

MEGILLAH

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RABBI'S NOTES



I'm going to break the Fourth Wall here and tell you that I wrote almost all of a completely different column, then found myself pondering one small aspect I had arrived at near the end. I realized, as I sometimes do when I've started down another thought-road, that this is what I really want to think about with you. Thank you, and here goes.

Before I went to rabbinical school, I spent two years at USC working towards a Ph.D. in ethics (I dropped out; no regrets). While I was there I took a class called something like "Biography and Autobiography," taught by the great anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff of blessed memory. The class had a huge effect on me; I draw on what I learned there all

the time.

Our final assignment was to interview someone important to us and write their biography. At that time my housemates and I were hosting a family of Cambodian refugees, which was an enormous, transforming experience for all of us. Among much else, it had a lot to do with my decision to become a rabbi, but that's another story. At any rate, I wrote my final biographical paper about Pruong Pin, the young father who was living with us (this though he knew about four words of English and I even fewer in Cambodian, so I couldn't really interview him!).

We students turned in our papers and, for a final class session, Barbara filmed some of us reading our essays. This was before i-phones and being filmed wasn't an everyday thing. I remember standing there facing the camera, my teacher and a few classmates, reading my biography of Pin, with tears rolling down my face and a case of the shakes. Barbara asked me why I was crying, and I think I must have responded that it was just overwhelming to be listened to closely about something that was so important to me.

I wondered at the time about my response. It's not like I never got attention or people didn't care what I think. But there was something so powerful about being witnessed in the way I was that day. Barbara had already read my paper. She must have sensed that it was meaningful to me to share this experience. And she took this extra step—for me and, if I remember right, for a few other classmates as well—of using the filmed reading as a way of allowing us to witness each other with intention.

I think now of the many times in the context of our Jewish community that I have shared things important to me, and the tremendous feeling of honor that comes from being witnessed as I did so (not least writing my monthly Rabbi's Notes). I think too of many of the women of our community standing naked at the edge of the river or the pond over the years, one by one, sharing their heartfelt intentions for their lives, then being lovingly watched as they dipped into the *mikveh* water and emerged into our arms. I think of young people, and some not-so-young people, blessing Torah for the first time as they became B-Mitzvah and sharing their Torah with family, friends and community. I think of regular old Shabbat morning services, where the structure is just about the same from week to week, but within it people speak of friends and family in need of healing, mourn deaths, celebrate milestones and, again, listen deeply to the thoughts of friends standing in front of the *minyan* to teach Torah as refracted through their own experience.



I think of the gorgeous teachings shared over the years on Rosh Hashanah afternoon by many different members of our community, sometimes polished, sometimes less so, but almost always vulnerable and heartfelt. I think of the Elders' Conversation, where there has grown over the many years a quality of attention

that is deeply moving. I think of visiting people in the hospital, seeing them in times of frailty, and how beautiful and close to the surface their hearts often seem then.

Somehow these days I'm especially noticing this quality of witnessing. I've been reading some of Surgeon General Vivek Murthy's recent words about the epidemic of loneliness and thinking about all of us emerging, in different ways, to different degrees, from the extreme isolation of COVID. I'm thinking about people who moved up here during the pandemic and maybe don't really know many people here, or—equally important—feel known by others. I'm thinking about the many ways people can feel like they don't belong, in their families, their neighborhoods, their shuls....

It is absolutely crucial to be seen and heard in life. Ella Russell of blessed memory, our beloved *mikveh* lady* for many years, used to teach that the act of witnessing was as important as the act of immersing. She taught that when we heard a woman speak her *kavvanah*, her heart's intention, before going into the cold water, we could hold that intention for her so, while in the water, she could completely let go of thought and memory. When she emerged we would welcome her back to her truth.



This quality of witnessing, of holding each other's truth—whether for a moment or through a lifetime—might be one of the most important things we do for each other as a community. When we listen to each other teaching Torah or joining in a conversation or sharing concerns and joys at a service or a party or a *mikveh*, we are learning about the topic at-hand. Every bit as much, however, we are seeing each other, hearing each other, knowing each other. We are holding each other's truth. And we all so deeply need this.

