

Mendocino Megillah

Mendocino Coast Jewish Community,

February 2010 (5770)

The Jewish Center (Shul) is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar CA.

The MCJC can be reached at (707) 964-6146

Mail can be sent to PO Box 291, Little River, CA 95456

website: <http://www.mcjc.org> email: mcjcmegillah@mcjc.org PDF Version: <http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm>

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Esther with the Decree of Destruction,
etching - 1635, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Rabbi's Notes: Tamales and Latkes

This past Sunday, as I write, was the "Culture Mix All-Holiday Party," which our elders' group co-organized with Safe Passage Family Resource Center. The party was the brainstorm of the fabulous, irrepressible Irene Malone, who is active in both groups. Her idea was to invite local Latinos and local Jews, and anyone else of any cultural stripe, to share some food and some songs and stories around the winter holiday time. At our most recent elders' meeting, Irene made her proposal, and it was enthusiastically chosen by the group.

We got together to plan with some of the Safe Passage crew (many of whose clients are Latino.) We decided right off the bat that we should serve latkes and tamales. Well, how many latkes and how many tamales? How many people did we really think would show up for something like this? The most cautious among us suggested we plan for twenty ("and that will be lucky.") The ever-hopeful, me among them, said we should plan for fifty and just be prepared to buy back extra tamales to take home afterward.

So all of us were happily blown away when there was a lively buzz of more than a hundred people, of all ages, speaking several languages -- even though the 100 latkes and 120 tamales vanished in minutes. The party was scheduled for two hours, and that's exactly how long it lasted. Fifteen minutes for a little mixing game, 30 minutes to eat, the planned songs and stories and games -- we were cleaning up and out the door. Not a big deal.

At the beginning of the party I did a demonstration of the mixing game in front of the crowd. I had a word taped to my back, and I had to ask questions to try to figure out what it was. I hardly speak any Spanish. One thing about being a rabbi is that you get used to doing things you don't know how to do in front of a crowd, so I gamely stammered in both languages as people laughed and cheered me on. It was actually way more fun than mortifying. Later I sat down at a table with five or six women and children speaking Spanish, and I smiled and shrugged quite a bit as I tried to enter the conversation, and they did the same in return.

The next night I was in La Bamba with my boisterous post-yoga crowd having our weekly burrito feast, and the woman working there greeted me and started talking with me a bit. She said that she had seen me many times before at Los Gallitos, where she also works (and where our Monday gang usually has our after-class feast.) She didn't speak much English at all, but I understood her just fine, and we made a nice connection there for a minute. And it struck me that we had seen each other for many years and never had made more than eye contact before that night. I don't think she was at the party the day before. It seemed like a pleasant coincidence that she had picked this particular night to chat with me.

This got me to thinking about my own shyness when trying to speak another language or make myself understood to someone who doesn't speak much of my tongue. Well-meaning as I may be, I have an instinctual reticence to, I don't know, sound foolish? Make mistakes? Be inappropriate? So, while I am smiley, I seldom make contact across those

barriers.

And this has left me, over a lifetime, with a kind of subtle inner loneliness that I very seldom notice. But it rises up sometimes. I remember a couple of years ago when (for reasons of a political event which I can't recall now) I went to a big, big rally in Fort Bragg about immigration. And I saw many hundreds of Hispanic people, many families, babies in strollers, men and women whose faces I dimly recognized from various local businesses. It was beautiful to see so many people of color together on Main Street. And I had that little pierce of loneliness then -- here is this vibrant community right here, and I hardly know anybody...

It's not quite the same thing, but over the years I've been part of a number of interfaith programs. After September 11, I remember that we held a couple of forums (fora?) at the shul in which many different clergy sat together, and people from our various communities came together to hear our little five-minute statements. Again I was kind of blown away by how many people showed up and how strong the energy felt. I particularly think of my Foursquare Gospel Church colleague, Rev. Don Stiltner, whom I admire and miss, and the warm feeling of sitting next to him in front of the ark. I thought at the time: it's not necessarily because any of us was going to say anything earthshaking. There is just something healing and moving about seeing people of obvious different-ness sitting together. Sometimes that vision is particularly sustaining.

When I was in Cape Town on my sabbatical, I spent many of my days at the University of Stellenbosch Medical School, where the Desmond Tutu TB Centre has its offices. It's a stunningly multi-racial and multi-lingual scene there, and within it the TB Centre all the more so was a microcosm of the colors and languages of South Africa. Good will abounded. But I was still conscious of how the nursing students in the cafeteria at lunchtime clumped at tables by color. I was aware that it wasn't until my second year that I was a guest in the home of someone black or coloured (nor, as I now think about it, did I ever have anyone of color over to my "dungeon.") I was aware above all of my own slight self-consciousness when I chatted with black and coloured co-workers, whereas I quickly became close to a white couple (for whom English was not their first language either, for that matter.) Hmmmm.

