by Nick Morrison on Unsplash

The next Photography Workshop will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 12th. 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 50 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 Krisztian Tabori on Unsplash

September Jahrzeits

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

	Original Hebrew Date	Original date	This Year
Freke Vuijst	Elul 15 5780	9/4/2020	9/1
Ruth Levi	Elul 15 5732	8/25/1972	9/1
Benjamin Kipnis	Elul 17 5769	9/5/2009	9/3
Serena Kaplan	Elul 20 5780	9/20/2019	9/6
Denny Edelman	Elul21 5750	9/11/1990	9/7
Irving Nadelman	Elul 22 5743	8/31/1983	9/8
Lilly Brill	Elul 23		9/9
Aranka Gellert	Elul 24 5740	9/10/1970	9/10
Adolph Horwitz	Elul 25 5754	9/24/2011	9/11
Masato Mitsuda	Tishrei 01 5768	9/13/2007	9/16
Diana Fisher Berkowitz	Tishrei 03 5778	9/23/2017	9/18
Matilda Radin	Tishrei 03 5754	9/18/1993	9/18
Bruce Budnick	Tishrei 04 5777	10/6/2016	9/19
Sara Brook	Tishrei 10 5773	Yom Kippur	9/25
Esther B. Cutler	Tishrei 10 5773	9/25/2012	9/25
Anna Schwartz	Tishre 10 5723	10/8/1962	9/25

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Jenny Margo

In memory of Louise's father, Masato Mitsuda

Arthur and Louise Hillman

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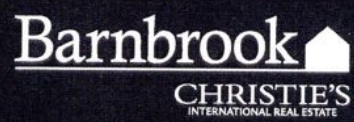
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