

**December 2011 (5772)**

**Mendocino Coast Jewish Community**

The Jewish Center (Shul) is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar CA.  
Mail can be sent to PO Box 291, Little River, CA 95456

The MCJC can be reached at (707) 964-6146  
website : <http://www.mcjc.org> email: [mcjcmegillah@mcjc.org](mailto:mcjcmegillah@mcjc.org)

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

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**Rabbi's Notes:**

As many of you know, I've been pretty sick for the past month. (For those that don't, briefly I fell ill during Sukkot with a severe liver inflammation and have been slowly recovering since.) About three days ago I took a noticeable turn towards the side of the living, and in the past couple days I have done some wonderful, exciting things, like washing a few dishes, making breakfast for Mickey and me and even walking outside a block or so (whatever a "block" means on G Road...) I don't know if my path back to good health will be straight or winding, but my heart is full of *shehechyanu* right now. And I am deeply aware of what has "kept me and sustained me and brought me to this moment." There have been a lot of angels -- but all of you, whether you know it or not, have been a big piece of my restoration. So this is really a two-part thank you note to all of you for the ways that you have nourished me in body and soul through these past weeks.



Part one: I can't begin to tell you how much I have loved all the delicious meals you have made for Mickey and me! I must confess -- I've been on the organizing, cooking and schlepping side of the equation any number of times over the years as one or another person in our community has been ill or injured or bereaved. And I've always secretly wondered what it feels like to have people do this mitzvah on your behalf. Is it embarrassing? Intrusive? What if you don't like what people cook? What if there's too much food? Not enough? Do people feel like they have to clean their house because someone from the Jewish community is dropping by with dinner?

I'm sure that every person experiences these things differently, but I can now say that for me it has been PERFECT -- an unbelievable blessing, an honor, a *mechayah* (which means an unbelievable blessing and honor...), to have people feed us so lovingly and attentively. I have loved every single bite. I feel so fundamentally cared-for, so supported. At the animal-level of my being, I feel sustained by all of you.

And equally much, I have been so very moved by the cards and e-mails and calls from so many of you. These are just as delicious as the dinners. It's an amazing feeling, at a fragile time, to be flooded with words of love and affection and goodwill. It's been interesting for me to take all this in -- of course many of you I know well and feel your very personal hopes for my good health. But some people who have been in touch in this way I don't know so well. Or even if I do, I imagine that you have reached out as you have because it is a mitzvah to reach out to people when they are ill. And, you know, it all feels equally sustaining -- the love of people who love me personally and the love of people who are part of our mitzvah-dik community and send their affection and good wishes because it is the right thing to do. It feels knit-together and strong.

Many years ago now I was driving down Highway 101 to someplace or other. It was a beautiful fall afternoon, and I was just idly mulling over this-and-that in my mind. And right as I passed the Geyserville exit I had an experience that was almost like hearing a voice. It said (or not-quite-said, maybe I should say, "I heard...") "You will never free-fall forever. There will always be a hand to catch you." I don't know why that message came to me, why then, why ever, but I've never really argued with it. Still, these past weeks I learned some details about the "hand to catch me." The picture is clearer because of all your kindnesses.

But there is another way that all of you have sustained me apart even from all the cooking and loving messages (and cleaning our fridge and driving me to appointments and leading services and bringing books and DVDs and many other sweet and generous things that I will thank you for more privately.) I fell ill during Sukkot, which means that I had just finished celebrating the High Holy Days with many of you. During the Days I got to hear Hyla Bolsta's and Barbara Brenner's incredible talks about their journeys through very serious illnesses. I got to hear the shofar sounded a hundred and one times. I got to fast with all of you and to recite *vidui* and to open the ark at the end of *neilah* and sing *shema*

*yisrael*. I got to build a sukkah and dwell in several. And you know, I have lived these Days with you for MANY years now -- and the Hannukahs and Purims and Passovers and so on of every year as well. And many hundreds of Shabbats. And we have been studying together and inquiring and arguing and experimenting and singing and celebrating and mourning and all the rest of it -- and, I don't know quite how to say this, but even when I was really, really sick and had no idea where things were going for me health-wise, I just felt full of faith. Not faith that things would turn out one way or another, but some kind of faith that felt very strong nonetheless.

