

MEGILLAH

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA.

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RABBI'S NOTES



I loved our women's retreat this year! That is not a sentiment that you always hear from me after the retreat, but this year there was an ease, a simplicity, a depth. It was a pleasure. This year's gathering was, if I'm counting right, our thirty-second retreat. Some women come for the first time every year, but many of us have kind of grown up together with this annual confab. We've seen each other from early work lives, menstrual cramps, new relationships, young motherhoods, back-to-the-land ambitions, political awakenings, and earthshaking spiritual discoveries on through all the events of mid-life and now to cane use, grandmother-hood, artificial knees and hips. As we were swimming around naked in the glorious water of the Navarro River, several people commented on the bobbing heads of grey hair. Beautiful! There were, as every year, some younger women, but even they have grown older.

Our theme for this latest retreat was the search for and celebration of wisdom. As I like to tell young women becoming bat mitzvah, we are living in the greatest time in Jewish history to be a woman. We are living in the generation of the emergence of the voices of women! Women's Torah commentary, women's *midrash*, women rabbis, women's ritual, and so much more. As this efflorescence continues, we are hearing queer voices as well—a new and redemptive development in Jewish text and culture.

There has been a new attention (new as in the last 50 years, let's say) to the milestones in women's life cycles: from this arose the *simchat chochmah*, the celebration of the attainment of wisdom. Our own Fran Schwartz celebrated her *simchat chochmah* on her 70th birthday, a joyous and inspiring occasion for all present. Others, including my beautiful friend and teacher Savina Teubal, of blessed memory, celebrated their attainment of wisdom at age 60. How can one say that one has attained wisdom at a specific age? Especially at the tender age of 60?

This idea of the attainment of wisdom as part of the life cycle, for people of all genders, has long intrigued me. Does age make people wise? I look around at those grey heads around me (in the mirror at my own) and I'm not sure. I don't think that every old person is wise. And even the ones I think are wise have plenty of bumps in their calm and thoughtful exteriors. Can young people be wise? What do I even mean by wisdom? Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart once said of a very different matter, "I can't define it, but I know it if I see it." That works for me with wisdom. I know it if I see it.



As part of my prep for the women's retreat, I dove into the book of Job, a fascinating and horrifying story: God, in a wager with Satan, allows Job to be afflicted with every terrible suffering to see if Job will curse God. Job's home and fields are destroyed. His children die. He is afflicted with boils. Job does not curse, but he crumbles in despair. Three "friends" come allegedly to comfort him. They each challenge him, saying, essentially, "You must have done SOMETHING wrong to warrant all this affliction." Job engages with each of them, proclaiming his innocence and his bafflement. Finally God Godself challenges Job. There is a climactic scene, a kind of awakening, a renewal.

In most conversations about the book, the friends are looked at as creeps who blame the victim in the guise of consoling him. But ***The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations***, by Carol A. Newsom, challenges this view. It sees the friends as “multi-vocal,” an essential part of the story. “...the truth about piety, human suffering, the nature of God and the moral order of the cosmos can be adequately addressed only by a plurality of unmerged consciousnesses engaging one another in open-ended dialogue.” That’s academic-ese for saying that you can only come to clarity about the big issues of life by bumping and grinding with others in a lifetime of conversation and confrontation.

These days I am reducing this thought to an even more basic one: there is no way out but through. We have to go through life, with its torments and conundrums—and its long, not-always-satisfying conversations—to attain wisdom. There are no shortcuts. I saw wisdom at the retreat when various women talked about their responses to personal loss and crisis. And I saw it in much smaller ways as well: the ways that people would help each other down to the river, the ways people moved smoothly from one space to another without worrying about which chair they sat in, the times when people didn’t insist on saying yet one more thing before the session ended. I heard in this absence of fuss and anxiety a kind of small-scale wisdom: there will be a way to the river, there will be a chair, there will be a time when I can be heard with attention.

There is no way out but through. I write this, very intentionally, at the beginning of the holy month of Elul, the month that asks us to engage in *cheshbon ha-nefesh*, accounting of our souls, our lives, and specifically of our past year. A mark, I dare say, of my own nascent wisdom is that I am not as hard on myself during Elul as I used to be.



