



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

February 2025

Upcoming services and events

Saturday, February 1 at 10:00 AM: Traditional Shabbat Service with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

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

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

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

Friday, February 14 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Saturday, February 15 at 10:00 AM: Tu B'Shevat Seder with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Monday, February 17 at 12:00 Noon: Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom

7:00 PM: Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

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

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

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

This month's newsletter features:

January Still Life Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak

Save the date: Passover Cooking with Alison

"Widow's Log," the second in a series of writings by Barbara Janoff

"Assembled," Mad Rose Gallery exhibit & "In Conversation"

Save the date: Introduction to Situational Awareness

February Creative Arts Workshops

You're still invited to help...

February Yahrzeits

February Donations

Community Event

Advertisers and Sponsors

January Still Life Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak

On January 26th, Ilene Spiewak, painter, educator, art therapist, and CAS member, offered a studio painting workshop in the upstairs reception space at the synagogue. Ilene volunteers her time for these unforgettable events!

"Things are whatever we imagine them to be. Engage yourself and your color sense in an intimate conversation. Sting your senses and charge your paints with energy!" was Ilene's charge to the group of 12 participants.





Save the date (March 6): *Passover Cooking with Alison*

Be sure to save the date, March 6th, for Passover Cooking with our own Alison Adams-Weinberg. Many thanks to the folks at Hevreh, who have volunteered their kitchen for this CAS fundraiser. We will book only 12 slots for cooking, eating, and a surprise (along with recipes etc). Reservations are first come, first serve. Follow details for the event in upcoming Constant Contact email blasts.



“Widow’s Log,” the second in a series of writings by Barbara Janoff

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

Filling An Empty House

We had our first big snow storm of the season last night. I live right off a road called Breezy Hill, but there was nothing breezy about the gales that twisted the birch branches outside my bedroom windows and made my whole second story sway. The fierce wind shook me awake before dawn. Lying under two heavy blankets and a quilt, my mind was on full-fear alert as I wondered how strong was strong enough. It felt like something indispensable might collapse--the foundation or the roof. Then I thought of what Al would have said, "Don't worry, Kid. The house can take it. Go back to sleep." And I did.

This morning I woke to twenty-one inches of snow, not unusual for a Columbia County winter. But the silence in the house felt strange to me. When Al was alive, I'd have wakened to the sounds of his industry. He'd be outside literally clearing the decks. I would have heard the thuds of his heavy bootsteps and the quick tapping of Star's paws while Al's shovel scraped snow from the wood planks. Or, if I'd slept through that task, I'd have heard the cabinet doors banging in the kitchen as he made breakfast. He wouldn't have sat down to eat or drink until he'd accomplished at least one activity on his list. "Always do the most difficult task first thing in the morning." He used to say, "Then, the rest of your day will go more easily."

That's what I've decided to do right now as I lie still blanketed in my bed and stare outside at the morning sky reflecting on the snowy slopes and valleys of my home. The most difficult thing is to acknowledge the painful absences of everyone I loved during this most family-focused of holiday seasons. I'd prefer not to think about how much I miss Al and my mother, who together would have taken over the kitchen by the early afternoon. Al would have been peeling Yukon golds for his delicious mashed potatoes and concocting blender drinks for everyone. And my mother would have been baking up a storm, filling the house with smells of cinnamon and apples and roasting meats, while Star hovered underfoot in hopes of a dropped scrap. And my father would have been sitting at the table, reading the newspaper out loud without realizing it, his mutterings a quiet accompaniment to the hustle and bustle of my husband and mother at holiday time. And I would have filled in where needed, happy to have them all together.

But my mind is revising the past, placing everyone at their best moments all together in my kitchen so that I can enjoy their memories in one sweet scene. It wasn't until old age finally calmed my father enough to keep him contentedly seated among us that he was able to concentrate on the news rather than be agitated by it. In contrast, it's been many years since my mother was energetic and focused enough to bake and plan the holiday meals. Her mind had begun to deteriorate by the time my father's spirit had mellowed. Star's gone too. And I left out my sister and her family, who would have added immensely to the laughter and warmth, but the children have grown and moved away, and the girl I grew up lives far away and is grappling with her own life changes.

