



# Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

## THE CAS NEWSLETTER

## March 2025

### Upcoming services and events

**Wednesday, March 5 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Thursday, March 6 at 11:00 AM:** Passover Cooking with Alison  
at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road, Great Barrington

**Friday, March 7 at 5:00 PM:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

**Saturday, March 8 at 10:00 AM:** Traditional Service with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

**Monday, March 10 at 5:00 PM:** CAS Board Meeting via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 12 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Monday, March 17 at 12:00 PM:** Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom  
**7:00 PM:** Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 19 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Sunday, March 23 at 11:00 AM:** SCN Security Training in the synagogue

**Wednesday, March 26 at 10:00 AM:** Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

**Friday, March 28 at 5:00 PM:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

**Saturday, March 29 at 10:00 AM:** Shabbat Study with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

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

### This month's newsletter features:

**Good News from Ahavath Sholom**

**Passover Cooking with Alison**

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

**Portrait Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak has been rescheduled**

**Assembled, Mad Rose Gallery exhibit extended**

**SCN Security Training: Introduction to Situational Awareness**

**Save the date: Poetry in Times of Crisis**

**Save the date: Book Talk: Two Tales: Jamalli Kamaili and ZundelState**

**Save the date: The CAS May Gala: *The Catskills Comes to the Berkshires***

**March Creative Arts Workshops**

**March Yahrzeits and Donations**

**Advertisers and Sponsors**

## Good News from Ahavath Sholom

What a wonderful year we are having at “The Little Shul That Could”. We want to share our successes and encourage everyone to take part in our warm and welcoming community events.

After the High Holidays, we were blessed to create an arrangement which gave us not one - but two, fantastic Rabbinic leaders!! As our beloved Rabbi Barbara Cohen stepped down from her responsibilities after a tenure of twenty years, Rabbi Jennifer Rudin stepped up to lead our congregation. Rabbi Rudin's family history lies deep in the community, as both her mother and father had been long-time active members of Congregation Ahavath Sholom. With her years of experience and deep love of learning, Rabbi Rudin has been sharing her knowledge and warmth with us through interactive services, study sessions, book club meetings, and Cafe Kahilla sessions.

Rabbi Cohen has been named Rabbi Emeritas, and is available to congregants for spiritual counseling.

In November, we were given the opportunity to work with the Katsh Family Trust. This local family, famously known in Great Barrington as Melvin's Pharmacy, gave a gift to Congregation Ahavath Sholom of \$40,000.00, designated specifically for the much needed rewiring of our synagogue. The work will be completed in February and, among its many benefits, has created a more efficient and effective lighting system in our sanctuary. We are thankful for the generosity of this local family!

December brought our first Chanukah Pop Up Shop! Our newly-formed Development Committee sold Chanukah items including dripless candles, gelt, and a variety of other beautiful holiday-themed items. Our many authors were present to sell their books, and we all shared a lovely afternoon.

In January things picked up for the Creative Community. In addition to the ongoing activities of our monthly memoir workshops with Dr. Barbara Janoff and photography workshops with Professor Emeritus Arthur Hillman, we began a Hebrew class with Dr Barbara Simon. Ten brave souls tackled learning to read Hebrew, a language many of us know mainly by rote. Dr Simon created a fun atmosphere which made learning successful and accessible for everyone!

Rabbi Rudin also created a CAS book club, with the initial reading, “Who Wrote the Bible” by Richard Elliott Friedman. Rabbi Rudin led two sessions each week for the two groups that formed - one on Sunday evening and a second on Tuesday morning, with lively discussions about the complex history of our Torah. The groups clamored for more - stay tuned for the next Zoom book club experience!

The cold of January was interrupted by a wonderful afternoon of painting and learning led by our own award winning painting teacher, Ilene Spiewak. A group gathered to try their hands at creating a still life with surprising and fabulous results. A second class for March is planned. This time we'll try portraits. Join us - it's so much fun!!

There's always more to come in this lively congregation. Services on Friday night and Saturday morning (dates on CAS website). Meet your neighbors and bring your talents to “The Creative Community that Dwells Here



## **Passover Cooking with Alison on Thursday, March 6th**



**Alison will be back in the kitchen teaching some Passover recipes. Hevreh has graciously allowed us to use their kitchen.**

