



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

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

Please note: all submissions sent by the 20th of each month to Carol Rosenberg (Carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net)

Coming Events

- **Sunday, February 5, 10:00 a.m.-12:15 pm**, Shul School; **11:00 a.m.** Tu B'Shevat Seder
- **Friday, February 10, 6:30 pm**, Kabbalat Shabbat with R. Shoshanah, followed by vegetarian potluck supper.
- **Saturday, February 11, 10:00** Bat Mitzvah of Leila Achtoun, daughter of Sigrid White at SPACE Theater, -Perkins St., Ukiah
- **Sunday, February 19**, Feeding the hungry. To help, call Dan Hibshman, 462-7471
- **Sunday, January 26, 10:00-12:15**, Shul School
- **Friday, February 24, 6:30 pm**, Kabbalat Shabat with R. Shoshanah at the home of Bruce and Cassandra 750 HWY 20 in Willits, followed by Vegetarian potluck supper. call 459-4855 for directions.

New KHE Committees Forming See Harvey's Commentary, page 4

E-mail Jan Stevens with any ideas KHE members have regarding community musical events: visiting performers, participatory musical experiences Jan@jp4wellness.info

If you are interested in discussions and activities re: Palestine/Israel/US relations call or e-mail Andy Coren 467-1875 <andycoren@att.net> or Vicki Patterson 467-1932 <pattersonvictoriaz@gmail.com>

Jewish History Study Group

I am a member of a wandering tribe that has existed for thousands of years and live in every corner of our planet.

Have you ever wondered where the first Jewish house of worship stood and if it's still there? When did the Jews have a community in China? Are they still alive? How did a large community grow in a small Mississippi town and survive in the Deep South? How a chicken farmer brought a commune to the west? Our history is more than one book. If you would like to study and share this amazing heritage, come join us in our new studies. Call Nancy Merling, 459-0639. nancymerling@att.net

Opportunities for Tzedakah

Kol HaEmek (the Voice of the Valley) is funded by your member dues as well as your generous contributions to a number of funds including

- 1) Building Fund
- 2) Religious School Fund
- 3) Scholarship Fund
- 4) General Fund
- 5) Memorial Board Fund
- 6) Tzedekah Fund
- 7) Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
- 8) The Marion and Sanford Frank Fund for feeding the hungry in Ukiah and Willits
- 9) Congregation Eshel Avraham in Beersheva, to build a bomb shelter for their nursery school. Make out a check to KHE or you can send your own check to: Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 832, New York, New York 10115

Question? Call:

David Koppel, 485-8910

send checks to:

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

A Congregational Mystery!

The curtain in our Ark has disappeared! It is a small wine-colored curtain that covered the Torah behind the wooden doors to the Ark.

If anyone has any information that will lead to its return, he or she will receive a special blessing! Call Carol, 463-8526

Portion of the Week and Holidays

February 4 - Beshalach Shira

February 11 - Yitro

February 8 - Tu B'Shevat

February 18 - Mishpatim Shekalim

February 25 - Terumah

We Remember

Gordon Wagenet - February

Louis Klayman - February

Robert Krause - February

Harold T. Simmons - February 10

Rachel Fagin Bleicher - February 12

Yoshuah Stern - February 15

Anita Koppel - February 17

Esther Daniels - February 19

Thomas Brooks-Miller - February 21

Donald Brooks-Miller - February 28

Tom Shine Mapp - February 22

Sudharma Kumari - Shevat 30

Announcing the early arrival of Merrick Elijah McNamara, son of Miriam and Casey McNamara. Grandparents Linda and David Koppel ask for prayers and good wishes for this premature little one.

**KHE Donation Thank You List
for November 1-December 31**

*Ace Barash and Satoko Barash
Judith Corwin
Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau
Judith Fuente and David Nelson
Robbie Gitlin and Karla Gitlin
Dan Hibshman and Leslie Kirkpatrick in honor of Helen Sizemore
David Koppel and Linda Koppel in memory of Miriam Leshar
David and Linda Koppel
Robert Mandel
Adina Merenlender and Kerry Heise
Nancy Horowitz Moilanen
Linda Posner
Mari Rodin and Clay Brennan
Nancy Merling
Sam Goldberg and Pat Tysoe
Andrea Silverstein and Dennis Patton
Isaac Mandel
Margo Frank and Marc Levine
Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere
Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren
Carol Orton
Bud Roseman and Silvana Roseman
Sherie Ebyam
Janice Berman*

Mazel Tov to JoAnn Rosen, who in mid-March will be receiving the Lamp of Wisdom at a transmission ceremony in the lineage of Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village community. The lamp transmission is the way in which the dharma, or teaching, is passed on from a Zen master to a disciple. The procedure establishes the disciple as a transmitting teacher in his/her own right .

