

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

May 2017

Services and Events

Monday, May 1 - May 31: Art Exhibit by Lee Rogers and Nancy Maurice Rogers continues. See Art Shows page on website.

Sunday, May 7, 10:00am – 11:30am: Study Session with Spiritual Leader Barbara Cohen. Bagels and coffee included so a commitment is needed for planning. Firm RSVP by Thursday before to barbaracohen14@gmail.com.

Sunday, May 7, 5:00pm – 6:30pm: CAS Mini Film Series, Part II: “Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story” (91 Minutes). For more info, call Michele Waldman at michelewaldman@rcn.com or check the website.

Monday, May 8, 5:30pm – 6:30pm: Board Meeting. Congregants are welcome to attend. Please email Sandra Flannery at smflann@ix.netcom.com for more information.

Friday, May 12, 5:30pm: Erev Shabbat service

Saturday, May 20, 10 am: Shabbat service followed by coffee, tea, pastry and conversation

Sunday, May 21, 9:00am – 12:30pm: Federation SUPER SUNDAY - Congregation Ahavath Sholom Volunteers needed. Click on Future Events TAB for more info on signing up.

Sunday, May 21, 10am – 12pm: A Soul's Code: Abiding Lessons in the Quran: Study session and discussion. Chaplain Sharif Rosen will guide a study session which will focus on words from the Koran that lead to universal and non-denominational interpretations and lessons for us all. The study session will include open discussion and a free exchange of ideas.

Friday, May 26, 5:30: Erev Shabbat service

Articles/Information

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- **Special Potluck Brunch at the Diana Felber Gallery**
- **CAS Second Night Seder**
- **Milchidika with Marty: WOULD YOU TRUST A CPA WHO WORE AN ORANGE SUIT?**
- **Part II of the CAS Mini Film Series: "Jews and Baseball"**
- **A Soul's Code: Abiding Lessons in the Quran:
Study session and discussion**
- **B'Shalom Chorale of the Berkshires**
- **May Donations**
- **May Yahrzeits**
- **Dialogue through the Lens**
- **Shabbat Across the Berkshires**
- **Super Sunday**

Clara's Bat Mitzvah

A Bat Mitzvah in Jerusalem: A Spiritual Journey

By Barry R. Shapiro

"Dad," said my son, Andrew, "Kathy and I have decided to have Clara's bat mitzvah in Israel."

And with those simple words began a transformative, spiritual journey for our family.

Let's be honest. Most kids don't like Hebrew School and my granddaughter, Clara, was no exception. Keenly aware and proud of her Jewish heritage, having gone to Eisner Camp for years, lighting Shabbat candles every Friday night, and celebrating the Jewish holidays with her family, she found Hebrew School, well, to be candid, a turnoff and a distraction from the significant academic pressures kids in the city face these days. The complaints were typical: it's boring, I'm not learning anything and it's a waste of my time. Pushing her to attend would likely have all too familiar negative consequences.

The solution: a bat mitzvah in Jerusalem followed by a grand tour of Israel, kind of Jewish Pride boot camp, the hope being that this journey would cement into her a profound love for and appreciation of her heritage.

There ensued lots of hard work. Months of private tutoring on her Torah portion and the structure of the service. Skyping with a lovely woman rabbi in Jerusalem (a Reconstructionist rabbi, no less!).

Finally, the big day came and off we flew to Israel in mid-March. How wonderful it was to be asked by the customs officer at Ben-Gurion Airport the reason for our visit and to hear a hearty, "Mazal Tov!" when we told him. (By the way, the Israelis pronounce it with the accent on the second syllable of "Mazal," something that took getting used to.)

The service took place outdoors at the Western Wall at Robinson's Arch in the Archeological Park. It was unusually chilly that day but the emotion of the moment kept us all warm. There were numerous other bar and bat mitzvahs going on at the site and it was moving to hear snippets of song drift our way during our service. The day before, my son and daughter-in-law had purchased a beautiful, pink, embroidered tallit for Clara, in the Old City from a shop where they weave their own tallit and Clara wore it proudly.

Clara is our first grandchild to reach bat mitzvah age and it was for that reason alone a highly emotional moment for us. But to be standing in Jerusalem, in front of the Wall, intensified our feelings. We both thought of our departed parents and how proud they would have been of Clara. It was hard to keep from sobbing.

Clara did a wonderful job reading from the Torah and her speech after was creative, witty and fun. It all went by way too fast.

