



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

February 2008

P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470 Phone # 707-468-4536

Shevat -Adar 5768

Please note all submissions preferred by the 15th of each month to carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net

Visit our web page: www.kolhaemek.org

Coming Events

Friday, February 1, 6:30 pm, R. Shoshanah will lead the Kabbalat Shabbat service with potluck to follow.

Sunday, February 3, Shul School 10:00-12:15 R. Shoshanah will teach “ENHANCING SPIRITUALITY IN OUR DAILY LIVES: JEWISH DAILY PRACTICE” (part1)

Thursday, February 7, at 7:00 pm David Smith-Ferri, poet and activist, will speak on the people of Iraq (see page 3)

Sunday, February 10, Shul School 10:00-12:15 “ENHANCING SPIRITUALITY” (part 2)

Friday, February 15, 6:30 Kabbalat Shabbat. Gather round the table for blessings, songs, stories and a family-style Shabbat celebration. Amy Wachspress & Esther Faber will host.

Saturday, March 1, a very special Shabbat! Come at 9:00 am for a bagel breakfast and Torah study, 10:00 am for our Shabbat Service, including our Shul school children. Service to be conducted by visiting **Rabbi Carol Caine**. After a potluck lunch break there will be a very special Talmud study group with Rabbi Carol from 1:30 to 4:00 pm. PLEASE register in advance for the study group by calling Carol Rosenberg at 463-8526 (see page 4 for more info). Donations of \$15 in advance to cover the rabbi’s expenses will be greatly appreciated; send your donation to KHE, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley 95470; scholarships available, call David, 485-8910.



PURIM is Coming !!
Save these dates:
Saturday & Sunday,
March 22 & 23, 2008

Saturday evening March 22,
Elizabeth Raybee & friends
will again present for
adults

a splendid, exciting
and fun fundraiser,
this year called

Dada Purim

Tickets in advance \$18,
at the shul door \$24

Then on Sunday
March 23 Purim fun
for the entire family



Portion of the Week

February 2 - Mishpatim
February 9 - Terumah
February 16 - Tetzaveh
February 23 - Ki Tissa
March 1 - Vayakhel

Mazel Tov! to Bela & Avrum Goldberg on their 60th wedding anniversary and on Avrum's 90th birthday.

Condolences to Tom Anderson, and to all those who knew and loved Dori Anderson. Dori died January 4, 2008.

From Women's Retreat Committee

We know that all of you who have been so touched by the beautiful spirit, words and encouragement of Ella Russel, our Mikveh Diva for the last 18 years, would want to know what is happening to her.

On Friday, January 25, Ella received the biopsy results of the tumor which is located in her left temporal lobe. The biopsy showed a Stage IV glioblastoma; this is the most malignant stage. Radiation and chemotherapy are being recommended to improve her quality of life and life span. This tumor is not curable.

During the six weeks of treatments Ella will stay in Berkeley at her brother David's home. Her immediate need is for caretakers/caring friends to assist and stay overnight with her there.

If you can do this sometime during the next six weeks, please contact Donna Montag at 877-3243 or <montag@mcn.org> and she can give you further information as to what is needed for this position.

We know that all of us who have had a mikveh can hold the image of our smiling curly-haired Ella in our hearts. As she held out her arms with that oversized robe or towel to protect us from the cold, may our prayers now wrap her and her family in love and blessing.

Shalom,
Harriet Bye, Deena Zarlin, Donna Montag

Donations to Kol HaEmek

Make a Difference

Kol HaEmek is grateful for all contributions to our various funds. The following is a list of some of them:

- 1) Building Fund
- 2) Religious School Fund (Kalifornia Memorial)
- 3) Scholarship Fund
- 4) General Fund
- 5) Memorial Board Fund
- 6) Tzedakah Fund
- 7) Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- 8) The Marion and Sanford Frank Fund for Feeding the Hungry in Ukiah & Willits
- 9) Caring for needy Jewish and Arab people in Acre, Israel*
- 10) MEMBERSHIP

Questions? Call David Koppel 485-8910

Please mail your contributions to:

**Kol HaEmek, P.O. Box 416,
Redwood Valley, CA 95470**

*Make your check payable to PEF:

Israel-Endowment Fund and earmark it to the Association for Community Development-Acre; HaAsif program. (There is a \$25 minimum requirement for checks to Israel).