I no longer use the month just to catalogue my failures, wrongs and deficiencies (though if I did, there would be plenty of material). Instead, I will look over the year I have just lived and reflect on its important moments. I will think about how I have responded in those moments, how I have changed, what I have learned. This year, which has been full of challenge for all of us (and some very specific ones for me), has been full of voices telling us what we should think and what we should do. We have our actual friends, family and community, but also our “friends” in media and culture and the larger zeitgeist, all speaking in our direction. Life is multi-vocal.

One way we might approach the accounting aspect of Elul would be to think about all these crises and all these voices coming at us. And we might reflect on how we have tried to make sense of it all, to find clarity, to figure out how to take the next step. We might look at ourselves as being in the messy, chaotic process of attaining wisdom, a process probably never completed.

I’ve never before thought of Elul—with its *cheshbon ha-nefesh*, its inner account-taking—as a kind of *simchat chochmah*, a celebration of the attainment of wisdom. We know as Jews and friends of Jews that it is important to celebrate victories even if they are only partial. And so it may be with *simchat chochmah*. There may never be a moment of the attainment of wisdom. But I find it helpful to think of myself, all of our selves, as moving in the direction of wisdom—on the bumpy, frustrating, confusing path of real life with all its noise. I find it hopeful, and true, to think of myself and all of us getting wiser through the process of living another year.

As we enter Elul this year, I wish us all *simchat chochmah*: find joy in the awareness that we are growing wiser, gratitude for all those wise-ish friends who advise, console and confront us, clarity about when to listen and when to ignore their advisements, acceptance (and celebration) that we still have a ways to go. There is no way out but through, and we’re in it together. *L’shana tovah*, my dear community.

ELUL ACTIVITIES



Daily shofar sounding and reading of Psalm 27 — 9:00 AM every morning except Saturday on Zoom. The shofar is sounded every day—from August 28th through the morning of September 25th—except Shabbat to awaken our soul and deepen our focus as we move toward the New Year. Psalm 27 is read every day throughout Elul and through the High Holy Days. Its images of divine nurture, protection and care support us in the work of taking account of our souls.

Weekly Elul teaching and meditation with Laura Goldman —9:30-10:00 AM Monday mornings on August 29, September 5, September 12 and September 19. Laura will help us to deepen our spiritual preparation for the Days of Awe, as she has the past several years.

Weekly outdoor chanting and meditation with Student Rabbi Paige Lincenberg and Rabbi Margaret — 5:30 PM on Wednesdays August 31, Sept. 7, 14 and 21. We will meet on August 31st at Chapman Point, a beautiful little outlook just south of Mendocino. Subsequent locations TBA. Please bring a chair.

HIGH HOLY DAYS 5783

We wish you and yours a happy and healthy New Year. We hope you will join us for the High Holy Days this year. Below is a rough schedule; details are still being finalized, and more complete information will come to you soon by e-mail and will be posted on the MCJC website.



HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES

Our main services this year will be at the Caspar Community Center. They will also be on Zoom. Some other events will be held outdoors or in our shul.

Selichot — Saturday night, September 17, 8:00 PM at the shul and on Zoom. A short, candle-lit service of inner preparation for the High Holy Days, with chanting and time for looking within.

Mikveh — Sunday, September 25 in the morning. Details to follow. The mikveh is a prayerful immersion in “living water,” a beautiful traditional way to enter the Holy Days. All women are invited to attend.

Rosh Hashana:

Evening service — Sunday, September 25, 7:30 to 9:30 PM at the Caspar Community Center and on Zoom.

Morning Service — Monday, September 26, 10:30 AM to approximately 2:00 PM at the Caspar Community Center and on Zoom.

Community potluck lunch — 2:00 - 3:30 at the CCC. Our Rosh Hashana lunch will be on the picnic tables outside. Please bring a serving platter or bowl of your delicious (*vegetarian*) dish to share.

