

Mendocino Megillah

Mendocino Coast Jewish Community January 2011 (5771)

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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Tu B'shevat Challah

from Best of Challah

<http://picasaweb.google.com/meechaelami/BestOfChallah#>

Rabbi's Notes: The Extra-Tallit World

Sometimes the energy in the shul on Shabbat morning feels to me like an exactly-perfectly warm shower (this despite our perfectly frightful heating system!) Sometimes the morning light through the east windows melts right through my closed eyes and makes me feel like I am being washed in light from the top of my head down. Sometimes a word or two in the service just start to shimmer on the page in a way that they have never lit up for me before, and I am transported to someplace I've never been.

Sometimes I can hardly wait to sing a certain tune, and I feel like a child on line for a ride at Disneyland. Sometimes I gaze at the people in the shul with me, and the sweetness of their praying faces brings me just about to tears. Sometimes -- often, in fact -- by the time we come to praying for peace at the end of the Torah service, I feel like we have been spun together into such a thick skein of peacefulness that we just need to unspool it from right where we are on Caspar Road and send it wherever it needs to go.

Often, just singing the words *ma tovu* -- the first three syllables of the service -- send me right to that peaceful, light-washed place. I'm not a natural davvener at all, and it's taken me a long time to grow into one. Truth be told, if you would have told me a decade ago that I would someday write the above paragraphs, I wouldn't have believed you. I don't think I really knew what davvening is -- or can be. In fact, I'm realizing as I'm writing this that I don't even know exactly what the word "davven"* means -- it's Yiddish, I think, and it's the thing we do when we pray together, especially when we do the formal services of morning, afternoon and evening, especially in that idiom of chanting and singing and moving about a bit as we do.

In the past I think I mostly looked at davvening as an exercise in competency, as something that people do if they know how to do it. I used to go occasionally to a minyan in LA full of rabbis and other people who seemed to know their way around a service. They could sling their big tallises over their shoulders, and they wouldn't slide off. They chanted at lightning-speed. They marched firmly forward to lead sections of the service, chant Torah, give teachings. In those days I was thinking about becoming a rabbi myself, and then a few years later I was a rabbinical student, so I figured I should probably find it all more compelling than I did. It seemed like a show to me, and not such an interesting one at that.

Now, some thirty years later, the following definition just came to me: 'Davvening is reciting a code which takes you into a world in which God is very present.' Our ancestors, in their funny, painstaking, slightly obsessive way, created a code for us, a kind of "open sesame!" a technique to bring us into a different consciousness. In that altered state, divine light, mercy, justice, love, healing, song, passion and ecstasy are opened for us. We are able to step in, as it were, among the mystical animals around the divine throne, and bask with them in holy presence. We enter Godful space.

One thing I wish someone would have told me a long time ago: you don't have to believe any of this in your regular life to step into these possibilities in prayer. I don't think that prayer is predicated on belief. Prayer is a tool, a code, to take you into a temporary state in which God is Source and Sovereign of the Universe, in which all your bones are singing and the bent-over are raised and the captive freed. You can enter, through prayer, into the possibility of Godly presence. When you take off your tallit you can ask yourself which reality seems more real: the reality of your prayer-world or the reality of your extra-*tallit* world (how about THAT word!)

What has happened for me over the years is that I now move more fluidly back and forth between my native skepticism and a kind of tried-on faith. I no longer assume that my weekday consciousness, which tends to be a bit critical and hard-edged, is more real than my davvening consciousness, in which divine presence feels quite real and light-ful and joyous. In my case one hasn't supplanted the other. It's more like both realms now exist side-by-side, and my experience of life is informed pretty equally by both.

The tricky trick is that part of the code involves using a minyan -- a quorum of ten or more adults -- to open the portal into that davvening world. You can certainly davven alone, or with a smaller group. But there is some kind of power to the voice of ten or more people that just makes it all more, I don't know, whole or something.

We often don't have a minyan on Shabbat morning. Many congregations don't, especially little ones like ours. Others build their numbers through rules and inducements. Some require families of b'nai mitzvah students to attend a certain number of times, or they have different temple groups "host" the service, or they "draft" people to complete their numbers.

I'm not so crazy about all these machinations. Personally I'd just as soon assume that everyone present is there because they want to recite the davvening code and explore God-space. I find it uncomfortable to see people looking bored and disconnected, waiting for it all to end (especially if I'm responsible for making them be there.) Not that bored minyaners are the worst thing in the world. I was one many a time, and look at me now...

In my mind there is very little "should" to davvening. It's more of a possibility than an obligation. And it is definitely, for many of us, an acquired taste. So in writing this screed here, I am inviting you to consider whether you might actually be craving such a taste, even enough to go through all the attendant aggravations: the cold shul, the hot shul, the heavy prayerbook, the funny people, the wrong tunes in the wrong keys, too much Hebrew, too much English and all the rest.



