

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

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Call the MCJC at (707) 964-6146

email: sarah.nathe@gmail.com

RABBI'S NOTES



It's finally 2020, a year many of us have been waiting for. If it's been "a marathon, not a sprint" these past three years, now we're in the final stretch. I can feel the anxiety and determination ramp up all around me, and inside me too, to push as hard as we can for the changes that seem existentially necessary—it's now or, oy, maybe never.

It's also deep winter, a season when we get rained in, roads close and flights get canceled, literally and metaphorically. It's a time of colds and flu. Remember the sweetness, warmth and ebullience of the High Holy Days? That was a long time ago.

Perhaps we can take advantage of the home-ness, even maybe the stuckness, of this season—even with its overlay of anxiety—to go inward, to quiet ourselves, dig deep, remember our roots.

Twenty years ago Mickey and I and my parents took a trip to the Carpathian villages where my mother's parents were born. We had hired guides who specialize in taking American Jews on roots trips to their ancestral homes. We started in Budapest, which was lovely. As we drove east we passed through verdant grain fields and small towns. Part of our fee to the guide service was a \$100 bribe to be paid at the Ukrainian border. The border was a mess, jammed and disorganized. We only waited an hour or two, but had we not stuck those hundred dollar bills in our visas, we might be there still. Once we got through, the roads completely changed to pitted dirt paths with crater-like potholes. There was grain growing, but it was half as tall as it had been a few miles behind us, and we saw lone farmers tending their fields with skinny horses and hand-pulled ploughs. Horse-drawn carts were the main transport on these roads, along with ancient Russian Trabant cars.

We got to the village of Verece, where my Grandma Sylvia had spent her first 11 years. Grandma Sylvia was still alive and well when we took this trip, and I had pumped her for details of her childhood home. There, below the town, was the river, beside which they would build their sukkah of cornstalks and marigolds. There was the church and the school, where her sister, my Aunt Bernice, had been beaten for bringing an icicle to class. Was this possibly their house, next door? There were chickens in the street. There was a Jewish cemetery, marked attractively with a Jewish star on top of an arch at the entry. The graves were neatly tended (due to funding from a *landsman* organization in Brooklyn, we learned).



A man drove up in his yellow Trabant, got out and introduced himself as the mayor. (Translation was tricky: one of our guides spoke Ukrainian and Hungarian but not English, and another Russian and English but not Ukrainian.) "Jews, no, no, none today." He didn't remember our family names, but he recalled a relative of ours who had come here a few years earlier. My mom needed a restroom and was taken to an outhouse in a neighboring yard with a pig tied to the front.

It was the most ordinary place in the world, a poor little town in a poor part of the world, but when I came home I felt like something had shifted inside me. I realized that, to whatever extent I even thought about earlier generations than my grandparents, I pictured them in some mythical Chagall-like floating village, not as people

who lived in a real place in real times. I didn't learn a lot of details on that trip, but I learned the crucial one: that my family came from someplace.

I was also reminded that my family, like most any family that uproots itself to move across the world to the unknown, came from poverty and struggle and oppression. I knew the broad story of my grandmother and her family running from Verece after her older brother had evaded the Tsar's draft and, to try to get her to tell her son's whereabouts, police had beaten their mother until she was crippled. But now I had stood on the ground where all that happened, and it became more real.

I spend a lot of time these days feeling lucky, or privileged, because of relative health, safety and ease, and because I live with all of you in a "bubble" of kindness and goodwill. Lots of times, though, I feel like kind of a lightweight. I listened recently to an interview with the United We Dream organizer Eli Cuna, a young Mexican leading the struggle for undocumented youth in our country. She said that a friend had asked her, "Where are you from from from?" "I'm from Mexico," she answered. "Not 'where are you from?' but 'where are you from from from?'" said her friend. She then told more of her own story: not just about earlier generations, but about being from land and struggle, from earth, from reality.

