

MEGILLAH

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA. Send mail to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA 95456.

Call the MCJC at (707) 964-6146 website: <http://www.mcjc.org> email: sarah.nathe@gmail.com

RABBI'S NOTES



It's time to write about not writing about Israel. We are watching the headlines, I know, as hundreds of thousands of Israelis fill the streets in protest, holding signs that say "Democracy!" We see the Prime Minister, facing indictment on various corruption charges, attempting to strip the Supreme Court of its authority to hold him accountable. We see politicians with intense right-wing policy agendas appointed to leadership. We see all of this and more. We may be in touch with people we know in Israel or in the Occupied Territories, and be moved by their accounts. It's painful and concerning and and and....

I don't know what to do, what to say, to be your rabbi in this regard. I have strongly-held thoughts and feelings about these goings-on, as do many of us. I have also been the rabbi of this community for over three decades and have experienced the anger and alienation that have most often come between us from attempts to speak together about Israel. I know that many of us are in pain as we watch the latest events. Some of you have expressed a desire to come together and share. I imagine that behind this desire is a hope to feel aligned with others in our Jewish community, to feel our own perspectives affirmed, to feel less alone in our concern and our pain. Some may wish that we could find a way to contribute to better outcomes there.

I don't know that we can do that. I know that we hold vastly different political, emotional and spiritual perspectives about Israel. Sometimes I think that we all look at the same facts, the same map, the same history, the same headlines, but our hearts are drawn to different views. For some it is toward brave halutzim who left the Pale of Settlement in Europe and tried to build idealistic communal life in a new land. For some it is toward the refugees from Hitler seeking safe refuge. For some it is toward the expectation that there can be a place of refuge if antisemitism where we are increases. For some it is toward the exciting technological and cultural sophistication of Israel. For some it is toward a place where one can live in Jewish time and language. For some it is alliance with the United States and its global objectives. For some it is toward the displaced inhabitants of ancient Palestine as their homeland was occupied. There are more, I'm sure. These different allegiances live deep inside us. For some of us they are very strong. I don't know if we can come together to witness and respect these strong inclinations of our various minds and hearts. And I don't know what is served even if we can.

I remember back to a Shavuot many years ago. We were studying deep into the night; I don't remember our theme, but the wonderful Scott Meltsner, a poet who lived here at the time, led a writing exercise about intimate relationships. I remember that he asked us to write about five different themes in this realm. The theme that touched me was "overlook." Any of us who have ever loved anyone know that part of loving someone is overlooking aspects of who they are, sometimes large and glaring aspects. Somehow we make peace with what we can't absorb, understand, support or celebrate. It's worth it because of all else that makes the beloved who they are.



But sometimes those aspects of the beloved become too disturbing to keep overlooking, and this causes a crisis. At that juncture, people may inch back to remembering all the other things they love about their beloved, and things calm down. With careful exploration, people can come to understand why a behavior or a belief is so important to one of them, and/or why it is so painful to the other, and this allows them to return to each other with more tolerance. One party or both may be able to change at least outward behaviors that inflame the conflict. Unfortunately, though, the differences, when looked at directly, become insurmountable, and beloveds can no longer stay in relationship.

I think we see some of these dynamics in this country, as family members, neighbors and communities negotiate the red/blue divide. Mostly we separate. Sometimes a relationship is important enough to us that we overlook. Over time many of us migrate to communities where we won't be continually rubbed by insurmountable differences with neighbors, colleagues and friends. It's not perfect by any means, but without these places of ideological refuge, we might be ground to the bone every minute.

I feel a certain amount of guilt about not advocating strenuously in our community for what I think is most right and just with regard to Israel and trying to rally as much allegiance and action as I can to move things in my preferred direction. I admire rabbis who stand up and speak out (in favor of the perspective I hold) and let the chips fall where they may. But there are several reasons I don't do that.

First and most important, I love all of you. I am more than willing to overlook just about any political division, and most any other, for the sake of love. You are my home and my community, my *hevra*, my *minyan*, my refuge. I would do almost anything in the world—including NOT speaking out in ways that will alienate and inflame people I love. "Almost," of course: there have been times when I felt it morally worth the friction to stand up and speak out, and I know that people I care for have felt alienated when I have done so. I've also made what I have come to see as mistakes in this department, holding my tongue when I should have spoken up or speaking out when I should have been more circumspect. This for me as a rabbi, and I know for many of us, is an ongoing negotiation. But I lean strongly in the direction of overlooking.

