



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470

Phone # 707-468-4536

March-April 2009

Adar - Nissan - Iyar 5769

Please note: all submissions preferred by the 20th of each month to carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net

Visit our web page: www.kolhaemek.org

Calendar of Coming Events

Sunday, March 1, Sunday School

Sunday, March 1, 10am-4pm Board retreat at the Koppels

Friday, March 6, 6:30pm Kabbalah Shabbat service conducted by Sara and Tony Esserman-Melville, with veggie/dairy potluck hosted by Divora Stern

Sunday, March 8, 10am Sunday School

Sunday, March 8, Community Purim Party ----->

Monday, March 9, 7:00pm - Megillah reading in English with R. Shoshanah, with a little commentary and shnapps

Saturday, March 14, 7:00pm Movie night!

Sunday, March 15, Sunday School & pick up your bagel bags

Friday, March 20, 6:30pm Kaballah Shabbat & potluck to follow at the home of Karen and Norman Rosen 1304 W. Clay St/corner Clay Court, Ukiah - call 462-0661

Sunday, March 22, Sunday School

Week of March 22, B'Tzelem Elohim = In the Image of God - via computer and chevruta study partners - with R. Shoshanah, for more info, call 467-0456 (see pg 11)

Saturday, March 28, 10am Shabbat Service with R. Shoshanah - for all Shul School families and folks of all ages, followed by potluck lunch

Friday, April 3, 6:30pm Kabbalah Shabbat service followed by a dairy potluck supper

Sunday, April 5, Shul School

Pre-sunrise, Wednesday, April 8, Birkat HaHamah, Blessing of the Sun, which takes place once every 28 years in Judaism, falls on the morning of the day known as Erev Pesach (the first seder is that evening).

We will gather on the back porch of the Shul for silent sunrise meditation followed by a brief celebration, breakfast, and a burning of the hametz.

Purim

Kol HaEmek Annual Purim Party

March 8

1:00-4:00pm

Games for the Children

***White Elephant Raffle**

Hamantashen

Fun for the Whole Family

call Carol Rosenberg

463-8526

to volunteer to make hamantashen

or to help!

**If you have an item worth at least \$25 that you want to donate to the White Elephant raffle, call Carol @463-8526*



Wednesday eve, April 8, First Seder

Thursday, April 9, 5:30pm Second Seder

at Shambhala Ranch with R. Shoshanah (see pg 3)

Friday, April 17, home service: would you like to host this Shabbat? Contact Shoshanah, 467-0456

Monday, April 20, 7pm - Yom HaShoah- this year we will especially honor the Jews of Pisek, Czechoslovakia (original home of our Torah scroll) who died in the Holocaust, by reading out their names.

Thanks to Karin Wandrei for gathering these names for us.

Portion of the Week and Holidays

March 7 - Tetzaveh-Zachor
March 8 - Purim party
March 9 - Fast of Esther
March 10 - Purim
March 14 - Ki Tissa -Parah
March 21 - Vayakkel- Pekude
March 28 - Vayikera

April 4 -Tzav Haggadol
April 8 - Erev Pesach
April 9-16 - Pesach
April 10 - Counting of the Omer begins
April 11 - Hol Hamoed
April 18 - Shemini
April 25 - Tazria-Metzora

We remember :

Dottie Marans - March 1
Betty Wolf - March ?
Mildred Rosen - March 4
Nathan Perner - March 4
Walter Browne Parker - March 13
Samuel Orton - March 30
Bessie Dale - March 31
Samuel Joshua Cole - Adar 15
Saul Faber - Adar 17
Paul Rothchild - Adar 29
Milton Coren - April 7
Sidney Epstein - April 1
Nannette Tver - April 1
Regina L. Kayman - April
Edward Sessler - April 7
Michael Kohan Selah - April
Dorothy Pollock - April ?
Leah Frankle - April 16
Rose Cecelia Ray - April 21
Saul Ginsberg - April 13
Allen Dale - April 13
Beatrice Hecht - April 27
Pearl Horowitz - Nisan 17
Charles Sorkowitz - Nisan 28
Marvin Guthartz - Iyar 7
Jessica Ann Doctors - Iyar 16

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.