PASSINGS

Our congregation will say Kaddish on the anniversary of your loved one's death. Call Rabbi Shoshanah at 467-0456 with your concerns about the loss of a loved one and/or the name and either the Hebrew or English calendar date of death.

We Remember

Arnold Melvin Ronkin 1-30-06
Dori Anderson 1-04-08
Louis Klayman - February
Rachel Faigin Bleicher - February 12
Esther Daniel - February 19
Tom Shine Mapp - February 22
Arthur Hecht - Adar 7
Saul Faber - Adar 17
Paul Rothschild - Adar 30

February 7 - Poet/Activist on Iraqi Displacement Crisis to Appear at KHE

An estimated four and a half million Iraqis have been displaced by violence in their country - two million within Iraq and 2.5 million to Jordan and Syria. Many of them suffer compounding traumas, including the loss of home and livelihood, severe physical injuries, and PTSD. For the past year, Ukiah resident David Smith-Ferri has been on a national speaking and book tour, educating Americans about the plight of displaced Iraqis and raising funds for their urgent medical needs.

On Thursday, February 7, at 7pm, David will speak at Kol HaEmek, reporting on current conditions in Iraq and in Jordan, and describing a grassroots humanitarian aid program called the Direct Aid Initiative (DAI), headquartered in Amman. David will read from the 2nd edition of his recently published book of poems, *Battlefield without Borders*. These are poems that tell stories of his encounters with Iraqi people during trips to Iraq and Jordan over an eight-year period. Several of the poems are about families DAI is assisting.

David will also present a short slideshow from his trips, focusing on stories of Iraqis who are trying to cope with violence and lawlessness in their country and with increasingly desperate conditions in Jordan. The slideshow will also highlight a number of the individuals and families who are benefiting from medical care through the work of DAI. His purpose is to bring the Iraqi people he has met into our presence, to help us connect with them, and to inspire us to act on their behalf.

The Direct Aid Initiative is designed to be a collaboration with Iraqi people. It recognizes that most Iraqis are already resisting the traumatic effects of war and occupation, doing everything they can to care for themselves and their families, and to provide a future for their children. DAI seeks to support these efforts. It is an act of friendship and justice, rather than of charity. Recognizing that it is Iraqis who will one day rebuild their country, DAI seeks to model and enact the kind of relationships that could strengthen and amplify their capacity to do so. In addition to providing assistance to individuals and families on a case-by-case basis, DAI helps supply clinics in Iraq with medicine and medical supplies. In mid-January, DAI helped open a clinic in Al-Fuhays, a town fifty kilometers from Amman which has no doctor and where a large number of Iraqi refugees live.

All proceeds from David's book (all but \$2 of the sale price) will go to the Direct Aid Initiative. For more information about the book and the humanitarian work it is supporting, go to <www.battlefieldwithoutborders.org>

For Your Information:

Letters have been sent to several school districts providing them with the dates of the High Holidays and Jewish celebrations for the coming fiscal year. If you wish the Board to send a letter to your child's private or charter school, please call Carol at 463-8526.

Send Your Child to Jewish Camp, Fully Funded

A new incentive to encourage middle-school students (6th, 7th, and 8th graders) to attend a Jewish camp is available through the JWest Campership Program.

If your child has never attended a Jewish camp, he or she can do so regardless of financial need. For more information go to <<http://www.jewishcamping.org>> The information is located at the bottom of the home page under JWest Campership. Jewish summer camps are a great way to get kids excited about being Jewish, meet other Jewish kids, and learn while having fun.

In My Opinion:

On January 12, I was preparing for Sunday school after two weeks of school vacation for the kids and the teachers. I did not relish the idea of getting to the Shul early enough to turn on the heat and setting up for classes. As usual, I was concerned that my lessons wouldn't go well. Had I done enough preparation? What sense would the youngest children make of the Bible stories? Is it fair to teach them Hebrew letters when half the class has yet to learn to read English?

Then I realize 10-12:15 for 20 Sundays a year is not a long time to give 6-8 little people a grounding in being Jewish, a sense of belonging, a history, a respect for law, the concept of Tzedakah and above all a fondness and sense of responsibility for each other. Fortunately, for me their teacher, you their parents have already given them wonderful skills and Jewish values.