These are awkward things, and I admire those of you I know who --either because of your natural social comfort or because you've worked at it -- have expanded your circles of friendship and community across cultures, languages and races. And I am grateful for those friendships of my own which have overcome shyness and reticence to connect across cultures.

But I suspect I'm not completely alone with that little tinge of loneliness and self-consciousness arising from my racial, cultural and religious isolation. I think that might have something to do with the energy of these little gatherings, however modest, where the intention is made explicit to mix it up.

I even wonder if something about that Culture Mix party on Sunday -- and specifically something about my standing up in front of all those people with a post-it on my back and asking silly questions until I guessed my word (which was "candle / vela") -- that made me a look little more approachable the next night at La Bamba... so that it was that night, of all possible nights, the woman working there introduced herself and chatted with me? Who knows?

I'm glad it happened, and I look forward to more get-togethers where we can put tamales and latkes on the same plate! - Rabbi Margaret Holub © 2010

Tu B'Shevat Seder

Just a reminder that the heavenly ascent of Tu B'shevat falls on the full moon of Shevat (of course!) also known this year as Saturday, January 30. There will be a Tu B'shevat seder at the shul with all the holy fruits and wines and chants at 4:00 PM. (mh)



Purim !!!

Tricksters, magicians, jesters, pranksters, jokers! All are invited for the annual Purimshpiel on Saturday night, February 27, 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the shul. Celebrate Queen Esther, the greatest practical jokester of all time (sneaking into that beauty pageant, getting the king to choose her, inviting the wicked H-M-N for the surprise of his life, and saving the Jewish people besides....) Come dressed as your favorite Purim character, or wear your tux and tails or your harlequin hat. We're looking for clever people who can do a magic trick or two, juggle or tell a really funny joke (contact Margaret at 937-5673 or mholub@mcn.org if that's YOU.)

To be preceded by a ...**Hamantachen Bake**

Thursday, Feb. 25, 1:00 - 4 or 5:00 PM at the shul. Come help roll, fill, bake, schmooze and taste! (mh)

Mussar Schmooze

Our amazing mussar class is just too stimulating to contain in its four-hours-a-month format. So all who wish are invited to an occasional mussar schmooze – the first one on Sunday, February 7, 3-5 PM at the shul. This will be a chance to get together informally and just chat about our ongoing explorations of the middot (personality traits.) The coffee pot will be on -- feel free to bring snacks, readings or anything else -- or just come on by. You are welcome to come even if you haven't attended the class.

Next Couple of Mussar Classes

The mighty mussar class will meet on February 3 and 17, 5:00 -7:00 PM at the shul. On February 3 we will enter the middah of anavut (humility) and on Feb. 17 we will explore tzedek (righteousness.) Two big-ticket middot! All are welcome.



Funny Box

I (Margaret) was reminded recently that many years ago I put out the call to our community for really funny things that could be put into a box -- cartoons, videos, stories, pictures, books, I don't know what else -- that could be loaned around when people could really use a laugh, in times of illness, mourning and such. At that time a couple of great things came in, but I'm afraid the box disappeared when we moved into the shul. Now I'd like to start that collection again.

The sole criterion is that whatever you offer must have made you personally LAUGH OUT LOUD (not merely smile.) Matters of taste are up to the donors. I'll put a box in the shul library on top of the bookshelves, and you can put offerings in there, or get them to me at PO Box 97, Albion 95410 or mholub@mcn.org.

Thank You for Megillah Help

Thank you to Sally Welty and Rachel Binah for collating and mailing our last megillah. Contact Mina if you'd like to help with this task. (mc)

MCJC Board meeting dates

The next MCJC Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 11th. If you would like to attend a meeting please contact Raven Deerwater at raven@taxpractitioner.com so he can let you know the time and include you on the agenda. (mc)

Mitzvah Freezer

We had another successful Mitzvah Meal and fed the freezer full of delicious vegetarian food for those who are ill or are having trouble preparing meals. The food is in single portion servings that can be easily reheated. Ingredients for each is available in case there are issues of allergy. If you or someone you care for needs this assistance we will arrange for you to get it. For access or if you have any questions contact one of the Bikkur Cholim committee Mina at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org, Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 or franamie@cs.com, or Karen Rakofsky at 937-5522 or nerak@mcn.org. Thank you to all who cooked for this mitzvah. (mc)

Mendocino Maven

by *The Shadow*

For this month we have Purim, the holiday where even the most straight laced of Jews is supposed to be wacky and get a little bit shickered, while reading the book of Esther. Time to dust off those groggers.

