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RABBI'S NOTES



Five-and-a-half years ago, after the 2016 election, MCJC's Justice Group was born. It was conceived out of the dread many of us felt about an impending Trump administration. We've met monthly ever since, and it's continued to be a big and lively group with wise and brilliant people working conscientiously. I'm proud of "the Justices," and personally I can't begin to imagine how I would have gotten through the last few years without them.

And it has made me aware of an intellectual mystery that continues to perplex and engage me. All of us come together month after month with huge passion for a better community, country and world, and with chagrin and fear about the many ways this seems so far away. We talk about the issues that move us most, we read, we small-group, we bring in speakers, and then we try to come up with practical, doable, useful projects that bring justice closer. It is so difficult! What we often come up with feels small next to the giant concern it is trying to address.

I am fascinated and driven slightly mad by that gap between our passion about issues and our ability to generate useful ways to address them. Sometimes I imagine a giant power plant (our passion, distress, yearning for justice) and a long, uninsulated wire that loses amps all along its path, until it finally arrives in a little spark. To mix metaphors, all that raw passion goes into the bottom of a still, gets heated up, evaporates into the copper tubes, and distills into a tiny drop of action.

As you probably are too, I'm on the mailing lists of a gazillion organizations I admire that advocate for issues I care about. Most of these groups have a lot more expertise and resources than our little Justice Group, but more often than not they too are calling on their memberships to "write your elected official about Measure XYZ" or "send \$3 so we can hire people to call you to urge you to write your elected official about Measure XYZ."

I'm not really disheartened by this. It makes me realize that meaningful change largely comes about not through quantum leaps, but through small, unglamorous acts done by diligent people over a long time. I think of the legend of Rosa Parks one day boarding a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, announcing, "I am tired" and sitting down at the front of the bus: poof! the Montgomery Bus Boycott was born. In fact, Rosa Parks was an accomplished community organizer and part of an ongoing campaign preparing for and continuing from that afternoon on the bus. I'm sure there were endless meetings, agendas, notes taken and typed, chairs set up and put away, and debates in order to generate that electrifying moment on the bus.

Sometimes there are bolts of lightning: the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, or of Michael Brown before them; or Alicia Garza tweeting "Black Lives Matter" into our shared lexicon. After them, however, there are long journeys to productive change. What can we actually do to insure that Black Lives Matter? BLM itself went from being a meme to an organization to a march to a platform to an ongoing organization with, yes, meetings, chapters, agendas, campaigns. (Along the way it split into several organizations and spokespeople and campaigns....) All those little droplets of concrete activity, all those meetings, schedules, agendas, notes....



What can we do here? One small but crucial step is to take a look at policing in our own community. A number of organizing groups on the Mendocino coast—including the MCJC Justice Group, the South Coast Organizing for Radical Equity (SCORE), and Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ Mendocino Coast), and others—have come together to call for an audit of the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office. (Unless you live in one of the four incorporated cities in Mendocino County, your policing is handled by the MCSO.) The audit will

call for information about expenditures, contracts, hiring and firing, and also about conditions at the county jail, arrests, use of force, and more. This is a first step toward an informed conversation about public safety issues in our community, what any of us thinks about them or has experienced, and what can be done to bridge differences of opinion.

There is never a time when police departments should operate without public awareness and input. But the current moment offers that jolt of energy to move us, maybe a little faster and further than we would have gotten without it. We are invigorated by the shared passion of people all over our country to stop more police killings of unarmed Black people and find better paths to public safety in their communities. Which will inevitably lead to more meetings, phone calls, zooms, notes, lists—tiny electron charges that so slowly, so arduously bend the arc of our universe a bit toward justice.

SHAVUOT WITH THE WORLD

Shavuot—the festival of the giving of Torah at Mount Sinai—falls this year on Sunday night, May 16th through Monday, May 17th. This year, MCJC is going to join the Reconstructionist Movement in its worldwide *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*. The first one last year, on Zoom, had more than 1000 participants, music, Torah teaching, meditation, art and more. We hope that next year we will be able to gather in person in our Caspar shul to learn together, but for now we can learn with teachers and communities all over the country and beyond.