Mazel Tov !!

Born on February 4, Orion Bernard Katz;
Congratulations to Mom, Chelsi Fuentes, and Dad,
Daniel Katz. Mazel Tov to grandparents, Kathy and
Aaron Katz and happy aunts Amanda & Melanie Katz

Born on February 5, Levi Aaron Stone;
Congratulations to Mom, Divora Merling and Dad,
Travis Stone. Mazel Tov to Grandma Nancy Merling

Inland and Coastal Jewish Communities' Seder at Shambhala Ranch

There will be a Mendocino County Jewish Communities Pesach second night Seder Thursday, April 9, 2009 at Shambhala Ranch 5:30pm with Rabbi Shoshanah. The address is 21200 Orr Springs Road.

RSVP is required and we expect that this will fill up quickly. Please call Divora Stern at 707-459-9052 to RSVP. This is a potluck dinner; please coordinate what you will bring with Divora when you make your reservations. Shambhala Ranch, located on Orr Springs Road, can seat up to 35 people. Please refer to www.shambhalaranch.com for directions and maps. The Kol HaEmek board is requesting a \$20 per person donation, which will go towards feeding the homeless. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds. (Please note that Kol HaEmek needs more funds to feed the homeless in both Willits and Ukiah. This program needs to be subsidized by our general funds because local grocers are cutting back on food bank donations. It is our mitzvah to do Tikkun Olam and help the less fortunate.)

Additionally, up to 25 guests wanting to spend the night may do so. If you desire to spend the night, please bring a *pesadich* potluck breakfast dish as well. Let Divora know what you plan to bring for breakfast so we can have a balanced meal. You may use the kitchen to prepare your breakfast contribution. Overnight guests are expected to bring a sleeping bag, pillow, and towel. You will be expected to clean the room and bathroom when leaving and make it look as fresh and clean as when you arrived. Last year many guests spent the night and enjoyed an evening sweat after the Seder. **This is sure to fill up quickly, so please make your plans early.**

When arriving at Shambhala Ranch, please go to the kitchen and find Divora, Jan Stephens, or Mark Levin, with your potluck dish. Indoors, Shambhala Ranch is a "no outdoor shoe zone," so you may want to bring slippers with you. If you are staying overnight you will receive relevant information when you check in with Divora, Mark or Jan. Since neither Tara nor Stuart Marcus (Shambhala owners) is organizing the seder, please do not contact them about it. Direct your calls to Divora Stern, 354-9911 or 459-9052.

Letter to the Editor 2-4-09

I am unhappy that the only resource given in the *Shema* for information about Israel is the Israeli consulate. Between hosting the deputy consul and giving only a pro-Israeli line resource, I feel that Kol HaEmek is stating a position. A pro-militarism position which I personally oppose.

Another place for "information" about Israel and its policies would be "Jewish Voice for Peace." It has a Bay Area chapter and a Sacramento chapter, as well as others elsewhere.

Their mission statement as well as a history of the violence in Israel is available on their website:

<http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/>

Please put out this information to the congregation at large, and in the *Shema*.

Thank you,

Yvonne Coren

P.S. I really appreciated Shoshanah's thoughtful column - thank you.

What may I bring to a Seder? It's always wise to check with the hosts!

Usually at KHE we observe the Ashkenazi rules and customs of Pesach: no wheat or bread of any kind unless made with matzoh or matzoh products. Nothing that can ferment unless it's *Kosher le Pesach* wine or *Kosher le Pesach* matzoh meal. This means no peas, beans, corn or legumes. It's always safe to bring items made with only vegetables, fruit or fish.

Baked goods are made with eggs and matzoh meal, such as sponge cake or macaroons. Remember foods may be thickened with potato or potato starch, not corn starch or flour. Don't bring cheese; this can be questionable depending on the householders' observance of the law.

Sefardic laws are slightly different, allowing some grains. These differences will be discussed at a later time.