Rosh Hashana teachings and Sin Buffet — 3:30 PM at CCC and on Zoom. Shofar service and Taslikh — 4:30 PM at Caspar Beach.

Kever Avot ritual, Sunday, October 2, in the afternoon (exact time TBA), Jewish cemetery in Mendocino.



Bob Evans will lead us in visiting the graves of loved ones and community members, sharing memories and honoring their presence in our hearts. We will also acknowledge the memories of loved ones who are not buried in this cemetery. There may be other gatherings during the Days of Awe as well.

Yom Kippur:

Kol Nidre service — Tuesday, October 4, 7:30 - 9:30 PM at the Caspar Community Center and on Zoom.

Morning service — Wednesday, October 5, 10:30 to approximately 2:30 PM at the CCC and on Zoom.

Yizkor memorial service — 4:30 - 5:30 at the CCC and on Zoom*.

Mincha and Neilah — 5:30 PM to sundown at the CCC and on Zoom.

Details about the Rosh Hashana potluck lunch, break-fast meals after Yom Kippur, childcare, and other important matters are being finalized, and we'll let you know soon.

*If you have names to add to MCJC's existing **yizkor list**, please contact Donna Montag at montag@mcn.org.

MAKE TZEDAKAH A PRIORITY

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to a new year—of health and happiness, we hope—consider making a *tzedakah* contribution to the Adele Saxe Tzedakah Fund and the Ella Russell Bikkur Cholim Fund, both of which are low on funds at this time of year. The latter's funds are available to members of the community to help them work through short-term emergencies. All funds are made available on a confidential basis at the Rabbi's discretion.

CONTRIBUTIONS—We are suggesting a contribution of \$150 for each adult who is not a contributing member of MCJC. As always, our services are open to anyone and we ask you to contribute what you can. Please mail a check to MCJC, P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or make a donation through PayPal on our website (<http://www.mcjc.org>). If you have any financial questions, please contact Donna Montag, the MCJC Treasurer, at montag@mcn.org. Thank you.

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TORAH READERS FOR THE HIGH HOLY DAYS



This year we will be back together at the Caspar Community Center, with a Zoom option for those at a distance. Among the pleasures of the holidays are the Torah readings on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. If you have read in the past and would like the honor of reading and/or chanting this year, please contact Mina at mcohen@mcn.org or (707) 937-1319. If you have not done so in the past but would like to, the portions are five to eight verses long and we have audio materials to help

you master the art.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

A full Shabbat service is led by community members, with singing, chanting and silence, Torah teaching and reading, blessings for healing and peace, and time for mourners to say Kaddish. The teachers for September are listed below. We now have hybrid services, so come to the shul or Zoom in from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. The Zoom address is below.

09/03/22	<i>Shoftim</i>	Raven Deerwater
09/10/22	<i>Ki Teitzei</i>	Bob Evans
09/17/22	<i>Ki Tavo</i>	Raven Deerwater
09/24/22	<i>Nitzavim</i>	Margaret Holub

Members of the community are invited to give a Torah teaching (*drash*) during a Shabbat service. If you have an interest in performing this mitzvah, or would like more information about what's involved, please contact Raven Deerwater at raven@taxpractitioner.com or (707) 937-1099.

ZOOM ADDRESS

We are using the Zoom address here for MCJC events. You may or may not be asked to type in a password, which is *shalom*. Disregard the numeric passcode at the bottom of the invitation unless you're dialing in on a landline. If you have questions or problems, contact Susan Tubbesing at susan.tubbesing@gmail.com.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7071836183?pwd=NzFaTkpiOXVYMDNnNnprOXlnZjVhQT09> Meeting

ID: 707 183 6183

Passcode: *shalom*

Numeric Passcode: 776001

IN-PERSON KABBALAT SHABBAT



On September 16th at 6:00 PM we will meet at the home of Joan and Paul Katzeff on Road 409 near Caspar. A short service will be followed by a vegetarian potluck. To let the Katzeffs know you are coming, and for directions, contact them at (707) 964-9161.

We need hosts for October and November, preferably for the 3rd Friday of the month. If you would like to host, please contact Mina at (707) 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org.