### **MENU TO INCLUDE:**

**Grandma Tessie's Matza ball soup  
Passover Fritata  
Chocolate Caramel Macarons  
Haroseth Truffles  
Matza Brittle**

### **TO RESERVE A SPACE AND MAKE PAYMENT:**

**RSVP to [dslater@cramermediaint.com](mailto:dslater@cramermediaint.com)**

**Mail checks to:**

**Congregation Ahavath Sholom, P.O. Box 464, Great Barrington, MA 01230**

**This hands-on class, plus lunch, is limited to 12 people. Cost is \$100.**

### **ABOUT ALISON:**

**Alison Adams-Weinberg is a member of CAS and has done cooking videos during Covid on the synagogue's website. She is a registered dietitian and has worked in food service management in hospitals and nursing homes. She is a graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology.**

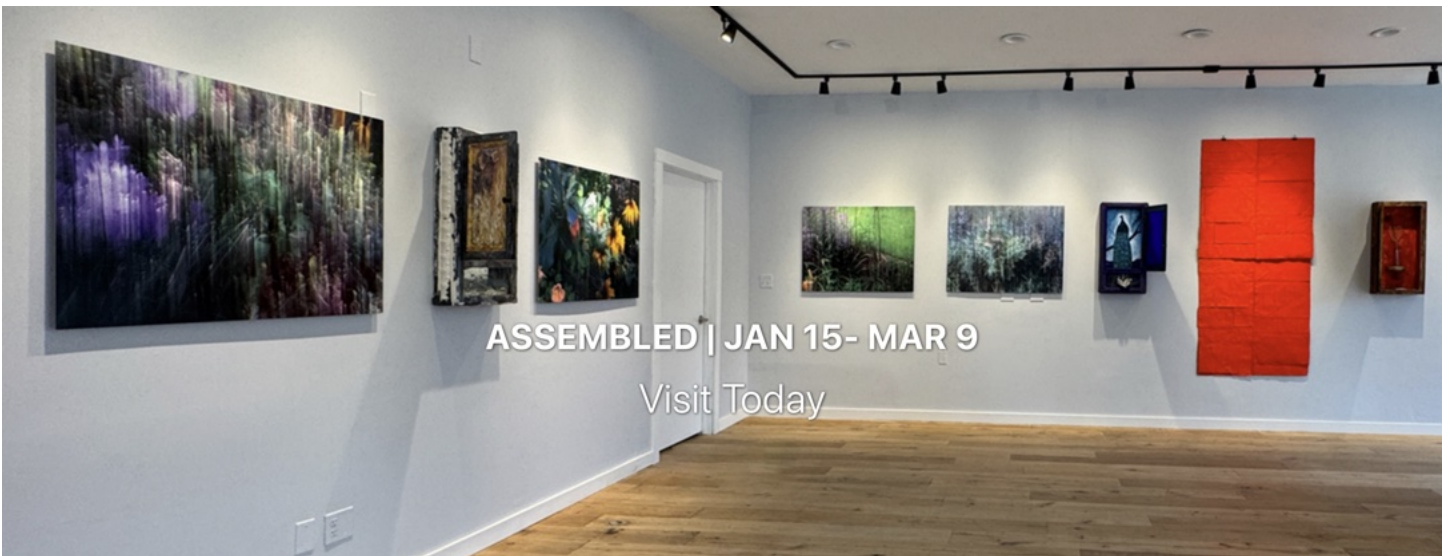
## Portrait Painting with Ilene Spiewak has been rescheduled

The Portrait Painting Workshop offered by painter, educator, art therapist, and CAS board member Ilene Spiewak, originally scheduled for March 23rd, has been rescheduled for Sunday, April 6th at 1:00 PM. This studio painting workshop will take place in the upstairs reception space at the synagogue. Ilene volunteers her time for these unforgettable events!



## Assembled exhibit at the Mad Rose Gallery has been extended

*Assembled*, the current exhibit at the Mad Rose Gallery at 5916 North Elm Avenue, Millerton, New York, has been extended to March 9th. CAS member Arthur Hillman is one of the six artists represented in the exhibition.



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

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

In the northeast part of the United States, we'll remember the winter of 2011 as a harsh one to have endured. It's March and after a mild, rainy week, I woke to a crash outside the house. Things are always creaking and crashing in the mountains, so I didn't get up right away to explore. Instead, I stayed under the covers and stared at the icy branches of the white birches just outside my picture window. During the night, the temperature had dropped to the aughts and frozen the rain that had soaked the trees. I had slept through an ice storm.

It was a gray morning, but the intricate cross-hatched birch branches were catching light from somewhere beyond the clouds. I contemplated getting my camera to try to capture their sparkle, but I've known for a long time that I can either be with a riveting presence or photograph it; I can't have both. As I get older more and more I choose being with the thing, taking it in and sending back...what?...wonder, I suppose.