Eli Cuna said "We need to remember who we are outside the struggle and fight, in our legacy, in our ancestry. You know what? I am more than an immigrant, I am more than just my papers. We can connect not just in the struggle. We can connect in our blessings and stories and our cultures and our foods. This is liberational."



At the same time as I was listening to Eli Cuna, I was thinking about the Torah portion for this week (as I write, our parshah is *Vayishlach*). Here Jacob, alone and terrified, wrestles with an angel or something like it. The language is mysterious and evocative. The struggle ends in a blessing, and Jacob calls the place Peniel, "God's face." I am thinking of a friend who recently said to me, "We have to step into our larger selves."

We are from earth in all its particulars, and we are from something larger. This quiet, inward January time might be a time to remember, and to enlarge the picture of, who we are and where we are from, and to draw strength from these roots for days to come.

PLANNING FOR TU B'SHEVAT



Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, falls this year on Sunday evening, February 9th. The 15th of Shevat is the day that marks the beginning of the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle. It seems like such an apt year to make a really beautiful and powerful Tu B'Shevat ritual to bless and nourish the Tree of Life and pray for our planet. If you would like to help create this year's Tu B'Shevat gathering, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

Shabbat morning services are held every Saturday morning of the year from 10:30 AM until about 12:30 PM. Members of the community often give the *davar Torah* ("word of Torah"), an interpretation (*drash*) of the weekly Torah portion (see schedule below). The services are led each week by Rabbi Holub, except when she is out of town. Below is the schedule for January:

01/04/20	Vayigash	Margaret Holub
01/11/20	Vayechi	Margaret Holub
01/18/20	Shemot	Andrea Luna
01/25/20	Vaera	Raven Deerwater

RESERVE YOUR SEAT NOW!



*ANNUAL MCJC DINNER
& Silent Auction*

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

Ledford House, Albion

Join in the fun & help support our Jewish community.

6:00 pm: *Delicious appetizers by MCJC chefs & fine local wines*

7:00 pm: *Dinner*

✻ Garden Greens with Dijon Vinaigrette, Apples & Walnuts

✻ Duck Breast with Roast Root Vegetables & Kale

or

✻ Beet Wellington with Balsamic Reduction *

✻ Chocolate Cake with Citrus Marmalade

* gluten-free Beet Wellington available with advance notice

\$60 per person

👉 **TO MAKE A RESERVATION, AND SPECIFY YOUR ENTRÉE, PLEASE CONTACT
HARRIET BYE AT 937-3622 OR bysawyer@mcn.org**

👉 **PLEASE SEND CHECKS FOR DINNER TO MCJC, BOX 291, LITTLE RIVER 95456**

👉 **TO OFFER AN AUCTION ITEM, PLEASE CONTACT SUSAN TUBBESING
AT susan.tubbesing@gmail.com**

KABBALAT SHABBAT



Kabbalat Shabbat will be on Friday, January 24th at the home of Joan and Paul Katzeff in Mendocino. They can be reached at 964-9161 to let them know you are coming and get directions. Please carpool if you can. Our February hosts will be Karen Rakofsky and Helen Jacobs in Albion.

The joyful get-togethers take place on the fourth Friday of each month. The short service is followed by a vegetarian potluck dinner.

We are looking for a host for the month of April (24th). Please contact Mina at mcohen@mcn.org or 937-1319 if you can help.

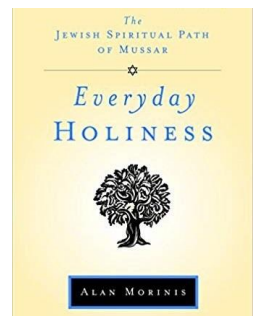
BASIC JUDAISM CLASS CONTINUES

The Basic Judaism class has met twice so far, and there will be four more meetings. In this class we're having a great time looking at the Big Picture (all of Jewish history, all the books in the sacred canon) and taking deeper dives into interesting parts. All the classes are on Thursdays from 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul. Each class will have a particular focus:

- January 2nd — God, prayer, mitzvot, mysticism
- January 16th — Cycles: calendar, holidays, life
- February 6th — Holocaust in history and theology
- February 20th — Women and other revolutionaries

MUSSAR CLASS BEGINS

The new Mussar class will begin at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, January 21st at the shul, and it will meet on first and third Tuesday evenings until April 28th. Mussar is the time-honored practice of refining our (desirable) character traits. It is hoped that students will be able to attend all the classes since each class builds on the others. The text will be **Everyday Holiness** by Alan Morinis.