This year's Reconstructionist plans are in the works, but below is part of the plan:

- The 15-hour event will be built around **seven blocks of time** each lasting *2-hours*, followed by a *1-hour* service. Collectively, the blocks will flow from one to another following an intentional progression for the 'long haulers.' Individually, each block will stand on its own as a coherent program for those who wish to attend in two-hour increments. The seven blocks will progress according to the themes of the seven blessings of the *Amidah* for Shavuot.
- Each two-hour block will have its own host/coordinator and will strive to nurture each of the "four worlds of being": 1) igniting the **creative spirit** with prayerful music, poetry, and meditation [*avodah*]; 2) inspiring the **intellect** with text study, story, and new approaches to education [*torah*]; 3) caressing the **heart** with live human interaction, personalizing big ideas in small group dialogue, and holding a safe space for sharing stories [*sichah*]; and 4) engaging our **bodies** with intentional action in pursuit of balance, taking a stand for health in the body, justice in society, peace and sustainability of the planet, beauty for the soul and senses [*maaseh*].

Maamad Sinai translates as "standing at Sinai." Centuries ago, the sages linked the Feast of Weeks [*Shavuot*] and First Fruits [*Biqurim*] to the mythic event of **standing** together at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. This year, let us extend the metaphor, hearing in the phrase a renewed calling to **take a stand**, to up-stand rather than by-stand. Just as the *Amidah*, or standing devotional prayer, customarily begins by taking a series of steps back and forward, so too our preparation for harvesting change will begin with standing and stepping forward, each of us with a unique and valued offering and story to share.

We here in MCJC will take a break from whatever is going on with the Reconstructionist event to gather in our own community Zoom circle at 11:45 PM for our beloved midnight prayer. Details to follow by email.

BAR MITZVAH



Marinela Miclea is proud to announce that her son, Colin Miclea, will become bar mitzvah on Saturday, May 29th, 2021 at the 10:30 AM Torah service. Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, in-person attendance will be limited to a few participants, but please join Colin and the community as the ceremony streams live on Zoom at the usual MCJC link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9628821372>; Meeting ID: 962 882 1372; Passcode: 820822 .

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 May). Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9628821372> Meeting ID: 962 882 1372; Passcode: 820822.

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|----------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 05/01/21 | <i>Emor</i> | Andrea Luna |
| 05/08/21 | <i>Behor–Bechukotai</i> | Margaret Holub |
| 05/15/21 | <i>Bamidbar</i> | Lew Mermelstein |
| 05/22/21 | <i>Nasso</i> | Raven Deerwater |
| 05/29/21 | <i>Beha'alotcha</i> | Colin Miclea |

TORAH STUDY

Rabbi Holub is offering weekly Torah study on the *parshah* for that week, the section of Torah read and studied each week. Join her on Thursdays in May, 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, and then we will discuss the portion together. In May, we will complete Leviticus and journey on into Numbers.

Join Zoom meeting at address in item above. All are welcome. You don't have to know anything about Hebrew or Torah, and the text will be available.



WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

Along with much of the world, MCJC is working out how and when we can again meet in-person. We would like community input as we move forward. Our L'Chayim Committee (MCJC's COVID advisory group, made up of Pamelyn Close MD, Barry Baylen MD, Marnie Press, and Mina Cohen) has been a great help in advising us on how and when we might resume in-person gathering.

While statistics for Mendocino County and California are reassuring now, there is still real uncertainty about possible surges, about long-term COVID transmission, about children and vaccinations, and more. It's an in-between time, when guidelines are less clear than they have been. The L'Chayim Committee thinks that we are likely to have greater clarity by mid-June (which is also the time Governor Newsom has set for opening California up significantly).

Zoom has worked very well for many of us. A wonderful bonus has been that a number of people who live distant from the coast have been able to join us for services, classes, or social events. Whatever we do in the future, we want to include both those who don't use Zoom and those who can't meet in person because they live too far away. We are looking at ways to hybridize.

