



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley

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

October 2007

Tishrei-Heshvan 5768

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

Check our web page: www.kolhaemek.org

Coming Events

Friday, October 5, 6 pm Simchat Torah/ Shabbat. We'll gather a bit earlier on Friday, before Simchat Torah is over and Shabbat comes in, and do our Simchat Torah celebration while there's still daylight, then afterwards transition into welcoming Shabbat and having a potluck.

Sunday, October 7, Shul School, 10-12:15
AND parents class with Rabbi Shoshanah

Sunday, October 14, Shul School, 10-12:15
Rabbi Shoshanah will be in Israel.

Friday, October 19, 6:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat with **visiting Rabbi Jack Gabriel.** Rabbi Gabriel recently moved out West to lead the Shir Shalom congregation of Napa, and he will be leading services for Kol HaEmek. He's a guitar-playing, renewal-style singing rabbi with a yeshiva upbringing!

Sunday, October 21, Shul School, 10-12:15

Saturday, October 27, 7:00 pm, Ironing Board Theater film: "The Quarrel" (see p. 3)

Sunday, October 28, Shul School, 10-12:15

Early Next Month:

Saturday November 10, 10:00 a.m., Shabbat service led by Rabbi Shoshanah. Preceded by adult Torah study at 9:00 a.m. (with bagel breakfast), led by Carol Rosenberg.

Thank You, One and All!

*To William Ray and the Torah readers, many thanks to you all.

*To Karen Rosen, thanks for another beautiful and moving Yiskor.

*To Robert Klayman and Tal Sizemore, many thanks for setting up the Shul for Rosh HaShanah.

*To Rachel Elkins, for snacks for the children.

*Many thanks to Nancy Moilanen, Jan Stevens and Rachel Elkins, for preparing the kitchen for the break-fast.

*To Robert Klayman, special kudos for setting up for Yom Kippur all by himself!

*To Louisa Aronow, many thanks for the beautiful flower arrangements for the Holidays. And to Louisa & Sandy, for cleanup after Yom Kippur.

*To Bruce Andich and Karen Rosen, for doing the break-fast dishes.

*To Dan Waterman, for the plants and for putting things away after Yom Kippur. (You and Tony Melville were quite a team.)

*To Harvey Frankle and Nancy, you showed up just in time with greens for the Sukkah and to help get the Shul back to normal.

*To Sara and Tony Esserman-Melville and Ethan, you are our right and left hands--we wouldn't have a Sukkah or Sunday school without you!

Garden Report

The Meditation Garden may now begin!!!! The shed is down and rains are approaching. If you would like to donate plants, or help with planning the Meditation Garden sometime in the month of October, or help with planting and earth moving in November, December, and January . . . please contact me!

Louisa 485-1290 or <midnite@pacific.net>

Torah Portions

October 6 - Bereshit
October 13 - Noah
October 20 - Lech Lecha
October 27 - Vayera
November 3 - Haye Sarah

Our Condolences

To Linda Posner on the death of her mother

The Head of the Year

by Marge Piercy
(Knopf, 2000)

The moon is dark tonight, a new
moon for a new year. It is
hollow and hungers to be full.
It is the black zero of beginning.

Now you must void yourself
of injuries, insults, incursions.
Go with empty hands to those
you have hurt and make amends.

It is not too late. It is early
and about to grow. Now
is the time to do what you
know you must and have feared

to begin. Your face is dark
too as you turn to face
yourself, the hidden twin
of all you must grow to be.

Forgive the dead year. Forgive
yourself. What will be wants
to push through your fingers.
The light you seek hides

in your belly. The light you
crave longs to stream from
your eyes. You are the moon
that will wax in new goodness.

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 mini
mum requirement for checks to Israel).

PASSINGS

Our congregation will say Kaddish on the anni-
versary 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

Minne Sorkowitz - Tishrei 8
Bonnie Ann Springer - October 7
Sylvia Glazer - October 8
Anna Allinikov - October 22
Shirley Jean Kisslinger - October 27



In My Opinion

It started when a friend in a nursing home whispered to me, "Why did poverty affect me so hard?" I told her it was a great question, and that I suspected she was doing the important work of examining those experiences that shaped her life. Afterwards, and much later, I thought about some of the experiences that have affected my life view and my way of living in the world.

