

# Shema שמע



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](mailto:Carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net))

## Coming Events

- Sunday, March 4, Shul School 10-12:15
- **Wednesday, March 7, 7 pm**, 501 Jones St Ukiah, call 463-8526, Erev of Purim reading the Book of Esther at the home of Carol Rosenberg, 501 Jones St., Ukiah, call 463-8526 for information and directions.
- **Friday, March 9, 6:30 pm**, Kabbalat Shabbat with Robbie Gitlin followed by vegetarian potluck supper.
- **Sunday, March 11, 12:30-3:00 pm**, Purim Party at the Shul (after Shul school)
- **Saturday, March 17, 7:00 pm**, Movie at the Shul
- **Sunday, March 18, 10:00-12:15**, Shul School
- **Sunday, March 18**, Feeding the hungry B. To help, call Dan Hibshman, 462-7471
- **Friday, March 23, 6:30 pm** Kabbalat Shabat, followed by vegetarian potluck supper, at Norm and Karen Rosen's, 1304 W.Clay St, Ukiah
- **Sunday March, 25, 10:00-12:15**, Shul School



Sunday, March 11  
Shul School, 10-12:15  
followed by  
Purim Party, 12:30-3:00  
Hamantashen, Music, Games  
Raffle and Fun  
for the Whole Family

## ***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**

## **Portion of the Week and Holidays**

*March 3 - Tetzavah Zachor*

*March 7 - Fast of Esther*

*March 8 - Purim*

*March 9 - Shushan Purim*

*March 10 - Ki Tissa*

*March 17 - Vayakkal Pekude Parah*

*March 24 - Vayikra*

*March 31 - Tzav Haggadol*

## **We Remember**

Betty Wolf March  
Dottie Marans - March 1  
Mildred Rosen - March 4  
Walter Brown Parker - March 13  
Samuel Orton - March 30  
Martha Waldman Kowarsky - Adar 11  
Samuel Joshua Cole - Adar 15  
Arthur Hecht - Adar 7  
Myra Cohen - Nissan 5  
Leah Frankle Nissan 7

**FYI**

All good wishes to Rabbi Shoshanah on her journey to Israel in March. May she enjoy a wonderful visit with her family and friends.

During the Rabbi's absence call Harvey Frankle or Carol Rosenberg for emergencies or a referral to a Rabbi.

## Dear KHE Chaverim,

**Jim Hecht (partnered with Zena)** is now living at Redwood Cove Health Care, 1162 S. Dora, Ukiah, due to the care he needs for his Parkinson's. He would enjoy company, and visitors are welcome anytime. Zena continues to live at home in Redwood Valley, 485-1932.

**Avrum and Bella Goldberg**, parents/inlaws of Betty and Eric Idarius and Joel and Cindy Goldberg, would also enjoy visits. Avrum is housebound these days and Bella is home most of the time. It's a beautiful and short drive past the dam lake to their home up Mill Creek Rd off Old River Road in Talmage. They live on the ground floor at 4800 Mill Creek Road, on the left hand side of the road. 468-0201.

**Karen Rifkin** is recovering after surgery in Santa Rosa and will remain there for some rehabilitation. After she returns to Ukiah, she will benefit from short friendly visits. 645 Walnut Ave, Ukiah 462-2789. Refuah Shleimah, Karen!

**Congratulations** to Karen Rifkin on the birth of her granddaughter Quincey Rose, born February 8 in Alameda to Karen's daughter Lorien and husband Brian McKenna.

**Congratulations** to Sherrie Ebyam on the upcoming marriage of her son Ben Ebyam to Kimberlee Marsh in Maui on March 3rd.

**Congratulations** to grandparents Judith Fuente and David Nelson and Phyllis Webb and Steve Lorber on the birth of their granddaughter Freya Webb Slag, born to Jessica Nelson and Joe Slag on February 11, 2012 in Minneapolis. Family doing great, grandparents report they are ecstatic!

