

JANUARY 2013

TEVET -SHVAT 5773



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

Saturday, January 5, 10:00 a.m., morning Shabbat service, Shul School families oriented, open to all.

Friday, January 11, 6:30 pm, Baby-Naming
Kabbalat Shabbat and potluck supper.
The parents and hosts are Victoria and Matthew Harris, the grandparents are Linda and David Koppel

Friday, January 25, 4:30 pm, Shul School
Friday, January 25, 6 pm, Tu B'shvat Seder.
Round-the-Table potluck for folks of all ages hosted by Adina Merenlander

Sunday, January 27, 2-4 pm Margo Frank and Shoshanah will co-lead a "Silver Circle" gathering on the blessings and losses of aging

SILVER CIRCLE

Gathering led by Margo Frank and Shoshanah

2-4 pm, Sunday, Jan 27

You are invited to our first Silver Circle. Come share a personal challenge as a result of aging. These challenges can be your own or be from caring for a family member or friend. The challenge may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. We invite you to lighten your heart as we tap into our group wisdom to discover new possibilities of accommodating to our life circumstances.

Margo Frank LCSW is passionately engaged in her own aging process, drawing from a deep well of creativity, authentic movement work, and nature's wisdom for inspiration. Through Crossing into Elderhood programs, she offers elder council circles, individual coaching and psychotherapy, and nature-based programs to those anticipating or entering their later years. Visit her website at www.CrossingIntoElderhood.com

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

Additional Tzedakah suggestions

- 9) Mazon -a Jewish Answer to Hunger
- 10) Women of the Wall

Question? Call:

David Koppel, 485-8910

send checks to:

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

Congratulations Andrea and Jaime Stephens on the birth of their baby boy, Tristan Robert. Congratulations to Jan and Gary Stephens on grandparenthood!

Portion of the Week and Holidays

January 5 - Shemoth

January 12 - Rosh Hodesh-Vaera

January 19 - Bo

January 26 - TuB'Shevat -Beshalach

We Remember in January

Raymond Glickman - January

Harold Corwin - January 11

Paul Aaron Kowarsky - January 11

Joseph Brooks-Miller - January 25

Jacob J. Borkan - January 16

Ken Holden - January 16

Tom Lowenstein - January 21

Rodney Sandler - January 25

Joshua Edelman - January 30

Arnold Kerr - January 30

Marion Margolis Frank - Tevet 20

Dori Anderson - Tevet 26

Sidney Kowarsky - Tevet 26

Murry Choen - Shevat 2

Nathan Zorkowitz - Shevat 3

Mo Sunbeam is currently serving with AmeriCorps and was stationed in New Jersey for several weeks to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

Congratulations to Sasha Wilkins for her excellent performance as Alice in the Ukiah Players performance of the "Best Christmas Pageant Ever"

THERE WILL BE A CHANGE IN KHE LEADERSHIP!

Many many, thanks to Harvey Frankle as he leave the KHE Board January 1st. His year and a half of service as President of the Board has provided us with his classes, the physicians series of musical events and plays, the forming of a Klezmer band, the story of Joseph and the adventures in Judaism of a boy from Queens N.Y. Thanks again, Harvey--may you enjoy new adventures.

We are delighted to welcome three new Board members who have stepped forward to serve. --Mark Levin, Sigrid White, and Bob Mandel-- These three members bring new, young energy. to our congregation management. Just in time! We are experimenting with a new plan in leadership. Two members will serve as co-chairs for a three-month period. One will be an experienced Board member, the other a newcomer. This way we share responsibility and develop a broad leadership base, and for the record we are moving our meeting day to the first Monday of the month.

The sequence will be as follows:

January, February, March - Sherrie Ebyam and Bob Mandel

April, May, June - Nancy Merlin and Sigrid White

July, August, September - Judy Corwin and Acorn Sunbeam

October, November, December - Carol Rosenberg and Mark Levin

David Koppel will continue as Treasurer

Short Bio's from New Board Members!

