

MEGILLAH

The MCJC shul is located at 15071 Caspar Road, Caspar, CA.
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RABBI'S NOTES



I'm just back from my second-ever Let My People Sing! weekend at Isabella Freedman Center, a Jewish retreat center and organic farm in the Berkshires in Connecticut. I went for the first time three years ago, and I came back from it with my hair on fire! I loved it so much. This year was again fantastic and inspiring, but this time I was a little lonely too. I want to think about both the beauty and the loneliness.

LMPS! is a project sprung from the hearts of five brilliant young Jewish activists who have a passion for the healing and liberating power of song. One runs a chicken ranch called Linke Fligl ("Left Wing") and uses the pronouns "they" and "them." Another, a rabbi ("she/her"), is an organizer of Queer Talmud Camp and other programs of Svara, a "radically traditional yeshiva." (I've written here before about participating in a mind-blowing Svara "fling"—a one-day Talmud study.) Another is a ("they/them") rabbinical student, the sibling of my friend in the core group, the organizer for the Rabbinical Council of Jewish Voice for Peace. The fifth I know less about, except for her sweet countenance and the especially melodious songs she composed and taught. The five met some years before at Isabella Freedman Center as participants in one of their Jewish farming intensives, and they dreamed up what was originally going to be a one-off singing get-together that now has a life of its own:

Our vision is for more kinds of people to learn how to embody and lead Jewish music, transforming us individually and transforming Judaism as a whole. This is a project of spreading seeds of song that go out into the world to sprout new singing communities and a justice-based singing culture far and wide.

The LMPS! crowd skewed young, though there were a few grey heads like my own. Many people there were obviously and beautifully queer, and we were instructed not to assume that we knew anyone's gender. When anyone spoke we introduced ourselves: "Margaret--she/her." There was also a nice representation of JOCISM: Jews of Color, Indigenous, Sephardi and Mizrahi. Most of the lead teachers were JOCISM, and they taught music and led prayer from these Jewish cultures, which was exciting and beautiful and sometimes hard for me to sing.

The heart of LMPS is "community sings," in which anyone who wishes can stand up and lead a song. Everyone learns the song and sings. But we were a group of 250, so that piece about "more kinds of people" means that the usual kinds of people were asked, explicitly and implicitly, to step aside so others could stand up and lead. It was moving and challenging to realize that if I stood up, as a white cis-gender, I was taking up space that a queer, non-white, non-Ashkenazi person could have instead.

I am old enough to remember when just being female shut lots of people out of Jewish leadership in many spaces, the rabbinate for one. I have always been grateful to have come of age at a time when brave women—in the Jewish world and elsewhere—were struggling to take space in settings that had been the exclusive preserve of men. Those courageous feminists cleared a place where I can stand up and lead without feeling like much of a revolutionary.



Earlier this summer I participated with a group of rabbi-activists in a training by a leader from a group called Jews of All Hues. The leader, who had dark skin and African-American-looking features and wore a kippah, asked us to write down places in our work lives where we have power. I found that hard: geez, I'm a little local rabbi. I guess I get to choose which melody we'll use for prayers. Sometimes I decide what day we'll meet for this or that project. I get to write a *Megillah* column every month. I don't think of myself as wielding a lot of power. Once we had made our lists, our trainer led us in a very simple, and confounding, thought experiment. "Consider giving up those powers," he said. As some of us began to sputter in protest, he said, smiling, "You'll do okay. You'll find another job."

At LMPS!, in gentler but no less insistent tones, I was also being asked to cede my space at the center to people who have less access to leadership in the Jewish world. I admit, I found it hard. I felt—pure projection, I know, since no one said it to me—that I wasn't worth talking to, wasn't worth getting to know. I was just another cis-gender Ashkenazi Jew, part of the ruling class of the Jewish world that should get out of the way. I felt lonely and invisible. It made me think about the Afrikaaners I interviewed in South Africa, who felt so marginalized and displaced after the end of apartheid even though they still controlled so much. It made me think about white Americans in our current political environment, many of whom voice something like the same loneliness and invisibility, even though they control so much. It's not easy or comfortable to be told to step aside.

