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RABBI'S NOTES



It's eight days before Election Day as I sit down to write this, and I am, of course, a nervous wreck. I've resolved over and over since this endless election season began, and then COVID on top of it, that I would not prognosticate about future events that there is no way to predict. Yeah right. As is my nature, I tend to blow pessimistic. So my teeth are clenched and my stomach is in knots. I think back over the last four years and can hardly bear the thought of four more like them. Or worse.

But first a little more this-and-that about my day here. I'm expecting friends to stop by for a quickie visit. We'll sit outside—brrrrr—masked, six feet apart. Later I will participate in a Zoom baby naming (joy! in the midst of everything a new baby was just born to beloved friends) and then sit outside again, in the dark this time, to eat take-out burritos with my erstwhile yoga class, with whom, sigh, I haven't done any yoga in the past eight months. There is remarkably little COVID here on the coast, but I find myself on the insistent end of the spectrum nonetheless, choosing not to go indoors with others when it gets cold, to keep my mask on, keep my six feet distance.

Why, exactly? The chances of my getting, or giving, the virus may, or may not, be fairly small. Today, as it happens, there is one person hospitalized with COVID in the entire county. But even so, it feels like it would be disrespectful to flout the precautionary rules. I think of the places where the coronavirus is rampant, people who are terribly ill, bereaved families and friends, medical workers risking their lives. I think of how it takes a social consensus to protect each other, how we need to build a community that watches out not to infect each other. I think of the message which is communicated when I see a person wearing a mask, or not wearing one.

I read an article recently about the changing science regarding COVID on surfaces and how it is not now considered to be as important to scrub our groceries and quarantine our mail as it did at the beginning of things. The article uses the phrase "performative sanitation" to talk about places that make a big show of disinfecting surfaces between uses, and then makes the thoughtful comment that performative sanitation might actually be a good thing, because it communicates the desire that people be safe and welcome in one's space.



I think it's more important to keep my mask on than I do to quarantine my groceries. But even if masking and distancing are to some extent performative (and I don't know to what extent that is true; there is certainly some risk, even here, of contracting and spreading COVID), I undertake these precautions out of solidarity. Whatever the practical value of masking, I want to communicate welcome and concern for the safety of people I encounter.

Okay, back to the election. These past four years have brought events in the public realm that I couldn't have imagined in my most pessimistic churnings. As with COVID, I am well aware that many of them have fallen much more heavily on others than they have on me personally.

Along with all the horror, they have brought new experiences of solidarity. Immediately after the 2016 election, the MCJC Justice Group was formed (see Nancy Harris' account on page 4 of this newsletter). We began by drafting a Statement of Principles, part of which can be seen on the next page.

We commit to the following:

- Celebrate ethnic, cultural, religious and sexual differences.
- Defend civil rights, the rights of women, immigrants, racial and religious minorities, and the LGBTQ community.
- Safeguard programs for the elderly, for youth, and for people with physical and mental disabilities.
- Support access to a free and fair public education system and advocate health care for all.
- Protect the health of our environment.
- Speak out against hate speech, bigotry and anti-Semitism.
- Work for election integrity.
- Promote social and economic justice and criminal justice reform.
- Participate in the sanctuary movement.
- Take action when support is requested.

Something the Justice Group didn't spell out in the principles, but which has turned out to be beautifully true, is that we have usually stepped forward in partnership with other groups in our community. Occasionally we have also joined with larger groups, like the ACLU and Reclaim Our Vote, but in every case we have teamed up with the Fort Bragg Adult School Citizenship Class, Safe Passage, the Fort Bragg High School Liberal Club, the Mendo Huddle, the Latino Coalition, Project Sanctuary, the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters, and more. Not to mention with others in our own Mendocino Coast Jewish Community!

Now, four years down the road, there is a strong, principled, committed, bonded circle of solidarity in our local community. We show up for each other's events, volunteer for each other, celebrate, commiserate, and plan. Beyond these activities, we have made friends, across generations and ethnicities and other affinities. So now there is a web of friendship and commitment here that wasn't woven four years ago.

Some of what we do with and for each other is performative. We hold the signs, wear the outfits, dance the dances, bake the cakes, wash the dishes, write the checks—not necessarily because we anticipate practical results, but because of what these gestures communicate: welcome, connection, friendship and solidarity, with people in our own community and points beyond.