Bob Mandel writes:

Bob Mandel comes to us from New York, Boston, San Francisco and sordid points in between, including a year living in Israel. He has been maintaining the Kol HaEmek website for the past 5 years and likes to be involved with the traditional Jewish celebrations and traditions here in the Ukiah Valley area, including Torah reading and shofar blowing for the High Holidays. He looks forward to serving you as a board member!

Mark Levin writes:

I was raised in the North Bay as a sporadic reform Jew. My father taught me that ours is a religion which enables one to both worship as one can, and to connect with God in a sanctuary or in the deep woods (my dad is an avid conservationist). In college, I was introduced to the ritualistic aspects of Judaism. Later to root myself to my religious identity, I reconnected with Judaism while attending Loma Linda University. Their training in Nuclear Medicine Technology (assisting doctors by taking a specialized type of X-ray) enabled me to work first near Palm Springs, then to move here 7 years ago.

As a result of my history, I am more comfortable with the personal approach to Judaism than the ritualistic aspects. That said, I still do love some of the ritual traditions, cherishing many of the prayers in the prayerbook. Our heritage: history, tikkun olam, rich literature and arts, and talented people make me proud to be Jewish and in this community. My spiritual efforts explore the pathways to God and search for personal experiences of the Divine.

Next month we will hear from Sigrid!

Dear KHE Chaverim,

The aim of the hero's journey is the growing of compassion, said Joseph Campbell several decades ago. Seems as if everywhere I turn these days, I discover compassion being broadcast as a key quality to cultivate and put into practice. Just today I came upon an online video of a 2010 talk by Karen Armstrong fostering compassion as the paramount virtue we need to guide us in our world today. Armstrong is the former Catholic nun turned very successful writer of books on the world's religions. Her practical means of enlisting compassion is for all of us to gauge our actions by the Golden Rule. Now we all know that the Golden Rule tells us to "do unto others as you would have others do unto you." And yet in explaining how to apply the Golden Rule, Armstrong poses it in the negative, i.e., "do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you." Hey- that's our Jewish version: it was Rabbi Hillel over 2000 years ago who invoked this 'negative' Golden Rule as the essence of Torah when taunted by a pagan to teach the Torah while standing on one foot. Armstrong does not mention Hillel, but credits Confucius, who lived some 500 years BCE, with this formulation.

Sounds True recently produced a free 7-part series of hour-long online programs entitled "The Compassionate Brain: Activating the Neural Circuits of Kindness, Caring, and Love."* Each session features a different expert being interviewed by Ron Hanson, a neurophysiologist based in San Rafael. Hanson mentions that the Dalai Lama, as part of his daily yoga practice, takes on the being, dress, and posture of the Buddhist deity of compassion, the better to practice compassion in his own daily life. When we call out the thirteen attributes of God during High Holiday services, the very first quality we name is El Rachoom/ God the compassionate. And does our Torah not tell us we are made in the image of God?

Kristine Neff, focusing on self-compassion, tells us to start with the physical gesture of placing your hand on your heart. This simple gesture reduces your cortisol/stress level. Then acknowledge: 1) this is a moment of suffering (without going into problem-solving mode); 2) recognize suffering as a normal part of life; and 3) say to yourself, "This is hard; I'm here for you; what do you need?" She emphasizes that self-compassion is not self-indulgence, but rather being a good ally and friend to oneself. Self-compassion, in the midst of a difficult situation, helps keep the heart open. This leads into Jean Houston's assertion, looking outward and not only inward, that compassion allows you to see larger possibilities in everyone you meet. Shifts in consciousness happen when we are not closed down. The insights of Neff and Houston, both part of the Compassionate Brain series, remind me of the ancient psalmist's line: *Min hameitzar, karati Ya, anani bamerchav Ya/I called out to God from a tight place, God answered me from spaciousness.*

Speaking of spaciousness, Tara Brach (in the Compassionate Brain series) posits that a sense of being held compassionately goes along with connecting with anything that enlarges our sense of being. She calls prayer such a bridge between longing and belonging, as well as the sense of being part of the ocean of being or the divine. For materialists or atheists, she says that hugging or lying on the earth can also be connectors. Brach asks, what is the difference between illness and wellness? Her answer: in **Illness** the **I** suffer alone, whereas in **Wellness** we feel connected.