COMMENTARY by Harvey Frankle

First of all, hats off to a hard working very dedicated group of people who met for our annual town hall community meeting. The Shul's walls were covered with 3 large project boards filled with scores of comments of the 89 people who were interviewed in the survey. The 6 interview questions, coincidentally enough, divided the survey into 2 parts: Who We Are, and What We Need. That's how the first two project boards were divided.

If you'll recall, the first three questions dealt with what you choose about your Judaism, what rituals/activities are closest to your heart, and whether you are moved spiritually, by what, and if you wish to be. The results were fascinating: 65% of us focused on one of 5 basic categories including the importance of **community, holidays, Shabbat, social justice, and Jewish Culture**. A full 20% focused on Community and this became one of the central concerns of this conference. 30% listed Jewish Music as a primary component of what is closest to their hearts, and this also was dealt with later on in the meeting. It turns out that a whopping 67% of us are moved by a spiritual practice and of that 67% more than half of us are moved by eastern practices, 25% by Judaism.

This is who we are. What do we need? This is exemplified by the final 3 questions: what would help you connect more with your Judaism, you would attend Kol HaEmek more if...?, and what would help you connect more with the Jewish community?

The responses were extremely varied but 25% of us listed the need for more cultural events, 14% would like to see more community participation. In my preliminary report to the Board I stated: "A wise selection of the former may bring an uptick of the latter."

This brings us to the third project, which I entitled: How Do We Get There. It was broken into two major committee formations: Culture and Strengthening Community. The Culture committee itself broke into 2 categories based on your responses: Classes and Events, each containing 8-10 of your suggestions. The Community committee dealt with such issues as making newcomers feel welcome, including younger members and recruiting volunteers.

The committees went to work. After an hour and a half, each came up with their top three picks and reported out to the group as a whole when we later reconvened. The Cultural committee came up with 1. holding a forum on the Middle East, 2. presenting Jewish music performances, and 3. a class or study group focused on Jewish History. The community committee chose 1. The forming of a comprehensive post B'nai Mitzvah program, 2. adopting a phone call/carpooling strategy for events, and 3. greeters for new members. Thanks go out to Carol Rosenberg for the timely minutes of the Cultural committee. The Community group is currently burning up the ether with creative suggestions via the Internet: it's really exciting. Please keep this process going and make these programs a reality. Great work on the minutes, Robin!

There also were suggestions to add on content to Oneg Shabbat and Torah School, fundamental changes in the school program, more intergenerational projects, and monthly poker/games night as well as enhancing the film program. Additionally, interest groups can be formed around a Jewish book club, family activity group, choir, a women's group, a Klezmer band, or a study group.

We have begun! Between the two major committees we have chosen half a dozen projects. The work is not over. These committees now have to decide how to bring these projects into reality. I will be available to help in any way I can. What we don't want is to find ourselves all dressed up with nowhere to go. Half our board members are on one committee and half on the other. They will report out at our next board meeting on February 7. We **must** keep on top of this in planning for the Spring and after. Meanwhile you hard working, dedicated people, Kol HaKavod!

Robert Joseph's Drosch for January 7, 2012

I'd like to welcome you all to the part of the service where I get to present my Drosch. For those of you who had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, then you know what a drosch is, it's an inquiry into the meaning of the Torah, but the word itself has come to mean "interpretation." My drosch is what I'll be doing now.

For my *alliot* lines are 1-3. I have read from the Book of Genesis, chapter 48, verse 13-21. These all are about Joseph taking Ephraim and Manasseh his two sons and going up to their grandfather Jacob who was old and dying, to have him bless them. But Jacob adds a twist, literally. I chose this part because it shows much of the time things don't go as planned.

I have been studying my Torah portion and I have been pursuing the idea that God was influencing Jacob to do the blessing differently. In a traditional blessing of two children you'd be expected to bless your children with your arms crossed, with your right hand on the first born and your left hand on the second born. This would give the first born the bigger share of the blessing. But the text tells us that Jacob was crossing his hands during the blessing, giving Joseph's second born son Ephraim the bigger share of the blessing.

In support of my earlier theory that God was influencing Jacob. Would God have convinced Jacob to do the blessing differently? Then I realized that Jacob's name switches from Jacob to Israel at this point in the Torah. Could this have indicated that God was within Jacob's consciousness? Israel is Jacob's higher name. And when Jacob knew he was going to die did he himself know that, or was it God telling him? But one of the most important clues is when Jacob was blessing the children (and Joseph through the children), he said "By you Israel will pronounce."

If you didn't notice, Jacob was talking in the 3rd person. So was Jacob talking for himself or was it God talking?

