

# Mendocino Megillah



Mendocino Coast Jewish Community

November 2008 (5769)

15701 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA <http://www.mcjc.org> (707) 964-6146

PDF Version: <http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm>



## Rabbi's Notes:

### Peace and Satisfaction in 5769

I'm home, croaking but happy, ruminating on our Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur together. So many sounds: the yelps and cries of the shofar going right through our skin and Roberta's harp interpretations opening us up to hear them, our youngest and oldest Torah readers collaborating to leyn an aliyah, Jonathan playing his extended meditation on Kol Nidre, bracketed with Sam's pure and heartfelt voice, Sandy carrying us out to the stars after yizkor with that incredible song by Kurt Weill, and of course all our voices rising in the dark in front of the open ark at neilah -- the moment I wait for all year long...

Then there were the sounds conveyed in speech: three wildly-different, inspired teachings on Rosh Hashana afternoon, Jonah's bumbling but (and?) hope-filled appearance on Yom Kippur afternoon, channeled by Hyla, so many people saying their Jewish names aloud (sometimes with a little bit of unintentional Spanish thrown in for good measure...) and hearing them called back by our gabbai-im, and of course prayers prayers prayers, loud and soft, English and Hebrew, "these words or the words in your hearts," sometimes even in silence (for a few seconds, anyhow, as we were affectionately teased about by our Mettika...)

I have the bliss of standing in front of all of you for many hours over the High Holy Days, gazing at you. I usually pray with my eyes closed, I realize -- it's often just too intense to look into your faces at such a sweet and open-hearted time. But I still get to drink in the beautiful aura of our little Jewish community gathered at an auspicious time of year, and my heart is full and grateful.

I hadn't really meant to do any political polling during the Days, but an interesting straw-vote came up over Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur recalls the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies to atone for himself, his tribe

and the Jewish people. This year at the morning Torah reading, I invited people to come up to the Torah according to the area which most burdens their own conscience -- the aspect of life for which they feel most called to atone and repair. There were six aliyot, and I distributed them as follows: the personal sphere (selves, households, families, intimate relationships); neighborhood and local community; our local Jewish community; the United States; the Jewish people and Israel; and the world, nations and ecosystem.

A mob of people came up for the first aliyah, for the personal sphere. A nice handful came up for the second one, for the local community. Then came aliyah #3, for our Jewish community. And no one stood up at all. I had a moment of, well, not quite panic. But if there were ever a time when it was clearly my moment to stand up, that was such a time. I chanted the blessings alone. Lots and lots of people came up for the next aliyah, for the United States. Two people came up for "the Jewish people and Israel." And a whole bunch of people came up for the last one, the global-consciousness aliyah.

Very, very interesting data... Pundits could well claim that prayer, the Jewish community and the Jewish people come in at the bottom of our people's concerns -- even on Yom Kippur! Oy oy oy... One might be tempted to throw up one's hands and say, "What the hell are we doing here, anyhow???" But that's not how I spin these stats.

We had the world's quickest press conference, right at the conclusion of the Torah reading. I asked all of you there, "Why do you think that so few people came up for the Jewish community/Jewish people aliyot?" And Mike Shapiro called out (with, I think, a happy lilt in his voice) "With all the things going wrong in our world right now, these are going well! We don't need to worry about them as much..." (That's not, of course, a direct quote.)

Halevai! So may it be... And I think that there is another message in this "poll" as well, one that takes a

longer perspective than even this troubled political moment. For some Jews the Jewish community, the Jewish people and Jewish life are the most important thing in the world, sometimes the only thing that matters at all. And I suppose perhaps we should be glad for such people. But for me -- and I think I may share this with many of you -- Judaism is not an end in itself. Jewish life and practice exists for the larger purpose of adding a bit of meaning, beauty and goodness to life and world. Judaism is hopefully a source of nurture for our personal and family lives and for the ways we contribute to our communities, country and global reality.