If you are, I'll see you on Shabbat!
© 2010 Rabbi Margaret Holub

(* Editor's note = The etymological origin of *davven* or *daven*, is obscure. For an interesting discussion of this question, see <http://www.balashon.com/2007/01/daven.html> (rge))

Hevra Kadisha Gathering January 9

One of the treasures of our community is our Hevra Kadisha, our group which cares for the bodies of people who have died, and for their loved ones in time of loss. Our community's Hevra Kadisha has been in existence for over twenty years and is one of the pioneer community-run hevrot in the USA. We perform taharah (the ritual washing and dressing of a body) and organize shomrim (people who sit with the body from death until burial.) And we help with the funeral and shiva.

Many people in our community have been moved to participate in this deep and beautiful mitzvah, both people who have very active Jewish lives and people who have few other connections to Jewish practice. In the last couple of years several members of our Hevra Kadisha have died themselves; others have moved away or needed to step back for other reasons. So we are actively looking to invite new participants.

On Sunday, January 9, from 4:00 - 5:30 PM we will have a meeting at the shul for people already in the Hevra Kadisha and for anyone who would like to explore getting involved. We will do a bit of organizational business, and then we will take some time for experienced members to share experiences and learnings and for those who are interested in getting involved to share their thoughts and questions. Please let Donna Montag know if you plan to come: montag@mcn.org or 877-3243. (mh)

"Death Class"

In January the "death class" will meet on Thursdays January 6 and 20 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the shul. On January 6 we will talk about Jewish perspectives on end of life issues: life support, pain relief, euthanasia, decision-making and the like. On January 20, we will look at Jewish teachings about wills, inheritance, "ethical

wills” and the “paperwork of death. Our final class will be Thursday, February 3, and our topic will be “What is a good death?”



Mussar, Round Two

Last month I announced this class with a start-date of January 4. This had to change. We will meet for our first class on Tuesday, January 11, at 5:30.

Mussar is that practice of checking in with oneself about personality traits, or middot. Mussar teachers counsel repeating the cycle as often as possible. In that spirit, Margaret will lead a thirteen-week mussar refresher course beginning in January, on Tuesdays from 5:30 - 7:00.

We will begin on Tuesday, January 11 and will conclude on April 5. This will be thirteen consecutive Tuesdays, one devoted to each of the thirteen middot taught by Rabbi Mendel of Satanov: equanimity, tolerance, order, decisiveness, cleanliness, humility, righteousness, frugality, zeal, silence, calmness, truth and separation.

In this class we will look more closely at the readings from last year's mussar class and probably not add a lot of new material. So it will be suitable for both new mussar students and for people who took last year's course. Each class will begin with a short ma'ariv service and then about an hour of discussion and reflection. All are welcome, and you may attend individual sessions. Please let Margaret know if you plan to participate (mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.) (mh)

Jewish/Latino Group Meets

The Jewish/Latino group will be meeting on Thursday, January 13, 5:30 PM at the Weller House in Fort Bragg. We'll have a potluck dinner and there will be childcare available. The Weller House is a beautiful old inn at 524 Stewart Street -- a magical place to meet!

This group is starting to get on its feet, with people getting to know each other and each other's (many) cultures. Last month we ate latkes and lit the menorah together on the first night of Hanukkah. We are making plans for future activities, and the possibilities are pretty exciting: a film festival, a Dia de las Madres celebration, an ongoing “intercambio” in which English and Spanish speakers pair up to converse and learn, and more. Come join the conversation! All are welcome. (mh)



Tu B'shevat -- the New Year of the Trees

Tu B'shevat, the full moon of the deep-winter month of Shevat, is the day when the mystics tell us that the frozen sap in the Tree of Life begins to warm and rise, portending another year of life in the whole natural world. On that day we participate in that rising through a ritual meal of fruits and wines, blessed and contemplated around a beautiful table.