We'd like to have a community conversation about how MCJC can best transition to life after lockdown. We invite you to join the conversation on Wednesday, May 12th from 5:00-6:30 PM. We will meet on Zoom (look for an e-mail with a link closer to the meeting). If you are not a Zoom user and have suggestions, please contact Margaret or any board member.

JOIN US ON ZOOM!



MCJC continues to hold its 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 email and posted on the MCJC web page. To get the invitations, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. If you would like to receive the emails announcing **Chai on The Coast** activities, contact Susan Tubbesing at susan.tubbesing@gmail.com.

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 6:30 PM with a bit of schmooze, share news of our weeks, and wish each other Good Shabbos. We light at about 6:45 PM. It’s a sweet way to bring in Shabbat together.

ELDERS’ CONVERSATION

The Elders usually meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, but this month we will have an extra meeting on account of Margaret’s April vacation: we will meet on May 4th, 11th and 25th, from 3:00 to 4:30 PM 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 present 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 or 937-5673.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



The Justices meet on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting is on Thursday, May 13th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list or attend meetings, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. *Everyone is welcome to attend.*

Last month, we reported on MCJC’s contributions to *Cajitas Calientitas*, a project that provides humanitarian assistance to very young asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors who are met at the Brownsville/Matamoros international bridges. This month we continue to discuss asylum seekers and hopeful immigrants. The United States’ southern border is part of a global refugee malaise with causes that include war, lack of work, gang violence, political corruption, persecution, pollution, drought, and other disasters like crop failure and famine. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>), there were 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2019, of whom 26 million were refugees, 4.2 million were asylum seekers. Children make up 40% of the 79.5 million.

Although President Biden suspended the Trump Administration’s Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), that policy created a humanitarian emergency that can’t be dealt with quickly. Known as “Remain in Mexico,” the policy required certain asylum seekers arriving by land at the U.S.-Mexico border, who passed a “credible fear” interview with a U.S. asylum officer (a first step in the process for requesting asylum), to return to Mexico to await their asylum hearing in U.S. immigration court. They were instructed to return to a specific U.S. port of entry at a specific date and time for their next court hearing. Then the hearings were suspended indefinitely in March 2020 although thousands of people continued to be placed into MPP.

The American Immigration Council (<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/>) reported on the effects of the policy: “data suggest that just 7.5% of individuals subject to MPP ever managed to hire a lawyer.... The lack of counsel, combined with the danger and insecurity that individuals face in border towns, have made it nearly impossible for anyone subject to MPP to successfully win asylum. By December 2020, of the 42,012 MPP cases that had been completed, only 638 people were granted relief in immigration court.”

According to the Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC), an organization formed in March, 2011 that brings together 60 organizations from San Diego, CA to Brownsville, TX (<https://www.southernborder.org/>), as of December 2020, an estimated 70,000 asylum seekers had been returned to Mexico to wait for their day in court. SBCC notes that the majority of asylum seekers in the MPP program come from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, with other significant populations from Cuba, Ecuador, Venezuela and Nicaragua. Over 60% of them are under 35.

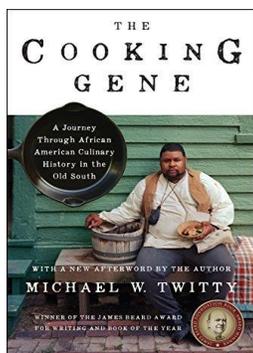
EAT MORE CHALLAH!

Fort Bragg Bakery will begin to bake challah on a limited basis starting Friday May 14, 2021. It will be sold exclusively to customers who place their orders in advance directly with the bakery. Orders can be placed either by email, at orders@fortbraggbakery.com, or by phone, at 964-2030, no later than noon on Wednesday May 12, 2021. Customers will have a choice of plain or seeded (a mix of anise, fennel, poppy and sesame seeds). The price will be \$8.00 per loaf, payable either by cash or check upon pick-up at the front door of the bakery, 360 N. Franklin Street in downtown Fort Bragg, on Fridays from 1:00-6:00 PM. When placing an email or phone order, customers are asked to please give both their name and phone number. The bakery plans to continue this special bake once a month. The first bake will be limited to 24 loaves, so if you are interested, place your order soon!