I kept thinking of that law which says that if you see a fire engine rushing down the road, you are not supposed to pray that it isn't going to your house. Because the fire is already burning. It is where it is. And I kept saying to myself that whatever was making me ill had already started its work, and it is what it is. And I don't need to get well quickly, or at all, if that's how the fire is burning. It was really all okay, and I would face whatever came whenever it arrived. Of course I am very happy and relieved to be sitting up at my computer right now without having to lie down every five minutes, and I would like for my recovery to be quick and complete, if that's how the fire burns.

I feel like whatever bit of faith I may feel today is because I have grown up in a Jewish community -- THIS Jewish community -- in which we have been taught by our ancestors but equally much by each other, in which we have teachers like Hyla and Barbara to go far down the road of mortality and come back and report to the rest of us... I feel rich and full and sustained, not only by delicious dinners (like the one which just arrived a minute ago!) and sweet cards and calls, but by what it is we are all doing together in this life, being a community, being a Jewish community -- deeply, eccentrically, passionately, beautifully -- in which we can explore how to be in the world, how to meet life's experiences, how to connect and grow and live meaningful lives. For THIS I thank you more than I can possibly say.

So I've had a brush with the *Malach Ha-mavet* (the Angel of Death) -- it may be a quick brush or a more sustained one. I've still got some work on the material plane to figure out what's up and hopefully heal completely from it. I hope I'll know more by the time you see this Megillah. And I hope I'll be out in the world seeing all of you, catching up and enjoying December.



### **SHABBAT MORNING CHANT AND STUDY**

Last month I (Margaret) proposed a Shabbat morning experiment, but it didn't happen because I was ill. So I'd like to offer this experiment for Shabbat morning, December 10. Instead of a regular Shabbat AM service, we will have one hour (from 10:30 to 11:30) of prayerful chanting and silence, followed by one hour (from 11:30 to 12:30) of Torah study.

There will be a Mourners' Kaddish and Kiddush at 12:30. Everyone is most welcome to come for either or both parts of the morning.

The hour of chanting and silence will draw on words and tunes from the siddur but will not move through the whole morning service by any means. We will sing in a contemplative, leisurely way, dropping deeply into the words and into the practice of chant. There will be plenty of opportunity to learn the songs if they are new to you. During this hour we will offer prayers for healing and for peace, as well as blessings and words of praise and gratitude.

During the Torah study we will look at the weekly Torah portion (or at least a few words of the portion) and some commentaries and discuss its meaning in more depth than we have the opportunity to do on a regular Shabbat morning. We will not take out the Torah scroll or chant the portion in Hebrew.

If you have feedback about this experiment I would love to hear it, and we can see whether it feels like something which we might continue.

### **MCJC BOARD MEETING**

The next MCJC Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to attend the meeting please call the shul at 964-6146.

### **MEGILLAH THANKS**

Thank you to Sally Welty who folded and mailed last month's megillah. If you are available to help with this task it takes a couple of hours and can be done at home. Please let Mina know at [mcohen@mcn.org](mailto:mcohen@mcn.org) or 937-1319

### **KABBALAT SHABBAT**

We will celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday, December 23rd, at the home of Karen Rakofsky and Helen Jacobs in Albion. We will begin at 6:00 pm with a short song-filled service and follow it with a vegetarian potluck. Please call them at 937-5522 for directions and to let them know you are coming. In January we will

be hosted by Joan and Paul Katzeff in Mendocino. We are looking for hosts from March on (4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month).

## **TORAH SCHOOL**

In December the children from the Torah School will be learning together on Friday December 9<sup>th</sup> (new time 4:00 to 5:30). Our focus through the end of 2011 will be learning about Shabbat. For information about Torah School contact Stacy at 961-6037 [stacyandjay@comcast.net](mailto:stacyandjay@comcast.net) or Jessica at 937-2115 [mcop@mcn.org](mailto:mcop@mcn.org).



## **PJ LIBRARY**

The children of our community have been enjoying books of Jewish content for a year now. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to offset the cost of books that are age specific and mailed monthly directly to the children's homes. MCJC picks up the remaining cost of the books. If you have a child aged 2-9 living HERE on the coast please contact Mina to sign them up for this program. If you have children elsewhere it's possible for you to subscribe to this program (if they don't already get the books in their home community) by contacting the PJ Library at <http://pjlibrary.org>.