CEMETARY CLEANUP

During a *Chevrah Kadisha* meeting, it was noted the Jewish section of Evergreen Cemetery in Mendocino was looking a bit unkempt. Plants had grown too large and were obscuring markers and blocking access. Steve Antler volunteered to organize a cleanup effort. On July 31st, Bob Evans, Helen Jacobs, Jon Goodstein, Karen Rakofsky, Kenny Wortzel, Lew Mermelstein, Lisa Fredrickson, Paul Katzeff, Sam Waldman and Wednesday The Dog descended on the cemetery with various gardening implements and had at it. The cemetery was tidier for Jay Frankston's funeral and should be easier to maintain now. Thanks to all who helped.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 PM on Zoom. We will meet on September 13th. The conversation is always provocative and enjoyable. The topic of the conversation is announced in the weekly email announcement. People of all ages are most welcome. Use the MCJC Zoom address on the page above. If you need more information, please contact Linda Jupiter (jupiter@mcn.org) or Joy Lancaster (ajoylancaster@gmail.com) and they will be happy to fill you in.



BEST WAY TO START THE DAY



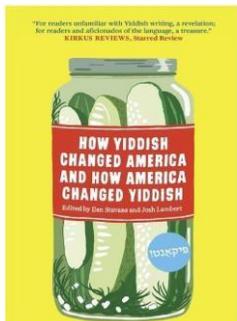
Tune in on Zoom for a virtual cup of your favorite beverage every Wednesday at 10:30 AM. Check in with community members and chat about anything and everything from the garden to the state of the nation, or from zucchini recipes to what the kids are up to these days. We also talk about health and wealth. Leslie Krongold is the host and welcomes your questions and comments any time at elkrong@yahoo.com. Use the Zoom address mentioned above.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP

The Justice Group will meet in person on Thursday, September 8th, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the shul. Vaxed and masked please. At this meeting we will decide how we will proceed as a group. Specifically, the group will continue to meet and undertake work together only if there are new leaders. The Justices currently have two ongoing projects: the Citizenship Scholarships and an emerging Indigenous Relationships group. These

will continue regardless of what is decided at this meeting. We may decide to take a hiatus from other projects until after the November election, or we may decide that the group has run its course and done its work. Or new leaders and new energy may emerge. Please come to the meeting to add your voice and energy to our discernment of next steps. If you are not able to come on September 8th and would like to offer a suggestion, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org.

BOOK GROUP



We will meet Monday the 19th on Zoom to discuss ***How Yiddish Changed America and How America Changed Yiddish***, an anthology edited by Ilan Stavans and Josh Lambert. Is it possible to conceive of the American diet without bagels? Or “Star Trek” without Mr. Spock? Are the creatures in Maurice Sendak’s ***Where the Wild Things Are*** based on Holocaust survivors? And how has Yiddish, a language without a country, influenced Hollywood? These and other questions are explored in this rich anthology on Yiddish and American culture. It starts with the arrival of Ashkenazi immigrants to New York City’s Lower East Side and follows Yiddish as it moves into Hollywood, Broadway, literature, politics, and resistance. The book presents a large menu of genres: essays, memoirs, songs, poems, plays, recipes, cartoons, and conversations by luminaries including Isaac

Bashevis Singer, Grace Paley, Art Spiegelman, Cynthia Ozick, Michael Chabon, Sophie Tucker, and Irving Howe. Far from being an endangered language, Yiddish is alive. For Zoom invitation and/or directions to the meeting, please contact Fran at franbschwartz@gmail.com Copies are available at Gallery Bookshop.

ADVICE TO THE FOLKLORN by Holly Tannen(baum)

What is folklore? Are we folk? All of us or only a few? What is our lore? Is it dying out? Are we folklorn? The answers to these questions and more I hope to explore in this new ***Megillah*** feature.

In the early 1800s, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected traditional stories for fear they would disappear. Yet William Butler Yeats wrote that folklore is “always going, never gone.” We still share recipes, tell jokes, sing songs, repeat rumors. NASA scientists refer to planets’ habitable regions as “Goldilocks zones.” Children make up rhymes and games: ask five kids and you’ll get that many versions of “great green gobs of greasy grimy gopher guts.”