And then a whirlwind tour of Israel followed. That afternoon, as if the emotions of the morning were not enough, off we went to the Herzl Museum, then walked through the cemetery where Israel's leaders are buried (Clara placed a stone on Golda Meir's grave), and then to Yad Vashem where we were given a private tour geared to Clara. Our guide, Shoshana, who made Aliyah from New Jersey a few years ago, was sensitive and caring, telling Clara stories of the victims and heroes of the Holocaust, and showing her artifacts of interest to a 13-year-old girl. It was a wrenching experience

but Shoshana was careful to steer Clara away from the more graphic displays. ("We want to educate, not traumatize her," she said, "to the extent that's possible.")

At the end of our visit, Shoshana told Clara that 1.5 million of the murdered during the Holocaust were children and many did not live to see their 13th birthday. She said that they had searched their records and would now like to "twin" Clara with one such unfortunate little girl so that Clara could remember her and live her life in her honor. She then pulled out a photograph of a beautiful little blonde-haired girl, age 10, and said, "Clara, meet Klara." Our Clara's new twin, Klara Tiroler, from Slovakia, perished along with her family at Auschwitz. I need not describe the pathos of that moment.

So, what does one do after a day in which your granddaughter is bat mitzvahed at the Wall and you visit Yad Vashem? Easy. You eat. So off we went to the Machane Yehuda market where we let the sounds, smells and flavors of life wash over us.

The rest of the week was a whirlpool of experiences. The Old City of Jerusalem. Masada. The Dead Sea. En Gedi, a lovely oasis where David hid from Saul at David's Waterfall. A camel ride. Planting trees in a Jewish National Fund forest. A trip to the Syrian border where we heard the sounds of war at the nearby city of Quneitra. (We visited a chocolate factory right afterwards to remind us that life is indeed sweet). A visit to a kibbutz on the Lebanon border where we were watched from a Hezbollah outpost. (Clara tied an Israeli flag on a tree to let them know we were not intimidated by them.) A half-hour chatting with Israeli soldiers on the Lebanon border, giving gifts to them of shawarma, falafel, chocolates and a Shakespeare & Co. baseball cap. (The soldier I gave it to thanked me and said that he used to live in Lexington!) Clara climbing onto and even into a tank, just before it went out on patrol. A quiet night in the beautiful area around Lake Tiberias. Walking around Acre, seeing the Bahai Gardens in Haifa and finally to the youthful, fun city of Tel Aviv where we were moved by the interactive Palmach Museum, sang Hatikvah at Independence Hall where the State of Israel was re-born in 1948 and finally to Old Jaffa for a walk around its narrow streets and a remarkable view of Tel Aviv.

Tired from just reading that? Well, imagine how we all felt.

But this trip was really about Clara and her identity as a Jew. There was clearly a lot for her to absorb. A bat mitzvah in Jerusalem. The history of the Jewish people from Masada to Yad Vashem to the birth of a new nation to the current day. She smiled when I asked her what the trip meant to her and she said, "I'll never forget it. I learned so much. But I'm still processing it."

Perhaps the best evidence of the impact of this trip on Clara was the brief speech she gave to the soldiers when we met them. The guide asked Clara to tell the soldiers something about herself and, among other things, she told the brave young men how honored and proud she was to be with them and how much she appreciated what they are doing to protect Israel. After all, she said, "while I live in America, I consider Israel to be my home as well."

She could not have made us more happy and proud.

Special Potluck Brunch held at the Diana Felber Gallery

On Sunday, April 23rd, the Diana Felber Gallery, at 6 Harris St. in West Stockbridge, was the scene of a special potluck brunch for the CAS Women's Group. The gallery exhibition "SIX WOMEN," curated by Warner Friedman and CAS member Diana Felber, featured the work of Kathleen Cammarata, Jessica Hess, Huguette Martel, Marjory Reid, Janet Rickus, and Pamela Stockmore.

CAS Second Night Seder

Congregation Ahavath Sholom has a long tradition of hosting a community seder on the second night of Passover. This year's event was once again held at the beautiful Apple Tree Inn in Lenox. Led by our spiritual leader, Barbara Cohen, sixty-seven participants gathered together in community and enjoyed the songs, thoughts, great food and blessings of the season.

Milchidika with Marty:

WOULD YOU TRUST A CPA WHO WORE AN ORANGE SUIT?

Years ago, when I was working as a CPA; I had to dress the part and wear a suit, starched shirt and tie. And if I were to be at a client's office for a few days, I had to have a different outfit for each day. This was to create a certain image of professionalism.

So, every once in a while, I would ask my wife to help me to pick out a new suit that I could wear at work. Her taste was terrific. There's an old joke "What do you know instantly about a well dressed man? The answer: His wife is good at picking out his clothes."

We would go shopping at my favorite men's clothing store and she would help me (she really did it all), picking out a new suit, matching shirts and ties. The combinations were always great, but I began to think, "I'm 40-years-old. I'm old enough to buy my own clothes. I don't need my wife along to help me. What am I, a little boy?"