## **A LETTER FROM OUR HIGH HOLY DAY VISITORS**

I wasn't sure where to send this e-mail so I hope this suffices. I just wanted to thank the community again for the incredible services of Yom Kippur and for the warmth and hospitality that everyone showed towards us.

We searched out a Jewish community for Yom Kippur knowing that we wanted to be surrounded by Jews on 'Judgement Day'. We were rewarded with a moving service. Many of you may have realised that we come from more orthodox communities and although its not what we are used to, I think that G-d sent me there to learn what I needed to this Yom Kippur. that I love to be surrounded with our traditions, that i miss attending shul on Shabbos, that being in touch with the torah (spiritually and physically, when you gave me the honour of removing the torah from the ark) is something I yearn for, although it is easy to forget. So thank you.

You welcomed us and invited us into your homes, were interested in our lives and travels, you opened your arms to us. This is what I expect of Jewish communities, an immediate home yet it still blew me away. 'You see' I said to Moshe as we left, 'that is what communities outside of Israel are like'. I like to think that the 'zchut' of my parents' hospitality to strangers to our community in Australia bounced back on us. Unfortunately we weren't able to stay in the area but we sincerely regret those offers we could not accept. Perhaps next year, thank you thank you thank you. Although i don't like cliches, they became cliches for a reason, so thank you, you touched our hearts and warmed them up.

### ***Sara and Moshe (the Israeli travelers)***

Editors note: if you did not have a chance to meet these delightful young people, they live in Northern Israel. Sara is from Australia and Moshe is a 12<sup>th</sup> generation Jerusalemite! They came to the US for Burning Man and spent some time "traveling" around. We were fortunate they landed in our town.

## **PRAYER BOOK DEDICATIONS**

If you would like to honor or remember someone, a dedication plate can be inserted in one of our prayerbooks at the shul. Cost for this is \$36. Please include information that you would like on the book plate when you send your donation to P.O. Box 291, Little River 95456.

## **BOOK GROUP**

The book group will not be meeting in December but will pick back up Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 if you wish to join us. We will be reading "The Invisible Bridge" by Julie Orringer. The book is a grand love story set against the backdrop of Budapest and Paris, an epic tale of three brothers whose lives are ravaged by war, and the chronicle of one familys struggle against the forces that threaten to annihilate it. This selection is available at Cheshire Books in Fort Bragg and you can get a 10% discount if you mention the MCJC book group. We will be taking a break in December and then reading "The Invisible Bridge" by Julie Orringer.

## **New Feature: BOOK REVIEW "FREEDOM" BY JONATHAN FRANZEN**

The MCJC Book Group recently read "Freedom," a novel by Jonathan Franzen. A big book at 450+ pages, "Freedom" requires commitment. In my opinion, it's well worth the time.

The novel takes place between the 1970s and 2004 and deals with the Berglund family, Walter and Patty, and their two children. Franzen's brilliance lies in his ability to create compelling characters whose personal lives play out against a background of contemporary events. The interweave between the characters and the events gives the novel its power. Parent-child struggles, government corruption, environmental degradation, and naivete in the face of power clash and collide. Yet we care about the characters, all of whom have issues with "freedom;" this is primarily a novel about people, not ideology, (by Fran Schwartz)

## **THANKS TO BOB EVANS**

Bob Evans has been the editor of the Megillah for many years and we thank him for his amazing job of making our newsletter such an integral part of our lives. Mina will step into the editor role as Bob has commitments that take him to the Bay Area often enough that it makes it difficult for him to continue. He will still be configuring and sending the e-megillah version so we thank him for his continued help. Look for some changes in the MCJC website coming soon.

## **How the Internet Began**

(This is appropriate since we are currently in the Abraham and Sarah section of Genesis)

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dot. And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com. And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?" And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. And the sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent. To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures - Hebrew To The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS. And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. And indeed did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drumheads and drumsticks. And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are." And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "YAHOO," said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE). That is how it all began.

*Thanks to Irv Winesuff for sharing this*

## **MENDO MAVEN**

Congratulations to Claire Ellis and Chuck Greenberg, adding two granddaughters (twins) to their flock of 3 grandsons. They spent November in Philadelphia to get to know the new additions.

## **MCJC PARTICIPATES IN WINTER SHELTER**

Winter is almost upon us, and MCJC along with the interfaith community at large will again open its doors to provide emergency winter shelter for the unsheltered. Along with food to eat, a roof over one's head, most especially in cold and stormy weather, is among the most basic of human needs. If you are able meet our guests and open the shul, around

5:30 pm, or if you are an early riser and could be at the shul to see our guests off in the morning around 6:30 am and lock the shul, please contact Joan Katzeff at 964-9161.