I wondered about why the week before it had been so easy for me to check out the refrigerators available in Ukiah, then go into Sears and buy one! For seven years I have disliked the noisy, beige refrigerator with the floppy vegetable bins that came with my house. Why, after all this time, did I find it easy to get a new one? It had finally sprung a leak, I needed to keep a towel on the bottom shelf to keep water from dripping on the floor. Hah! It doesn't work, I can let it go!

As a child during the 1930's I was raised to save what could be saved and use what could be used. I prided myself that I wasn't as old school as some of my friends, but I too have a strong emotional tie to what ever is already in my possession. Some of this I had understood in an earlier flash of recognition, when I connected my sadness and regret at receiving a gift of a new doll with the birth of my brother, when I was four years old. As a child I didn't want my dolls to feel the same sense of rejection and replacement I did with a new baby in the family.

I suspect for me and maybe others, accepting new ideas and new views of reality is even more stressful than new appliances and toys. So many people have told me that their experiences in the synagogues and Talmud Torahs of their childhood have made it difficult or impossible to be involved in Kol HaEmek. Or the reason they come to Kol HaEmek is because of positive childhood memories or a beloved grandparent. I know that many of my religious and political beliefs have come to me as the result of the telling of family history, or the positive and negative experiences of influential people in my life; or my negative reaction to these influential others.

This examination of my belief structure and what I take as the given truth is what for me is the on-going task of *Tshuvah*; it's about why is wrong wrong and why is right right. What is really true? This work obviously doesn't end at Yom Kippur--it is the work of a lifetime. Why am I who I am? Is this the best, clear-thinking, truth-seeking me that I can be? Do I act with "knee jerk" reactions, or do I examine what is the best course of action for now?

As president of the Kol HaEmek board, I ask: are we representatives of the community, acting with clear heads? are our foundations of belief sound and true? do we really have all the information we need to make the best judgment? We need you to respond, to insure we are on the correct path.

Sincerely, *Carol Rosenberg*



Next Film at the Shul

"THE QUARREL" (1991) - Saturday, October 27, 7 pm

Walking through a park, probably in Toronto, an immigrant Jewish poet in 1948 passes a High Holidays ritual in progress. Then he suddenly sees taking part a figure out of his nightmarish childhood during WW II, his best friend from Poland. They meet, converse, and resume their age-old quarrel about the nature of a God who silently oversees incomprehensible suffering. It is "Dinner With Andre" with a poignant ideological Jewish cast to the conversation. The amazing thing is that they still continue to talk. Canadian made, the film has been praised for its *Yiddishkeit*. Recommended by our own Elizabeth Raybee.

The Ironing Board Theater welcomes viewers, guests, children, suggestions, and donations. Feel free to bring food and cushions. The film last about an hour and a half. If the group wishes, a discussion will follow.

Reflections on Rosh HaShanah 2007/5768

by Amy Wachspress

This year I could not do the work of the Days of Awe in a community setting. I needed to take a private reflective journey; mostly because a few weeks before the holidays I lost one of my closest friends in a bizarre traffic accident and I am still trying to remake my universe without her and come to terms with the ways in which this incident has shaken my faith. On Rosh HaShanah, I reflected on what the three tenets of the holidays, *Tefilah*, *Teshuvah*, and *Tzedakah*, mean to me. Here are my thoughts.

Tefilah

Tefilah is a complex activity, and more so for me because I don't believe in God as a deity. I believe that all things living and no longer living, seen and unseen, known and unknown, have spirit (or God-ness) within them. I believe a rock, a person, a cat, a tree, a bracelet have spirit (God-ness energy). I believe that all things and all beings, both seen and unseen, are inter-related and have an impact on one another. For me, as for most Jews, the Shema is a very powerful prayer. And for me, the operative word in the Shema is the word "echad." When I say the Shema it reminds me of the unity and inter-relatedness of all spirit, of all the sparks of "spirit energy" in every piece of matter as well as in every "entity" beyond the corporeal world.