A far-distant second reason is that I don't think we as a community have that much to offer in the direction of justice and peace in Israel and Palestine. We are more likely to end up fighting against each other than contributing anything constructive toward the goals I or any of us might espouse. So a simple cost-benefit analysis leads me to reckon that we offer more to a better world by not going up in flames about something over which we have very little control. We have some power, not none, and we certainly have moral standing to act. Many of us do so individually in the ways that support our perspectives. But I generally don't think it's worth the cost to try to do so collectively.

A third reason—and this one I feel more and more strongly committed to—is that I believe that the locus of Jewish life and thriving is more and more in the diaspora. And so building vibrant, spiritually alive, interesting Jewish life in the places where we live is actually really important for the Jewish people and not just for me or us as a little satellite on the edge of the world. This notion is sometimes called *doikayt*—Yiddish for "here-ness." The term is associated with Bund, the socialist labor movement in Lithuania most active before World War II. As an alternative analysis to the emerging Zionism of the time, it said, "Let's build a better world here where we are."

The term is taking on some currency again these days, as more and more Jews question the religious and cultural centrality of Israel to vibrant Judaism. Much of what is transformative and forward-looking and spiritually alive these days is happening in Jewish communities around the world and also in the cyber-world. That we have managed somehow to create and sustain a little Jewish community where we are, with our distinctive mix of imagination, love of trees and ocean, commitment to materially supporting each other as best we can, our funny and flexible and often-moving ways of prayer and celebration and study, our flexibility and joy for half a century right here where you can't even buy a real rye bread. When it comes to building a vibrant and healthy Jewish people, and a better world, this is not nothing. "Here" is where I live spiritually and politically—mostly, not entirely, but it's where the work feels juiciest and most promising.



My dear community, we can look at each other and know that Israel is causing us pain these days, for reasons that may be different for each of us. Maybe we can feel compassion for the fear and pain even of people we disagree with. In places of intractable division and pain I am inclined to pray. If nothing else, prayer reminds me of what power I hold and what I don't. Prayer also has a tendency to open my heart, and sometimes even my mind. Maybe.... I don't know how to end this sentence. But maybe.

LAG B'OMER



The 33rd day of the counting of the omer is a little wild card in the Jewish calendar. It's traditionally a day given to picnics, bonfires, ball games, Kabbalistic mysteries, and haircuts. We can certainly enjoy at least the first two or three of these pleasures together. This year, Lag B'Omer falls on Tuesday, May 9th. Weather permitting, we will have a dinner picnic and bonfire at Caspar Beach, starting at 5:30PM. Please bring your own picnic dinner and/or food to share, and your own utensils. Don't forget balls, Frisbees,

maklot, etc. Look for an e-mail confirmation close to the date as we begin to see what the weather will be.

SHAVUOT

Shavuot begins on Thursday night, May 25th. We will have our annual feast of Torah study, chant and song, cheesecake and blintzes, midnight prayer and more. Our focus this year will be on the physical Torah scrolls: the history and physical appearance of our two scrolls, the ink and parchment with which they are created, Torah calligraphy, and some of the wonderful scribal oddities that make reading the scroll different from reading Torah in a book—enlarged and reduced letters, spaces between them, additional letters popped in, and more.



We will begin at 8:00 PM with a brief festival evening service and *Yizkor*, then delve into our explorations. If there is energy, we may even study all night long. We will pause at a few minutes before midnight, open our ark, and pray in this especially holy time for ourselves, our community and world. You are most welcome to come and go as you wish, staying for any part of the night that awakens your soul, or napping amidst the goings-on. If you have a teaching, practice or other offering to add to this beautiful, please let Rabbi Holub know at mholub@mcn.org.

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.

05/06/23	<i>Emor</i>	Andrea Luna
05/13/23	<i>Behor–Bechukotai</i>	Bob Evans
05/20/23	<i>Bamidbar</i>	Raven Deerwater
05/27/23	<i>Shavuot</i>	Margaret Holub

If you have an interest in giving a Torah teaching during Shabbat services, 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 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=NzFaTkpjOXVYMDNnNnprOXInZjVhQT09>

Meeting ID: 707 183 6183

Passcode: *shalom*

Numeric Passcode: 776001

KABBALAT SHABBAT



Kabbalat Shabbat May 19th will be hosted by Scott and Tracie Green in Fort Bragg. You can reach them at 650-274-4305 or shalomgreen9090@gmail.com to let them know you are coming. Following a Shabbat service, we will share a vegetarian potluck meal. Please contribute a food or beverage. In June, Bob and Julie Melendi will host in South Caspar. We need hosts in August and beyond. If you do not wish to use your home, you can do so at the shul. Please contact Mina at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org.

