

## MEGILLAH

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

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## RABBI'S NOTES



The *shmitah* year is over; that beautiful seventh year of fallowness, of resting our fields, concluded at Rosh Hashana. We again pick up the plow. Except that it is fall now, not time to plant new crops. We'll still be eating out of the stored-up grain for a while longer. It is a slow return.

Largely because of the brilliant work of Hazon: the Jewish Lab for Sustainability, many of us have known about the *shmitah* year at least since the last cycle. I have just finished my annual ritual of putting new post-its in my High Holy Day *machzor* to lead us through this year's services. At the place where we chant a verse about the sounding of the shofar, I found a post-it that I must have put in there seven years ago, at Rosh Hashana 5776 (2017). It says, "Now *shmitah* ends—we: foraged for apples, gathered Tu B'Shevat fruits, learned about fabric waste, and patched and up-cycled our jeans." I remember those delightful activities, spawned as we tried to incorporate the notion of *shmitah* into our own lives and concerns.

In the seven years since, the folks of Hazon and others have helped us all to enlarge our sense of *shmitah* to address many kinds of fallowness: taking a holiday from consumerism, looking at how we work and rest, undertaking debt forgiveness (check out the astonishing RIP Medical Debt project at <https://ripmedicaldebt.org>), and contemplating the wisdom of cycles of productivity and cessation. *Shmitah* is such a powerful teaching, in its literal agricultural and economic sense and in its metaphoric extensions.

Imagine a year with no crops—not because of drought or fire or overgrazing, but built into the cycle of things. You know for six years that the seventh year is coming. There is time to plan, to store up. It is the opposite of a crisis. There are deprivations in that seventh year: no Early Girl tomatoes! But the community has set aside provisions, and you get along. It is not a crisis, not an emergency. It is something that happens, that must be remembered and planned for and lived through.



I recently read an essay by Kyle Whyte called "Against Crisis Epistemology." Whyte is Professor of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan and an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. I learned about this essay from my brilliant and inspiring friend and teacher Rabbi Dev Noily, who is, among many other things, the co-chair of Jews on Ohlone Land down in the Bay Area (<https://www.jewsonohloneand.org/about>). Dev has been probing connections and disjunctions between Jewish and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Whyte says that what makes something a *crisis* is that it is cast as *unprecedented* and *urgent*. Identifying something as a crisis allows people in power to suspend their ethics and impose "solutions" which often incur more harm than benefit. Framing a situation as a crisis allows the building of dams and the drilling of oil wells, brutalization of animals, imprisonment or enslavement of Native people, seizure of Indigenous land, and many other responses that end up privileging the powerful.

Whyte focuses on climate. Remember when we learned that we shouldn't talk about "climate change" but about "climate *crisis*" in order to underline the *unprecedented urgency* of the situation? He does not deny that global climate change is real and serious, but he asks some hard questions about how to deal with it.

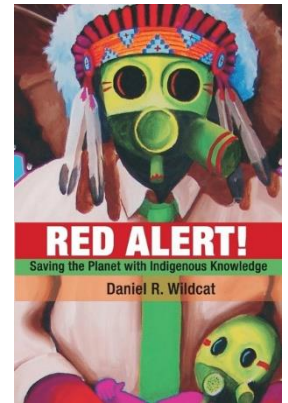
In case you want to read the essay, it is online at

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343214624\\_Against\\_Crisis\\_Epistemology#:~:text=Indigenous%20%28Potawatomi%29%20philosopher%20and%20climate%20justice%20activist%20Kyle,suspension%20of%20concerns%20about%20justice%20and%20ethics%20%2852%29\).](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343214624_Against_Crisis_Epistemology#:~:text=Indigenous%20%28Potawatomi%29%20philosopher%20and%20climate%20justice%20activist%20Kyle,suspension%20of%20concerns%20about%20justice%20and%20ethics%20%2852%29).)

It's a hard read—it sat on my desk for months before I finished it. But I'm glad I did. I can't stop thinking about the problem of crisis thinking in so many realms, close-to-home as well as distant. I'm thinking about how even well-meaning activists frame so much of what is happening around us in crisis language which may make us numb and hopeless. Endemic crisis thinking not only makes us chronically anxious, but might also keep us from thinking well and acting wisely. Just today I saw a headline saying that a panel of medical experts has recommended anxiety screening for everyone under age 65.