This year Tu B'shevat falls on Wednesday evening, January 19, and we will celebrate beginning at 5:30 PM at the shul. We will enjoy many fruits and olives and nuts, but a full meal will not be served. You don't need to bring anything. Younger children often enjoy seeing the table and participating in the beginning of the seder. You are welcome to come for the first blessing of fruits and then slip out. The full seder takes about two hours and is full of chant and meditation and bliss. If you would like to help with planning or with the mitzvah of preparing the fruits and setting up the space, please let Margaret know (mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.) (mh)

MCJC Board meeting dates

The next MCJC Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 12th. If you would like to attend the meeting please call the shul at 964-6146. (mc)

Mitzvah Freezer Gets Rave Reviews

A number of people who have had need of the goodies in the freezer have reported how yummy the selections were so once again thanks to all our cooks. If you need food from the freezer 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. You can access the freezer anytime. (mc)

Kabbalat Shabbat

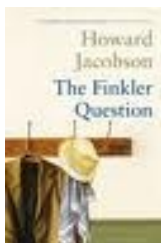
In January we will be celebrating our home Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner on Friday, January 21st at the home of Jessica and Olivia Grinberg. Please call them at 937-2115 for directions and to let them know you are coming. Because Torah School meets earlier that afternoon we will be treated to their famous and very yummy freshly baked challah. In February our host will be Polly Green at her home in Mendocino. 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)

Torah School

In January we will be meeting on January 7th (Tisch following) and again on the 21st. If your child has not attended in the past and would like to start contact Jessica at 937-2115 or mcop@mcn.org. (mc)

PJ Library

We are still accepting sign ups for the PJ Library, a free book each month for any child in our community between the age of 6 months and 8 years old. Contact Mina at mcohen@mcn.org if you want to sign up. The deadline is the 20th of the month. (mc)



Book Group

The book group will not meet in January. We will meet Monday, February 21st at 3:00 pm at Joanne Dickson's home in Mendocino. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading "The Finkler Question" by Howard Jacobson. Books are available at Cheshire Books with a 10% discount if you say you are in the MCJC book group. (mc)

Megillah Thanks

Thanks to Jay and Monique Frankston for collating and mailing the Megillah last month. This is a task that can be done in around 2 hours at home. If you are available to help in the future let Mina know at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org. (mc)

Movies Coming Soon

A committee has been previewing films for several movie nights starting this winter. Stay tuned for a schedule coming soon. (mc)

Tisch

Our January Tisch will be Friday, January 7th 6:00 pm. Come and enjoy a Shabbat meal, delicious challah baked by our torah school students. This is a multi-generational gathering. Greet your old friends, make some new ones, and enjoy a vegetarian meal prepared by our own Ruby Gold. If you are so inclined you can bring dessert, otherwise just bring yourself. (mc)

Would you like to become part of the MCJC Simcha Band?

We have enjoyed playing at the Shul for Simchat Torah and Hanukah, and are looking forward to more musical adventures. If you play an instrument or sing (and can hang on to your part while others are harmonizing with/against it), this is a good time to let Wade Gray or Jennifer Kreger know if you'd like to join in as a performer. Email to refinnej@mcn.org is preferred but if you are without access, call us at 964-4684 between 8 AM and 8 PM. Of course, you don't have to be a performer to be part of the scene. We specialize in music you can sing along with, dance to, or kvell over...and that's where we get our motivation! Thanks for all the ruach! - Jennifer Kreger

Hannukah Thank you

Yasher Koach to all of Team Hanukkah that made our MCJC annual Hanukkah party on Dec 5 another haimish and fun celebration. The Golden Latke award goes once again to the daytime kitchen crew that made (more or less) 500 delicious latkes: Peelers and Mixers Marnie Press, Joan Katzeff, Monique Frankston, Mina Cohen, Rosalie Winesuff, Donna Camita and Donna Montag and Latke Cooks Mark Zarlín and George Montag. Thanks for all who contributed other food: salads from Susan Hofberg and George Montag and others; home made applesauce from Dawn Hoffberg, Ellen Saxe, Laurel Moss and others; cookies from Rena Blauner, Marni Press, Teresa Glassner; homemade chocolate from Yarrow.

Eli Bye schlepped and set up tables and chairs, and Marnie Press helped decorate the shul between grating batches of potatoes. Kudos to the return of the Serving Crew (Steve we miss you!): Benna Kolinsky, Danny Mandlebaum, Nina Ravitz, Alena Deerwater, Jon Goodstein, Susan and Rachel Juster, Ron Press and Devora Rossman. And to amp up the ruach, the Simcha Band rocked the shul thanks to Shalom Lewis on trumpet, Gioia Lewis on saxophone, Ben Kafin on trumpet, Toby Kafin on flute, Peter Kafin on keyboards, Yemaya Gray on clarinet and vocals, Annie Lee on percussion, Jennifer Kreger on vocals and Wade Gray on saxophone, guitar, bass guitar, and vocals. The dancing when the tables were cleared was totally delightful!