So by these lights I should be -- and am -- delighted and moved by the way those aliyot lined up. I think it's wonderful that so many of you bring your personal, communal and global passions to the shul, and hopefully bring the consciousness we try to cultivate there back out to the world. I hope that for those of you who celebrated Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur -- whether for a few minutes or for the whole marathon, whether with us in Caspar or in another community -- you left feeling like you have something nourishing to bring back with you to your household, neighborhood, nation and world.

Every year at Yom Kippur I read a little midrash, retold by Aryeh Kaplan in his book on mikveh. Kaplan says that all rivers really flow from the Garden of Eden and are, as such, really one river. Adam, after he was booted out of Eden, couldn't return to the Garden itself. So he used to go sit in the river to connect with that primal source. And in doing so, he was cleansed.

I like to think that one of the rivers that flows from the Garden of Eden is the river of Judaism and the Jewish people, and one of its tributaries is our little Jewish community here on the Coast. A few people need to make the health of the river itself their top priority, and sometimes there is a slide or a spill, and more work is needed. But for the most part the river flows generously from its source, and all of us can dip in when we need to, for renewal and inspiration, for a drink of cool water.

I am moved by all the ways that people in our Jewish community (and yes, in the larger Jewish community as well) extend yourselves to nurture community, world and earth. I am happy and honored to be one of the river keepers, and I know well that you will show up to plant and shovel when needed, and more often to swim and play and dive in this lovely water.

I hope that life brings a reduction in stress on our own souls, our families, our community, country and earth.

But whatever happens in the big poll this month, I am grateful for our time together in the river, and I wish you peace and satisfaction in 5769.

- Rabbi Margaret Holub

### **Peace Prayers**

We will gather for an hour of prayers for peace, justice and national renewal on Wednesday, November 5, 5:30 - 6:30 PM at the shul. Whatever happens in the election, there will be peace and restoration to pray for. (mh)

### **“Inner Torah” Classes Canceled**

Life has gotten too full! Margaret will not be teaching her "Inner Torah" classes, scheduled for three Sundays: November 16, December 14 and January 11. She is looking forward to planning some short classes for after the first of the year. (mh)

### **Shabbat Tisch**

All are invited to Shabbat dinner at the shul, Friday, November 7, 6:00 PM. We'll light candles, sing a bit, have a nice veggie dinner and enjoy each other's company and the spirit of Shabbat peace. You don't need to RSVP or bring anything -- just come. We love having children come to the tisch (and adults too!) This isn't our usual last Friday of the month date, as you can see. Future tisch dates TBA. (mh)



Wilshire Boulevard Temple, LA, CA (circa 1929)

<http://flickr.com/photos/56832361@N00/920728396/>

### **First Cook-In with Two Great Teachers**

Monique Frankston will teach us to prepare her delicious noodle kugel recipe AND Carla Jupiter will teach us how to make her exquisitely rich rugeleh on Thursday afternoon, November 6, 4:00 - 6:00 (or so) at the shul. We'll make the kugel and rugeleh to serve at the tisch the next night. Come help with the cooking, or keep the cooks company even if you're not much of a chef yourself. Please let Margaret know if you are planning to come -- mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. This is an experiment in community cooking, and hopefully it will lead to other cooking adventures in the future. (mh)

## Elder's Conversation

All (of any age) are invited to an open conversation on the topic of meaning and purpose in life -- Tuesday, November 11, 5:00 - 6:30 PM at the shul. This conversation grows out of the group which has been meeting about growing older. It is one of the personal issues forums which are being held every six weeks or so, in which anyone who is interested is invited to come together to talk and explore and connect. (mh)

## Interested in a Human Rights Seder?

Wednesday, December 10 is International Human Rights Day, and this year is the sixtieth year since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Margaret, along with Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, wrote a haggadah for International Human Rights Day, and two years ago MCJC held a seder using the new haggadah. It was a great experience -- good conversation, good learning, lots of heart and inspiration. If there is interest, we could have another seder to mark the six-decade anniversary of this remarkable document, perhaps open to the larger community. Please let Margaret know if you are interested in helping to plan -- mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. (mh)