So, the next time, when I felt I needed a new suit, I said "Honey, I need a new suit, but I'm going to pick it out myself." She said "Are you sure you don't need me?" "Of course not, I'm a big boy. I can pick out my own clothes."

So off I went to my favorite men's store full of confidence in my impeccable taste. I think the salesman saw me coming. He said, "We have the latest styles and fashions just in your size." He took out what looked like a pale orange suit. He assured me that if I bought this suit, I would be in the latest style

and be a trend setter. He also happened to have a light green suit complete with a matching vest, which he also assured me was very avant-garde.

Wanting to prove to my wife that I had flawless taste, I bought them both. They needed some alterations and I would have them in a week.

When I got home, my wife asked, "So, what did you buy?" I told her "She'll just have to wait until the alterations are complete and then you'll see that I really have great taste." By the way, for some reason, she wouldn't let me pick out any of the wallpaper for our house.

The next week when I proudly brought home my boxes with my new wonderful selections, I told my wife, "I'm going to try them on and you tell me what you think." I went into the bedroom and put on my new orange suit (it wasn't that bright, really a very light orange) and came out to show off my new purchase. My wife couldn't stop laughing and said "What are you nuts? Who would take advice from a CPA in an orange suit? What else did you buy?"

When I next appeared in my green suit (also not the Jolly Green Giant green, but a very light green) with a matching vest, she couldn't control her laughter.

Well, I wore the orange suit only once and never had the courage to wear the green one. I guess I know now why she wouldn't let me pick the wallpaper for the bedroom.

A NEW PAIR OF SHOES

A man walked into a shoe shop and tried on a new pair of shoes.

"How do they feel?" asked the salesman.

"A bit too tight."

The salesman bent down to check the shoe fit and said, "Try pulling the tongue out."

"Thet thtill feelth a bith tighth."

Part II of the CAS Mini Film Series: "Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story"

The film, "Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story," will be shown on Sunday, May 7, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at the synagogue; it runs 91 minutes.

The film was written by Pulitzer Prize winner Ira Berkow and is narrated by actor Dustin Hoffman. Hoffman does not normally narrate films and initially turned down the project. But after looking at the script, he changed his mind, saying: "Oh, this is about bigotry and overcoming anti-Semitism, about discrimination and these issues that I grew up with:

that really matters to me".

Anti-Semitism and the stereotype of Jews as non-athletic were two issues that many Jewish baseball players faced and had to overcome. A number of early Jewish ballplayers changed their names, so that it would not be apparent that they were Jewish. The movie discusses key Jewish ballplayers in each decade since baseball started in the 1860's. The film encompasses Jewish immigration and assimilation into American society; bigotry against Jews; the passing on of Jewish traditions despite assimilation; heroism; and the breaking of Jewish stereotypes.

The film includes rare archival footage and interviews including a session with the notoriously reclusive Sandy Koufax. The soundtrack ranges from Benny Goodman to YoYo Ma and Tom Rush.

All are welcome. Admission is free and a general discussion will follow the film.

A Soul's Code: Abiding Lessons in the Quran: Study session and discussion

On Sunday, May 21st at 10:00 a.m. at the synagogue, Chaplain Sharif Rosen will guide a study session which will focus on words from the Koran that lead to universal and non-denominational interpretations and lessons for us all. The study session will include open discussion and a free exchange of ideas.

Chaplain Rosen currently serves as the Muslim chaplain at Williams College. He is a resource to Muslim students and works in collaboration with other chaplains to foster and enrich the religious and spiritual life of the entire Williams community. He is also the assistant director of the Center for Learning in Action.

Previously he was at Dartmouth College, where he served as Muslim and Multi-Faith Advisor. For the campus' Muslim students, he coordinated Muslim education, worship, and multi-faith programming; advised student groups; and taught Arabic and Quranic recitation.

Chaplain Sharif's training in the Islamic sciences occurred primarily in Amman, Jordan between 2008 and 2013, where he studied areas such as ritual law, spirituality, tenets of faith, Quranic recitation and commentary with scholars holding unbroken chains (asanid) of transmission back to the beginnings of Islamic tradition. He holds permission to teach Quranic recitation (obtained 2013), the classic Arba'in al-Nawawiyah (obtained 2015), and Imam al-Haddad's Book of Assistance (obtained 2015). His studies continue amid translation projects under his teachers' supervision.

Chaplain Rosen completed the full Classical Arabic program at the Qasid Arabic Institute, also in Amman, while directing its student affairs office aimed at helping students succeed during their study abroad experience. As an administrator at Qasid, he facilitated students cultural and language immersion to include volunteer service assisting low income and refugee populations in and around Amman.