On the very first day of class back in September, as they started to touch food they looked at each other and said we have to wash our hands! Then all ran off to do just that. One child, the youngest in her family, offered to help her youngest classmate. They all know about taking turns. They understand sharing, they understand kindness and individual differences. When not interested they are incredibly polite. They are kind, loving and alert, a teacher's dream.

So, knowing I will be very tired by 1:00 pm and that I won't be able to do a lot of what I like to do on weekends, I will cheerfully be at Shul by 9:00 am and ready to greet your four- to seven-year-olds with affection and, hopefully, lessons that work and engage their lively minds.

I also hope they will continue, and that I, with luck, will be able to see each of them grow and learn, and be there to listen as they read Torah before their families and our congregation in their thirteenth year.

*With love and thanksgiving,
Carol*

Entering the Talmud - Workshop with Rabbi Carol Caine, March 1

Imagine an opportunity to enter into an ongoing conversation with the great sages of the Jewish tradition, claiming a place for ourselves at their holy table. In this workshop, we will provide an accessible introduction to the Talmud and contemplate the meaning its teachings have for us today. The Talmud is a profoundly rich compilation of wisdom that has continued relevance to our contemporary search for meaning. It addresses eternal questions of ethics, human nature and relationship to the Divine, and, through its way of constructing arguments, teaches that there are many different ways of arriving at the truth. No background in Talmud is required. All texts will be studied in English.

Carol is a long-time friend of Kol HaEmek who came to our High Holiday services when they were conducted by Rabbi Shefa Gold. She is a native of Queens, N.Y., was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and received the private *smicha* of Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi. She serves as rabbi and workshop leader in the Bay Area and beyond. Rabbi Carol is an active participant in both Reconstructionist and Renewal circles, drawing on both approaches in an integrative way. A former attorney and a veteran leader of Jewish chant and meditation, she combines the legal intellect of Talmud with the heart-opening directness of Jewish contemplative work.

Kol HaEmek's Member Brunch Report

On Sunday, January 20, the Board of KHE invited the membership to Brunch as an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with the recently re-elected Board of Directors. We also planted several trees and placed Mezuzahs (a gift of Bela & Avrum Goldberg) on the classroom doors.

After a very moving exercise on the retelling of the experiences that brought home to us our Jewish identity, we realized the incredible variety of our experiences, and the following four questions were asked:

1. What programs of KHE work for you?
2. What programs or activities would you like to see improved?
3. What new programs and activities would you like to see developed?
4. For which programs and activities will you volunteer?

The answers and suggestions given by the 18 attendees were:

1. A number of the men present reported how meaningful and life changing they found the men's group.
2. How important was the children's religious school to the community, it should be, a major priority.
3. People said they enjoyed High holy days, especially in our own Shul, and how welcoming the congregation is to people who come only one time each year.
4. Friday night Shabbats - this member felt we had light medium and heavy services, something for everyone.
5. People expressed how important Rabbi Shoshanah's contributions were, especially her relationship with the kids. Also mentioned was the time she spends counseling people which is invisible to the larger community.
6. One member said she loves visiting Rabbi's she enjoys the differences and is grateful for Rabbi Shoshanah.
7. Events - such as "Sarah & Hagar at the Well" that was an experience for the whole community.
8. Movies and cultural events are important for the secular members of our congregation.
9. More adult classes, sharing community members' life experiences and skills, a suggestion for Shul school children to prepare more for services, bake the challah, sing a song, prepare the torah portion drosh.
10. For members to offer and take turns driving each other to services, less cars more socialization time and a bonus for people who may not see well in the dark.
11. A plan of asking families to contribute what a B'nai Mitzvah or wedding would cost, to help expand the Shul to accommodate future special life cycle events.
12. A special event can be planned inviting back Rabbis Hannan, Daniel Lev and other wonderful people that are part of our history as a congregation.
13. Really following through on a Rosh Hodesh Women's group - the women that have attended the Annual Woman's retreat on the Coast would like a monthly meeting.
14. A series of articles need to be submitted to the local papers on the variety of Jewish experience, and that the term Jewish include a variety of people, practices and beliefs.
15. Annual Parties and fun, such as the 'Dada Purim' that is planned for March 22.