Here at the end of October, 2020 I'm not as pessimistic as I could be. I certainly hope with all my heart that, in the days and years to come, this circle of solidarity will be turning our attention to acts of repair: towards limiting and mitigating climate crisis, welcoming and supporting immigrants and refugees, equalizing our economy, healing racial injustice, policing and judging fairly, educating children and adults well, being better international partners and neighbors, and so, so much more. Under the best of circumstances, there will be plenty of work to do.

Whatever happens next week, and in the weeks after that, we will be able to meet it with friendship and solidarity. And that means the world.

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 November).

11/07/20	<i>Vayera</i>	Margaret Holub
11/14/20	<i>Chayei Sara</i>	Lew Mermelstein
11/21/20	<i>Toldot</i>	Raven Deerwater
11/28/20	<i>Vayetzei</i>	Margaret Holub

ZOOMING ALONG

We will continue to have MCJC 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 and Kiddush go on. Zoom invitations to these gatherings are sent by e-mail and posted on the MCJC web page. To get the invitations, let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673.

Cup of Coffee—a time to connect and check in and talk about anything on your mind every Wednesday morning at 10:30 AM.

Candle-Lighting— Since COVID began, we've been getting together every Friday night on Zoom to light Shabbat candles and spend a little bit of schmooze-time together, as though we were sitting together at a Shabbat dinner table. We meet up at 6:30 PM and light the candles and make Kiddush at around 7:00 PM.

HOW'S THE ZOOMING GOING FOR YOU?

Our Jewish community is now many months into a largely online life together. It has brought us together with friends who might not have been able to gather in person, which has been wonderful, but it might be shutting some of you out, which is the opposite of wonderful. If Zoom is not working for you—either technically or because you don't like it or can't manage it for other reasons—please get in touch with Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. Let's see what we can figure out to make it possible for everyone who wishes to gather with the Jewish community to be able to do so.



PRE-THANKSGIVING CIRCLE



Thanksgiving will be different for many of us this year, as we may not be able to gather with friends and family as we have in years past. Margaret will be hosting a pre-Thanksgiving circle on Zoom, on Wednesday, November 25th, from 4:00 to 5:30 PM. We will sing a bit and share thoughts and feelings and blessings with each other.

If you would like to offer a song, a poem, or something similar, please let Margaret know at mholub@mcn.org.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders' Conversation will gather on Zoom on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. This month we'll meet on November 10th and 24th at 3:00 PM. Each meeting we have a theme about some aspect of how we experience life as we age (selected at the meeting before). A wide-ranging conversation begins with the theme and often moves along to deep and surprising places. 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.

YOUR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION: THIS YEAR MORE THAN EVER

Dear Friend of MCJC:

We hope that you and all those you love are healthy and safe.

We had no idea when 2020 began that we would find ourselves in a global pandemic and our lives would be transformed. MCJC has risen to the challenge and conducted all synagogue activities via ZOOM. In fact, we developed new activities to involve our community!

We participated in High Holiday rituals during Elul with Rabbi Margaret's daily shofar blowing, leading into beautiful and meaningful Rosh Hashana services and a profoundly moving Yom Kippur. Many of us sat in our delightful community Sukkah and joyfully danced around the Torah-Mobile celebrating Simchat Torah.

There's more: Shabbat candle lighting and weekly services; creative Elul installations in the shul; **Chai on The Coast** programs of songs, writing, jokes, computers, and cats. The Elders continued their conversations and others had weekly coffee with Rabbi Margaret. Mussar classes pursued their explorations of virtue and the Justice Group turned its focus to getting out the vote and community safety. MCJC members on the coast, plus those around the country, have come together in more services and events than in years past, enriching our community, making it stronger, closer, and more vibrant than ever.



However, though expenses have remained nearly the same, our contributions and fundraising have decreased. If there were ever a time we needed our Jewish community, this is it. The level of participation and engagement we have experienced in the past eight months is proof. We are relying on your commitment to help make up our shortfall and support our Rabbi and our shul for another year. **Your annual contribution is more important than ever.**

B'Shalom,

MCJC Board of Directors

MCJC JUSTICE GROUP



The Justices meet on the second Thursday of each month, 5:30-7:30 PM. All meetings are online via ZOOM. The next meeting is Thursday, November 12th. We will have much to reflect on about the election and how we will want to move forward. This will be a time to start setting new project priorities for the days to come.