What does this have to do with today? It shows that God is everywhere at all times. But sometimes there is more of a concentration of God's essence. During the blessing of children, I noticed that when Jacob was crossing his hands he probably made a symbol of the letter *alef* to symbolize the connection between heaven and earth. *Alef* is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and also represents one in the Hebrew numerical system. So *alef* has come to mean God, the beginning of all, the first. If you look at an *alef* you can see it is made up of two *yuds* and a *vav*; the *alef* is said to symbolize the connection between heaven and earth (the two *yuds*). The connector is the *vav*. Maybe Jacob at the time was the connector.

Joseph showed me that things can change, evolve and that things are not set in stone. In fact, we all can do things out of the ordinary. And if God was influencing Jacob, does it mean that God wants us to change?

As I conclude my Drosch I would like to thank you all for being here at my Bar Mitzvah.

Shalom!

FYI

Our very own Herron Spence is competing for the title of Miss Mendocino. You can join the Miss Mendocino County Scholarship Program Committee in watching as the judges choose at 7 pm, Sat, Feb 4, at the Ukiah High School Cafetorium. Tickets are available at the door or at the Mendocino Book Company.

Dear KHE Chaverim,

Hineni, here I am, once again back from a trip, this time to the annual gathering of Jewish Renewal Rabbis in Colorado and then a session with the Board of Rabbis of Northern California in Palo Alto. In both venues, the learning was a treat - I must have attended some 12 of these conferences in Boulder by now, and yet this one felt like my favorite. The only expectation I'd had beforehand was to swim once again in the outdoor swimming pool amidst the winter snow- that did happen! But I found myself delighting in the study sessions, the prayer times, the music and dance in the evenings, and the informal conversations at meals. For starters, my roommate, whom I'd not met before, was a woman a year older than I from Tennessee. Our chatting revealed she'd been a Catholic nun from age 19-29, then become an academic teaching physiology, and only in later life converted to Judaism. Now she serves as a chaplain.

This was the first year of my coming to the conference that I attended every prayer session, which meant praying together with others for *shacharit* (morning prayer), *minchah* (afternoon prayer), and *ma'ariv* (evening prayer), three times a day for three days. My experience was that this was very fortifying. There's definitely something powerful that can be evoked when people who love to pray davven together in a minyan. Each service was unique, not only because they were led by different people, but because this is Jewish Renewal, after all! One day I attended *minchah* right after a Talmud class taught by Judith Abrams (from Texas). We learned that the Aleynu and Kaddish, which today are wind-down prayers at the end of the service, were, two thousand years ago, climactic prayers for meditative trips ascending through the seven heavens to the very throne of God (or at least to God's footstool). All those "yits" - *yitbarach*, *vyishtabach*, *vyitromam*, *vyitnaseh*, etc., were steps in the staircase for scaling the heavenly heights. Just hearing this brought me into a contact high, and I experienced and enjoyed an especially trippy *minchah* that day.

Speaking about God, and going from low to high, Elliot Ginsburg (from Michigan) shared with us how God too goes back and forth between small (*katnoot*) and expanded (*gadlout*) consciousness. This learning comes from the Zohar, which tells us that the letter *yud* gives birth to all the other letters, i.e, you can find a *yud* in every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Now *Shechinah* is symbolized by the letter *heh* (both *hehs* in the *yud* *heh* *vav* *heh* are considered feminine expressions of the divine). As the full, open letter *heh*, *Shechinah* protects us and gives birth to all the world. But when *Shechinah* feels unloved and unrecognized (in exile, in traditional terms), she diminishes in size until she is nothing but a tiny curled up *yud*, in fact she becomes just the tiniest black dot. How do we bring her forth again into her fullness? By loving her, by helping her feel seen again, by calling out to God and bringing the *Kadosh Boruch Hu* (the male creator aspect of divinity) into union with her again. Our role as partners with the Divine, as essential to the well being of God and the world, is clear here.

Elliot also applied this movement between small and expanded consciousness to our very names as a people. Israel, we are told in the biblical story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel, means "struggle with God." Jew, on the other hand, comes from the Hebrew *Yehudah*, which comes from the Hebrew root for being thankful. So when we are in a tight, narrow place, we are Israel, struggling with life and what it means; when we are in an open-hearted, magnanimous space, we give thanks to God and all creation, and are Jewish in our essence. Both places are legitimate places to be, and it is natural for us, as for God (above paragraph) to go back and forth between them.