So how does someone who doesn't believe in God pray? My *Tefilah* consists of a threefold reflection: gratitude, blessings, and constructive visualization. The gratitude part is easy. I think about things and people I am grateful for in my life and I say thanks. The blessings part is about sending protective and supportive thoughts to those I love. I also send healing to those in need, including individual people I know (and some I don't know), as well as the people of places in distress, such as the residents of New Orleans or the people who suffered in the December 2004 tsunami. I believe that my thoughts and meditations contribute to a positive energy force that assists these people and builds miracles. Finally, I visualize change. This is the hardest part of my *Tefilah* practice because it requires battle against doubt. I visualize changes I want to see in myself, such as the improvement of health issues or the ability to increase my competency in areas of my life that I find difficult. I visualize peace in the Middle East. I struggle every day when I do my visualization to believe in my heart that what I visualize is possible and will one day occur. If I am successful in this struggle, then perhaps what I experience is faith. I define *Tefilah* as directed reflection.

Teshuvah

Teshuvah is not just for the holidays, it is an everyday practice. All of us are a work in progress. During the high holidays, we reflect on changes we have made, want to make, and are in the process of making. For me, *Teshuvah* is inextricably bound up with daily *Tefilah*, which, as described already, includes visualizing the changes I wish to see in myself and my life. *Teshuvah* is all about my constant striving to be a better person and to have a positive impact in the world. There is a popularized quote that, as near as I can tell, is best attributed to Hopi Chief Dan Evehema and it goes like this: "We are the ones we have been waiting for. We have the ability to set in motion many of the changes we wish to see." I believe each of us has tremendous powers of transformation locked within us and that our creativity helps us recognize and utilize these powers. I define *Teshuvah* as transformation.

Tzedakah

This year, as I reflected on *Tzedakah*, I realized that I have a bad habit of associating *Tzedakah* with giving money. And of course *Tzedakah* is much bigger than that. I watched my mother-in-law, who had almost nothing, give away whatever she had to whomever needed it more than she. She took homeless people into her house to live with her. She fed and clothed everyone who came to her door hungry or cold. She devoted all her resources to helping others. My mother also dedicated her life to the service of others. She once bought a house and gave it to a struggling single mother of five whom she had befriended at her synagogue. Not long after the Six-Day War, she took in a Palestinian adolescent (a refugee from Lebanon) to live with us; and to this day he refers to her as "Mom." I ask myself how my efforts at *Tzedakah* can compare with these spiritual

linebackers in my family and I know that I must change my whole notion of *Tzedakah*. I am not a social worker. I am not in a position to donate much money. So I must seek ways to use my personal gifts to improve the lives of others in a manner that is appropriate for me and which matches my abilities.

As the author of a children's book, I frequently have the opportunity to speak with young people. I tell them that the most important thing they can do to make the world a better place is to figure out what they love and what they're good at (their gifts and talents) and then pursue these with a passion. Imagine a world in which everyone does what they love and what they're good at. I feel blessed that what I'm good at is writing. This provides me with two avenues for my *Tzedakah* in the world. I can use my creative writing to promote positive change and to touch the lives of others in positive ways. My children's fantasy adventure book, *The "Call to Shakabaz*, demonstrates the power of nonviolent action. My bread-and-butter job as a grant writer affords me the opportunity to raise funds for worthy causes that benefit children and families. In my travels through life every day, I see people making their own *Tzedakah* contribution by being passionate, caring and dedicated doctors, teachers, real estate agents, car mechanics, caterers, grocery store clerks, artists, musicians, bank tellers, booksellers; I mean you name it. These are people who love to help others in their role in the work world. I consider all of this *Tzedakah*. *Tzedakah* is the dedication of one's life and work and energy to using one's gifts to improve the lives of others. That's the most important contribution that we make. I believe that energy does not disappear, it goes somewhere. We must make as much positive energy as possible. And I think that the positive energy that each of us makes is ultimately the only thing that endures in the end. I define *Tzedakah* as putting positive energy into the world.

I think my definitions of *Tefilah*, *Teshuvah*, and *Tzedakah* are actually very Jewish, and probably not as far from the traditional concept of them as I might imagine. Perhaps you've found some of yourself and some of your own thoughts reflected in my words. And since directed reflection is how I define prayer, then with these words I pray with you.



Delicious Figs

By popular request the following is Susan Sher's recipe for the figs she brought to the Yom Kippur break-fast.

1/2 lb. dried Mission figs *
1 oz. peeled fresh ginger, thinly sliced (this is about two thumbs' worth)
2 cups of water *
1/2 cup honey
sour cream and grated lemon peel, to garnish

* Since this is fig season, you will probably be using fresh, not dried figs. If so, use no more than 1/2 cup of water.