The study session is free.

B'Shalom Chorale of the Berkshires

The B'Shalom Chorale, the Berkshires' only chorale showcasing Jewish music, is pleased to announce its 4th season! Plans are underway for weekly rehearsals, which will begin on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, culminating with a concert on Wednesday, August 16th, in Great Barrington. The Chorale is conducted by Jack Brown, with accompanist Joe Rose, each well known in the Berkshires and beyond.

The Chorale is open to all men and women, Jewish or not Jewish, who have a pleasant singing voice and the ability to stay on pitch. Choral experience is preferred, as is a love of singing 4-part music. The ability to read music is helpful, though not mandatory. Several CAS members have enjoyed singing with this group.

If you are interested in singing in the B'Shalom Chorale or wish to support the organization with work or funds, please contact Founder and Coordinator, Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler at 413-418-1836 or send an email to BshalomChorale@gmail.com

May Donations

In memory of Nancy Cohen's mother, Sydelle

Richard and Diana Richter

Passover donation

Charles and Karen Schader

Other donations

Robin Berson

Lisa Chamberlain

John Slote and Nancy Cohen

Carol Killian

Walter and Gail Orenstein

Barbara Rubin

Marlene White

May Yahrzeits

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

Florence Bissel Gans

Iyyar 05 5740

5/1

Lillian Cohen

Iyyar 06 5698 5/2

David Levine
Iyyar 06 5750 5/2

Lynne Cutler
Iyyar 06 5767 5/2

Frances Schmetterling Innerfield
Iyyar 06 5769 5/2

Muriel F. Goldman
Iyyar 8 5757 5/4

Joseph Fisher
Iyyar 09 5731 5/5

Helen D. Rawitz
Iyyar 09 5753 5/5

Bettye Slaminsky
Iyyar 10 5771 5/6

Perry Winston
Iyyar 11 5664 5/7

Michael Felber
Iyyar 13 5/9

Louis Levine
Iyyar 17 5733 5/13

Alfred Dronge
Iyyar 18 5732 5/14

Mae Osterweil
Iyyar 18 5772 5/14

Joseph Freund
Iyyar 20 5709 5/16

George Slaminsky
Iyyar 22 5735 5/18

Ruby Feldblum
Iyyar 23 5709 5/19

Risa Graubard
Iyyar 26 5775 5/22

Irene Linder
Iyyar 26 5760 5/22

Judith Winston
Iyyar 26 5761 5/22

Rochelle Grosser
Iyyar 27 5755 5/23

Anna Gitta Maskowsky
Iyyar 28 5729 5/24

Henriette Waller
Sivan 04 5/29

Blanche Goodman
Sivan 4 5742 5/29

Jim Eder
Sivan 05 5765 5/30

Dialogue through the Lens



Dialogue through the Lens

featuring the works of thirty Israeli Arab & Jewish photographers,
depicting life and coexistence in the Afula-Gilboa region of Northern Israel

Meet the Photographers: Join us for a special reception with four of the photographers who are part of the multi cultural photography club of *Marching Together for a Shared Future*, an Israeli NGO whose goal is to promote coexistence between Jews and Arabs in the State of Israel.

Monday, May 8, 2017

5:30-7:30 pm

Charles Flint, Fine Art & Antiques Gallery
52 Housatonic Street, Lenox, MA

Exhibit and Reception is free and open to the entire community

Presented by



Special thanks to Charles Flint, Fine Art & Antiques Gallery for hosting this special event for our community

Shabbat Across the Berkshires



Shabbat

Across

The Berkshires

Join with friends from across the Berkshire Jewish Community as we come together for a musical, family-friendly Shabbat service, led by rabbis, spiritual leaders and musicians from across the County, then stay for a delicious, volunteer-prepared kosher Shabbat dinner.

Friday, June 2, 2017
5:30 pm

Hosted by

Congregation Knesset Israel
16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA

DINNER: Adults \$20, Teens (13-18 yrs) \$15, Kids 12 and under, free. \$56 Family Maximum
Space is limited and advanced dinner reservations are required by May 30.
Reserve online at knessetisrael.org or by calling (413) 445-4872, ext 10.

Sponsored by:

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
Berkshire Minyan
Congregation Ahavath Sholom
Congregation Beth Israel
Congregation Knesset Israel
Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
Temple Anshe Amunim
Berkshire Hills Hadassah



Super Sunday



Join with friends from across the Berkshire Jewish Community as we come together for a musical, family-friendly Shabbat service, led by rabbis, spiritual leaders and musicians from across the County, then stay for a delicious, volunteer-prepared kosher Shabbat dinner.

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