

MAY 2014

IYAR-SIVAN 5774



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@pacific.net)

COMING EVENTS

Monday, May 5, 6:30 pm KHE Board Meeting, at the Koppels' home, all welcome

Tuesday, May 6, 7 pm, Pirkei Avot, Chapter 5 with Shoshanah - Once again, during this period between Pesach and Shavuot, we dip into the wisdom of our ancestors with these Sayings of the Fathers. An easy and intriguing way to enter the world of the Talmud

Friday, May 9, 6:30 pm,- Kabbalat Shabbat with Shoshanah, featuring Simchat Bat (baby naming) for the first-born daughter of Michelle Tremaine and Andrew Hudson. Michelle and Andrew are schoolteachers living in Willits, and their baby came into this world on 2/7/2014. Veggie/dairy potluck to follow.

Tuesday, May 13, 7 pm, Pirkei Avot, Chapter 5 with Shoshanah

Saturday, May 17, 10 a.m., Shabbat Service for all Shul School Families and Folks of all ages. with Shoshanah

Sunday, May 18, 4 pm, Author and Activist Penny Rosenwasser presents "Hope Into Practice" at our Shul. Her book of the same name will be available for purchase and signing.

Tues, May 20, 7:00 pm - Pirkei Avot, Chapter 5 with Shoshanah -

Friday, May 30, 4:30 pm,- Shul School

Friday, May 30 6:30 pm,- Round-the-Table Shabbat

CELEBRATING SHAVUOT

Tuesday June 3, 6:30 pm- We gather with our children to celebrate the festival. If you are able, bring flowers and ornaments to beautify our Shul.

6:45 pm - Offering of the First Fruits (Bikurim). The children offer baskets of fruit and canned goods (all present are invited to bring donations) which will later be given to the Food Bank. Followed by our real "first fruits:" our children, who will entertain us with dance, song, instruments, etc., whatever talents they'd like to share.

7:15- Refreshments- blessing of challah and dairy/fruit dessert potluck (suggested: bring drinks, cheesecake, blintzes, noodle pudding, fruit desserts)

7:45 - Transition to our adult Shavuot Learning - We'll experience revelation of Torah through community-led teachings, starting with Carol Rosenberg and an art project and Bruce Andich with a surprise activity. We'll complete the evening by reading the Book of Ruth, which is traditional for Shavuot.

Have you made your reservation?

call David Koppel 485-8910 or
davekoppel@yahoo.com

Friday -Sunday, June 13-15 KHE Shabbat campout
with B'nei Mitzvah Vision Quest
(Ariella, Ziven, Avi, Koda, Eli)
Open to young-at-heart of all ages!

At Clear Lake State Park with access to swimming beach, boat rental, and hiking trails. We will be at the group campsite near the lake shore, very close to the boat rental, and walking distance to the beach.

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) Mazon -a Jewish Answer to Hunger

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

May 3 - Emor
May 10 - Behar
May 17 - Bechukotai
May 24 - Bamidbar
May 31 - Naso
June 3 - Erev Shavuot
June 4-5 - Shavuot

We Remember:

Rae Hecht - May
Joel Green Yossel - May
Jim Roland - May
Benjamin Rosenberg - May
Janet Fisher - May 2
Harry Bistrin - May 4
Harold Kopek - May 6
Elenore Feldman - May 9
Harriet Libby Dolmas - May 14
William X. Silva - May 15
Beatrice Starosta Coren - May 16, Sivan 2
Nancy Brooks-Miller - May 22
Julius Markowitz - May 26
Milton Fleiss - Iyar 8
Jessica Anne Doctors - Iyar 16

All good wishes to Carol Orton for a speedy and complete healing from recent surgery.

All good wishes to Nancy Merling for a speedy and complete healing

Mazel Tov!

To Amethyst Raybee & Maya Stern on their acceptance and their plan to attend the University of California at Berkeley.

To Efreim Turner for his acceptance and plan to attend the University of California at Davis.