And really, were my best moments the times when I filled in where needed? What about the tensions that arose at almost every family gathering? I miss them too, but I can see that my fantasy needs a good edit. I'm not the little sister anymore or the baby of the family, for that matter. I'm no longer "Kid" to my husband, who was eleven years older than I and a mentor to me in the ways of the world, just as I mentored him in the ways of the heart. "Always do the most difficult task first thing in the morning." Which is that--facing the world or the heart. . .or a little of both?



This morning my most difficult task when I woke to my empty house was to start my day with action. I wanted to stay in bed reading a magazine with the television on mute, my most effective distraction and escape. But that would have led to a day-long dark mood. My most difficult task was to get up at all, go into my office, and write. Soon I'll have the rest of the day to myself, and I think Al was right. It will go more easily. Although I made myself coffee *before* I wrote.

And here is how I foresee the rest of my day. First, I'll fill my living room and dining room with music from the radio. I'll fullness in my house. The sound will spill into the kitchen, where I'll go next. I plan to bake a poppy seed cake to bring to my friends' house for dinner tomorrow night. It isn't my mother's recipe, but its fragrance will remind me of her poppy seed hamantaschen. I'll build a fire too. Then I'll decide what I want to do next. It might even be reading a magazine in front of that fire instead of that television on mute. I'll no longer need that distraction. By the end of a satisfying day, I'll want to relax.

December 27, 2010

“Assembled,” Mad Rose Gallery exhibit - and “In Conversation”

The group exhibition, *Assembled*, is on display until March 2nd. The panel discussion, *In Conversation*, takes place on Saturday, February 15 beginning at 3:00 PM. CAS member Arthur Hillman is taking part in both events.





Louise's Garden: Symphony, by Arthur Hillman, HD Metal print 30" x 40"

ASSEMBLED

Structures, photographs, drawings, ceramics and fiber arts.

Featuring the works of Karen Dolmanisth, Michael Flower, Emily Fuller, Arthur Hillman, Bruce Panock and Kim Saul

The Mad Rose Gallery is open:
Thursday-Sunday, Noon-5:00 PM
Saturday until 6:00 PM