The Schlosser-Hofberg dynasty is on the move, with Ayla relocating to Washington DC to take a job as a beltway bandit. Zev is on an extended trip through South East Asia and is frequently posting to his interesting chronicle of adventures (copiously illustrated) <http://mendoindo.blogspot.com/> .

Albert Polay is out of the Army and living in Southern California, where he has developed an interest in acting, good luck to Albert and his budding career.

If you have simchas (joys) that you would like to share with the community, please email maven@mcjc.org.
- *The Shadow*

MCJC Annual Dinner - Monday March 8th

It is once again that time of year for the annual dinner, an opportunity for feasting, frivolity, schmoozing and indulging the acquisitive spirit; all in support of the MCJC. Come and renew old friendships and make new ones. The menu is still under consideration, but you will have a choice of entrees. To donate an auction item please contact Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 or franamie@cs.com. More information will be published soon.

Join your fascinating community and Rabbi Margaret Holub
for great schmoozing and a fabulous time at the

**Annual MCJC Dinner Monday, March 8th, at the
Ledford House in Albion**

Appetizers prepared by MCJC's finest cooks, 6:00 pm

Dinner at 7:00 pm, Great selection of local wines

Salad, Meat or Vegetarian entree

(entrees served with seasonal vegetables)

Dessert, Coffee and Tea Service

\$50.00 per person

Reservations required, please specify meat or vegetarian, for each person attending,
contact Harriet Bye at 937-3622 or bysawyer@mcn.org
or Mark Zarlin at 937-0341 or mzarlin@mcn.org

Legendary MCJC Auction of goods and services

Kabbalat Shabbat

In February we will be celebrating our home Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner on Friday, February 26th at the home of Ira and Edie Plotinsky in Mendocino. Please call them at 937-1415 for directions and to let them know you are coming. Please note that this is not the second Friday, rather it is the 4th Friday. In March we will be at the home of Carol and Jerry Greenberg in Mendocino on the 4th Friday (26th). 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)

Tisch Welcomes You

In February we will have our Tisch dinner on Friday February 12th, on the eve of Scott Duncan's Bar Mitzvah. Please note that the Tisch has switched places on the calendar with Kabbalat Shabbat coming at the beginning of each month, with the Kabbalat Shabbat towards the end of the month (see Kabbalat Shabbat). Dinner is at 6:00 pm and begins with candles, Kiddush, and fresh baked challah created by the Torah School just before our arrival. A yummy vegetarian dinner is provided. You can bring dessert if you like. It's multi-generational and fun for all. Greet your friends and meet some new ones! (mc)

Torah School Evolution

Torah school is now meeting every other Friday at the shul. Jeremiah Seim, recently arrived in the community is teaching Hebrew conversation, and we are continuing with stories, art, and of course challah baking before the Tisch dinners. If you are not yet involved and want to be, call Jessica at 937-2115 or contact her at mcop@mcn.org. (mc)

We cordially invite you
to share our joy when our son
Scott Roy Duncan
is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah

Saturday, February 13, 2010
Ten thirty in the morning
Caspar Shul, Caspar, California
Reception immediately following

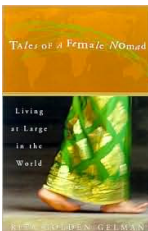
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**TODAH RABAH! (Great Thanks)
For The Following Generous Contributors Who in the Last Month Helped
Sustain Our Community**

Joan and Norman Rudman; Linda Jupiter; Yarrow Rubin and Miles Clark; Ruth and S.A. Rosenblum Ephraim; Hal and Sidra Stone; Nancy Harris; Harold Hauck and Gloria Liner; Ceril Lisbon; Mina Cohen and Jeff Berenson; Mindy Rosenfeld and Hilleary Burgess; Annie Lee; Joan Benjamin; Rachel Binah; Sharon and Mike Shapiro; Jane Marcus and Lew Mermelstein; ;Fran and Roger Schwartz; Henrietta Steineger; Betty Deutsch; Jane Corey; Marnie and Ron Press; Rosalie and Art Holub

Nancy and Richard Banker In Honor of Lillian Steinkohl Sirmay; Esther Markson In Memory of Abby Markson; Myra Beals and Ida Matson In Honor of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen; Claire Ellis and Chuck Greenberg In Memory of Nancy Green, daughter of Walter and Polly Green; Sharon and Mike Shapiro In memory of Sherman Juster; Sydelle Lapidus In memory of Frank Lapidus; Claire Lobell in Honor of Sylvan Wachs; Jonathan and Annett Lehan In Memory of Bert Lehan; Jewels Marcus In Memory of my Dad, Morris Marcus. (mz)