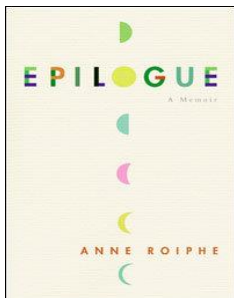


There will be a course fee of \$36 for MCJC contributing members and \$54 for non-members, but no one will be excluded for lack of funds. If you have questions, or wish to sign up, please contact Sandra Wortzel at artsplay@mac.com or (520) 591-7176.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 2:30-4:30 PM at the shul. January meetings will be on the 14th and 28th. Topics to be determined. People of all ages are most welcome.

BOOK GROUP



The group will meet on January 27th at 2:00 PM to discuss **Epilogue** by Anne Roiphe. After 39 years together, Roiphe lost her husband, Herman, to a heart attack. Time may move on, but she remains suspended "like the fly I saw in an amber stone, waiting for release." **Epilogue** moves among memories of her marriage, the day-to-day routine of being alone, and the often humorous adventures of looking for new companionship. "I am now a single woman," Roiphe writes, "and there is no one at home to call when I am away. Self-pity is never useful; it tends to distort like a fun-house mirror." Roiphe notes there are two parts to grief: loss and the remaking of life. Her book, she resolves, is about remaking her life. Roiphe is a "first-generation" feminist writer and journalist whose 1970 novel, **Up the Sandbox**, was a national best-seller.

Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-1352 for information on location. Gallery Bookstore offers 10% off purchases to MCJC book club members.

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



"The Justices" meet on the second Thursday of each month, 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul (a little earlier for sharing noshes and schmoozing). We'll meet Thursday, January 9th. If you'd like to be on the Justice Group mailing list, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. Anyone is welcome to attend a meeting.

Thanks to the following for their generous donations to the Citizen Scholarship Project: Harriet Bye & Larry Sawyer, Devora Rossman, Yarrow Rubin & Miles Clark, and Linda Rosengarten in honor of Claire Ellis.

At the November meeting, the Justices decided to send a letter of protest (below) to the **Beacon/Advocate News** about the recent increase in immigration fees, including the one we've worked so hard to pay for local immigrants--the fee for the citizenship exam.

December 13, 2019

Dear Editor:

Three years ago the Mendocino Coast Jewish Community Justice Group established the Citizenship Scholarship project. We did this as a tangible gesture to show friendship and support for our local immigrant neighbors at a time when they are under attack from the US government. With the enthusiastic support of our Coast community we have raised enough funds to pay the \$725 fee for every student at the Coastal Adult School Citizenship Class who is ready to take the citizenship exam and become a US citizen. Just last month we were joined by 250 friends and neighbors, and a rush of other contributors, for a giant fundraiser which — we thought — would raise enough funds to provide scholarships for everyone who is now preparing and likely to take the exam well into the next year.

One day after this wonderful event we learned that the State Department has issued new regulations for gigantic increases in fees paid by immigrants for many certifications — including a 60% increase in the fee for the citizenship exam! Instead of the already onerous \$725 fee, it will now be \$1170. Waivers for low-income applicants have been eliminated. Fees for Green Cards, DACA renewals and other certifications affecting immigrants have been similarly raised. There is even a proposed fee for refugees seeking asylum.

These draconian fee increases are part of the same regulatory energy which separates immigrant parents and children, sends people under mortal threat back to their deaths and more. The MCJC Justice Group supports and honors immigrants to this country, in our community and beyond, and we protest this latest cruel regulation.