If you would like to be on the Justice Group mailing list and attend meetings, please contact Margaret at mholub@mcn.org or 937-5673. She will send out an email Zoom invitation for the meetings. *Everyone* is welcome to attend.

The Justice Group is on the cusp of its 4th anniversary. After the election of 2016, Rabbi Holub invited everyone in MCJC to meet in community. On that November evening, we commiserated and imagined how life in the U.S. would change, and conceived of the Justice Group as a way to do more than wring our hands.

We developed a set of principles that would guide our intentions and actions over the coming years. Based on our traditional Jewish values of compassion, justice, respect, and caring, we pledged to make our community a place of welcome and safety by working with other groups that shared our values. Our actions have created new and meaningful relationships in our community and in like-minded communities across the nation.

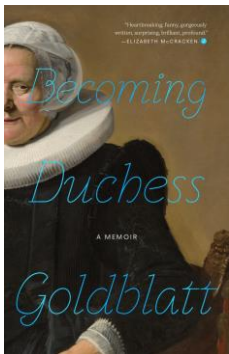
The Justice Group has accomplished much over the last four years:

- The Citizen Scholarship Project raised over \$40,000 for scholarships and awarded 35 scholarships of \$725.00 each. It has funds for 15 more, at the pending increased fee level of \$1,170;
- Produced a dance party for the 2018 International Women's Day;
- Worked with other community groups to help pass Measure C, a parcel tax in support of the Mendocino Coast District Hospital;
- Hosted two public events featuring Judy Stavely describing her 75-mile walk on the Migrant Trail from Sásabe, Sonora, Mexico to Tucson, Arizona;
- Wrote letters and helped coastal residents write letters to protest the 1) draconian changes to the Public Charge rules; 2) changes to the policy of separating children from their parents at the U.S./Mexican border; and 3) the roll back of the 1997 Flores Agreement which protects children from detention in unsafe and jail-like conditions;
- Formed the Climate Crew to focus more intensely on the climate crisis and community safety around natural and human-caused disasters;
- Hosted two public events for Doug Nunn's slide-show presentation based on Al Gore's Climate Reality Project;
- Participated in Families Belong Together and Black Lives Matter rallies and marches;
- Participated in 25 Million Stitches, a fiber art project displaying one hand-sewn stitch for each of the world's 25 million refugees;
- Invited guests to speak about legalities of immigration, DACA, and the importance of the county plan for the 2020 Census;
- Raised over \$4,000 for Safe Passage during the pandemic;
- Wrote postcards and made phone calls for Reclaim Our Vote, a non-partisan organization working to empower under-represented voters by fighting voter suppression.



Regardless of the outcome of the 2020 election, the Justice Group will continue to pursue its mission and find meaningful ways to help our community.

BOOK GROUP



We will meet on Zoom on Monday, November 16th at 2:00 PM to discuss ***Becoming Duchess Goldblatt, A Memoir*** by Anonymous. Part memoir and part joyful romp through the fields of imagination, the story behind a beloved pseudonymous Twitter personality reveals how a woman deep in post-divorce grief rebuilt a life worth living. ***Becoming Duchess Goldblatt*** is two stories: that of the reclusive real-life writer who in 2012 created a fictional character out of loneliness and thin air, and that of the magical Duchess Goldblatt herself, a bright light in the darkness of social media. Fans around the world are drawn to Her Grace's voice, wit, life-affirming love for humanity, and the fun and friendship of the community that has sprung up around her. The duchess is the inspirational author of *An Axe to Grind*, *Feasting on the Carcasses of My Enemies: A Love Story*, and the heartwarming meditation on mothers and daughters—*Not if I Kill You First*. A cultural icon, trophy ex-wife, friend to all, and sponsor of the prestigious Goldblatt Prize in Fiction, she lives in her duchy of Crooked Path, NY. She's fictional, but her love is real.

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.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:00 PM, these days on ZOOM. The November meeting will be on Thursday, the 19th. 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.

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU

Thanks very much to Tracy Salkowitz and Rick Edwards for preparing the October **Megillah** for mailing. Volunteer for a future folding, stamping, and mailing project, and you can do it at home, or another spot of your choosing, in about two hours. If you want to do this *mitzvah*, 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. You can subscribe to the hardcopy version and have it mailed to you, you can subscribe to the email PDF version, or you can receive both. 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.

GREAT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS



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Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum in honor of our beloved Rabbi Margaret and her wonderful posse.

To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah Fund: Ronite Gluck

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 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 make a donation 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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