## Donations for January 2112

Darline and Josh Bergere  
Janice Berman  
Yvonne and Andy Coren  
Judith M Corwin  
Karla and Robbie Gitlin  
Linda and David Koppel  
Nancy Horowitz Moilanen  
Carol Orton  
Linda Posner  
Barbara and Ernie Waugh

# *Chronicles*

## *Beginning a Series on the History of the Jewish People*


### **PART I: CIVILIZATION**

Ten thousand years Before the Common Era the glaciers begin to recede and the earth begins to warm. Wild wheat and barley appear scattered on the hilly flanks of the Zagros mountains overlooking the Tigris-Euphrates river valley, much later to be known as Mesopotamia, and not very far from Mount Ararat where Noah was said to have landed the Ark. By 8,000 B.C.E. the first small villages have clustered around these stands of wild wheat where adequate rainfall and warm weather have provided good forests as well as an ample supply of wild sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs. No more than 500 years later, perhaps as a result of drought, it is discovered that wheat can be transplanted down into "The Land Between Two Rivers", and thus farmers, having access to a more or less steady water supply would no longer be subject to the vagaries of the weather.

A revolution of world-shattering proportions has begun. Hunter-gatherers, a wandering people representing a way of life of hundred of thousands of years' duration are now transformed into sedentary farmers, and, as such, settle into the land between two rivers, dig canals and build levees to irrigate their crops. Rains come, canals silt, levees break down, the system needs to be maintained so everyone can eat. People are sought to do this work: to oversee, maintain, and organize labor for the common good, and since they will not have time to farm themselves, must be fed from a share of each farmer's surplus. These early communities construct and maintain a complex irrigation system along the banks of the two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, by creating an organized, permanent entity we call government, and a way of paying for public works through contribution of surplus crops: taxes. People prosper, population increases. Farmers must keep track of crops, animals, taxes. Government must keep track of water allocation and, yes, taxes. Writing, the earliest discoveries of which are business records, is invented. By 4,000 B.C.E. the first civilization flourishes.

To the southwest another great civilization awakes along the banks of the Nile. Neither civilization will know of each other's existence for the next two thousand five hundred years, but when they do they will race toward each other and clash time and again at the Middle Ground, the place we call Canaan.

Brought to you by: Harvey Frankle--to be continued!

A decorative border surrounds the central text. It features a repeating pattern of Hebrew characters and symbols. At the top and bottom, the words "פּוּרִים" (Purim) and "פּאַרְטִי" (Party) are written in a stylized font. The border also includes the Star of David (Magen David) in blue and black, and various other symbols like a menorah and a scroll.

PURIM PARTY

SUNDAY MARCH 11 11 A.M.

RAFFLES

PURIM SHPIEL

NOT QUITE A MINYAN KLEZMER

SONGS

HAMENTASHEN

COSTUME CONTEST

GAMES

**Dear KHE Chaverim,**

Harvey, our president, recently brought me a book he had spotted on a shelf in a San Francisco hotel. The book is entirely in Hebrew, and from its leather-style binding with gold embossed letters, is clearly a religious text. Printed some 36 years ago in Zichron Ya'acov, Israel, its title is *Beit HaBechirah*, The House of Choice. Its author, Menachem HaMeiri, was born in 1249 in Perpignan in southern France (though at that time Perpignan was part of the County of Barcelona). He served as rabbi in Provence, and was the leading local Talmudic and halachic authority in his day. Now I had heard the name HaMeiri, but I was not familiar with his writings or rulings, and so I turned to the web to flesh him out a bit. Provence at this time was a center of enlightened Jewry, no doubt influenced by the Golden Age of nearby Spain. Jews had been living in the vicinity for hundreds of years, with important Jewish communities in Arles and Marseilles already in the 6th Century.

HaMeiri's book is a commentary on sections of the Talmud. The print in the text is small and dense and the pages are many, so I am not going to tell you that I have discovered his insights from a personal perusal of his writing. But here is what I gleaned from the Internet of his important contributions. He is most well known for his innovative decision that Biblical injunctions against idolatry and consorting with idolators do not apply to Christians. Christians, he proclaimed, are not idolators, but monotheists with a developed ethics, and therefore contact is permissible and Jews may enter Christian churches. This ruling controverted common practice in many parts of Europe. Perhaps, almost a thousand years later, some of you grew up hearing that it is still forbidden to Jews to enter churches, especially Catholic churches, because of the idols (statues) in them. HaMeiri greatly admired and was influenced by the writings of Maimonides (known as the Rambam=Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon) who had lived in Muslim Spain and North Africa in the preceding century. Maimonides, in his day, had set a new precedent by declaring that Jews could enter a mosque, since Islam is a monotheistic religion, and not idolatrous.