In My Opinion -- *Divora Stern*

When I feel somehow bereft, I have a habit of just opening up my Chumash to a random page for some divine encouragement. Today I was thinking about my lack of water last summer, and worrying about the lack of rainfall again this year. I opened my Tanach to Devarim XV Re-Eh. "There shall be no needy among you... If there shall be among you a needy... within one of your gates...you shall not make your heart unfeeling and not close up your hand to your brother." So that reminded me that I volunteered at the last board meeting to write this *Shema* article

It is no news today that people are tightening up financially. Here we are experiencing the local food bank's not providing what they used to for the brown bag lunch program. A large local food chain is no longer helping with this program as well...

It is the Jewish way of life to assist the needy. Not only am I asking for your assistance with our local feeding the homeless program, I am asking for your assistance with Kol HaEmek, in general. This year we are working in the red. We did not have a large annual fundraiser due to lack of volunteer support.

In many other religions people do tithe 10% of their gross annual income. Local Mormons even ask members for their IRS statements to check on the level of tithing. I do know local Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons who tithe regularly.

My sister who attends a smallish Shul in Dallas pays several thousands dollars a year on membership, and also tithes 10% of her remaining income as well. I am not asking this of you.

However, I am asking you to voluntarily be more generous, both to our general fund, and feeding the homeless program. As you know we are planning to expand the Shul. We were given a very generous donation by Mr. Rosen, specifically for this endeavor. We do need additional funds to accomplish our goals.

Hopefully by doing this we will not be so crowded on the holidays and special events. The Shul school is also too crowded. We hope that by enlarging the Shul, we will be able to accommodate more b'nai mitzvot and other life celebrations, decreasing our congregants' need to rent out larger facilities. Surely you have noticed how crowded it is at the Shul during some events.

While I am not asking anyone to tithe as traditionally indicated, I am asking you to review your financial commitment to our community. The Board has not raised the membership dues in several years, and I do not think we are going to do this. I personally tithe a certain percent of my income. Perhaps some of you would consider donating one half of one percent to Kol HaEmek? You could earmark the donations any way you see fit. Not only do we feed the homeless, but there are several other Tikkun Olam programs that we are involved with. There is the Akko program, that serves BOTH Arab and Israeli low-income families.

I am asking you to search your heart and open up your checkbooks, while people are needy, and Kol HaEmek needs to dip into their reserve saving funds.

Prayers for more rain, blessings for peace,
Divora Stern

**KHE SHAVUOT CAMPOUT
FRIDAY EVE-SUNDAY, MAY 29-31
SHUL SCHOOL FINALE and B'NEI MITZVAH Vision Quest**

LOCATION: Beautiful RUSSIAN GULCH STATE PARK, near MENDOCINO, with access to the ocean as well as a hike inland to a waterfall. We have reserved 8 campsites for Shul School families and staff (two cars, two tents, two families, 8 people maximum per site). KHE members who do not have children in the Shul School are welcome to reserve your own campsites at Russian Gulch (see reserveamerica.com) or at nearby overnight facilities and join us for the weekend's meals and activities.

Friday evening through Saturday night ALL MEALS will be prepared for you!

The program concludes Saturday night, but many of us will be sleeping over and packing up in the morning. We don't need to leave until noon on Sunday.

Reserve your spot now! \$35 per family covers the campsite for Friday (check-in starts at 2 pm) through Sunday until noon--this is a good deal less than the cost to book a campsite on your own for two nights.

Food: \$25 per person 13 and over; \$12.50 per child. This includes Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, supper, and campfire. Snacks, as well as food for Sunday, are not included. Non-Shul School folks who are booking their own overnight reservations can sign up to pay just for the food.

If we have room remaining in our reserved campsites by March 31, we will open them up to non-Shul School KHE members. So Shul School families, RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW by returning the form below and sending in a check made out to KHE and earmarked "Shavuot camping weekend" to cover the costs of campsite and food. Send to KHE Shavuot Weekend, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470.