But it also made me think, much more joyfully, about the space I was in at LMPS! and had been in at Svava and other exciting, thriving Jewish spaces: I was part of a brilliant array of appearances and dress and songways and languages and cultures and perspectives, where there was so much new to learn and taste and enjoy, where I saw people stand up and weep because they had never before stood up in a Jewish space to share something they loved, where I saw 249 other people learn and catch on to the warbles in a melody from a shul in Calcutta or spontaneously complete a chant called *Goddus*, as in "God-us" while the young queer person who had just composed it shined with joy at the roar of our voices.

When I was a rabbinical student a thousand years ago, I was asked—like every one of my female classmates was asked, over and over--to teach a class on women in Judaism at some local synagogue. My gig happened to be at a Conservative shul in Orange County. Men would come to the class and challenge everything I said: "Doesn't it say in the Talmud that...?!?" My knowledge was indeed a baby-finger deep, and I felt humiliated and furious. The last day of the class I brought my tallit and invited the women in the group to take turns putting it on. I took a Torah scroll out of the ark and offered it to the women to hold. Tears streamed down their faces as they touched the *sefer Torah* for the first time. One of those guys who had challenged me so much, now watching his wife wearing a tallit for the first time, holding the scroll she had never before been allowed to touch, was shaking his head in amazement and saying over and over, "I had no idea!"

There is radiant new Jewish life birthing in spaces like Let My People Sing! and Svava and The New Synagogue Project in Washington DC and Hinenu the Baltimore Justice Shtiebel and Kol Tzedek in Philadelphia, and many other places where people whose voices haven't been heard much before are now being centered and celebrated. I look forward to more opportunities to step into those spaces, to step aside while in those spaces, and to bring their voices back here to our community.

ELUL SHARE



The holy month of Elul corresponds almost exactly with the month of September. Rosh Hodesh Elul is Sunday, September 1st, and the month concludes with Rosh Hashana at sundown on Sunday, September 29th. Elul is that month for visiting with our own souls, for taking stock of our lives, our relationships and commitments. It is time for forgiveness and healing of broken hearts. It is time for spiritual refreshment and renewal. All are invited to an Elul Share on Sunday night, September 8th, 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul. Margaret will offer a bit of Elul teaching and song, and we will take time to hear from each other about where we are in life and to support each other in renewing our spirits. If you would like to bring some food to share, that would be lovely, but is not necessary.

HIGH HOLY DAYS 5780

The MCJC Board wishes you and yours a happy and healthy new year. We hope you will join us at the shul for the High Holy Days.

Selichot:

Saturday, September 21st, 8:00 PM. A short, candle-lit evening service of preparation for the Holy Days, with chanting and time for looking within. Selichot means "forgiveness" and is meant to heighten our *teshuvah*, our returning to life and goodness.

Mikveh:

The mikveh, a prayerful ritual immersion in "living water," is a beautiful traditional way to enter the Holy Days. All women are invited to attend. The mikveh will be held on Sunday, September 29th. We will meet at 10:00 AM at the Albion Grocery and carpool together to the Middle Ridge Pond. If you do not want to meet at the store, please park at Harriet Bye's house (31131 Middle Ridge) and walk to the pond. Please do not park your car anywhere along Middle Ridge Road.

Rosh Hashana:

Evening service--Sunday, September 29th, 7:30-9:30 PM.
Morning service—Monday, September 30th, 10:30 AM-2:00 PM
(community luncheon following morning service)*
Rosh Hashana teachings and Sin Buffet—3:30 PM
Tashlich at Caspar Beach—approximately 4:30 PM

Yom Kippur:

Kol Nidre—Tuesday, October 8th, 7:30-9:30 PM.
Morning service—Wednesday, October 9th, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM
Yizkor (memorial service)--4:30-5:30 PM
Mincha and Ne'ila--5:30 PM to sundown.
(potluck breaking-the-fast meals at community members' homes)**



YIZKOR LIST

The yizkor list is a perpetual list of family members and others close to members of our community who have died. Names read last year will be read again. If you have a name that has not already been added to the permanent list, please email Donna at montag@mcn.org or call 877-3243, well in advance of the service. There will be time after the reading of the list to say the names of additional people you want to remember.