The Mendocino Coast Jewish Community Justice Group

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM at the shul. The January meeting will be on the 7th. If you would like to attend the meeting, please leave a message on the phone at the shul: 964-6146.

ONLINE MEGILLAH

The **Megillah** is available in a format suitable for online viewing. The format will adapt itself to any screen size, *including smartphones*. It is posted on the MCJC website on the newsletter page: <https://www.mcjc.org/newsletter>

NEWSLETTER THANKS

We are grateful to Kath Disney Nilsen for preparing the January **Megillah** for mailing. If you volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, you can do it at home, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. Please contact Sarah at 962-0565 or sarah.nathe@gmail.com.

MEGILLAH SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Mendocino **Megillah** is published in three formats: hardcopy, emailed PDF, and online web page. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you, you can subscribe to the email PDF/ online version, or you can receive both. The **Megillah** is posted on 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.

GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



Yarrow Rubin & Miles Clark; John Allison & Rebecca Picard; Juliet & Tim Anderson; Helen Sizemore; Adina Merenlender & Kerry Heise; Jo & Norm Budman; Bob Evans; Les & Leora Rohssler; Rosalie & Art Holub; Laura Goldman & Dennak Murphy; Carol & Jerry Greenberg; Cecile Cutler; Brona Lessen; Tracy Salkowitz & Rick Edwards; Marinela Miclea; Andrea Luna; Myra Beals; Marsh Epstein & Aviyah Farkas; Annie Lee; Ronnie James;

Esther Faber in memory of Rosamund Gumpert Jorgenson; Harriet Bye & Larry Sawyer in memory of Allison Bye Coutts;

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP IN MCJC

Everyone who lives on the Mendocino Coast, and desires to be a member of MCJC, is one. The MCJC Board has a goal of having every household become CONTRIBUTING members in 2020. 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 contribute in memory or honor of someone, an acknowledgment card will be sent to the individual or family. Please include their name and mailing address. Contact Donna Montag at montag@mcn.org

EDITORIAL POLICY

The **Mendocino Megillah** is published monthly. The deadline for article submission is the 15th 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. Live music weekly; all ages welcome. Open daily from 11:00 am - 9:00 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.

Phoebe Graubard: Attorney at Law. Wills, trusts, probate, conservatorships. 594 S. Franklin, Fort Bragg, 95437. 964-3525. www.phoebelaw.com Member National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. Wheelchair accessible.

Rainsong & Rainsong Shoes: From head to toe in Mendocino! Contemporary clothing. Shoes & accessories for men & women. Two locations: Mendocino and Healdsburg. 937-4165 (clothing), 937-1710 (shoes), 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. Tel: 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. POB 453, Mendocino CA 95460. Tel: 964-2787. Email: rteplow@mcn.org

Thanksgiving Coffee Co: Local roasters on the Mendocino Coast for over three decades. Certified organic, shade grown coffee & Fair Trade Coffees. Box 1918, Fort Bragg, 95437. (800) 462-1999. www.thanksgivingcoffee.com

Tonk's Tree Service: Hazardous removals, spurless pruning, arborist reports, stump grinding, 60' aerial lift, view and sun improvement. Owner-operated, licensed & insured. Tatanka Russell, certified arborist WE-9236A, lic. no. 798911. 964-6209, Email: tonk@mcn.org

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(MCJC underwriters increase their businesses' visibility to over 300 subscribers and improve their presence on the web. \$100/year. Contact Donna Montag at 877-3243 or montag@mcn.org

MCJC Board & Useful Numbers (* = board member)

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Outreach (new to the community) & Finance Committee	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	susan.tubbesing@gmail.com
Culture & Education (films/ speakers/ classes/ Women's Retreat)	Harriet Bye*	937-3622	bysawyer@mcn.org
Treasurer (finance and donations)	Donna Montag*	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
Kabbalat Shabbat coordinator	Mina Cohen	937-1319	mcohen@mcn.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Susan Levenson-Palmer	882-1750	slevensonpalmer@gmail.com
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