



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER March 2019

Upcoming services and events

Sunday, March 3, 10:00 am: 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. **CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER FORECAST**

Saturday, March 9, 10:00 am: Shabbat Service followed by coffee, tea, pastry and conversation.

Sunday, March 10, 2:00 pm: *Still-Life Sunday*, a studio workshop with Ilene Spiewak. Supply fee of \$15. Please contact CASoffice@gmail.com to reserve a space.

Monday, March 11, 6:00 pm: CAS Board Meeting.

Thursday, March 14, 9:00 am-1:00 pm: People's Pantry at St. James Place, Great Barrington. Generally 2 hour shifts: contact Walter Orenstein at ptcpa@roadrunner.com to participate. *If schools in Great Barrington are closed for snow ... so is the Pantry.*

Sunday, March 17, 10:15 am: Book Group: "All Who Go Do Not Return" by Shulem Deen. Please contact Diana Richter at drpajama1@gmail.com for location of the meeting and further information.

Friday, March 22, 5:30 pm: Erev Shabbat service and potluck dinner to honor Purim.

Sunday, March 24, 2:00 pm: *Poetry Writing Workshop* with Barbara Janoff. Workshop fee of \$10. Please contact CASoffice@gmail.com to reserve a space.

This month's newsletter features:

- **Creative Arts Series: Photos from February's *Jewish Graphic Artists* talk and the *Visual Midrash* Exhibition**
- **Creative Arts Series: *Still Life Sunday* with Ilene Spiewak - March 10**
- **Creative Arts Series: *Poetry Writing Workshop* with Barbara Janoff - March 24**
- **Milchidika with Marty: Mary, Mary Quite Contrary
How Does Your Garden Grow?**
- **Keep Smiling! More photo memories by Don Victor**
- **CAS Book Group**
- **March Yahrzeits**
- **March Donations**

Creative Arts Series: Photos from February's *Jewish Graphic Artists* talk and the *Visual Midrash* Exhibition

On Sunday, February 24, Arthur Hillman spoke about 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.



The talk was followed by a reception for the exhibit, *Arthur Hillman, Visual Midrash*, the Upstairs Art Gallery at the synagogue.





This was the first of four scheduled events in the *Creative Arts Series* at the synagogue; two March workshops are described in the following articles.

Creative Arts Series: *Still Life Sunday* with Ilene Spiewak - March 10

Things are whatever we imagine them to be.

Come wield a paintbrush and enjoy a glass of wine.

Engage yourself and your colors in an intimate conversation.

Sting your senses and charge your paint with energy!

Make your own still-life painting.

It's a little bit risky.

It's lots of fun!

Still-Life Sunday will culminate with an alla prima exhibition of the group's work in the Upstairs Art Gallery at CAS.

You will like what you see.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a supply fee of \$15. Contact CASoffice15@gmail.com to reserve a space.



Still Life paintings by Ilene Spiewak

Workshop leader Ilene Spiewak received her B.A. from The Pennsylvania State University and her M.A. in Art Therapy from Hahnemann University Hospital. Ilene studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Moore College of Art, the Fleisher Art Memorial, the Provincetown Art Museum, the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. She is currently enrolled in the low-residency program at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where she received an M.F.A. in Painting. Ilene is a painter, therapist, and educator and lives in West Stockbridge, MA.

Throughout her career, which is steeped in 50 years of first-hand observation and study, she has investigated the physical relationships between color and visual space. Her paintings are built of layers of washes and bold color, creating subtle irregularities in placement of composition on the canvas. She continues to push the boundaries of this exploration to create tension and informed passion, breaching staid boundaries of painted images.

“My work as a painter involves making images from a near non-representational position, moving toward abstraction. While working on two or three canvases at a time, I consider what is in front of me as well as what I invent. My body of work has a sense of excitement and energy achieved through layers of color that build on one another. I draw basic compositional elements to make forms and shapes on the canvas which may be painted out or enhanced with bold lines and washes of strong color combinations.”