## RIDES TO MCJC EVENTS

Our Bikkur Cholim (caring for the sick -- plus more) committee recently reached out to our community's elders and others who might like rides to Jewish community events. We now have a list of people with events that they often like to attend -- like Kabbalat Shabbat services, tisches, cultural events and holiday services. We now want to do our best to match these people up with folks who often attend these events and could offer a ride to someone from their own neighborhood. If you sometimes attend one or more of these kinds of events and would offer rides, please contact Mina ([mcohen@mcn.org](mailto:mcohen@mcn.org)), Fran ([franamie@cs.com](mailto:franamie@cs.com)) or Karen ([nerak@mcn.org](mailto:nerak@mcn.org))

## The Megillah: Email or Hardcopy; Have it your way

The Mendocino Megillah is published in two formats: the hardcopy format which is optimized for printing on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper and the HTML format which is formatted for easier 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 want to change the way you receive the Megillah please email Myra at [myrah@mcn.org](mailto:myrah@mcn.org) or leave a message at the shul 964-6146. BTW, the E-Megillah is posted on the MCJC website at <http://www.mcjc.org/mjoldart/Megillah/MJMM0000.htm>

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC FOR 2011

As you are probably aware, everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast and desires to be is a member of MCJC . The MCJC Board has set a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2011. We have contributing memberships at Regular, Limited Income, and Family levels, as well as any level possible for you. If you have not contributed financially this year, now is the time to do so. Please give careful consideration to the level at which you can, and mail your donation to: MCJC, Box 291 Little River, Ca 95456. If every household in our Jewish community contributed \$400 we would be able to meet our budget. But not every household can do this, so when you contribute at above this level, you are offsetting another person or family who can't offer as much at this time. We deeply appreciate contributions of all sizes. Contact Donna Montag for any information.



## ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY

Our annual Hannukah party will be at the shul at 5:30 Monday December 26th, the 6th night of Hannukah 5772. We will serve a sit down dinner of Hot Latkes after lighting Menorahs (don't forget to bring yours and some candles). If you want to help make Latkes on Monday call Donna at 877-3243. If you would like to bring a Salad, Desert, or Applesauce, or help set up, serve or/and clean up, call Luna at 972-4494, or 962-9180. If you can do none of the above ....Come Anyway! and enjoy Jewish Soul Food, Music, Fun, Spinning Dreidels, Schmoozing with our community, and the Fabulous Hannukah Raffle! Look for the raffle tickets coming in the mail soon.

## 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](mailto:myrah@mcn.org) or P.O. Box 1113, Mendocino. Let her know if you prefer to receive a printed Megillah coming in the USPS mail or by email (or both). 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.

## 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 necessarily the policy or representative of the opinions of the Board of Directors of Mendocino Coast Jewish Community. Divergent opinions are welcome.



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

Mindy Rosenfeld & Hilleary Burgess; Ceril Lisbon; Sydelle Lapidus; Phil & Jill Lopate; Bernice & Harold Zoller; Joan Kaye; Bob Evans; Betty Deutsch; Guy Burnett; Rosalie & Art Holub; Irv & Marilyn Kreisberg; Jane Corey; Cecile Cutler; Ronnie James; Nancy & Richard Banker.

In support of complete healing for Rabbi Margaret, a Mi Shebeirach from Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum; In honor of my parents Sidney & Helen Glickfeld for facing major life transitions with courage & grace, from Sandy Glickfeld; In honor of Morris Marcus & his best friend Martin Trooskin from Jewels Marcus; In honor of, and with special thanks to Mina Cohen and Ellen Saxe along with the entire MCJC community for supporting Noah Heiss at his Bar Mitzvah. Thank you everyone from Kerry Heiss & Adina Merelender

**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 include your name and mailing address. An acknowledgment card will be sent to the appropriate individual or family. Thanks! (dm)

### **Thanks to Our Underwriters for Supporting the MCJC Megillah and the Community**

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## MCJC Board & Useful Numbers

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<b>Outreach (new to the community)</b>	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	<a href="mailto:susan.tubbesing@gmail.com">susan.tubbesing@gmail.com</a>
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\* = board member