CHILDREN

If you are interested in child care during High Holy Day services, please contact Joan Katzeff at (707) 964-9161 *by September 15th*. Children are welcome at services. There are some parts that children may enjoy most, even if they do not stay for the rest of the service. On Rosh Hashana that includes the shofar service and the Sin Buffet at the end of the afternoon teachings; on Yom Kippur, the first singing of Kol Nidre. Also consider the closing havdalah and shofar blowing "in the dark" to end the holidays.

GENERAL INFORMATION

We anticipate that the shul will be crowded. We encourage you to come early. If you are an elder or are disabled and require assistance or transportation, or if you can provide this assistance during the holidays, please call Mina at 937-1319 or email mcohen@mcn.org by September 15th.

We are suggesting a contribution of \$150.00 for each adult who is not a contributing member of MCJC. This contribution will help cover costs of providing High Holy Day services. We request that this be paid in advance and sent to P.O. Box 291, Little River, CA, 95456. Alternately, you can mail your contribution later to the above address. It is traditional not to handle or discuss money on the holidays themselves. As always, no one will be turned away for lack of funds, so please contribute what you can. If you have any financial questions, please contact Donna Montag, our treasurer, at montag@mcn.org.

* Rosh Hashana Lunch:

Following Rosh Hashana morning services, many people choose to remain at the shul to rest and eat lunch together. If you plan to have lunch at the shul, please bring a vegetarian cold dish that can serve 8-10 people. Everything else will be provided.

** Breaking the Fast:

It is customary to break the Yom Kippur fast with a festive meal. We encourage you to invite friends and family to break the fast with you. If you would be willing to have additional guests, please contact Donna at montag@mcn.org. We particularly need a host whose home is wheelchair accessible. Locations of break fasts will be announced at Yom Kippur services. Everyone is welcome; please bring a veggie dish to share.

MAKE TZEDAKAH A PRIORITY

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to a year of health and happiness, consider making a tzedakah contribution to the Adele Saxe Tzedakah Fund and the Ella Russell Bikkur Cholim Fund, both of which are very low on funds at this time of the year. The funds are available to members of the community to help them work through short-term emergencies. Funds are made available on a confidential basis at the Rabbi's discretion.

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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 September:

09/07/19	<i>Shoftim</i>	Margaret Holub
09/14/19	<i>Ki Teitzei</i>	Andrea Luna
09/21/19	<i>Ki Tavo</i>	Margaret Holub
09/28/19	<i>Nitzavim</i>	Raven Deerwater

KABBALAT SHABBAT



There will be no Kabbalat Shabbat in September since we'll be together at Rosh Hashanah. In October, we'll gather in Margaret and Mickey's sukkah on the 18th.

The joyful get-togethers usually take place on the fourth Friday of the month, begin at 6:00 PM, and include a short service with a vegetarian potluck following. Mina is taking sign-ups for 2020! If you would like to host a gathering, contact her at 937-1319 or mcohen@mcn.org.

ELDERS' CONVERSATION

The Elders will meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, September 10th and 24th, 3:00-5:00 PM at the shul. People of all ages are most welcome. Topics are decided at the previous meeting. If you're not on the announcements list, or not sure, please check with Margaret at mholub@mcn.org.

JUSTICE GROUP



2020 Census: At the August meeting, Paula Cohen, a member of the Mendocino County Complete Count Committee, said it is vital to get an accurate head count, because that will determine how congressional seats are apportioned and how state and federal dollars are distributed. The government would like all forms to be filled out online. Many in the county do not have internet or access to computers. Furthermore, the immigrant population may be reluctant to fill out forms because of the hostility of the current administration. The Complete Count Committee has plans to mitigate these challenges through outreach at post offices, libraries, schools, senior centers, churches and other community organizations.