The tree closest to my bedroom was bent nearly double with the weight of all that ice soaked to its core. It's an old tree, old for a birch, its trunk wider than the span of my arms. I've read that birches aren't supposed to live too long, but the ones surrounding my house look ancient. They looked old when Al and I moved in a dozen years ago, and despite their fragility, they've held their ground until now. They bend with what looks like insupportable weight and straighten when their burden lessens.

This harsh winter, the ground looked like a bone yard, covered with broken birch limbs and trunks. I've lost many trees already and was looking forward to the year's thaw. I'd been hoping that the last few mild days marked the beginning of the change, but change doesn't usually happen in so predictable a linear pattern.

Downstairs, I saw that on the other side of the house, our biggest birch had fallen. That was the crash I'd heard. I could barely look at it, the poor roots ripped out of the earth, the bare branches crushed. That tree had stretched high beyond my house's three stories. And all the time I've lived here, I'd only known it from below its canopy. Now it lay at my feet. My thoughts flipped from mourning its lost beauty to relief that it had fallen away from the house. Grief and relief. Grief and relief. Isn't that the way.

I'd have sworn that, by now, I could talk myself into accepting, no, expecting changes in any and all landscapes. The space would be filled by some other growing thing. It's inevitable. It didn't work. This felled giant had been my favorite birch, something about the ways it caught the light at different times of day.

I guess I still carried some belief that since that splendid tree had made it to old age, it would take on the strength and longevity of a mighty oak. Silly, really, some form of magical, wishful thinking.

Too much. I went back to bed and stared through the picture window at the birch that had withstood last night's storm. Bent as it was, it was holding, and the weather report had forecasted a mid-afternoon thaw. I willed that tree to hold on until the sun came and released its limbs from their crystal shackles, letting it stretch once more towards the sky. I stayed in bed longer than I should have, sending out my good wishes and cheers, pushing away the thought that some inner rot that I couldn't see might get the better of it, wondering if that was what had done in our oldest, strongest birch.

Barbara Janoff

March 7, 2011

## SCN Introduction to Situational Awareness

Deputy Regional Security Advisor at Secure Community Network Andrew Hoffman will teach an introduction to Situational Awareness: How to recognize threats and what to do about them. For CAS members on Sunday morning, March 23 at 11:00 AM -12:30 PM in the synagogue. Pizza will be served.



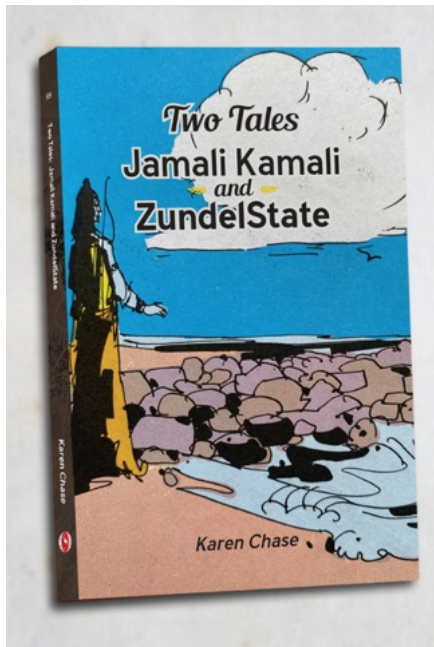
For more about SCN: <https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/>

## Save the date: *Poetry in Times of Crisis*

The poster features a colorful, abstract background of swirling blues, oranges, and purples. At the top, the title "POETRY IN TIMES OF CRISIS" is written in a white, serif font, with "a symposium" in a white, cursive font below it. The event details are centered in a white box: "Saturday, April 5 // 3 pm" and "Stockbridge Library, 46 Main Street". A paragraph of text follows, quoting William Carlos Williams and listing the poets: Richard Michelson and Lesléa Newman (both from Northampton), Jayne Benjulian (West Stockbridge), and Owen Lewis (Stockbridge). At the bottom, four circular portraits of the poets are shown, each with their name written in cursive below: Jayne Benjulian, Owen Lewis, Lesléa Newman, and Richard Michelson.

Please join CAS board member Jayne Benjulian, one of four poets taking part in the symposium, for this April 5th event.

## Save the date: Book Talk – *Two Tales: Jamali Kamali & ZundelState*



Be sure to save the date for a Book Talk: “Two Tales: Jamaili Kamali and ZundelState” on **Sunday, April 27 at 2:00 PM** at the synagogue. Author Karen Chase will be in conversation with poet Jayne Benjulian, author of “Five Sextillion Atoms.” Both Karen and Jayne are members of our congregation.