PAIGE NOTES



Chodesh tov! The previous new moon transitioned us into the Hebrew month of Iyar. Mystics often interpret Iyar as an acronym for the Torah verse ינא םא ךאפר ם״ meaning “I, the Divine, am your healer” (Shemot/Exodus 15:26). We spend this entire month on the healing journey of Counting the Omer. This earth-based practice of counting the barley growth during the seven weeks from Pesach to Shavuot also serves as a metaphorical counting of our healing. Each week, and each day of the week, aligns with one of the Sefirot, the Kabbalistic attributes of the Divine Spirit, of ourselves, of Life. Thus, with no major holidays the whole month (Lag B’Omer is minor), we welcome the Divine as our healer, journeying through the seven Sefirot of *Chesed* loving-kindness, *Gevurah* boundaries, *Tiferet* beauty/harmony, *Netzach* endurance, *Hod* surrender, *Yesod* actualization, and *Malchut* presence. In order to receive revelation and our own personal truths next month on Shavuot, we must first make progress through this profound counting.

with blessings of healing,
erev rabbi paige lincenberg

COFFEE TIME



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 elkronq@yahoo.com. To attend, use the Leslie’s Zoom address:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZMscumhpi8sGdLc3-](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZMscumhpi8sGdLc3-fEePz6ycDwaULk1p6h/ics?icsTokKaen=98tyKuGvrz4qE9yRthqBRpwEBY_4c_PxiCldjadxn0yoBQVWUhmgl-FmJbNKPNOb)

[fEePz6ycDwaULk1p6h/ics?icsTokKaen=98tyKuGvrz4qE9yRthqBRpwEBY_4c_PxiCldjadxn0yoBQVWUhmgl-FmJbNKPNOb](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZMscumhpi8sGdLc3-fEePz6ycDwaULk1p6h/ics?icsTokKaen=98tyKuGvrz4qE9yRthqBRpwEBY_4c_PxiCldjadxn0yoBQVWUhmgl-FmJbNKPNOb). Meeting ID: 871 5098 4636; by phone: 1 669 444-9171.

ELDERS’ CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 PM on Zoom. In May, they will meet on the 9th and 23rd. 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.

THE MCJC GEMACH

Just a reminder of the wonderful, growing 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 others in our community; currently it has about 30 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, and/or to add your own offers.



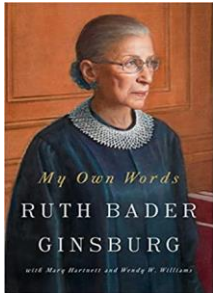
MITZVAH FREEZER

We hope you are healthy and enjoying the better weather. Because some in our community anticipate needing help in the coming months, we have decided to restock the Mitzvah Freezer at the shul. For those who are new to this, MCJC has a freezer in the shed next to the shul in which we keep vegetarian food for those needing it because of illness or inability to prepare food for themselves. If you can prepare vegetarian food that is easily frozen in individual portions, with a list of ingredients, please contact Mina (mcohen@mcn.org) or Fran (franbschwartz@gmail.com) and they tell you how to drop off the food.

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 May 25th. 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 Constant Readers will discuss *My Own Words*, by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, on Monday, May 15th at 2:00 PM on Zoom. For this collection, she worked with her authorized biographers, Mary Hartnett and Wendy W. Williams, who introduce each chapter and provide biographical context and quotes gleaned from hundreds of interviews they conducted. The book gives a comprehensive look inside her brilliantly analytical, entertainingly wry mind, revealing the fascinating life of one of our generation's most influential voices in law. Justice Ginsburg discusses gender equality, the workings of the Supreme Court, being Jewish, law and lawyers in opera, and the value of looking beyond U.S. shores when interpreting the U.S. Constitution. 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.

Advice to the Folklorist

by Holly Tannen

"A Jewish heart is like a fiddle: you squeeze the strings and you draw forth songs. Even the most pious Jew need not weep as many tears over the destruction of Jerusalem as the women would shed when Stempenyu played."

— Sholom Aleichem, *Stempenyu*



Fiddler Tommy Jarrell set down his bow and stared at the earnest young man from New York City, with a yarmulke on his head and a banjo on his knee. Henry (Hank) Sapoznik had discovered American folk music in Greenwich Village, and in 1970 he was in Round Peak, North Carolina to learn tunes from real southern fiddlers. "Don't you people got none of your own music?" asked Tommy. The son of a cantor, Hank was familiar with rabbinical chanting, but did Eastern European Jews have their own dance music? Had any of it survived?

Back in New York City, he scrounged through second-hand record stores, and found a trove of Jewish music, *klezmer* music. From the Hebrew words *kley* (vessel or tool) and *zemer* (song or melody), klezmer first referred to the musicians who performed on violin, cimbalom (hammered dulcimer), clarinet, bass and drums, but over time came to mean the style of music they played.