Happy parents include: Elizabeth Raybee, Divora Stern, El Seigel, and Louisa Aronow and Sandy Turner

Donations to KHE, January 1 through March 31, 2014

Thank You

Louisa Aronow and Sandy Turner
Lucy Bayer and Pat Wilson
Lillian Cohn and Thomas Evans
Judith M. Corwin
Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau
Judith Fuente and David Nelson
Robbie Gitlin and Karla Gitlin
Jay Joseph and Jennifer Joseph
David Koppel and Linda Koppel
Nancy Horowitz Moilanen
David Moilanen and Elisa Mass
Richard Yusem and Rachel Arama
Ariana Elster
Divora Stern
Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere
Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren
Sherrie Ebyam and Carol Orton
Sara Esserman-Melville and Anthony Esserman-Melville
Allyson Brooker-Rossbacht
Vergilia Dakin
Barbara Stanger and Leo Stanger

Yom HaShoah - Remembrance of the Holocaust

On Sunday, April 27, KHE's remembrance of the Holocaust program included the showing of the excellent film *The Lady in Number 6*. Following the dedication and film, our amazing Lillian Vogel played two piano melodies of hope.

photo by Helen Sizemore



Shavuot* *You shall count for yourselves -- from the day after the Shabbat, from the day when you bring the Omer of the waving -- seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh sabbath you shall count, fifty days... You shall convoke on this very day -- there shall be a holy convocation for yourselves -- you shall do no laborious work; it is an eternal decree in your dwelling places for your generations. -Leviticus 21:15-16, 21*

Shavu'ot, the Festival of Weeks, is the second of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are [Passover](#) and [Sukkot](#)). Agriculturally, it commemorates the time when the first fruits were harvested and brought to the [Temple](#), and is known as Hag ha-Bikkurim (the Festival of the First Fruits). Historically, it celebrates the giving of the [Torah](#) at Mount Sinai, and is also known as Hag Matan Torateinu (the Festival of the Giving of Our Torah).

The period from Passover to Shavu'ot is a time of great anticipation. We count each of the days from the second day of Passover to the day before Shavu'ot, 49 days or 7 full weeks, hence the name of the festival. See [The Counting of the Omer](#). The counting reminds us of the important connection between Passover and Shavu'ot: Passover freed us physically from bondage, but the giving of the Torah on Shavu'ot redeemed us spiritually from our bondage to idolatry and immorality. Shavu'ot is also known as Pentecost, because it falls on the 50th day; however, Shavu'ot has no particular similarity to the Christian holiday of Pentecost, which occurs 50 days after their Spring holiday.

It is noteworthy that the holiday is called the time of the *giving* of the Torah, rather than the time of the *receiving* of the Torah. The sages point out that we are constantly in the process of receiving the Torah, that we receive it every day, but it was first given at this time. Thus it is the giving, not the receiving, that makes this holiday significant.

Shavu'ot is not tied to a particular calendar date, but to a counting from Passover. Because the length of the months used to be variable, determined by observation (see [Jewish Calendar](#)), and there are two new moons between Passover and Shavu'ot, Shavu'ot could occur on the 5th or 6th of [Sivan](#). However, now that we have a mathematically determined calendar, and the months between Passover and Shavu'ot do not change length on the mathematical calendar, Shavu'ot is always on the 6th of Sivan (the 6th and 7th outside of [Israel](#)).

[Work](#) is (traditionally) not permitted during Shavu'ot. It is customary to stay up the entire first night of Shavu'ot and study [Torah](#), then pray as early as possible in the morning.

It is customary to eat a dairy meal at least once during Shavu'ot. There are varying opinions as to why this is done. Some say it is a reminder of the promise regarding the [land of Israel](#), a land flowing with "milk and honey." According to another view, it is because our ancestors had just received the Torah (and the dietary laws therein), and did not have both meat and dairy dishes available. The book of Ruth is read at this time. Again, there are varying reasons given for this custom, and none seems to be definitive.

*From the Judaism 101 website

A Note from the Board

As the season for weddings, graduations and other events approach, please think of sharing your *simcha* by donating to *Kol HaEmek* in honor of your happy event. Our shul, like many houses of worship, in our community, is struggling to remain vital. We need your help. By sharing your *simcha* you keep the spirit of *tzedakah* alive.