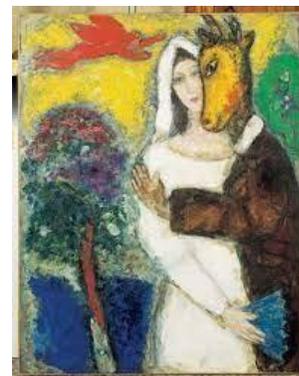
We spend years in school, and hours staring at screens, yet we learn much of what we know from people we hang out with. Folklore can be defined as “customs and oral traditions” or as “artistic communication within small groups.” Or as Tradition!

Observant Jews believe the Torah is divinely inspired, and follow its commandments. According to the late folklore scholar, Alan Dundes, however, both Old and New Testaments can also be understood as oral literature that has been written down.

Folklore is always changing, and each song, legend, joke, and recipe exists in many versions. Jews and non-Jews shmooze, sprinkling their conversations with Yiddish words like glitch, klutz, tush, or shmuck, but do they understand them the same way?

I’d like to devote future columns to European Jewish traditions in California and on the Mendocino coast, Klezmer music, the interplay of written and oral art forms, and the effects of the Internet and Covid on how we express ourselves.

I was raised agnostic, and am unfamiliar with many Judaic traditions and observances. This is an opportunity for me to learn more about Jewish culture. Perhaps you’re as hungry for good conversation as I am, and this column can jump-start dialogue about what we know, how we know it, and how we pass it on. Do you have a question or a comment? Please contact me at htannen@mcn.org.



MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM in the shul. The September meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 6th at 5:30 PM. If you wish to attend part of the meeting, please contact board member Susan Tubbesing at (707) 962-0565, or susan.tubbesing@gmail.com, and she will give you directions.

NEWSLETTER THANK YOU

We are very grateful to Julie and Bob Melendi for preparing the July-August *Megillah* for mailing. Double issue, double mitzvah. Times two! If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it in about two hours. It imparts such a sense of accomplishment and spreads goodwill. Please contact Sarah Nathe at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com

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The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 20th 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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Frankie's Pizza and Ice Cream Parlor: Homemade pizzas, Cowlick's ice cream, and other yummy things to nosh on. Beer and wine available. Open every day but Monday from 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm at 44951 Ukiah Street, Mendocino, 937-2436. www.frankiesmendocino.com

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Rabbi	Margaret Holub	937-5673	mholub@mcn.org

September, 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				5 Elul 1	6 Elul 2	7 Elul 3 Shabbat Minyan 10:30 am <i>Shoftim</i>
8 Elul 4	9 Elul 5	10 Elul 6 MCJC board meeting 5:30 pm	11 Elul 7 Cuppa 10:30 am	12 Elul 8 Justice Group meeting 5:30 pm	13 Elul 9 Shabbat candle lighting 6:30 pm	14 Elul 10 Shabbat Minyan 10:30 am <i>Ki Teitzei</i>
15 Elul 11	16 Elul 12	17 Elul 13 Elders Converse 3:00 pm	18 Elul 14 Cuppa 10:30 am	19 Elul 15	20 Elul 16 Kabbalat Shabbat Katzeff's 6:00 pm	21 Elul 17 Shabbat Minyan 10:30 am <i>Ki Tavo</i> Selichot 8:00 pm
22 Elul 18	23 Elul 19 Book Group 2:00 pm	24 Elul 20	25 Elul 21 Cuppa 10:30 am	26 Elul 22	27 Elul 23 Shabbat candle lighting 6:30 pm	28 Elul 24 Shabbat Minyan 10:30 am <i>Nitzavim</i>
29 Elul 25 Mikveh am Erev Rosh Hashana 7:30 pm	1 Tishrei 26 Rosh Hashana 10:30 am	2 Tishrei 27 Rosh Hashana	3 Tishrei 28 Cuppa 10:30 am	4 Tishrei 29	5 Tishrei 30 Shabbat candle lighting 6:30 pm	