Name of Family _____ # of family members _____

Description	cost	Quantity	Total
Campsite per Family (Friday and Saturday)	\$35		\$
Food for Adults – 4 meals (13 and older)	\$25 each		\$
Food for Children 4 meals (4 to 12 years old)	\$12.50 each		\$
			Total: \$_____

Are you staying for the Saturday night food and campfire fun? No extra cost, we just want to plan for food. Please check here if you are: ____

Program:

We will arrive Friday afternoon, set up tents (we have some extra tents for those without--let us know if you need one), enjoy Shabbat/Shavuot dinner together followed by a holiday celebration, including preparing our b'nei mitzvah for their own adventure. Saturday morning, we'll have a leisurely breakfast and more holiday celebration together, and after lunch, (the b'nei mitzvah will have rejoined us by then) free time in the afternoon. We'll regather for supper and then havdalah and campfire fun--s'mores, singing and drumming!

The results of the KHE Community Meeting January 25, 2009

More than 50 people participated. with 15-20 remaining to make the final selection of priority items.

This was brainstorming and prioritizing, no costs or money on hand was discussed. Current KHE budgets were provided to each group but not used.

Two committees have started organizing. The Youth group is planning the camping trip for Shavuot and the political action group is scheduling when to meet.

Priority subjects

1. Building and Grounds

New Sanctuary with vestibule: note! Please remember we have \$65,000 with another \$15,000 promised, (this will be bare bones construction) Community will have to raise more money!

Other possibilities of this committee

- Phased kitchen remodel (better for catering)
- Move and organize library
- Better lighting
- Expand toward back (east)
- Expand North
- Larger main room for events
- Improve front of the shul
- Bigger classrooms
- Storage
- Vestibule entrance with Memorial Board
- Check state of the roof
- Insulate windows
- Peace garden
- Green Shul
- Rainwater catchment
- More parking
- Art part of the plan
- Vaulted sanctuary
- Better ventilation

2. Youth /Children's education

Youth Group Development

- Find out what they want
- Another Hebrew teacher in school
- Youth included in e-mail list
- Youth mentor
- Teen counselors
- Social activities & trips
- Service opportunities
- Post-B'nei Mitzvah classes

3. Tikkun Olam

a. Community Outreach

- Outreach to community
 - including senior assistance (car pooling)
- Food bank
- Liaison activities with non-Jewish community

b. Political Action

- Lobby for Israel/PalestinePeace
- Green

4. Community Activities

- Cultural presentations
- Women's group
- Jewish Genealogy group
- Craft classes, folk dancing
- Jewish cooking classes
- Artwork in Shul /classes/
 - changing exhibits
- In-house performances
- Singing? Choir
- Hikes

5. Religious practice

- Basic Judaism 101+ advanced classes
- Create new prayer book with more information on the why we do what we do
- Reactivate the Rabbi's Council

6. Miscellaneous

- Financial planning
- Disaster planning

In My Opinion -*Andy Coren*

These were ideas from the work group that I have tried to re-cap.

We already have some of these activities ongoing...for example, the people involved in Interfaith work, those who volunteer for Chevra Kadisha, Brit Milah, Community Support.

The idea from the group was this whole area of supporting our own community could be coordinated by one or more organizers, AND that this would be a Board/Shul-congregation priority and commitment to tikkun olam. People would make recommendations for needs within our Jewish community AND for our local community AND this work might be prioritized and the Board would actively encourage participation— like we now encourage making donations, but more specifically and constantly putting it in a context of tikkun, like a mitzvah.

I think we would find many examples among other congregations as well as ours. Some ideas that have been raised included rides to the schul and some kind of carpool number to call for most other events.

Ecology/Global Warming local work received a lot of support: like including green construction and maintenance in the Shul, teaching and helping congregation how to be ecologically responsible (including the religious and ethical background), perhaps getting deals or lining workmen up to do house projects.