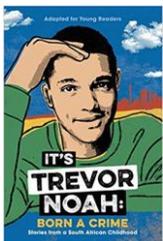
The Justice Group will meet on Thursday, September 12th, 5:30-7:30 PM at the shul. Come at 5:00 to share some refreshments and shmooze time. At this meeting, in the spirit of Elul, we will take some time amidst our power-packed agenda to reflect on our past year of work, friendship and struggle, to acknowledge each other, and to reflect on what this group means to us and to the world.

We would like to thank the following people for their generous support of the Citizen Scholarship Project: Karen & Leonardo Bowers; Jeannette Rasker & Robert Cutler; Sharon Hansen; Julia & Mya Byers; and Gregg Ross and Meg Courtney.

GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE

The Sunrise Movement has called for a global strike for climate action on Friday, September 20th. As of this writing, plans are still being formed for local actions, but mark this day and look for updates. More information about the national strike actions can be had at <https://globalclimatestrike.net/usa/>

BOOK GROUP



We will meet Monday September 16th at 2:00 PM to discuss Trevor Noah's ***Born a Crime***. Alarming, sad, and funny, Noah (the host of "The Daily Show") provides a harrowing look, through the prism of his family, at life in South Africa under apartheid, offering a series of sharp-edged snapshots. ***Born a Crime*** is not just an unnerving account of growing up bi-racial under apartheid, but a love letter to the author's remarkable mother. You'd be hard-pressed to find a comic's origin story better than Noah's. Every memory of helping his mother scrape together money for food, gas, school fees, and rent, or barely surviving the temper of his stepfather, reveals the anxious wellsprings of the comedian's ambition and success. Please call Fran Schwartz at 937-

1352 for information on location. Gallery Bookstore offers 10% off purchases to MCJC book club members.

MCJC BOARD MEETING

The MCJC board meets monthly at 5:30 PM at the shul. The September meeting will be on the 10th. 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

Mark and Deena Zarlin prepared the July-August ***Megillah*** for mailing. Since it was a double issue, that was a double-double domestic mitzvah! 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



Linda Jupiter; Clarke Glasow; Bonnie Saland; Carol Michelson & Simon Hodson; Roberta & David Belson; Orah Young & Steve Greenwood; Julie Byers; Sally Welty; Marinela Miclea; Laura Goldman & Dennak Murphy; Tracy Salkowitz & Rick Edwards; Barry Baylan & Pamelyn Close; Harvey Hoechstetter & Lari Shea; Lew Mermelstein; Steve Antler & Carla Jupiter; Bob Evans; Nancy Harris; Rosalie & Art Holub; Eric Labowitz & Kathy Bailey; Cecil Cutler; Dorothy Salant; Jessica Morris.

To the Adele Saxe Tzedekah Fund by Dr. David Schiff. Benna Kolinsky & Danny Mandelbaum with hope for the healing of the USA; Reba Simon in honor of Roger & Fran Schwartz.

In memory of Bill Millen, father of Jay Millen & husband of Diane Millen, by Diane Millen; In memory of Bill Millen by Dr Jeff Berenson & Mina Cohen; In memory of Rick Banker by Jan & Marc Wasserman; In memory of Florence Kaufman, their son-in-law's mother, by Irv & Rosalie Winesuff; In memory of Sidney Dominitz by Sydelle Lapidus; In memory of Monique Frankston by Irv & Rosalie Winesuff.

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 2019. 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
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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. 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

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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

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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)

Rituals and Holidays (including Hevra Kadisha/cemetery)	Joan Katzeff*	964-9161	jkatzeff@mcn.org
Outreach (new to the community) & Finance Committee	Susan Tubbesing*	962-0565	susan.tubbesing@gmail.com
Culture (films/ speakers/ Women's Retreat)	Harriet Bye*	937-3622	bysawyer@mcn.org
Treasurer (finance and donations)	Donna Montag*	877-3243	montag@mcn.org
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