“I am inspired by the very essence of color and form in nature. I love to paint work informed by figure, landscape, and still-life. My subject matter is in line with philosophical discourse on the sublime and the beauty of the natural world.”



Still Life paintings by Ilene Spiewak

Creative Arts Series: *Poetry Writing Workshop* with Barbara Janoff - March 24

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.

Please bring a favorite photo to the event!

NOTE: Workshop fee of \$10. Please contact CASoffice15@gmail.com to reserve a space.



Barbara Janoff Ph.D. is an associate professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York in Manhattan, where she teaches writing and literature. Before her full-time faculty appointment, she served as interim dean of the college's division of Continuing Education. As writing coordinator for the college, she developed "The Craft of Writing Poetry" for the Presidential Scholars program and coauthored *The Graphic Designer's Guide to Better Business Writing*. 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*.

Milchidika with Marty: *Mary, Mary Quite Contrary, How Does Your Garden Grow*

When I was a young boy growing up in my parents' apartment in Astoria, Queens, I don't remember my mother having any houseplants growing on the window sill. She just wasn't interested in plants. I even remember that the artificial plants always looked wilted and seemed to need watering.

So, when I was married, and ultimately bought my first house, which was on a quarter acre plot in Syosset, Long Island, I was really impressed that all that grass belonged to me. But had no idea of how to deal with it, except that I knew it had to be mowed. But how often? What do you do about those hedges, whatever they are? Do they get cut? At that point there were no flowers growing around the house, so I didn't have to think about that.

I didn't have much extra money at that time as we were now "house poor" but did manage to find a gardener who would give me one day of work on a Saturday in September in exchange for my ultimately preparing his income tax return.

When the gardener came to our house early on a Saturday morning and began to work, I sat in awe watching him as he thinned out the overgrown hedges with abandon, so that they now began to look less overgrown and straggly, mowed the lawn and edged it, so that it too was looking pretty good. It was now four o'clock in the afternoon and he said to me, "Come on, we'll go to the nursery and buy some tulip bulbs." Which we did. He then took those brown things which looked like onions to me and planted them all around the perimeter of our little cement patio and left.

I didn't think too much about it, but next spring when the tulips all came up, and were so beautiful, I was hooked. So that spring, I went to the local nursery and bought what they assured me were easy to grow plants that were guaranteed not to die under the care of a beginner. I was really enthused at that point and bought marigolds, begonias and petunias. It didn't matter if the colors clashed. I just stuck them in the ground and they grew.

As the years went on, I grew more confident and bought plants where the colors didn't clash, but only bought annuals which I replaced each year. Perennials were for more experienced "real gardeners." But one year, I bought my first perennial, stuck it in the ground, and mazel tov, it survived until the following summer. And so, my gardening passion began. I thought, "Boy, I'm really a gardener now".

When I retired years later, I decided that I would like to go to a gardening school, as I now had the free time. I found that the local agricultural college on Long Island allowed you to attend gardening classes free of charge if you were over the age of sixty-two and if the class was not full.

And so, I began my new college career, one class at a time. I soon found out how little I really knew. The first thing I learned was that all the plants were only referred to by their Latin names so that if you asked the instructor a question about "marigolds" instead of "*Tagetes patula*," he wouldn't answer it.

Since I was much older than the 20-year-old students, I was an anomaly. No one would have anything to do with me, and they managed to sit two seats away from me on either side and basically had little to do with me. That was OK, because I was there to learn.

After taking a number of classes over the years which generally had the same students in them from year to year as we were progressing along the curriculum, my biggest thrill was one day as I was walking across the campus to go to my class, two students coming in the opposite direction, with their baseball caps on backwards, gave me a "high five" and said, "How are you doing Marty?" I was thrilled, recognition at last.

I was retired, had plenty of time, and was bitten by the green bug, so I volunteered to be a gardener in the public gardens of Old Westbury Gardens and at the same time became a costumed colonial farmer in Old Bethpage Village on Long Island. In Old Bethpage Village, I tended a small garden by hand, where we grew the vegetables of that colonial era. A lot of turnips, rutabagas, parsnips. Vegetables that would last throughout the winter in the "root cellar" of the colonial houses. We used no chemicals or pesticides and fertilized with the manure from the cows in the village. The original "organic gardening".