Discard the knobby stems of the figs. Rinse and put figs in a saucepan with the ginger, water and honey. Bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat until the figs are soft and the liquid has thickened to a dark syrup, about 25 minutes.

Chill and serve very cold with the sour cream flavored with a bit of grated lemon peel.

Dear Beloved KHE Chaverim,

Well, we have begun our fifth year together. I am writing this midway between Yom Kippur and Succot. I don't recall ever enjoying High Holiday services more than I did this year. I give thanks - thanks to each of you for being a part of the living body and soul of KHE, thanks to all of you whose special tasks contributed so essentially to creating the whole spectrum of our prayer and celebration - from putting out chairs to singing a *niggun* to leading a prayer to helping clean up afterwards. As I mentioned Kol Nidre eve, the message I had received in my meditation before leaving to come to Shul was that love is the essence, and that if I could embody and share that, and if each of us could focus there, then we are doing the holy work of Yom Kippur. So thank you, dear universe, thank you *Adonai Tzava'ot*, dear Holy One and all your hosts, for imbuing us with your love and grace at the beginning of this New Year. May we remember to return to the loving space again and again throughout the months and days and moments of 5768.

One of the fruits of our pre-Yom Kippur *mikveh* immersions in the beautiful surroundings of Pennyroyal Lake is this haiku created by Betty Lacy:

*women chant at lake
watched by calm blue heron
yom kippur mikvah*

Betty didn't know that just a few days earlier, I had received a forwarded email of many anonymous "Yiddishe Haiku" sent on by Lanny Cotler via Bill Ray. With their tongue-in-cheek tone, these verses lightened the weight of my serious holy day preparations, and I share one with you here:

*Yom Kippur-- Forgive
me, Lord, for the Mercedes
and all that lobster.*

My reply to Bill and Lanny:
Yom Kippur coming
Rabbi turns from classic texts
To Jewish haiku.

Upon arriving at KHE *Yom Kippur* eve, I note:
Flowers grace the room,
Grown in our own Shul garden;
Human bouquet, too.

And we enter into the world of *Kol Nidre*:
Our soulstrings plucked
Mom bows *Kol Nidre* cello
Baby's presence beams.

An evening discussion of "*tefilah* (prayer), *tshuvah* (return), and *tzedakah* (acting justly, charity) with or without God," [my title to our sharings] initiated by Amy Wachspress, prompts:

To believe or not,
The G-word provokes passion!
Either way, Jews pray.

A few days earlier, Bill Ray, via email, had communicated his own verses on the eternal topic :

If there is no God
When the sky booms and thunders
Who else is bowling?

At a recent meeting of the Northern California Board of Rabbis, the renowned guest rabbi dared us to shock our congregants by telling them not to look for God out there, but inside us. I commented that in our congregation, that perspective would not be discombobulating at all, but rather a starting point. He replied that we are lucky indeed. I sense that the God affirmers among us perceive divine energy to be present everywhere and every moment, within and without.

Lots of singing is a prime KHE mode of accessing the divine. Our *Yom Kippur* morning (*shacharit*) chanting of lines from biblical psalms makes me wonder:

Hallelu-u-yah!

Could ancient psalmist foresee

Transmission to us?

Experiential prayer involving body and soul is integral to our full engagement, as expressed during our special *Yom Kippur mussaf* practice:

Mendocino Jew

In *Aleynu* prostration

Morphs into High Priest.

The flow of the day draws us out back for *minchah*, the prayer offerings as the sunlight begins to subside:

Dancing on the deck

On *Yom Kippur* afternoon

We make love to God.

And back inside for *neilah*, the intense finale of this day of fasting:

Anticipation

How much longer to go? Ahhh...

Three stars in the sky!

And our prayer space transforms into our eating space, as we share our break-the-fast potluck. Taking in the camaraderie along with the good food, one member comes over to me to proclaim, “We are not just a congregation of people, “We are more than that--we are a community!” Gingered-figs-in-honey is the hit dish of the evening, which prompts many of us to ask how it was prepared. When the cook says she’ll email me the recipe, I reply:

Send your recipe

To Carol for the Shema.

“What, she does THAT, too?”

And so we move forward into our new year together.

Ahavah is One

Gematria tells us so,

Love flowing through you.

B’shalom (In peace), *ahavah* (love), *oovrachah* (and blessing),

Shoshanah (with apologies for poor haiku that were fun to create)





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

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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; **Ilalson** - 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)