## Kabbalat Shabbat

This month we will be celebrating our home Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at the home of Polly Green in Mendocino. Please call her at 937-3478 for directions and to let her know you are coming. In December we will be celebrating at the home of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen in Fort Bragg. The monthly Kabbalat Shabbat includes a song-filled short service that begins at 6:00 pm and is followed by a pot luck vegetarian dinner. If you would like to host this wonderful event in your home in future months, contact Mina at 937-1319. (mc)

## MCJC Board Meeting Dates

The next MCJC board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 13th and then again on Thursday, December 11th. If you would like to attend a meeting please contact Raven Deerwater at [raven@taxpractitioner.com](mailto:raven@taxpractitioner.com) so he can include you on the agenda. (mc)

translation at <http://www.hebc.com/sedrot>



## The Whole Mishpocha by Mina Cohen

We will resume our monthly dinners at the shul in November (see elsewhere in this Megillah for the details). This dinner is provided for

you, not a potluck so you can relax a little and someone else will be doing the cooking. Making Shabbat every week may seem daunting, if it seems that we have to provide a special dinner. In my family, my chicken has become legendary- Chicken ala Mina. But, even pizza can be served for Shabbat and be special when it is accompanied by candle lighting, Kiddush and challah. Try it sometime. (mc)

## Megillah Thanks

Thanks to Jay and Monique Frankston for folding and mailing the October Megillah. If you'd like to help with this mitzvah that takes about 1 hour at home contact Mina at 937-1319. . (mc)

## Online Study Opportunity: Art History

Mina Cohen who teaches art history at College of the Redwoods will be offering Art 1-A: Art History from Prehistory to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. This is a great opportunity to learn about some of the most interesting art history in the comfort of your own home. This course includes study of art created for the world's major religions that came into existence during this time including Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu art. The course starts January 20<sup>th</sup> and you can even register online at [www.redwoods.edu](http://www.redwoods.edu). Registration will be available end of November and the course will cost \$64.00.

## Trip to Louisiana to Lend Rebuilding Help

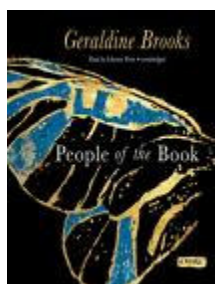
There is a plan in the early stages to organize a trip to St. Bernards Parish, close to New Orleans the week of March 22-28, 2009 to help residents finish rebuilding their homes destroyed or damaged in Hurricane Katrina and Rita. Frank Fanto, who is a contractor, has been to the area to assist as a professional and has also taken several groups from the community similar to what we are planning. The group would work with the St. Bernard Project (<http://www.stbernardproject.org>). We will be housed at Habitat for Humanity's facility called Camp Hope ([http://www.habitat-nola.org/camp\\_hope/index.php](http://www.habitat-nola.org/camp_hope/index.php)) which provides basic dormitory room and board. We estimate the cost for this trip will be \$800. that includes airfare, room and board, parking, and transportation. This program is for adults 18 years or older. If you are interested in participating we would like to hear from you. You can contact either Frank Fanto at 937-1010 or Mina Cohen at 937-1319. Once we know who is interested in coming along we will schedule a meeting to talk about the details. . (mc)

**Kabbalah Group**

So perhaps I could say that "during the past two months the Kabbalah group has been studying the translation of the Zohar by Daniel C. Matt under the direction of Ira Rosenberg. We are now ready to go on to a new book about Kabbalah and will decide on the book by the end of November. It would be a good time for new people interested in learning more about the Kabbalah to join the group. We meet on Tuesday at 11:00 to 12:30 at the home of Polly Green 10870 Palette Drive Mendocino. For more information call Polly at 937-3478.”.(mc)