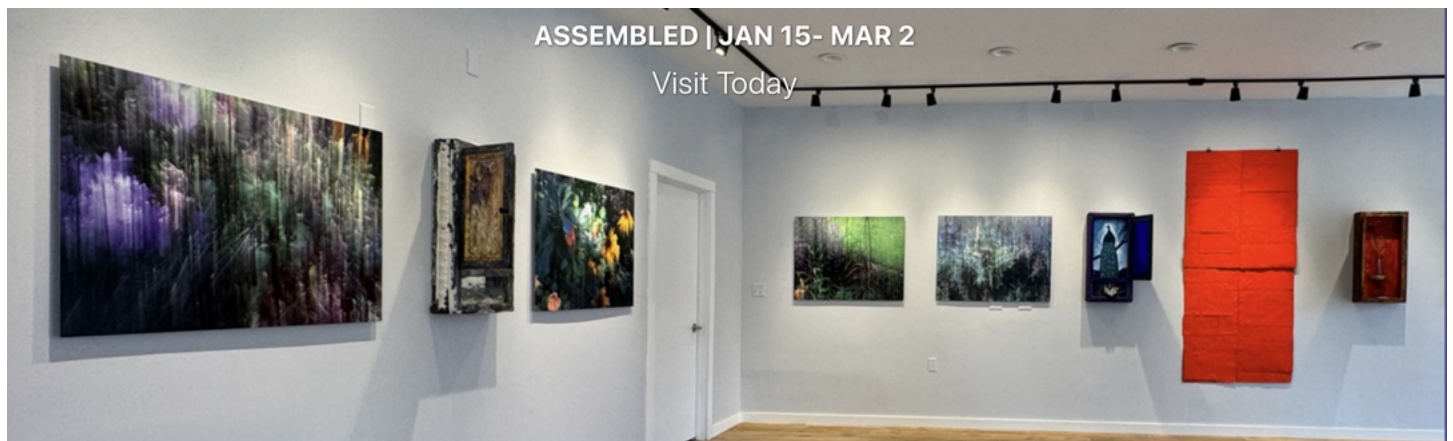


ASSEMBLED- In Conversation

Mark your calendars for February 15 at 3 PM and join us for an engaging and inspiring session of “In Conversation” with our featured artists. Dive into the creative minds of Karen Dolmanisth, Michael Lavin Flower, Emily Rutgers Fuller, Arthur Hillman, Bruce Panock, and Kim Saul as they share their unique artistic journeys, discuss their processes, and explore the stories behind their works. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with the artists and gain deeper insights into their craft.

RSVP welcome@madrosegallery.com

The [Mad Rose Gallery](#) is located at 5916 North Elm Avenue, Millerton, New York



Save the date (March 23): 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 @ 11:00 AM -12:30 PM at the synagogue.



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

You're still invited to help...

You are Invited...



to celebrate a year of community, prayer, change and joy at Ahavath Sholom. This past year, 2024, has seen uplifting religious services, warm and inclusive social events, fascinating cultural and educational programs, changes in our rabbinical staff and a revitalized forward-looking congregation.

Please support our congregation in whatever way you can: a single donation or a pledge for continued donation through the year. And, though we refuse to believe we are getting older, consider CAS in your estate planning. You can donate on our website or send your check to CAS, which is much preferred.

Thank you and looking forward to celebrating and sharing our community in 2025!

February Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is scheduled for Monday, February 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. 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 Nick Morrison on Unsplash

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, February 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. 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 Barron 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	Original	This year's
	Hebrew Date	Gregorian Date	Hebrew Date
Al Alson	Shevat 3 5777	1/30/2017	2/1
Rosemary Edelman	Shevat 4 5773	1/15/2013	2/2
Frances Letofsky	Shevat 07 5769	2/1/2009	2/5
Larry Hillman	Shevat 09 5722	1/14/1963	2/7
Lawrence Cohen	Shevat 11 5765	1/21/2005	2/9
Dan Bongini	Shevat 12 5765	1/22/2005	2/10
Alice Slater Stahl	Shevat 12 5772	2/5/2012	2/10
Martin B. Slater	Shevat 22 5767	2/10/2007	2/20
Meyer Osterweil	Shevat 23 5719	2/1/1959	2/21
Lewis Cohn	Shevat 23 5776	2/2/2016	2/21
Joseph Karelitz	Shevat 26 5743	2/9/1983	2/24
David V. Schenker	Shevat 27 5753	2/18/1993	2/25

February Donations

In honor of Rabbi Barbara Cohen for her kindness and generosity

Karen and Charles Schader

To memory of Larry Hillman

Louise and Arthur Hillman

Year End Donations

Linda Geffin

Louise and Arthur Hillman

In support of the Creative Arts Workshops

Ross Bettinger (Memoir Workshop)

Bruce Frishkoff (Memoir Workshop)

Linda Geffin (Memoir Workshop)

Arthur Hillman (Memoir Workshop)

Carol Killian (Memoir Workshop)

Shirley Ripullone (Memoir Workshop)

Marie Rudden (Memoir Workshop)

Stephanie Sloane (Memoir Writing)

Michele Waldman (Photography Workshop)

Community Event

SHARE THE LIGHT

Community Havdalah and Concert

Featuring Jewish music from around
the world with singer and musician

Laura Wetzler 

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1 | 7:00 P.M.
Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad St, Pittsfield

Join our Berkshire Rabbis and community members
from across the county for an inspirational evening of
light and song.

Co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation, Temple Anshe Amunim,
Hevreh, Knesset Israel, Congregation Ahavath Sholom,
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