Whyte talks about another way of understanding the world and responding to difficulties that calls for “kinship” rather than “crisis” response. He quotes Dan Wildcat, author of *Red Alert: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge*, who describes this sense of kinship as “requiring respect for the relationships and relatives that constitute the complex web of life.” Whyte cites another author, Jeannette Armstrong, Canada Research Chair in Okanagan Indigenous Knowledge and Philosophy from British Columbia, who studies traditional ways and values:

“...every year, continuously, the people who are caretakers, and the people who are careful of the harvest, whoever they might be, are reminded at our ceremonies and at our feasts, that this is what our responsibility and our intelligence and our creativity as human beings are about. That's what the gift of being human is about. If we cannot measure up to that, and we cannot live up to that, we're not needed here, and we won't be here.”



The most powerful piece of Whyte's essay to me was the suggestion, made by Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, an Indigenous Brazilian educator and land rights activist, that we need to “hospice” the earth, which:

“would entail sitting with a system in decline, learning from its history, offering palliative care, attending to the integrity of the process, dealing with tantrums, incontinence, anger and hopelessness, ‘cleaning up,’ and clearing the space for something new. This is unlikely to be a glamorous process.”

Unglamorous, yes, and also, to my ears, so much more realistic. It's painful to think that we might be called on to “hospice” our world. But I think that might mean to gently care for ruined landscapes, nurture animals and plants away from the brink of extinction, practice slower and more thoughtful consumption of resources. Not totally unlike *shmitah* values.

I don't know exactly where this line of thought leads, and I am certainly no expert from reading one essay. I think there is a need for identifying some events and situations as crises, but I am also persuaded that much can run amok when we feel under the gun, literally or figuratively. For a start, I think it might be worthwhile to just notice crisis thinking when it comes up and to wonder a bit about what it calls forth, in our own guts and souls, in our actions, in the policies we advocate and the voices we lift up.



As we return to the world of plowing and sowing, I'm sort of glad that it starts slowly, with a winter in there before the real action can begin. As we enter this new season and this new year and this new cycle, I wish us all some slowness, some time to deliberate and not to panic. And I wish us all a sense of kinship with all that we sustain and all that sustains us.

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## HIGH HOLY DAYS

Our Yom Kippur service will be at the Caspar Community Center, and also on Zoom.

**Kever Avot ritual, Sunday, October 2, 3:30 PM**, 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, and other important matters can be found on the MCJC web page.

\*If you have names to add to MCJC's existing **yizkor list**, please contact Donna Montag at [montag@mcn.org](mailto:montag@mcn.org).

### MAKE TZEDAKAH A PRIORITY

Consider making a 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>).

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### SUKKOT FESTIVITIES

Sukkot begins at sundown on Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup> and concludes with the special festival of Hoshannah Rabbah on Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. There will be a beautiful sukkah up in the yard at the shul throughout the festival, and you are most welcome to come "dwell" in it anytime. Stop by with your coffee, sit in there and read a book, or have a visit there with a friend.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, we will gather in Margaret Holub's sukkah to observe the Sabbath and celebrate Sukkot. Details below. If you would like to have guests come to your sukkah anytime during the week, please let Margaret know and she will share your invitation. This could be for a meal or to exchange poems or jokes or canning tips. Or invite people to call and visit at mutually convenient times.



### SUKKOT HARVEST PARTY

Join us for earth-based ceremonies and a conversation about Indigenous perspectives. We will sing and dance with the Klezmishpoche, everyone's favorite klezmer band, and sample delicious vegetarian dishes. Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 3:00-6:00 PM in the sukkah at the shul.

All are welcome. Bring a veggie dish to share if you like. Hosted by the Mendocino Coast Jewish Community Justice Group. RSVP, if possible, to [refinnej@mcn.org](mailto:refinnej@mcn.org)

## SIMCHAT TORAH



We will celebrate Simchat Torah on Monday night, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM at the shul. We will share a simple and festive dinner, then read the end of the Torah and roll her back to the beginning and say farewell to the Holy Day season. This will be a night to be close to the Torah—to look at her, hear her, lift her, feel her energy.

Since this year we will be beating the willows and praying for rain and dancing to the festive music of Klezmishpoche on Sunday at the Sukkot Harvest party, Simchat Torah may perhaps be a more inward gathering. But a bit of dancing might just transpire.

## 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 October 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.

10/01/22	<i>Vayeilech</i>	Raven Deerwater
10/08/22	<i>Ha'Azinu</i>	Margaret Holub
10/15/22	<i>Sukkot</i>	Bob Evans
10/22/22	<i>Bereshit</i>	Andrea Luna
10/29/22	<i>Noach</i>	Raven Deerwater

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](mailto: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](mailto:susan.tubbesing@gmail.com).