Book Group

The book group will meet Monday, February 22nd (not the usual 3rd Monday) at the home of Rosamond Gumpert Jorgensen Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading "Tales of a Female Nomad " by Rita Golden Gelman. When Rita Golden Gelman traveled to Mexico during a two-month separation from her husband, she hoped to satisfy an old craving for adventure and, in the process, rejuvenate herself and her marriage. Little did she know it was the beginning of a new life, not just as a divorcée, but as a nomad of the world. Since 1986, Gelman has had no permanent address and no possessions except those she can carry. She travels without a plan, guided by instinct, serendipitous opportunities, and a remarkable ability to connect with people. At first her family and friends accused her of running away, but Gelman knew she had embarked on a journey of self-discovery and a way of life that is inspiring and enviable. Books are available at Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg for a 10% discount if you let them know you are in the Jewish Book Group. We welcome new people at any time. (mc)

MCJC Library

We welcome assistance from Nona Smith to help us keep our library in order. It's easy to check out a book from the library and we have a very complete selection of books on every topic related to Judaism and the Jewish people. Check it out next time you're at the shul. As always, please DO NOT leave books at the library without checking with Mina first.

Mina can be reached at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org. (mc)

Shabbat Minyan

Every Saturday morning starting at 10:30am there is a Shacharit (Morning) Service at the shul in Caspar, usually led by Rabbi Margaret Holub. The service is in English and Hebrew, including a short reading from the Torah scroll, but you don't need to know Hebrew to participate. It is a small, variable, and welcoming group. If you have Kaddish to say or Gomel (for surviving a dangerous experience), want to say a prayer for healing for yourself or someone else, or just want a little spiritual recharge, please join us. The service usually ends around 12:30pm with Kiddish. Margaret always says to come and leave whenever you want. Come as you are, but please come. (rge)



Megillah Formats

The Mendocino Megillah is generated in two formats: the legacy hardcopy format which is optimized for printing on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper and the HTML format which is formatted for easy reading on a computer display. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you, you can subscribe to the email version or you can receive both. If you don't need the hardcopy and want to do your bit to repair the world by going electronic, and saving paper, toner and physical transport, please email Myra at myrah@mcn.org Todah Rabah!

BTW the E-Megillah is posted on the MCJC website at
<http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm> (rge)

Subscription and Notification

If you would like to subscribe to this publication and/or receive email notifications for events, changes, or important news from MCJC contact Myra Beals at myrah@mcn.org or send to P.O. Box 1113, Mendocino. Let her know if you prefer to receive a printed Megillah coming in the mail or by email. If you would like to receive notifications by email please indicate that as well. Subscription to the Megillah is included with a contributing membership of \$200. or more. A subscription alone to the newsletter is \$25. per year. Checks can be made payable to MCJC and mailed to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA. 95456. (mc)

Editorial Policy

The Mendocino Megillah is published monthly. The deadline for submission of articles is the 10th of the month before desired publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting with the exception of copyrighted material that does not have permission of the author. The material printed in the Megillah is not the policy or representative of the opinions of the Board of Directors of Mendocino Coast Jewish Community. Divergent opinions are welcome. (mc)

Contributions to the MCJC can be sent to:
MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456.

Please specify if your contribution is in memory or honor of someone,
and please include your name and mailing address. Thanks! (mz)

Using the Shul

If you are closing the shul please double check that the furnace, water heater and lights are all off and that all doors are locked when you leave. As a courtesy to our neighbors, please make sure that the lights are turned off in the front. THANKS! (rge)

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□

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MCJC Board & Useful Numbers

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| Rituals and Holidays | Donna Montag* | 877-3243 | montag@mcn.org |
| Community Care (rides, help when ill) | Karen Rakofsky* | 937-5522 | nerak@mcn.org |
| Outreach (new to the community) | Donna Montag* | 877-3243 | montag@mcn.org |
| Culture (films/ speakers/ Women's Retreat) | Harriet Bye* | 937-3622 | bysawyer@mcn.org |
| Education (adult and children/ library) | Mina Cohen* | 937-1319 | mcohen@mcn.org |
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| Torah School | Jessica Grinberg | 937-2115 | mcop@mcn.org |
| Book Group | Fran Schwartz * | 937-1352 | franamie@cs.com |
| Megillah Submissions and Website | Bob Evans | | bobevans@mcjc.org |
| Name & Address, Subscription Changes | Myra Beals | | myrah@mcn.org |

* = board member