

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA.  
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## RABBI'S NOTES



I saw my first trillium yesterday! It was poking up right next to a little woodpile on the side of our house. When I saw it, I stopped and said *shehechyanu*: "Blessed is the Source of Life, Who has kept us and sustained us and brought us to this moment!" We say *shehechyanu* when something new and good comes our way, or something we haven't been able to enjoy for a long time. Trilliums are harbingers of spring. Amen!

Spring this year, and March specifically, also marks a year since the COVID lockdown began in the USA. I remember my own utter shock and confusion a year ago when, over what seemed like the course of a weekend, regular life ceased. At first I thought it might be for as long as two weeks. Two whole weeks! Without shopping, visiting, hugging, popping in for a coffee at the Good Life? Two weeks without the shul??? Impossible for me to imagine!

Last week, at what was probably about our 48th Shabbat morning service on Zoom, someone suggested that we say *shehechyanu* for the impending reopening of life. And this led to a quick discussion: is it time to say *shehechyanu* YET? Have we really been brought to a new moment? Or are we in something more like the season of "not yet, but we can sort of see a glimmer of hope ahead"? We decided we would save our *shehechyanu* for something more definitive.

For me, COVID awareness began last year in the second week in March, when I started checking the UC Berkeley Theater listings to see if my long-anticipated Pussy Riot concert was still going to happen on March 14. Each day it was still on the schedule, still on. And then, just a couple days before the 14<sup>th</sup>, poof! It was canceled. So that date in March is my personal COVID anniversary.



Now I am thinking both backward and forward from this anniversary. Forward is easier: we have no idea. Though there is much speculation about what post-pandemic life will be like, so much is unknown. One practical note: like the rest of the Jewish world (and all other faith groups as well), MCJC's board and I are busy thinking about how to return to in-person gatherings. It won't be very soon; there is plenty of time for us all to discuss and imagine and plan. I just want you to know that the conversation has begun.

Looking backward, it feels a little like Elul, that month of account-taking before Rosh Hashana. We've lived through a very strange, challenging, powerful, and in some ways transformative year. I want to share a bit of what I am thinking about as Rosh Hashana l'COVID rolls around:

First, I am deeply grateful that here on the Coast our most dire speculations have not come to pass. People in our community certainly have gotten sick, and COVID may have contributed to the deaths of people we have known and loved, but our hospital was never overloaded to catastrophic levels. The people I know who have had COVID seem for the most part to have recovered well (*keinehora!* may it continue). Even as I write these words, I am aware that some of you know people who have died, or who are terribly ill with the virus or its aftereffects. Since we are all connected, it is not more easeful here than anywhere.

I am grateful that so many people around me are masking and distancing. I am grateful for all the precautions taken by local businesses to keep customers safe. I am grateful to our local public health folks, who seem, to my untrained eye, to be making sane and clear decisions amid great confusion. I'm grateful to everyone who cares for people who are sick. I'm grateful to the Food Bank, to Safe Passage, to Project Sanctuary, the

Children's Fund, FLOCKworks, and everyone who has stepped up to try to keep the bottom from completely falling out, even as COVID falls most heavily on the poorest people in our community.

I think of our friends at Sherwood Oaks, our local skilled nursing facility, who have pretty much been confined to their rooms, without visitors or recreation, for the past year. How utterly unbearable. I think of the brilliance and heroism of our community's teachers, figuring out how to teach without a school or a classroom or a lab or a gym. But still, for many students the school year has been pretty much a wasteland. Or worse: a lonely, lost time to struggle with depression and anxiety.



I think of the economic blows to local businesses, whether or not they have managed to say open in some way. And the bigger blows to their employees, especially at the lower end of the wage scale, who have had to struggle for the basics. I think of our neighbors without documents, who can't benefit from what public relief there has been.

And there's the world. I can't possibly make a list here, but I think of my beloved South Africa, struggling with a new and apparently more deadly variant of the virus. I think of Israel, boldly exporting vaccines to allies around the world while failing to share them with the people they occupy in the West Bank and Gaza. On the other hand, I think of the vastly reduced driving and flying that may be reducing carbon in the air and helping us imagine transitioning away from petrochemicals in the long term.

There are many softer and more personal effects of the COVID year. Take fashion, for example: I am sitting here right now at my computer in my old patched sweater and sweatpants, my hair in an elastic, barefoot—pretty much my uniform this past year. Time feels so different, a bit like shiva, mournful but sweet in its way, in time but outside it too, in the presence of death but alive.