We need your help to continue running our programs.

We need your help to improve our shul.

We need your help to support our children's education.

We need your help to feed the hungry.

We need your help to bring you fun holiday celebrations.

We need your help to retain our wonderful staff: the Rabbi and the groundskeeper, the *shamus*, etc.

We can only do this with you. We Jews honor others by *tzedakah*, and one of the best ways to do that for our community is by monetary contributions, by hosting a shabbat, by being a volunteer, or by attending our events.

For donations please contact our treasurer, David Koppel, at 485-8910 or mail to *Kol HaEmek*, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470. For hosting a shabbat, contact our Rabbi, Shoshanah Devorah, at 467-0456. To get involved contact our current co-presidents: Nancy Merling at 456-0639, or Mark Levin at 467-9037. We look forward to your involvement in whatever form you can.

Co-Presidents,

Nancy Merling and Mark Levin

“How I connect with my deepest being”

A response to Shoshanah's question in her April column

Dear Rabbi Shoshanah,

Please allow me - linked to Kol HaEmek only through friends, but as an avid reader of the SHEMA - to respond to the above question you posed in the April 2014 issue.

Definitely, for me, there is some of what you mention, "sunrises and sunsets", "the clouds by day and the stars and the moon by night," "prayer," "silence," and more. However, more than anything in times of sorrow and sadness as well as in happiness and joy, it is the natural world of the Earth that calls to me.

ROCKS, STONES, have been my passion, albeit intermittently only, since early childhood. During the past decade, and earlier, I was surprised by my spontaneous and totally solitary delight in my beginning to STACK BALANCED STONES, right here, where stones of many kinds had assembled themselves, having come from streams and country lanes over a period of many years, inviting me to assemble them into what sometimes is called STONE BALANCE SCULPTURES, some of which will last only a moment, others will last for days or even months and, this far, have only been shared by me with family and close friends (one of the latter having told me that exactly this was my M E D I T A T I O N, indeed)

Thank you for allowing me to share this with you.

Peace,

Erica Strong

Dear KHE Chaverim,

In last month's column, we heard how Rabbi Akiva recited the Shema even as he was being tortured to death by the Romans. Was this the origin of Jews aiming to recite the Shema when faced with the possibility of imminent death? Perhaps I've mentioned before the occasion when, in a car full of Syracuse University students on our way back to campus from Brooklyn, we hit a serious snow storm. We'd made it through most of our eight-hour return trip when, at the entrance to the city of Syracuse, the car skidded on a bridge, and around and around we turned and slid. All of us spontaneously found ourselves uttering the Shema midst the spinning. We gratefully landed safely in a pile of snow at the bottom of the bridge. But just in case we'd been about to go, we'd remembered to call out the Shema in good Jewish tradition.

The Shema figures daily in the morning (shacharit) and evening (ma'ariv) prayers, and it is also recited at the closing of the day in the prayers we call "Shema on the bed." Now when we fall asleep, we can't be assured we'll wake up, and Judaism considers sleep to be 1/60 of death, so perhaps that explains why the Shema forms classically our last words before nodding off at night. Perhaps the Shema has even come to serve as a verbal amulet, offering a sense of protection to those who pronounce the "watchword of Israel," as it was called in the congregation in which I grew up.

But if we really listen and heed, as the first word, "Shema," commands us to do, then this watchword helps us connect the nitty-gritty concerns of whatever is engaging us in the moment to an expanded God consciousness of unity and oneness of all there is. Seems like an optimum perspective for entering into sweet dreams or dying to this world and offering ourselves up to the beyond, if our time has come for that great transition.

How can we lessen the rote recital of the Shema when we are not in a crisis situation? To help us wake up, Reb Zalman has suggested replacing the word Israel with your own name as you recite the famous verse. Try this several times right now and see what impact this has for you. Remembering to take a breath between each word can also enhance our awareness of what we are reciting. Ayin, the last letter of the word Shema, and dalet, the last letter of echad/one, the final word of the Shema, are both written especially big in Torah script. Put together, these letters spell the word "ed" which means witness. What does the Shema call you to witness?