And More thanks to all who folded tables, carried them out to the shed and stacked chairs, and vacuumed: Ruby Gold, Michelle, Bob Evans, and many others. And finally a thank you Gadol! to Heather Gurewitz and Kathy, assisted by Yo Te He and Marcia/ Mickey Chalfin and others for a terrific job of washing dishes and kitchen clean up. Thanks to anyone I didn't mention and thanks to the 100 or so people of all ages who ate every last one of the latkes. Ya got ta love a tradition where it's the custom to huddle around burning candles at the darkest time of the year with people you love and eat fried potatoes and sour cream! Let your light shine! - Andrea Luna

TODAH RABAH! (Great Thanks) Contributors Who in the Last Community

Art & Rosalie Holub; Rhoda Teplow; Young; Syndey & Laura Balows; Ronnie

Helenchild; Sue Miller; Ruth Rosenblum & S A Ephraim; Mindy Rosenfeld & Hilleary Burgess; Nancy & Richard Banker; Guy Burnett; Sally & Lee Welty; Fanshen Faber; Merry Winslow; Marilyn & Irving Kreisberg; Eric Labowitz & Kathy Bailey; Heather Gurewitz; Donna & George Montag; Mina Cohen & Jeff Berenson; Polly Green; Cecil Cutler; Yarrow Rubin & Miles Clark; Dr Mark & Deanna Apfel; Clarke & Virginia Glasow; Claire Ellis & Chuck Greenberg; Betty Deutsch; Linda Jupiter; Myra Beals; Joan Benjamin; Dr Jennifer Kreger & Dr Wade Grey



For The Following Generous Month Helped Sustain Our

Katherine Pitcoff; Rachel Lahn & James James; Patricia & Joel Kaufman; Liz James & Richard Banker; Nancy & Richard Banker; Guy Burnett; Sally & Lee Welty; Fanshen Faber; Merry Winslow; Marilyn & Irving Kreisberg; Eric Labowitz & Kathy Bailey; Heather Gurewitz; Donna & George Montag; Mina Cohen & Jeff Berenson; Polly Green; Cecil Cutler; Yarrow Rubin & Miles Clark; Dr Mark & Deanna Apfel; Clarke & Virginia Glasow; Claire Ellis & Chuck Greenberg; Betty Deutsch; Linda Jupiter; Myra Beals; Joan Benjamin; Dr Jennifer Kreger & Dr Wade Grey

In memory of Frank Lapidus by Sydelle Lapidus; in memory of Raymond Walters by Sandy Glickfeld; in memory of Ella Russell by Roberta Belson; in memory of Bea Kemper by Ronnie Kemper & Lance Johansen. In memory of Peter Matlin by Marcia Matlin, "with thanks to the community for:unfailing support during the past difficult year." In honor of Rabbi Holub by Steven Zipperstein & Susan Berrin.



Mendocino Maven

I hope that everyone had a great Chanukah. The MCJC Chanukah Party was a stellar success thanks to Luna, Donna and their legions of helpers. I had the good luck to sit next to the ever vivacious Sandy Glickfeld. Between the high ambient sound level and the distorted amplifier, we couldn't really make out the raffle announcements, but managed to guess at the prizes and winners, and came up with some rather entertaining interpretations, however this being a family publication, I probably shouldn't share them here.

Margaret's Death Class is winding up in January, and due to the enthusiasm of the Mussarkateers, a new Mussar class is starting. If you have simchas (joys) that you would like to share with the community, please email maven@mcjc.org. - The Shadow

The Megillah: Email or Hardcopy; Have it your way



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Shabbat Minyan

Every Saturday morning starting at 10:30a, 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 12:30p with Kiddish. Margaret always says to come and leave whenever you want. Come as you are, and leave renewed. (rge)

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. (dm)

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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)

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Outreach (new to the community)			
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	mcohen@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

<p align="center">January 2011 Candle lighting times are for Manchester, CA, to generate times for your location go to http://www.hebc.com/shabbat/ MCJC events are bolded</p>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Shabbat Minyan 10:30a <u>Parashat</u> <u>Vaera</u>
2	3	4	5	6 Death Class 5:30p	7 4:50p Candle lighting	8 Shabbat Minyan 10:30a

				Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat	Torah School Tisch 6:00p	Parashat Bo
9 Hevra Kadisha 4:00p	10	11 Mussar Class 5:30p	12 Board Meeting	13 Jewish/Latino Group 5:30p	14 4:57p Candle lighting	15 Shabbat Minyan 10:30a Parashat Beshalach
16	17	18 Mussar Class 5:30p	19 Tu B'shevat 5:30p	20 Death Class 5:30p	21 Torah School 5:05p Candle lighting Kabbalat Shabbat Grinberg 6:00p	22 Shabbat Minyan 10:30a Parashat Yitro
23	24	25 Mussar Class 5:30p	26	27	28 5:13p Candle lighting	29 Shabbat Minyan 10:30a Parashat Mishpatim
30	31					

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