It also seems that there are few things as joyous and as nourishing as being able to witness someone's truth. Even difficult truth. There is something so precious about people allowing themselves to be seen, to be heard. Right now I am remembering back many years to the Local Heroes performances, led by Lynne Abels, in which many of us wrote and performed short personal monologues. Lynne encouraged us in the class to find what felt true and important to us—sometimes what made us shake and cry—and to craft that into a 15-minute performance. I was in the very first group. We wondered if anyone would come to the show. To our shared amazement, the line for tickets was down the block. And so it continued season after season. There was some hunger to witness each other, whether we knew the performers or not. It was an opportunity to see and hear someone else at their water's edge, saying what they decided was important for them to say. It felt huge.

In our little Jewish community these days some people have known each other for half a century. Others have just arrived. Some we only know on Zoom. We are different ages, with different backgrounds. There are close and sustained and sustaining friendships among some of us, and hopefully more will begin and deepen. But however well we do or don't know each other, by coming together in intentional ways—to pray, to study, to discuss, to play, to struggle, to plan, to share our lives—we can hold each other's truth. We can stand at the water's edge and watch each other dip underneath and re-emerge. The act of witnessing is as important as the act of immersing.

I want to notice and appreciate that we have over the years, instructed and inspired by generations before us, created a space for speaking and hearing our personal truths in a sacred context. I hope that for each of us, however we enter this space, we find it to be a sanctuary.

(* "*Mikveh* lady" is the name given in many traditional *mikveh* spaces for the attendant who guides, watches, and helps a woman immerse. Only she knows which women come to the mikveh, and she's not telling. I don't know what they call the *mikveh* attendant who helps people of other genders take their dips. Ella used that term, and we've kept it for others since who have performed this role.)

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 May are listed below. We now have hybrid services, so come to the shul or Zoom from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM.

06/03/23	<i>Nasso</i>	Andrea Luna
06/10/23	<i>Beha'alotcha</i>	Raven Deerwater
06/17/23	<i>Sh'lach</i>	Tracy Salkowitz
06/24/23	<i>Korach</i>	Margaret Holub

If you would like to give a Torah teaching during Shabbat services, or want 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 below for many 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@gmail.com.

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

Meeting ID: 707 183 6183

Passcode: *shalom*

Numeric Passcode: 776001

PAIGE'S PAGE



Chodesh tov! This past new moon, we welcomed in the Hebrew month of Sivan. We revel in this time as we finish Counting the Omer, physically harvest our barley, and spiritually harvest our growth through the *sephirot* (Kabbalistic attributes of the Divine). Like the wildflowers all around us, we begin to bloom to our fullest potential.

With that in mind, I want to share a personal update. After six years of rabbinical school, I have finished my final course! From the first entire year in Jerusalem through now, it has been a profound journey of insightful teachings, wise mentors, powerful prayer, and spiritual deepening for me. This final year of it, in addition to my studies, I have had the pleasure of launching here on the coast a monthly philosophical lunch with the Jewish high schoolers, a monthly youth education gathering, and a monthly Rosh Chodesh Chanting Circle. I have led Shabbat tefillot, served on the Young Adults Board as program lead, and had the honor of meeting every week one-on-one with Rabbi Margaret! I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn from, and work with her and all of you. I am looking forward to more work with the community here, cultivating more access for people of all ages and preferences.

When I was 16 and knew I would be a rabbi, I was terrified to tell my 101-year-old Orthodox great-grandfather, "Zeidelu." My grandmother and he, her father, had escaped from Pultusk, Poland during the Holocaust and he had never quite assimilated into modern American culture. I felt he would be against female rabbis. When I told him in front of my whole family, he looked at me and slowly responded, "I'm a rabbi." All of our jaws dropped. No one in my family had known he had been a rabbi. Without knowing it was my inheritance, I had spiritually tapped into my ancestral calling.