Time also feels different because I hardly ever drive. I've even been able to share my car a bit, because I use it so little. I've read some long books. I haven't had nearly as much time with friends as I'd like. But I've had more, and sweeter, time with Mickey than ever before. I feel like I've had time to think differently—more slowly, more broadly, more wonderingly.

I've had the Torah in my house all year. I'm sitting three feet away from her right now. I don't even know the full impact of that yet, but it's demystifying and intimate. I'll miss her when she returns home to the shul.

What would we have done without Zoom? It's both my new best friend and biggest taskmaster. This year would have been inestimably different without Zoom. Zoom has both saved and stunted our Jewish communal life this year. It has made possible so much contact, so much prayer and study and conversation and business, and even a certain amount of fun. Unfortunately, it's not designed to allow us to sing together. Nor can it help us touch each other or eat together: I miss the great food you all cook! It's enabled many of us to stay connected in ways both familiar and new, and has made it possible for wonderful and beloved people who don't live nearby to be a regular part of MCJC's goings-on. But it also hasn't worked for some people and they have been cut off from their Jewish community just when they most wish for it.

This year has been like tectonic plates scraping slowly past each other, like every other year of life, only more so. I wish there would be no more illness, and no more brokenness or broke-ness, but I am also appreciating a journey I never imagined a year ago. I hope we can return to whatever was best about pre-COVID life, and that we can hold on to whatever is best about the possibilities we didn't know about a year ago. Mostly, I hope that you stay well and safe. And smell the trillium!



## PESACH



Passover begins this year at sundown on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> and concludes at sundown on Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. As with all other holidays this past year, we are envisioning a Pesach that enables us to enjoy as much depth and connection as possible even as we are not able to gather together around seder tables. Plans are underway to celebrate Pesach safely, and you'll be getting information soon.

## SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

A full Shabbat service is led by Rabbi Holub, with much singing, chanting and silence, Torah teaching and reading, blessings for healing and peace, and time for mourners to say Kaddish. You are welcome to join in on Zoom for any or all of the service from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. The rabbi or members of the community give interpretations of the weekly Torah portion (see schedule below for March). Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9628821372> Meeting ID: 962 882 1372; Passcode: 820822.

03/06/21	<i>Ki Tisa</i>	Bob Evans
03/13/21	<i>Vayakhel-Pekudeh</i>	Lew Mermelstein
03/20/21	<i>Vayikra</i>	Raven Deerwater
03/27/21	<i>Tzav</i>	Bob Evans

## TORAH STUDY

In January, we began the book of Exodus; in March, we go to its finale. Rabbi Holub is offering weekly Torah study on the *parshah* for that week, the section of Torah read and studied each week. Join Margaret on Thursdays in March, from noon to 1:00 PM on Zoom. Each time she will introduce a section of the *parshah* for the following Shabbat and pose a couple of questions. Then we will discuss the portion together. Join Zoom meeting at address in item above.



All are welcome. No knowledge of Torah or Hebrew is necessary. We will continue on into Leviticus after we finish Exodus. Stay tuned in!

## DO YOU WANNA ZOOM?



We continue to have MCJC gatherings on Zoom. In addition to Shabbat morning services at 10:30 AM, meetings and classes, and **Chai on The Coast** activities, the Wednesday morning Cup of Coffee, and the Friday evening candle-lighting go on. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by e-mail and posted on the MCJC web page. To get the invitations, let Margaret know at [mholub@mcn.org](mailto:mholub@mcn.org) or 937-5673.

**Cup of Coffee**—every Wednesday from 10:30-11:30 AM, we pour ourselves a steaming cup and join together for a freewheeling conversation about whatever is on our minds. It continues to be surprising, inspiring, generative and fun. All are welcome.

**Candle-Lighting**—Every Friday evening the community is invited to Margaret and Mickey's virtual Shabbat table to light candles and make Kiddush together. We start at 5:30 PM with a bit of schmooze, share news of our weeks, and wish each other Good Shabbos. We light at about 5:45 PM. It's a sweet way to bring in Shabbat together.

## ELDERS' CONVERSATION

We're getting older together with our twice-monthly Elders' Conversation on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 3:00-4:30 PM. This month we'll chat on March 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, on Zoom. Each week, we take up a theme we've selected at the prior meeting and explore it in a personal and honest way, sharing our life experiences and our current thoughts and feelings. People of all ages are most welcome. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by e-mail. If somehow you missed the email, let Margaret know at [mholub@mcn.org](mailto:mholub@mcn.org) or 937-5673.

## MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



The Justices meet on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting is on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 to 7:30. If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list or attend meetings, please contact Margaret at [mholub@mcn.org](mailto:mholub@mcn.org) or 937-5673. *Everyone* is welcome to attend.

**Thank you** to the following for their generous donations to the Justice Group and its ongoing projects: Raven & Becky Deerwater, Donna & Bruce Beyer, Amy Lederman, Evan Mendelson, Larry & Gayle Heiss.

### **Citizen Scholarship Project and Immigration Updates**

According to Anne Thomas, instructor of the Citizenship class, four scholarship students passed their exams and took their oaths between February 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. There are now four new citizens in Fort Bragg! Five more students in the class are in the process of submitting their applications to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and, if the applications are accepted, will apply for scholarships.

The Biden administration is rolling back the controversial December, 2020 citizenship exam, reverting to the 2008 version. USCIS received over 2500 negative comments on the longer, more demanding 2020 exam, saying it would slow down the already backlogged testing process and discourage immigrants from becoming citizens. In addition, the Biden Administration will not raise the application fee from \$725 to \$1,170, as the previous administration intended.

**Below is a report from Coast Climate Crew member Jeannette Rasker.**



Since recycling services here on the coast are minimal, I have started using Terracycle Zero Waste Boxes. I can pack many one-time use plastic gloves, take-out containers, and clam-shell containers for berries into Terracycle's boxes or pouches. I buy them online and UPS both delivers the containers and picks them up when they are full. Terracycle then sends all the items to be repurposed into something new and useful; nothing ends up in a landfill. Check out Terracycle's website to see all their recycling solutions: [www.terracycle.com](http://www.terracycle.com).

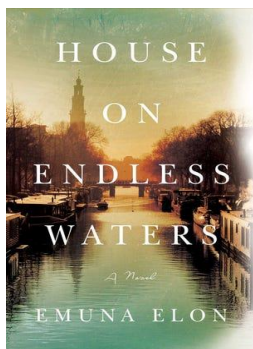
We are making progress in neighborhood emergency preparedness plans by raising people's awareness about urgent situations, especially fires. Some of us have joined the Neighborhood Fire Safe Council, associated with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, to help educate and raise awareness about fire safe practices, and to provide some hazard mitigation services; for instance, they have organized chipper programs to help neighborhoods get their properties ready for fire season in a "green" manner. More information is on the website: <https://firesafemendocino.org/>

The CCC may work in support of the efforts of the Mendocino Trail Stewards to create the *Mendocino Coast Redwood Forest Reserve* in portions of the Jackson State Demonstration Forest. This movement did not appear out of nowhere; it builds on the Campaign to Restore Jackson State of 20 years ago, which shut down logging entirely in the JDSF from 2001 to 2008. The Stewards are preparing a bill to place on the California Legislature's 2021 docket to continue CalFire's management of JDSF, but with a different set of priorities: climate change mitigation; carbon sequestration; recreation; education; ecosystem restoration; public enjoyment; spiritual health; and forest resource management.



Timber production would continue in over half of the current acreage, but with little to no harvest allowed in the watersheds of Big River and a number of creeks: Russian Gulch, Caspar, Jughandle, Mitchell, and Hare. Neither will it permit harvest in the 459 acres of true old growth in the central and eastern portion of the forest. Learn more about the Stewards' plans at [www.mendocinotrailstewards.com](http://www.mendocinotrailstewards.com)

## BOOK GROUP



The Constant Readers will meet on Zoom, Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM to discuss ***House on Endless Waters*** by Emuna Elon. At the behest of his agent, Israeli author Yoel Blum reluctantly agrees to visit his birthplace of Amsterdam to promote his books, despite promising his late mother that he would never return to that city. While touring the Jewish Historical Museum, Yoel stumbles upon footage portraying prewar Dutch Jewry and is astonished to see the youthful face of his beloved mother staring back at him, posing with his father, his older sister...and an infant he doesn't recognize. This unsettling discovery launches him into a search for the truth, shining a light on Amsterdam's dark wartime history. The deeper into the past Yoel digs, the better he understands his mother's silence, and the more urgent becomes the question that has unconsciously haunted him for a lifetime—Who am I?. Emuna Elon is a best-selling, critically acclaimed novelist, journalist and women's rights activist. Born to a family of prominent rabbis and scholars, she was raised in Jerusalem and New York. Her first novel translated into English, ***If You Awaken Love***, was a National Jewish Book Award finalist.