Maimonides had also studied Greek texts of antiquity and brought their philosophy and science into his explications of Judaism. He is today known as the greatest teacher of the period ("from Moses to Moses there was none like Moses"), but he created quite a stir in and after his lifetime. Just as most ultra-orthodox Jews today resist any study of science, math or other secular subjects as antithetical to a life of Torah, so too there were many scholars back then, both in Spain and Provence, who came out against delving into what they deemed alien to Torah. But HaMeiri, following the path Maimonides had opened, took a position against such censorship. Some opponents argued that these secular studies should be permissible only to adults. But HaMeiri encouraged the learning of science and Greek philosophy when one is young and can easily absorb new material.

A third perspective of HaMeiri's worth noting was that the wonders of nature exemplify God's presence in the world, and very precious to God is the fundamental dignity of all creation. I imagine that many of us here in Mendocino County would agree with this, as well as with his rulings above. But he needed to be daring and willing to be controversial to promote these views. HaMeiri died in 1246. Speaking of the Jews of Provence some 30 years later, the Jewish Encyclopedia notes that: "In 1276 Charles I protected them against the Inquisition, which had persecuted them severely, obliging them to wear new badges, and going so far in the case of some cities, as Marseilles, Avignon, and Forcalquier, as to throw them into prison and to extort ransom. In 1308 Charles II forbade them to hold public office. In 1348 the number of Jews who had died by sword or pestilence was so great that Queen Jeanine . . . the Jews of Provence for ten years from the payment of their annual tribute . . . In the same year a massacre occurred at Toulon, where they were accused of having introduced the Black Death into France;

and similar events took place at Luc and Forcalquier in 1351."

It seems as if the open-minded views (and perhaps milieu) of HaMeiri and even the controversies themselves may have become subsumed shortly after his death under larger forces affecting all the local Jews, no matter what their opinions. Maimonides, in the 1100s, had been forced to flee from the Muslim Spain where he'd been born in Cordoba (he spoke Arabic and wrote in Judeo-Arabic, that is Arabic transliterated into Hebrew script. In the Israel Museum I once saw a manuscript written in his hand in which he'd called God "Allah," the same way we American Jews say "God" (in English). Because of new fanatic Muslim rulers (the Almohads) who called for conversion, death or exile. He eventually made his way to Egypt where he served as the Caliph's physician. He practiced medicine with the common people as well, both Jews and non-Jews, and would even tend to the sick on Shabbat when necessary.

Maimonides' writings have been well studied over the centuries. HaMeiri's writings were neglected and it is only in recent decades that his manuscripts have been published and found a following. And thus we have the volume with the gold embossed cover that found its way into my hands. Thank you, Harvey.

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

## COMMENTARY by Harvey Frankle

Ya shudda been there! Last night was a truly hoppin' place at the shul where was born the Kol HaEmek Not Quite A Minyan Klezmer And Liturgipcal Music Orchestra. A joyous time was had by all, the musicians being the only ones there. Thanks to Charlie, Acorn, Joann, Kelly, Ace, Joel, Michael, Tony, and Jackie just for showing up, but presenting such music like you haven't heard this side of the Vistula. KHENQAMKALMO will be meeting most Wednesday nights at 7 pm at the shul (and there were people waiting outside before the appointed time last night) and although the band's impresario and lead singer will be away in the desert next week and its horn player will be on duty at the emergency room, the band will still meet to make some more joyous sounds. Anyone who wants to join, please be there on time because, despite the fact that these people are serious musicians, Jews, and residents of Mendocino County, they are somewhat disciplined and prompt. They may have their public debut at the Purim party at the shul on Sunday, March 11, some time after 11 A.M. or they may not. But if they do, a raucous time is guaranteed by all. In the first few minutes you knew that this orchestra was going to be a band to be reckoned with. If they do this well simply improvising, imagine what sheet music and a little rehearsing will do. It's fun simply to show up and listen, pick up a tambourine, and wail (or flail) away. Hats off to this marvelous addition to the newest member of the Kol HaEmek family.



**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**

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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](mailto:sdevorah@gmail.com)

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