Seven years later, I made a pilgrimage to Pultusk and was awed by the tiny town nestled in grand woods with a glorious river flowing through it; it was the exact environment I sought to live in. When I finally stumbled upon Mendocino years later, I knew I had found my Pultusk. Though my great-grandfather lived four more years after that conversation, he will not be there the day I become a rabbi. However, when the hands are laid upon me—which is the literal meaning of *smicha*, the Hebrew word for rabbinic ordination—I know they will belong not only to the rabbis of my seminary, but also to Zeidelu, and to the trees of Pultusk and Mendocino, too.

with awe & blessings,
erev rabbi paige lincenberg

KABBALAT SHABBAT



Bob and Julie Melendi are hosting Kabbalat Shabbat in June in South Caspar. The date is changed to a week later than our usual gathering, so it will be Friday, June 23rd at 6:00 PM. Following a Shabbat service, we will share a vegetarian potluck meal. In July we will be at the home of the Cohen Berensons on the Comptche-Ukiah Road. We need hosts for August and into the fall. If you do not wish to invite people into your home, you can be a host at the shul. If you are interested, please contact Mina at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 PM on Zoom. In June, they will meet on the 13th and 27th. The conversation is always provocative and enjoyable. People of all ages are most welcome. Use the MCJC Zoom address on page 3, 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.

HAVE A CUP



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 weather to the state of the nation, or from your garden to the cost of propane. We also talk about health and wealth, and share wisdom. Leslie Krongold is the host and welcomes your questions and comments any time at elkrong@yahoo.com. To attend, use Leslie's Zoom address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87150984636>
[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZMscumhpi8sGdLc3-fEePz6ycDwaULk1p6h/ics?icsTokKaen=98tyKuGvrz4gE9yRthgBRpwEBY_4c_PxiCldjadxn0yoBQVWUhmgl-FmJbNKPNOb](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87150984636). Meeting ID: 871 5098 4636; by phone: 1 669 444-9171.

JEWISH FILMS

One of this year's Mendocino Film Festival selections, "Three Minutes: A Lengthening" takes a fascinating look at what can be discovered from closely examining frames of a 1938 home movie. Just a few minutes of footage, taken by a Brooklyn resident visiting the town of his birth, are the only moving images left of the Jewish inhabitants of Nasielsk, Poland, before the Holocaust.



Director Bianca Stigter examines the three minutes of footage in the fullest detail, to see what the celluloid will reveal to viewers almost a century later. She edits the found footage in different ways to illuminate as many facts and stories about Nasielsk as possible. The film starts and ends with the same unedited found footage, but the second time you will look at it quite differently.

The film screens once, June 3rd at 10:00 AM at Matheson Performing Arts Center in Mendocino.

"The Forger" is a captivating biographical drama based on a true story of bravery in the face of evil. Louis Hofmann stars as an audacious young man who poses as a marine officer and forges documents to help fellow Jews escape Nazi Germany. The film screens once on June 3rd at 4:00 PM at Crown Hall.

The 16th Annual Mendocino Film Festival runs June 1st through the 4th. Purchase tickets online or at the festival office in Mendocino. Details at MendoFilm.org or on Facebook.

JEWISH MOROCCO TOUR

MCJC's friend, Moroccan musician extraordinaire and tour guide, Dror Sinai, has asked if there might be interest in an MCJC trip to Morocco focusing on that country's rich Jewish heritage. This would be a ten-day tour customized to the interests and needs of a group from our community at a date to be determined. Dror's website is <https://mugical-morocco.com/>. If this might be of interest to you please drop Margaret a note. This is just to see if there is interest among MCJC-niks. If it seems that there is, details would be figured out.

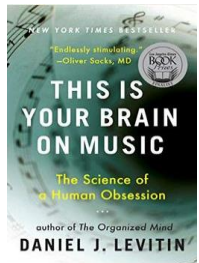
THE MCJC GEMACH

Don't forget to use the MCJC GeMaCh (that's an acronym for *gemilut chesed*, deeds of lovingkindness). It's the growing list of items you might wish to borrow from, or lend to others in our community; currently it has about 40 items, from gardening tools to kayaks to baby gear to books and beyond. Find the GEMACH at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18VpVqbopG399GSnu6ScwR2R3PZqbfjENAobPaQ4gAil/edit#gid=0>. Once you open it, feel free to contact someone who has offered something you're interested in and make arrangements to borrow it. Or you can add your own offers.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP

The Justice Group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, 5:30 to 7:30 PM on the MCJC Zoom (see page 3). This month we will meet on June 22nd. Watch the announcements for information about the meeting. If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list or attend meetings, please contact Donna Medley at dmthebee9@gmail.com.