Saying the Shema in unison strengthens the vibrational resonance of the words, and Kol HaEmek's tradition of stretching out each word adds to the impact and import. When I bring to mind our congregation reciting the Shema, I am reminded of how a rousing cheer increases the excitement and energy and sense of participation at a sporting event. This enthusiasm is a plus - the Greek root of the word enthusiasm actually means "in God." So the very recital of the Shema can be an embodiment of what the words tell us. Reb Zalman has often taught that we, by our kavanot/intentions and deeds, can strengthen the God field. Perhaps our enthusiastic recital of the Shema is a prime way of doing so.

Did you know that the six words of the Shema are said to indicate the same six directions - north, south, east, and west, above and below- in which we shake the lulav at Sukkot, reminding us that God's presence is everywhere? And that even though this divine presence extends infinitely (en sof=without end, a name of God), yet we are always at the center of God, God is always present within us, wherever we are.

The Rabbi continues:

During prayers, we follow the Shema with "Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto L'olam Va'ed/ Blessed is the glorious name whose majesty is forever and ever." Kabbalists suggest that the first line, the Shema, points to the unity of the divine in all the heavenly realms, while the Baruch Shem Kevod points to the unity of divine presence here on earth (reference to HaShem/the Name is considered a code for indicating God's immanence in the created world). And recited together, these two lines reflect the marriage of heaven and earth, of the male, transcendent, Kadosh Baruch Hu/ the holy blessed one and female, immanent, Shechinah/nearness, presence, aspects of God

Shechinah is sometimes called Knesset Yisrael/the Assembly of Israel, and thus we also have a marriage between God and us, Am Yisrael/ the people of Israel. This sacred marriage between us and God is one of the classic themes of our upcoming Shavuot holiday. Just as a Jewish marriage is marked by the contractual agreement of a ketubah, so too this wedding at Sinai was/is marked by a brit/covenant spelling out that God is our God, and we are God's people. Tradition says we were all at Sinai, and that Sinai is always happening, and Shavuot grants us a special opportunity to be blessed in the renewal of this deep connection. We celebrate Shavuot at Kol HaEmek on Tues eve, June 3rd this year. You are invited to the wedding!

B'shalom oovrachah/In Peace and Blessing,

Shoshanah

Correction:

In My April Shema column, I wrote about the rabbis some two thousand years ago who were tortured to death by the Romans. I said that this story of their deaths is retold in the Passover Haggadah. This accounting of their martyrdom actually comes from the traditional Yom Kippur liturgy. The Haggadah's reference to Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues tells of their staying up all night celebrating the Pesach Seder; it was just such observance, at a time when all Jewish practice was forbidden by the Romans, that led to the rabbis' deaths.

Sunday, May 18, 4 pm at Congregation . Kol HaEmek,

Penny Rosenwasser will introduce her new book *Hope Into Practice - Jewish Women Choosing Justice Despite Our Fears*

Transplanted to Oakland, California from Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C., Penny Rosenwasser is the author of *Visionary Voices, Women on Power: Conversations with shamans, activists, teachers, artists and healers*, and *Voices from a 'Promised Land: Palestinian & Israeli peace activists speak their hearts*. She earned her Ph.D. at the California Institute of Integral Studies in Transformational Learning & Change. Penny is former Jewish Caucus Chair of the National Women's Studies Association and is a founding board member of Jewish Voice for Peace. She teaches an Anti-Semitism/Anti-Arabism class with a Palestinian colleague at the City College of San Francisco and belongs to Kehilla Synagogue.



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
- 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)
- To offer to our 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

David Koppel, Treasurer	485-8910 < davekoppel@yahoo.com >
Alan (Acorn) Sunbeam	463-8364 < asunbeam@mac.com >
Nancy Merling, Co- President	456-0639 < nancymerling@att.net >
Carol Rosenberg	463-8526 < carolrosenberg@pacific.net >
Sherrie Ebyam	530-414-1104 < ebyam@sbcglobal.net >
Mark Levin Co- President	467-9037 < mlevin@pacific.net >
Bob Mandel	696-271 < bobLXVII@hotmail.com >
Sigrid White	272-1859 < sigridwhite@gmail.com >

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, Divora 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)