(If the rest of our members who were unable to attend the brunch would be willing to answer the same questions, we would be delighted to hear and consider your responses. Please submit to the Shema editor or any KHE board member.)

Dear KHE Chaverim,

We have 5 adult classes coming up in the next few months. While focusing on a variety of topics, these sessions will all meet during our Shul School times on Sunday mornings. Shul School starts at 10 a.m. with a singing and praying circle, and then breaks into separate classes. We will start our adult learning at 10:15, with an option for folks to attend the opening circle or not.

These opportunities for adult learning are not intended for Shul School parents alone. They are geared to all members of our KHE community and interested outsiders as well. There's something that feels fundamentally healthy about having adults and children studying simultaneously in our Shul. In addition to the modeling that's happening, the synergy created via our mutual studying can deepen our sense of ourselves as a dynamic congregation coming together to enhance our individual and communal lives via lifelong learning.

So here is the schedule for upcoming classes that I'll be offering: **Feb 3 and Feb 10 - ENHANCING SPIRITUALITY IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES: JEWISH DAILY PRACTICES** - Become acquainted with traditional meditations, prayers, actions, and blessings for marking each day and turning the mundane into the holy. While curiosity can motivate attendance, you will hopefully take home with you specific ways of cultivating and deepening your own sense of sacred presence and connection.

March 16 - As we make our way to Purim festivities later in the week, we'll look at **LIFE IN THE DIASPORA: OUR JEWISH HERITAGE IN IRAQ (ANCIENT BABYLON) AND IRAN (ANCIENT PERSIA)** Esther, Mordecai and Daniel (of the Lion's Den) all lived in ancient Persia, while the center of Talmudic study and compilation was ancient Babylon. Jews have lived in these communities ever since. How did we fare in this part of the world and how did we live as Jews of the Diaspora in these cultures?

April 6 - ROSH HODESH NISAN - an experiential celebration of the new moon/new month of Nisan, marking the first month of spring on the Hebrew calendar and featuring the freedom holiday of Pesach. Rosh Hodesh is the first holiday mentioned in the Torah and in ancient times was marked by shofar blowing. At our KHE community brunch in January, the desire was expressed for an ongoing KHE Women's Rosh Hodesh gathering. Perhaps our Sunday morning celebration will spur the formation of such a group. (A women's *rosh hodesh* group met a few times last year and petered out because of lack of leadership, not lack of interest.) This Sunday morning Rosh Hodesh Nisan welcomes men and women.

May 4 - ISRAEL IN OUR LIVES - Thursday, May 8, marks the 60th birthday of the State of Israel. Just this morning, I was sitting in a Ukiah restaurant and discovered via conversation that the young waitress had been on a birthright trip to Israel this past summer. She, who had grown up in a local non-observant Jewish family which had never affiliated with KHE, waxed enthusiastic about her travel experience and said it awakened in her a great desire to know more about her Jewish heritage. From reading the Bible, we learn that living in Israel wasn't easy back then, nor has it been easy for Jewish residents throughout post-Biblical times up till today. But our deep connection with Israel for thousands of years has been part of our Jewish identity, whether we lived in Eretz Yisrael or in the Diaspora. And then 60 years ago, for the first time in some 2000 years, we once again had a Jewish state.

Rabbi's article continued

What was the context for creation of the state of Israel at this time? How has the country developed over the decades? What role does it play in your identity and life today?

So hopefully, this potpourri of class topics will have something to appeal to you in the coming weeks, enough to draw you to the Shul on Sunday mornings, and then go out and enjoy the rest of your day however you please. For next year, I hope we can set up some serious chevruta study, the partnered text learning that I described in last month's column. And perhaps you would like to offer a class on a Jewish topic through KHE; if so, please contact our Board.

From feedback to my column a few months back about books I recommend, I have discovered that our local KHE community is full of avid readers. I suggest that if you've read a Jewish book that you're really excited about, write it up for the next Shema. Or perhaps go a step further and organize an ongoing KHE monthly Jewish book club. The coastal Jewish community has such a group that's been meeting for years, and I know that my brother in New York, who isn't particularly keen on attending services, has found his congregation's book club quite stimulating. So here's to ongoing Jewish learning, and to sharing what we've learned!