BOOK GROUP



The June meeting will be on Zoom at 2:00 PM on Monday, June 19th, to discuss ***This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of Human Obsession*** by Daniel J. Levitin.

In this marriage of art and science, rocker-turned-neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin explores the connection between music—its performances, its composition, how we listen to it, why we enjoy it—and the human brain. Drawing on the latest research and on musical examples ranging from Mozart, Ella Fitzgerald, and U2 to Schoenberg, Metallica, and “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” Levitin reveals how composers exploit the way our brains make sense of the world; why we are emotionally attached to music we listened to as teenagers; why 10,000 hours of practice (not talent) makes virtuosos; and how insidious jingles (aka earworms) get stuck in our heads.

Taking on prominent thinkers who argue that music is nothing more than an evolutionary accident, Levitin argues that music is fundamental to our species, perhaps even more so than language. ***This is Your Brain on Music*** is an ear-opening, mind-blowing investigation into an obsession at the center of human nature. If you are not currently in the Book Group, contact Fran Schwartz at franbschwartz@gmail.com to get the Zoom invitation. Books are available at Gallery Bookshop.

JEWISH WOMEN'S RETREAT

קולות מים רבים **MI KOLOT MAYIM RABIM — FROM THE VOICES OF WATER**

In the beginning of Torah we learn that there was water before creation. Water might be the material substance which most resembles God: water cannot be created or destroyed, but it changes forms and moves; it is transparent, but has substance. Water can also be an instrument of flood and drowning. We are largely made of water, and water sustains us daily. Each of us emerged from the waters of the womb. When our hearts are full of grief or rage or joy, water pours from our eyes. When we thirst, it is water that quenches.



Every year at our retreat we immerse in the water of the Navarro River, and we experience renewal, cleansing, transformation, permeability and interconnectedness. This year, after several years of drought, our river will be full with the generosity of abundant rain. Our goal for this year's retreat is to **raise our joy about water**—which is to say our existence, our bodies, our hearts, our planet. The voices of the waters will be our teachers as we immerse in texts and tears; in glasses and bodies of water; and in sound, blessing and play.

The retreat will take place August 3rd to the 6th at River's Bend Retreat Center in Philo. If you are interested in attending, or want additional information, please contact the Registrar, Harriet Bye, at bysawyer@mcn.org or (707) 684 9041.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly. In June the meeting will take place on Tuesday, the 20th, at 5:30 PM on Zoom. 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 the address.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH



Many thanks to Deena and Mark Zarin for preparing the May *Megillah* for mailing. Not only that, but then they had to manage the apprehensions of the Comptche postmistress. That's, like, a triple mitzvah! All who perform it are left with a great sense of accomplishment. If you would like to get that sense, contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com

MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino *Megillah* is published monthly as an emailed PDF and an online version. The online *Megillah* is posted on the newsletter page of the MCJC website: www.mcjc.org/newsletter. Any information on changes in email address or in email notifications should be sent to Sarah Nathe at sarah.nathe@gmail.com. If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$36 annual fee for the *Megillah*.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHUL

We appreciate all your support for the many programs MCJC offers throughout the year. When you make a donation in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family if you include their name and mailing address with your message. Please mail your donations to MCJC, Box 291, Little River, CA 95456, or use PayPal on the MCJC website.



THANK YOU VERY MUCH TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



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dobby sommer in honor of Grandma Nettie and great, great grandpa, Rabbi Landau

Annett and Jonathan Lehan in memory of Frances Lehan

Ayn Ruymen Ross & Robert Ross in memory of Bill Popow and in honor of Susan Hofberg

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly, except for August. 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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Karen Bowers Studio: Painting workshops and studio gallery. Website: karenbowersstudio.com
Email: highpt@mcn.org Tel: 707 937-3163.

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

Out of this World: Telescopes, binoculars, & science toys. 45100 Main Street, Box 1010, Mendocino. 937-3335. www.OutofThisWorldShop.com. Serving all your interplanetary needs since 1988.

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