That was a lot of fun, especially when the school buses would come with the first and second graders who would see me working in the garden and ask if I really was a friend of George Washington.

When winter came, and the gardens were put to rest, I heard that there was a course given by the Cornell Extension Service on Long Island, which if you completed all the material, and passed the final exam, you could receive a certificate proclaiming to all the world that you were a "Master Gardener."

And that began my career in the Extension Service on Long Island answering gardening questions. We would answer questions that people might ask over the telephone or at a counter in our building. I remember my first day as a volunteer on the telephone. I was so nervous wondering if I would know the answer if someone asked me a question on any gardening topic.

The Extension Service had prepared a three-ring loose leaf binder to use to help answering questions. It was so clever, in that it was divided not into topics, but rather into months of the year; with the topics that people would generally ask about in that particular month. So, in April for instance, we would probably receive a lot of phone calls about fertilizing the lawn, rather than what to do about the bugs on the tomato plants.

The day before I was scheduled to begin my first phone session, I studied that month's topics to make sure that I knew all about them. When I arrived at the building, the supervisor said that I would spend the first day looking up information for some of the questions asked of the other operators, but that I would not be on the phone until I had more experience. That was fine with me. And so, the day went on, and I would look up various topics in our extensive horticultural library for the other phone operators. We would answer the phone up until four o'clock in the afternoon. And that day, after everyone had gotten off the phones at four o'clock, the phone rang, and the supervisor said, "Marty, why don't you answer it?"

And I did. The person at the other end asked me a gardening question and to my complete delight, I knew the answer. I was thrilled.

When I had finished, I turned to the supervisor and said, "That wasn't so hard." To which she replied, "Why don't you write a little story about your first day's experience answering the telephone, and maybe we will get more people to volunteer." I did. In fact, I began to write a few monthly stories.

I mentioned this to one of my boyhood friends that I was now writing a monthly gardening column and his wise guy answer to me was, "What are you going to call it? Mulching with Marty?" And that is how it all began.

Two gardening quotes:

"If your garden is perfect, it's too small"

"Gardeners believe in the future"

Keep Smiling! More photo memories by Don Victor

A few photographs documenting the evolution of the our building





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CAS Book Group

The CAS Book Group will meet at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 17 to discuss All Who Go Do Not Return by Shulem Deen. Named one of "forty-three books to read before you die" by the Independent in UK, this memoir is about growing up in and then leaving one of the most insular Hasidic sects in the U.S. Deen lays bare his difficult wrestling with his faith, the challenges it posed to everything he thought he knew about himself, and the hard-won redemption he eventually found. **Ann Dorfman will lead the discussion.** Please contact Diana at drpajama1@gmail.com for further information and location of this meeting.



March 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

Jacob Cohen	Adar 03 5712	3/10
Aaron Fisher	Adar2 03 5725	3/10
Samuel Penziner	Adar2 04 5746	3/11
Sonia Ziperkowski Witkowski	Adar2 05 5768	3/12
Josef Waller	Adar 09	3/16
Max Shenkman	Adar 09 5699	3/16
Hannah Meltzer Greenside	Adar 10 5753	3/17
Louis Rollnick	Adar2 12 5733	3/19
Clara Brickman	Adar 13 5701	3/20
Anna Tickner	Adar 14 5740	3/21
Joe Enzer	Adar 16 5742	3/23
Benjamin Letofsky	Adar2 20 5765	3/27
Ernest Waller	Adar 21 5753	3/28
Meyer Spiegelman	Adar 22 5764	3/29
Sydelle Cohen	Adar22 5777	3/29

March Donations

In memory of Joe Enzer

Arthur and Louise Hillman

Annual Year End Financial Appeal

Michele Waldman

Other donations

Nettie Hammond