**Book Group**

The book group will be meeting on Monday, November 17th at the home of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading Geraldine Brooks’ book “People of the Book”. This is a fictionalized account of the Sarajevo Haggadah. The group will be treated to a viewing of a film entitled “Search for Hope” originally shown on ABC in 1996, which documents the saga of the Sarajevo Haggadah. The book can be gotten from Fran Schwartz. In December we will be reading Amy Bloom’s “Away” available at Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg, where you will receive a 10% discount on MCJC Book Club books. (mc)



**Calendar**

Nov 01	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Nov 05	05:30 PM	Peace Prayers
Nov 06	04:00 PM	Cook In
Nov 07	06:00 PM	Tisch
Nov 08	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Nov 11	05:00 PM	Elder’s Conversation
Nov 13		Board Meeting
Nov 14	06:00 PM	Kabbalat Shabbat
Nov 15	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Nov 17		Book Group
Nov 22	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan
Nov 29	10:30 AM	Shabbat Minyan

**Looking to the Future**

From time to time members have given additional financial help to MCJC. Upon the sale of a home, stocks or some other positive financial event they have shared their good fortune. Also, several members have

remembered MCJC in their wills. These generous acts insure the long term strength and sustainability of the Jewish Community and our shul here on the Coast. We encourage you to do this if you can. (mz)

**Torah Portions**

Nov 01	<b>Noach</b> Genesis 6:9 - 11:32
Nov 08	<b>Lech-Lecha</b> Genesis 12:1 - 17:27
Nov 15	<b>Vayera</b> Genesis 18:1 - 22:24
Nov 22	<b>Chayei Sara</b> Genesis 23:1 - 25:18
Nov 29	<b>Toldot</b> Genesis 25:19 - 28:9

You can find the Torah readings, portions and JPS translation at <http://www.hebcad.com/sedrot>

**TODAH RABAH! (Great Thanks) For The Following Generous Contributors Who in the Last Month Helped Sustain Our Community**

Donna and George Montag; Nancy Harris; Michael and Sharon Shapiro; Mark Gardner; Paul Troy; Deborah Moody; Gregory Sims; Eric Labowitz and Kathy Bailey; Les and Leora Rohssler; Janet Adelman and Bob Osserman; Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson; Sydelle Lapidus; Bob Evans; Bonnie Sarrow; Nancy Harris; Karen Novak and Daniel Dickson; Frances and Mack Novak; Liz Helenchild

Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson to the Adele Saxe Tzedakah Fund In Honor of Claire Ellis' birthday; Benna Kolinsky and Dan Mandelbaum In Honor of Edie Plotinsky's birthday; Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson To Judith Meisel Fund In Honor of the marriage of Hadassah Baum and Avi Lev; Karen Rakofsky In Honor of Benna Kolinsky and Dan Mandelbaum's 40th Wedding Anniversary; Elaine and David Tavelli In Memory of Belle Birnbaum Rodkin; Shirley Hill In Memory of Max Hill, Sara Jacobs and Philip Alpert; Shira Lee In Memory of my brother, Oren Pollak .

In Honor of Sara and Gerry Kreger's 50th Wedding Anniversary: Jennifer Kreger and Wade Gray; Karen Rakofsky

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## The Mendocino Maven



I hope that everyone enjoyed the High Holy Days.

Rachel Lahn's work will be displayed at Frankie's in Mendocino through December 12<sup>th</sup>.

There was an interesting article in the NYT Magazine on Kosher Wars by Samantha Shapiro. You can read it online at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12kosher-t.html>  
(rge)

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<b>Rituals and Holidays (including Hevra Kadisha/Cemetery)</b>	<b>Donna Montag*</b>	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
<b>Community Care (rides, help when ill)</b>	<b>Karen Rakofsky *</b>	937-5522	nerak@mcn.org
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<b>Culture (films/ speakers/ Women’s Retreat)</b>	<b>Harriet Bye *</b>	937-3622	bysawyer@mcn.org
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<b>Book Group</b>	<b>Fran Schwartz *</b>	937-1352	franamie@cs.com
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<b>Name and Address Changes, Subscriptions</b>	<b>Myra Beals</b>		myrah@mcn.org

\* = board member

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