Maybe a group could work together to redo something for a large part of the congregation (like change all our bulbs to compact fluorescents.— There would be work to be done figuring out the best products, the best deals, who wants to do it, teaching and selling the idea, implementing buying distributing, switching out bulbs, disposal of incandescents, etc. We had a (very mature) child in the work group who was very interested in this, suggesting the school and pre- and post-bar mitzvah teens might get behind this.

Home gardening advice and help. We could take on projects like this like a “barn raising.” Maybe we could raise (tax-deductible) money or discounts for this.

Other ideas included financial help/planning for people who may not be doing so well during these hard times, and even finding some temporary work for some (simple as a bulletin board, etc). Putting these kinds of activities together may take some funds. But much more importantly it takes the vision and the will, encouragement, organizing, investigation, educating, making it fun and rewarding (prizes, recognition, parties etc).

This is the kind of support the Board as a whole could make, and individuals provide leadership by helping, encouraging, being examples. I think if the Board said, “This is important for our shul to do and we will support it and find a couple of able individuals who would seriously dedicate some energy (paid or not) and we’ll oversight the development of this activity (like we would the building), and report to the congregation on its progress, as well as challenges”— I think this could happen and be a very positive force in our congregation and in our community.

Why Two Jews Have Three Opinions?

Friend, “ My neighbor and I send our kids to totally different schools.”

“My brother and I attend two very different style synagogues.”

“ My children are always bickering and quarreling ..”

“ My brother and I, he’s a staunch Democrat and I’m an Independent.”

And even, “ My wife and I, we can never agree at which restaurant to make reservations, I like Chinese and she insists on Italian.”

We have been told since Sinai, “Two Jews have three opinions.” It’s natural for a multitude of people to have dissenting opinions, and for each one to be adamant that he is right.

In the Torah portion Yitro, as the Jews gather round Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah, it is written: “In the third month after the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, they came to the desert of Sinai... and Israel encamped there opposite the mountain.

Our Rabbis explain that it is written in singular form for when the Jewish people arrived to receive the Torah they were “as one man, with one heart.”

It’s not just the specialty of the place (Mount Sinai) that created the conditions for this exceptional harmony, but also the time in which it occurred. It is significant that, as the above verse points out, the Jewish people’s encampment with “one heart” took place during the third month after the Exodus.

In fact, not coincidentally, “3” is often mentioned in connection to the giving of the Torah, “a three-fold Torah, to a threefold people, through a third-born on a third day in the third month.”

What is so special about the number three?

The number one implies that there exists but a single reality. It suggests absolute conformity. The number two indicates divisiveness and disparity, as in two opposing, rival approaches. The number three, however, finds an underlying unity between disparate entities.

The message of three is the beauty of having a world full of endless possibilities, nuances, talents and differences being brought into harmony of the Divine goal of making our world a better one. There is room for a difference of opinion and individuality between our loved ones.

Learn to accept what makes others happy and they will accept you. Learn to see the situation from another’s perspective and your world will be all the more peaceful.

Hashem created us and our families and friends like a symphony, with many different instruments contributing to Divine synchronization. Enjoy the music!

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Shlomo Yarchi of Congregation Chevra Thilim, San Francisco

Help needed!

Hey Y'all, even though it will only be one year of me providing brown bag lunches for the homeless here in Willits, I have been doing this by myself. Both Linda Posner & Bruce Andich volunteered on this project for a longer duration. However, I do not think either of them did the task solo.

So now I find myself burned out, in a rather rapid fashion, I apologize. I would like for a Willits community member to step up to take over this task. I can perform the task again tomorrow and April 4th, by myself. The process is quite simple as Safeway no longer assists us. Also no one is currently dragging the VERY HEAVY sign, from the charter school, so the whole process is simplified. I have been making 36 lunches and not submitting bills to Kol HaEmek, but the donated supplies from our local foodbank have been dwindling.

We should advertise in the Shema for someone to take over this project.

Perhaps there is a rather secular Jew who would consider doing this mitzvah? And hopefully someone not living alone, so that the process can be speeded up? One only needs to do it once every 14 weeks, and I have traded with the Methodists, to assist them, so after April, it doesn't need to be done until August 16. It seemed easier for me to do this alone than get assistance...And I am already weary of it.