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7071836183?pwd=NzFaTkpiOXVYMDNnNnprOXlnZiVhQT09>

Meeting ID: 707 183 6183

Passcode: *shalom*

Numeric Passcode: 776001

## KABBALAT SHABBAT



On October 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM we will meet in person in Margaret Holub's sukkah out on Middle Ridge Road. There will be Shabbat blessings and a Sukkot celebration, with all the trimmings, followed by a vegetarian potluck. To let Margaret know you are coming, and for directions, contact her at [mholub@mcn.org](mailto:mholub@mcn.org).

We need hosts for November, preferably for the 3rd Friday of the month.

Should you feel like opening your house, please contact Mina at (707) 937-1319 or [mcohen@mcn.org](mailto:mcohen@mcn.org). If you would like to host, but don't have a big enough house or don't want people in it because of COVID concerns, you can preside over the Kabbalat Shabbat at the shul.

## ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 PM on Zoom. We will meet on October 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. The conversation is always provocative and the topic 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](mailto:jupiter@mcn.org)) or Joy Lancaster ([ajoylancaster@gmail.com](mailto:ajoylancaster@gmail.com)) and they will be happy to fill you in.



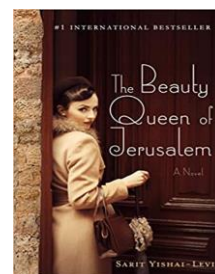
## THE EARLYBIRD SPECIAL



Tune in on Zoom for a virtual cup of your favorite beverage nearly 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 [elkron@yaho.com](mailto:elkron@yaho.com). Use the Zoom address mentioned above.

## BOOK GROUP

We will meet on Zoom at 2:00 PM on Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, a novel by Sarit Yishai-Levi. Gabriela's mother Luna is the most beautiful woman in all of Jerusalem, though her famed beauty and charm seem to be reserved for everyone but her daughter. But when tragedy strikes, Gabriela senses there's more to her mother than painted nails and lips. To understand their relationship, Gabriela pieces together the stories of her family's previous generations—from Great-Grandmother Mercada, the renowned healer, to Grandma Rosa who cleaned houses for the English, to Luna. As she uncovers secrets, forbidden romances, and the family curse that links the women together, Gabriela faces a past and present more complex than she ever imagined. For a Zoom invitation, contact Fran at [franbschwartz@gmail.com](mailto:franbschwartz@gmail.com). Copies are available at Gallery Bookshop.



## SAVE THE DATE AND SUPPORT MCJC

The Ledford House dinner and auction is back after a two-year hiatus on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 PM. One of MCJC's primary fundraising events, the festive evening is full of good wine, fine food, great conversations with your fellow congregants, and terrific auction items for you to take home. Ink it in!

## MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:45 PM in the shul. The October meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 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](mailto:susan.tubbesing@gmail.com), and she will give you directions.

## NEWSLETTER THANK YOU

Thanks again to Kath Disney Nilson and Steve Nilson for preparing the September *Megillah* for mailing. If you found a bird feather in your newsletter, I hope you saved it for future use. Volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, and you can do it in about two hours. Such a mitzvah! Please contact Sarah Nathe at 962-0565 or [sarah.nathe@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.nathe@gmail.com)

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC

Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be one, is a member of MCJC. The MCJC Board of Directors has a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2022. We have memberships at Regular, Limited Income, and Family levels, as well as any level possible for you. 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 is sent to the individual or family. Please include their name and mailing address. Contact Treasurer Donna Montag at [montag@mcn.org](mailto:montag@mcn.org)

## MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

## GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



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To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah Fund from Kenny & Sandra Wortzel.

Annette & Jonathan Lehan in memory of Jean Garrett; Fran Schwartz in memory of Mickey Chalfin; Kathleen Schultz in memory of Jay Frankston; Niclole Laumb in honor of Jay Frankston; Dale Glasser in memory of Mickey; Paula Cohen, Jennifer Blackson & Joel Blackson: "Monique & Jay Frankston brought a lot to this community and our family. We honor them with this donation to MCJC in the spirit of Monique & Jay." Robert & Carol Kafin in honor of the university graduation of Ben Kafin & Toby Kafin; Danny Mandelbaum & Benna Kolinsky in honor of a sweet sweet new year for all; Andra Luna in memory of Susan Miller.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Mendocino Megillah* is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 20<sup>th</sup> 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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