Andrea Luna bakes challah every Friday morning and observes the mitzvah of “lafrish Challah,” blessing, separating, and burning challah before braiding and baking the loaves. She uses organic flour, eggs, oil, and sugar, and her standard four-braid loaf with seeds (sesame, poppy, anise) is \$8.50. Orders should come in by Thursday night by email (aluna@mcn.org), or text (707 972 4494). Pick-up is after 12:30 PM Friday at 27900 Albion Ridge Road, the third left after the 5.25 mile marker. She also makes specialty breads for holidays and Bnei Mitzvot. You may have tasted her challah at Saturday Kiddush after Shacharit at the Caspar shul. May we raise a cup and break open a loaf there again soon!

BOOK GROUP



We will meet Monday May 17th at 2:00 PM on Zoom to discuss ***The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African American Culinary History in the Old South***, by Michael Twitty. An African American-Jewish cultural historian offers a fresh perspective on our most divisive cultural issue, race, in this illuminating memoir of Southern cuisine and food culture that traces his ancestry—both black and white—through food, from Africa to America and slavery to freedom. Twitty offers a unique perspective on who “owns” Southern food. He takes readers to the center of this fight, tracing the roots of his own family and the charged politics surrounding the origins of soul food, barbecue and all Southern cuisine. Twitty travels from the tobacco and rice farms of colonial times to plantation kitchens and backbreaking cotton fields to tell of the struggles his family faced and how food enabled his ancestors’ survival across three centuries. He sifts through stories, recipes, genetic tests, and historical documents, and visits Civil War battlefields in Virginia, synagogues in Alabama, and black-owned organic farms in Georgia. As he takes us through his ancestral culinary history, Twitty reveals a truth that is more than skin deep—the power of food to bring the kin of the enslaved and their former slaveholders to the table, where they can discover the real America together.

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 for a Zoom invitation.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHUL

Thank you to all of those who responded to the annual letter! To those who haven’t, it’s the perfect time. We appreciate your support, at every level. Your Jewish community is here for you through online Shabbat services, meetings, classes, afternoon chats, and other programs. Should you wish to contribute at a future time 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 or call her at 877-3243.



MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:00 PM, these days on ZOOM. The May meeting will take place on Thursday May 20th. If you wish to attend part of the meeting, please contact board member Susan Tubbesing at 962-0565, or susan.tubbesing@gmail.com, and efforts will be made to patch you in.

NEWSLETTER THANK YOU

We're grateful to Kath Disney Nilson and Steve Nilson for preparing the April Megillah for mailing. If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at your kitchen table, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. This *mitzvah* imparts such a sense of accomplishment that you'll wonder why you haven't done it before. Please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com

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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. 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. If you choose not to be a contributing member of MCJC, we request a \$25 annual fee for the *Megillah* hardcopy or email.

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Dobby Sommer in honor of her parents, Vivian & Ed Sommer; Chuck Greenberg & Claire Ellis in honor of Laura Goldman's birthday; David Klipper in honor of Sandra Wortzel.

Karen Rakofsky in memory of Mildred Rakofsky on her yahrtzeit.

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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

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Rainsong Shoes: Shoes & accessories for men & women. Two locations: Mendocino and Healdsburg. 937-1710 (Mendocino), 433-8058 (Healdsburg). www.rainsongshoes.com

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 Website: www.taxpractitioner.com

Rhoda Teplow Designs: Original jewelry created with beads from around the world, specializing in brass from Ghana, silver from Israel, and lapis, turquoise and coral from Tibet/Nepal. Box 453, Mendocino CA 95460. 964-2787. Email: rteplow@mcn.org

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MCJC Board & Useful Numbers (* = board member)

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