Moses was the focus of our Zohar study with Melila Helner (from Jerusalem) in Palo Alto. And once again the image of *Shechinah* in exile came up, but in a different context. Moses has his vision of God in the burning bush, and receives his instructions, but discovers that both the Israelites and Pharaoh are deaf to his words. He himself pleads to God that he has uncircumcised lips and can't speak well. To be effective, we need alignment of our thoughts (*machshevah*), our voice (*kol*), our speech (*diboor*), and the deeds (*ma'aseh*) that follow. The Zohar tells us Moses is suffering a lack of connection between his voice and his speech. Voice comes from the heart in the *sefirah* of *Tiferet*, which is male in the *kabbalistic* Tree of Life. You can have a full heart, but be unable to express what you know and feel in words. Speech, on the other hand, is *Shechinah* or *Malchut* in the Tree of Life, and is feminine. Speech unconnected with voice equals *Shechinah* in exile. Think of all the ways in which you are familiar with either situation, voice without speech, or speech without voice, in our modern world. Once again the solution is to bring the male and female together, union between *Tiferet/kol* and *Malchut/speech*. This, the Zohar tells us, happens for Moshe when he receives Torah on Mt. Sinai. In God's presence atop the mountain, he finds alignment, and words of Torah pour forth.

Having brought the Tree of Life into the picture, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy *Tu Bishvat* (Tuesday eve, Feb 7, and Wed, Feb 8). May we each do something concrete on this day to celebrate and support the beneficence of trees and to help heal our planet. I also learned at the conference that the great medieval scholar and doctor Maimonides said a thousand years ago that our earth is a living being.

B'Shalom *oovrachah*/In Peace and Blessing,
Shoshanah

Meet Anat Hoffman, Sunday, February 12 ~ 2 PM

at Congregation Shomrei Torah
2600 Bennett Valley Rd. in Santa Rosa, co-sponsored by Ner Shalom

Anat Hoffman is one of Israel's most significant activists working for social justice and religious pluralism. She is the leader of Women of the Wall and has been famously arrested for being a woman holding a Torah scroll at the Western Wall. She will be giving a talk on Sunday February 12. "Civil Rights and Women's Rights in Israel." Her talk is free and open to the public. To attend a special luncheon in her honor see www.shomreitorah.org.

Weekend Shabbaton
with Reb Zalman and Eve Ilse
Ashland, OR at the Havurah Shir Hadash
April 20-22 2012
For Registration forms
www.havurahshirhadash.org
or contact ayala@ashlandhavurah.org

Tu B'Shevat To be celebrated by KHE Sunday, February 5, at 11:00 a.m. with a Special Seder, sharing with our children our gratitude to the trees and all the bounty of nature.

And Elohim said;

Let the earth sprout forth vegetation:

Plants that have seeds, and trees that have fruits with seeds of its own kind...

And Elohim saw that this was good,

And it was evening and it was morning, the third day. (Gen1:1)

When the Holy Blessed One created the original Adam, God took Adam around to all the trees in the garden of eden and said, "Observe how lovely and excellent my creation are, and everything that I created, I created for your sake: take heed not to damage or destroy my world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it for you.

(Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7/13)

And it is said of Hillel, that he did not omit to study words of the sages, even all the languages, even the speech of the mountains, hills and valleys, the speech of trees and herbs, the speech of wild beasts and cattle, the speech of melody and parable. (Soferim 41b)

All of the trees, plants and spirits that dwell in nature conversed with one another. The spirit that lives in the trees and nature conversed with humankind, for all of the beings in nature were created for mutual companionship with humanity. (Gen. Rabbah 13:2)

Rabbi Yitzhak Eisik said,

The motto of life is "Give and Take"

Everyone must be both a giver and a receiver,
in living circle.

He is not both he is a barren tree. (quoted in Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters)



Kol Ha Emek MCJC-Inland
P.O. Box 416,
Redwood Valley, CA 95470

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.

- To provide 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 partnerships 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 the world) as a community through socially just actions and and by Mitzvot (good deeds)
- To offer membership in exchange for financial and other contributions and allow all to participate regardless of the ability to pay

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

Kol HaEmek

(707) 468-4536

Board Members

Harvey Frankle, President	459-9235 < woodnbooks@wildblue.net >
David Koppel, Treasurer	485-8910 < davekoppel@yahoo.com >
Alan (Acorn) Sunbeam	463-8364 < asunbeam@mac.com >
Judy Corwin	462-4661 < jmcsrp@gmail.com >
Divora Stern	456-9052 < onemindbody@gmail.com >
Nancy Merling, Vice President	456-0639 <nancy merling@att.net >
Carol Rosenberg	463-8526 < carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net >
Steve Levin	462-3131 < stevenl@pacific.net >
Sherrie Ebyam	530-414-1104 < ebyam@sbcglobal.net >

Brit Mila: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or your home; Robert Gitlin D.O. (465-7406), Sam Goldberg (463-8000; Jeremy Mann (463-8000)

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

Community support: Willits, Divorah Stern (459-9052), Ukiah, Margo Frank (463-1834)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-535; (415)-777-4545, (887)777-5247

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

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