Sincerely Divora Stern
Phone # 354-9911 or 459-9052

2009 Mendocino Women's Retreat Dates

Thursday August 13th - Sunday August 16th

Hi Dear Women,

Don't let overscheduling keep you away from one of the delights of summer. Here are the dates of our next retreat. Theme and more information will follow soon. We look forward to being, praying, studying, playing with you in the redwoods again.

Blessings from your retreat planners,

Harriet Bye bysawyer@mcn.org 707-937-3622, Deena Zarlin dzarlin@mcn.org 707-937-0341

ASK JCI & R

Warming up for Passover? Want to host or learn more about the Seder? You can ask JCIR more than four questions - Ask us about:

- . The Four Questions, Dr. Seuss style
- . Top ten places to hide (and find) the afikomen
- . Passover humor, rebus, skits and games to encourage participation
- . E-cards
- . Medieval, traditional and original Passover songs
- . Passover food, including international charoset recipes
- . Places to buy Seder plates, haggadot, matzoh and Passover foods
- . Community Seders, nearby and out of town

For everything you want to know about Passover and connecting with Jewish life, call JCIR 415-775-4545 or toll free within the San Francisco area 877-777-JCIR (5247) email Info@JewishNfo.org

Dear KHE Chaverim,

Yesterday I attended a workshop for rabbis on reviving the practice of *mikveh*. We are fortunate here in Mendocino County to have a strong and positive *mitzvah* practice, tied especially to the annual river immersions at the Jewish Women's Retreat. I have been a mikveh lover for decades. My preference is for immersion outdoors in natural bodies of water, and I can point to spiritual plunges I have taken in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the Gichon Spring (original water source for Jerusalem), various springs in the Judean Hills and near En Gedi in the Judean Desert, Indian Springs above Boulder, CO, Puget Sound, various lakes in the states of New York, Colorado, Washington, and California and, more locally, the Russian River, Orr, Wilbur and Harbin hot springs, and Pennyroyal Lake. I have also immersed in modern-day indoor *mikveot* constructed both in Israel and the USA, which are built to the same specifications as the 2000 year-old mikveot which have been excavated in Jerusalem and Masada.

Often I will intentionally find an occasion to immerse before a big holiday (as we do congregationally before Yom Kippur), but I also like to take advantage of whatever natural body of water I am near in order to spiritually cleanse and reconnect via a setting of intention (*kavanah*) and blessing, completely releasing and letting the waters hold me (entirely supported by water-completely immersed without contact with anything but the surrounding waters) and then emerging reborn. I have been present at immersions for conversions to Judaism which require a mikveh, I have encouraged couples to immerse before their wedding ceremony, and I was present at my own daughter's mikveh (mandated by the State of Israel) before her marriage in Tel Aviv. So what did I have to learn from this workshop?

I learned that *mikveh* is now being utilized by American Jews in ways that even I had not considered. The "mother ship" for this movement is the *Maim Chaim* (Living Waters) *mikveh*, which serves the greater Boston community, irrespective of affiliation or denomination. A prime motivator for creating this *mikveh* was our main speaker here in San Francisco this week, none other than Anita Diamant, the author of *The Red Tent*, *The New Jewish Wedding*, and a host of other important books connecting us to our Jewish heritage. In the few years since *Maim Chaim* has opened, there have been over 6500 immersions in the mikveh. *Mikveh* guides have been trained (and are currently being trained in the Bay Area) to support people in having the rich experience that ritual immersion has the potential to be.

People today are using the *mikveh* to mark and deepen all kinds of transitions in their lives. In addition to the traditional dippings for conversion (including infants and children), marriage, pre-Shabbat or holiday, and marking the end of *niddah* (immersion by a married woman before resuming sexual relations 7 days after her monthly period has ceased), folks today are coming to the *mikveh* for healing, when diagnosed with a serious illness or at the completion of chemo, to finalize a divorce or the ending of a relationship, to mark the onset of a young woman's first menses or an older woman's completion of menopause, to mark special birthdays or events in their lives such as *bar* or *bat mitzvah* (of teens and adults), graduation or "coming out," to complete a period of mourning, and to acknowledge and prepare for one's own approaching death. I had never known before that in some places it was a tradition for women in the ninth month of pregnancy to immerse before giving birth. And a tradition for women wanting to become pregnant to then immerse immediately afterwards. And the list of possibilities goes on....