The first klezmer guild was formed in Prague in 1558. Early bands are said to have included women, though later ones did not. *Kapelye* (bands) played for weddings: songs to greet guests, to lead bride and groom to and from the *chuppah*, exuberant circle dances (*freylekhs*), and the *broyges tants*, a dance of anger and reconciliation between mothers-in-law. *Klezmorim* also played liturgical tunes in synagogue before *shabbos* and for dedication of Torah scrolls.

Over time, they integrated the waltzes, mazurkas, and polkas of Germany, Russia, and Poland with Turkish, Romanian, Greek and Gypsy melodies, and Yiddish songs. Before the 20th century, few klezmerim read musical notation, but they knew hundreds of waltzes from memory. Apprentices learned by following along; they might get a gig of their own if the main band was already booked.

Jewish musicians emigrating to the U.S. in the late 19th century found a fledgling recording industry willing to feature them. In the early 20th century, Jewish musicians played in the Yiddish theatre, vaudeville, jazz bands, and Broadway shows. With the extermination of Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe, klezmer music nearly disappeared, both in Europe and the U.S., but Hank discovered the records from the 1920s and bought them up cheap. He learned the tunes and taught them at workshops and festivals, and in a Yiddish folk arts program called KlezKamp. He included many of them in *Klezmer! Jewish Music from Old World to Our World* (1999), the first history of klezmer music.

In 1975, a Berkeley group calling themselves The Klezmerim began performing Russian, Greek, Serbian, and Yiddish tunes, as well as Ladino and Hungarian Gypsy songs, spreading klezmer music to people who had never heard of it. Their 1977 album, *East Side Wedding*, was the first postwar recording to use the word *klezmer* to refer to the music. Our own Klezmishpocheh (*mishpokhe* is Hebrew for "family") is as traditional as can be, in instrumentation (clarinet, fiddle, voices, hammered dulcimer, bass, cello, flute, trumpet, drums, and occasional tuba), its inclusion of young musicians, its mix of players, and its wonderful music.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly. In May the meeting will take place on Wednesday, the 24th, 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.



OUTSTANDING NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEER

Many thanks to Joan Katzeff for preparing the April *Megillah* for mailing. A couple cups of coffee and she got it done in record time. It's a mitzvah that leaves everyone who performs it with an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. If you would like to give it a try, 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*.

IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD TIME TO GIVE

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.



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Myra Beals, Linda Jupiter, Arleen Weisman, Karen & Leonardo Bowers, Caroline Isaacs, Bob Evans, Rio Russell.

Andrea Luna in honor of our Chevra Kadisha, who perform *tahara* and organize *shomrim* to prepare our beloveds for burial.

Danny Mandelbaum & Benna Kolinsky in honor of our wonderful traditions.

Norm and Karen Rosen to the Women's Retreat in memory of Bibi Montag.

Karen Rakofsky in memory of her mother, Mildred Rakofsky, at her *yahrzeit*.

Sandy Glickfeld in loving memory of Helen & Sidney Glickfeld.

Susan Hofberg in appreciation for the beautiful memorial Margaret led for Bill Popow.

Gunnar Guinan in honor of his daughter, Annabelle's, bat mitzvah.

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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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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Rituals (Chevra Kadisha/cemetery)	Joan Katzeff	964-9161	jkatzeff@mcn.org
Outreach (new to the community), Finance Committee, <i>Chai</i> on Coast	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	susan.tubbesing@gmail.com
High Holidays/ liaison to young adults	Lisa Fredrickson*	972-0884	yes@mcn.org
Women's Retreat/ <i>Chai</i> on Coast)	Harriet Bye	937-3622	bysawyer@mcn.org
Kabbalat Shabbat coordinator	Mina Cohen	937-1319	mcohen@mcn.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Susan Levenson-Palmer	882-1750	slevensonpalmer@gmail.com
Building Maintenance	Marnie Press*	937-1905	marniepress@gmail.com
Treasurer	Raven Deerwater*	964-8333	raven@taxpractitioner.com
Landscaping	Lew Mermelstein*	650-387-3581	lewmer@gmail.com
Secretary/ Finance Committee	Alix Sabin*	415-238-1342	alixsabin@gmail.com
Library	Nina Ravitz*	357-6462	ninabo@mcn.org
Book Group/ Bikkur Cholim	Fran Schwartz	937-1352	franbschwartz@gmail.com
<i>Megillah</i> Editor	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
Name & Address, Subscription Changes	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
MCJC Website	Sarah Nathe	962-0565	sarah.nathe@gmail.com
Online <i>Megillah</i>	Bob Evans	357-2817	bobevans@boborama.net
Rabbi	Margaret Holub	734-0311	mholub@mcn.org
Rabbinic Intern	Paige Lincenberg		lincenberg@gmail.com