Order a copy of the book from Gallery Bookshop and request a 10% discount as a book club member. Please contact Fran at [franbschwartz@gmail.com](mailto:franbschwartz@gmail.com) for a Zoom invitation.

## CORRECTIONS TO THE NEW DIRECTORY

Though the dedicated workers in the MCJC publishing arm strive for perfection, they don't always reach that goal, as witnessed by at least one error in the new MCJC directory. We note it here so you can correct it in your copy: Leslie Gates' correct email address is [lesliebee1@gmail.com](mailto:lesliebee1@gmail.com)

## ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION

Thank you to all who have responded to the annual appeal letter! We appreciate your support, at every level. We will soon begin to contact those from whom we have not yet heard. Through the past year, MCJC has been present in your life through online Shabbat candle lightings and Torah services, meetings, classes, afternoon chats, and *Chai* on The Coast activities. We have provided short-term financial help through our Adele Saxe Tzedakah Fund, and food for those who need it through our Mitzvah Freezer. Please help support your Jewish community and its programs. Should you wish to pay at a future date in 2021, let us know and we will remind you then. If you have questions or concerns, please email Donna Montag at [montag@mcn.org](mailto:montag@mcn.org) or call her at 877-3243.



## MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:00 PM, these days on ZOOM. The March meeting will take place on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to attend part of the meeting, please contact board member Susan Tubbesing at 962-0565, or [susan.tubbesing@gmail.com](mailto:susan.tubbesing@gmail.com), and efforts will be made to patch you in.

## MEGILLAH MAILERS ROCK!

Thanks very much to Lorry Lepaule for preparing the February ***Megillah*** for mailing. If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project—and why wouldn't you, still stuck at home—you can do it at your kitchen table, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. If you want to do this *mitzvah*, please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or [sarah.nathe@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nathe@gmail.com)

## MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino ***Megillah*** is published in three formats: hardcopy, emailed PDF, and online. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you or receive it by email. The online ***Megillah*** is posted on the newsletter page of the MCJC website: [www.mcjc.org/newsletter](http://www.mcjc.org/newsletter). Any information on changes in mailing address, changes in email address, and changes in email notifications should be sent to Sarah Nathe at [sarah.nathe@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nathe@gmail.com). If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the ***Megillah*** hardcopy or email.

## GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



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To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah Fund: Becky and Raven Deerwater in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Tracy Salkowitz; Ruth Rosenblum & SA Ephraim.

In honor of Tracy Salkowitz' Bat Mitzvah by Claire Ellis & Chuck Greenberg.

In memory of her mother, Leah Lahn's yahrtzeit, by Rachel Lahn.

In memory of Jerry Kreger by Irv & Rosalie Winesuff.

In memory of Tal Sizemore and Peryl Post, and in honor of George Montag by Helen Sizemore.

To welcome Sadie Heller Mandelbaum by Danny Mandelbaum & Benna Kolinsky.

In celebration of the Bat Mitzvah of Tracy Salkowitz by Harriet Bye & Larry Sawyer.

In honor of the continuing work of Donna Montag by Harriet Bye & Larry Sawyer.

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC

Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be one, is a member of MCJC. The MCJC Board of Directors has a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2021. We have contributing memberships at four levels: Regular, Limited Income, Fair Share, and Family. For more information, see the annual letter on the MCJC website at <https://www.mcjc.org/membership-and-donations>. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website. When you make a donation in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include the name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at [montag@mcn.org](mailto:montag@mcn.org)

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The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month before publication. The editor will include all appropriate material, space permitting, with the exception of copyrighted material lacking the permission of the author. Divergent opinions are welcome. Material printed in the *Megillah* does not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the MCJC Board of Directors.



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**Raven Deerwater, EA, PhD:** Tax practitioner. Specializing in families, home-based & small businesses, & non-profit organizations. 45121 Ukiah Street, Box 1786, Mendocino. 937-1099. Email: [raven@taxpractitioner.com](mailto:raven@taxpractitioner.com) Website: [www.taxpractitioner.com](http://www.taxpractitioner.com)

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## MCJC Board & Useful Numbers (\* = board member)

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Culture & Education (films/ speakers/ classes/ Women's Retreat/ <i>Chai</i> on Coast)	Harriet Bye*	937-3622	<a href="mailto:bysawyer@mcn.org">bysawyer@mcn.org</a>
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