So next time you are at a threshold in your life, ask yourself if a *mikveh* might not deepen your experience and be helpful to you in your passage. Part of this revival of the practice of *mikveh* is to make the actual immersion a beautiful and memorable experience for the participant. Weather permitting, we have the wonderful nature of Mendocino County to support us as we give ourselves over, let go and be renewed, release and receive in our local living waters. We also have the opportunity to immerse in an indoor *mikveh* in the Bay Area, should that be your choice. I welcome calls of inquiry if you're wondering about such an immersion for yourself, and I am glad to help you create your special ceremony. And please let me know if you feel called to volunteer as a *mitzvah* guide and be available help others who want to immerse.

In closing, I'd like to mention that the Hebrew word *mikveh* means a gathering of waters in the Bible, and a ritual bath in our Jewish practice. The same word also means hope and has the same root as *HaTikvah*.

B'tikvah oovrachah, In hope and blessing, *Shoshanah*

Upcoming Spring Class:

B'Tzelem Elohim = In the Image of God

**via computer and *chevruta* study partners with R. Shoshanah
beginning the week of March 22, 2009**

Last fall I promised an adult course utilizing the modern convenience of the computer, so here is what is about to happen. I attended a wonderful rabbinical seminar in January on the topic of *B'Tzelem Elohim = In the Image of God*. (Back in Mendocino County afterwards, this theme engendered lively discussions at our January and February KHE home Shabbat gatherings.) Not only did we rabbis study intensely for the days of our retreat, but we have continued to receive weekly study materials since then. We each have a study partner, a *chevruta*, and together we read and discuss and chew on the weekly texts we receive.

I think it will be stimulating to share some of these texts and study techniques with you here at KHE. So our course will begin the week of March 22, 2009 on the theme of *B'Tzelem Elohim*. I will send an email out to our KHE email list each week with that week's study texts, which will also be available at our KHE website. We will begin with the most ancient of texts, and work our way up from the Bible through rabbinic commentary to contemporary takes on the topic. Hebrew text will accompany the English translation when available, but no knowledge of Hebrew is necessary. The plan is to continue the course for six weeks, with new texts each week.

Your first job is to find a *chevruta* partner with whom to study. You can arrange to meet in person with your partner for each of the 6 weeks of the course, or you can arrange to study together weekly over the phone. You simply need to have the text in front of you, which you can read off the computer, or print out if you prefer. You could obviously read the texts by yourself, without a *chevruta* partner, but the traditional *yeshiva* process of reading aloud and thinking and commenting aloud together is so different from individual study that I strongly urge you to find a partner and not even look at the text until you and your partner engage it together. The weekly text study will be geared to no more than an hour's time spent studying in *chevruta*, and you can study at your convenience any time during that week.

Via email, you will then have the opportunity to comment on the weekly text, with your comments being available to all of the course participants. We will also amplify the computer and *chevruta* aspects of the learning with one or two conference calls along the way.

So for now, find your *chevruta* partner and let me know (sdevorah@gmail.com) who that is. Contact me if you need assistance in finding a partner. And happy studying!



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



Return Service Requested

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
David Koppel, Treasurer (Financial Committee)	485-8910
Nancy Merling (Rabbi's Council)	456-0639
Divora Stern, V.P.	459-9052
Jan Stephens, Secretary	459-1207
Alan Acorn Sunbeam	463-8364
Steven Levin	462-3131
Robert Klayman	391-6114
Mark Levin	467-9037

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: Steven Levin 462-3131 stevenL@pacific.net and Robert Klayman 391-6114 rklayman@mhcinc.org

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)