B'shalom oovrachah, in peace and blessing,

Shoshanah

Haiku & Thoughts

without own being
original non-being
like a shooting star

My thought was how fleeting deep insight or a moment of enlightenment is. It is "like a shooting star." We see and understand and then it's gone.

We grasp at thin air! Yet the moment of understanding was real and wonderful. The trick is to keep on having enough moments of awareness so that we don't have to think too much about it.

Thinking separates us from experiencing everything in the moment. It locks us up into experiencing only our own thoughts. It gets in the way of experiencing everything that exists.

When I think about the shooting star I saw, it's not the same thing as what I experienced when I first saw it.

As I grow older and as my body and mind begin to fade out, I find it easier to let myself experience more without thinking too much.

Yet, here I am being ironic in explaining to you what I'm thinking about. Being a human being with the need to communicate is removing me from illumination.

Peace and lovingkindness and much laughter,

David Vilner

Men's meeting Wednesday January 30 - at the shul, 8591 West Road in Redwood Valley - please come and bring any info, ideas and questions about the upcoming weekend retreat. Some food to share, if possible, would be a great start for the meeting.



Kol HaEmek/MCJC-Inland
P.O. Box 416
Redwood Valley, CA 95470

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Permit No. 11

Our purpose is to create an environment in which Jewish culture, religion and spiritual life can flourish; to perpetuate and renew our Jewish connections with ourselves and our homes, within our community and the world.

Our Mission is to express and support Judaism in the following ways:

- To provide a space for religious study and prayer
- To share life cycle events through meaningful Jewish traditions
- To offer and sponsor Jewish education for all ages
- To be inclusive of all partnership and family configurations
- To include interfaith families and Jews-by-choice
- To network with other Jewish communities
- To educate and share our culture with other Mendocino County residents
- To be a foundation for *tikkun olam* (healing of the world) as a community through socially just actions and education, and by mitzvot (good deeds)
- To offer membership in exchange for financial and other contributions, and allow all to participate regardless of ability to pay

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

Kol HaEmek	468-4536
Board Members:	
Carol Rosenberg, President	463-8526
Dan Hibshman, Vice President	462-7471
David Koppel, Treasurer (Financial Committee)	485-8910
(open seat)	
Nancy Merling (Rabbi's Council)	456-0639
Divora Stern	459-9052
Alan Acorn Sunbeam	463-8364
Steven Levin	462-3131
Robert Klayman	462-5067

Address changes (e-mail, etc): contact David Koppel davekoppel@yahoo.com or call (485-8910)

Brit Milah: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or in your home: Robert Gitlin, D.O. (485-7406);

Sam Goldberg, M.D. (463-8000); Jeremy Mann, M.D. (463-8000); Sid Mauer, M.D. (463-8000),

Chanan Feld, Certified Mohel (510-524-0722). **Assistance with the ceremony, contact the Rabbi** (see below)

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial): Eva Strauss-Rosen (459-4005); Helen Sizemore (462-1595)

Community Support: *If you need help (illness, family crisis) or you can be called on when others need help;*

in Willits, call Divora Stern (459-9052); In Ukiah, Tal Sizemore (462-1595); Lake County (*Volunteer needed, call a board member*)

Editor of the Shema: Carol Rosenberg, Dan Hibshman & Tal Sizemore (carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-5351) (Food preparation for homeless in Ukiah)

Jewish Community Information and Referral: Bay Area activities and services (415) 777-4545 or toll free at (877)777- 5247.

Library: At the Kol HaEmek shul, 8591 West Road, Redwood Valley; open at shul events and by appointment

Movies-at-the-Shul: Bill Ray (459-5850)

New Members: Carol Rosenberg (463-8526)

Rabbi's Council: assists with community and calendar planning; **liaison** - contact Nancy Merling, grandnan@saber.net (456-0639)

Rabbinical Services/Special Ceremonies: Rabbi Shoshanah Devorah, 467-0456, sdevorah@gmail.com

Use of Torah/Siddurs: Schedule ahead of time with a board member.

Tzedakah Fund (Financial Assistance): David Koppel (485-8910)