*Karen Chase's Jamali Kamali & ZundelState are two wildly different yet interconnected works: Jamali Kamali, a homoerotic epic poem that takes place in sixteenth century Mughal India, and ZundelState, a futuristic novella in verse. Each story is its own story, but each story is the story of the world. From the past looking to the future and the future peering back at the past. Enveloping yourself in these pages, you have an experience of the whole world of time. These pages are Technicolor verse. They are visceral. These narratives, alone and together, affect the reader's body like landscape and you are fully sunk into that landscape when reading. They are stand-alone. They are intertwined. At the core of these stories is the endless possibility of love, language, and the power of the human heart. More than anything, they are an illustration of the author's range and the possibilities of the imagination. Two Tales: Jamali Kamali & ZundelState is brilliant. Karen Chase is a troubadour of wind, sound, space, time, memory, and desire.*

## Save the date: **CAS May Gala: The Catskills Comes to the Berkshires**

*The Catskills Come to the Berkshires*” is a fundraising gala to help preserve and restore our historic one-hundred-year-old landmark synagogue. The event will take place on Monday, May 12th at 4:00 PM at The Triplex Cinema in Great Barrington. Tickets are \$100, and information will soon be available for ticket purchase.

The evening will include a screening of the captivating documentary film “The Catskills” by Lex Gillespie, a buffet of small bites provided by Great Barrington Bagel Company, entertainment by Michael Pizzi with accompanist Bob Shepherd, and our own Rabbi Emerita, Barbara Cohen. The program will be introduced by our current Rabbi, Jennifer Rudin.



For the ideal Jewish-American vacation in the 1950s, it was the place to be. The Catskill Mountains, or the “Borscht Belt” as they were often called, boomed with resort hotels and bungalows frequented by all strata of society, including the hottest comedians and entertainers of the day. The documentary, *The Catskills* by Lex Gillespie relives the fascinating history of this vibrant scene.

## March Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Monday, March 17th 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 Thought Catalog on Unsplash*

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, March 17th, 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 Barbara Janoff from the CAS Photography Workshop*



## February Yahrzeits

“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 Gregorian Date	This year's Hebrew Date
Sherwin Fink	Adar1 3 5776	2/12/2016	3/3
Helen Weiner	Adar1 04 5766	3/4/2006	3/4
Emma <u>Mainker</u> Graubard	Adar1 07 5660	6-Feb	3/7
Josef Waller	Adar 09		3/9
Hannah Meltzer Greenside	Adar 10 5753	3/3/1993	3/10
Stanley Clarin	Adar 10 5759	2/25/1999	3/10
Wilhelm Brill	Adar1 16 5708	2/26/1948	3/16
Joe Enzer	Adar 16 5742	3/11/1982	3/16
Mollie Nadelman	Adar1 17 5763	2/19/2003	3/17
Roberta Rudin	Adar1 19 5774	2/19/2014	3/19
Ernest Waller	Adar 21 5753	3/14/1993	3/21
Sydelle Cohen	Adar 22 5777	3/20/2017	3/22
Michael Sloane	Adar 23 5780	3/19/2020	3/23
Jack <u>Nodiff</u>	Adar 25 5777	3/23/2017	3/25
Irving Toporek	Adar1 30 5711	3/8/1951	3/30
Sonia <u>Ziperkowski</u> Witkowski	Adar2 05 5768	3/12/2008	3/5
Martin Sagan	Adar2 07 5771	3/12/2011	3/7
Benjamin Letofsky	Adar2 20 5765	3/31/2005	3/20
Martin Cohn	Adar2 21 5771	3/27/2011	3/21
Oscar Slote	Adar2 25 5727	4/6/1967	3/25
Kenneth Kaplan	Nisan 01 5772	3/24/12	3/30

## February Donations

### In memory of Leonard Traines

Andy Traines

### In memory of Joe Enzer

#### In honor of Arthur's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday

Louise and Arthur Hillman

### In loving memory of Helen Weiner

Keren Weiner

### In support of the upcoming CAS Gala

Joan and Dan Burkhard

Jennie Jadow

### Memorial. Board

Feigenbaum Foundation

[In memory of Dr. Mark Cohen)

### Annual Fund

Barbara Janoff Silverstein

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Neal Hoffman

### In support of the Creative Arts Workshops

Barbara Barron (Photography)

Ross Bettinger (Memoir Workshop)

Bruce Frishkoff (Memoir Workshop)

Linda Geffin (Memoir Workshop)

Arthur Hillman (Memoir Workshop)

Barbara Janoff (Photography Workshop)

Carol Killian (Memoir Workshop)

Marie Rudden (Memoir Workshop)

Stephanie Sloane (Memoir Writing)

Michele Waldman (Photography Workshop)

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