Some have gone so far as to suggest that defining ourselves as separate beings is what is killing our planet today. Turns out scientifically that we are symbiotic with our surroundings, not independent organisms. Ron Hanson talks about the specific parts of our brains which light up as we take in actions, emotions, and thoughts expressed by others. Neurobiologist Daniel Siegel, also in "The Compassionate Brain" series, is quoted in the Summer 2011 Parabola Magazine on mirror neurons, which "can fire when someone communicates with you. They dissolve the border between you and others...."

Rabbi continued:

[They connect our internal state with those around us, even without the participation of our conscious mind (p. 73)." According to Siegel, "Interpersonal relationships that are attuned promote the growth of integrative fibers in the brain. It is these regulatory fibers that enable the embodied brain to function well and for the mind to have a deep sense of coherence and well-being. Such a state also creates the possibility of a sense of being connected to a larger world. The natural outcome of integration is compassion, kindness, and resilience (p.72)."

Ron Hanson asks where do you begin to practice compassion? Right where you are. Whom do you begin with? The one right next to you. Hanson concludes: "Do what you can in the place where you are with what you've been given in the time that you have." Amen! And once again let us return to our ancient teacher Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself only, what am I? If not now, when?"

B'Shalom oovrachah/In Peace and Blessing, Shoshanah

*To access "The Compassionate Brain" programs, go to <http://live.soundstrue.com/compassionatebrain/event.php>

April 12-14, 2013: Shabbaton with Reb Zalman & his wife Eve Ilsen in Ashland. Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is one of the most important spiritual leaders of our generation. Join us in this rare opportunity to learn, laugh, sing, and pray with him and many of the beloved rabbis he has ordained. Eve's teachings, singing, and meditations are an extraordinary complement to Reb Zalman's.

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Cost: \$260 for pre-paid & pre-registered by January 21, 2013 for general public; \$285 all registration after January 21, 2013; Some work study trades available. For more information download the flyer/ registration form at

<http://havurahshirhadash.org/pdf/Zalmanflyer2013Web.pdf>

PJ Library

Did you know that for a couple of years now, our young children have been receiving monthly books and CDs with Jewish content free of charge? Well, not exactly free of charge. This wonderful program, called the PJ Library, sends books to kids in Jewish communities all over the U.S. The communities, and not the particular parents of the receiving kids, are the ones expected to help defray the costs of this highly subsidized program. It has come to light recently that the 'community' contribution in our case means one person, Ace Barash, who singlehandedly has been donating the amounts required for the books to go out each month. Thank you, Ace!

If you'd like to help support this great project and share in being a benefactor, contact Ace, 463-1812, satokob@comcast.net.

KHE member Lee Wachs, a pilot and plane builder himself, is offering to supply plastic model aircraft kits to those interested. These building projects would be suitable for those ten years and older, or younger children with parental guidance. He writes, "These are not available in stores and some can be built to museum quality. All are from a private collection I acquired." Lee can be reached at maishalabe@all2easy.net or tel 463-0467. Note: The winning door prize for our eve of Chinese take-out and film was a model of the space shuttle assembled by Lee and won by Julian Achtoun.

CHRONICLES VIII by Harvey Frankle
MOSES

So the children of Jacob go down into Egypt, settle onto the choicest pasture land, the Nile Delta, Goshen. They prosper and become a multitude. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." And a shift occurs. Perhaps a dynasty topples, Joseph's deeds are forgotten and who are these people in our midst, these lowly semitic shepherds to roam over our best pastures, these strangers who in their vastness may someday seek to subjugate us? There are cities to be built, monuments to be made for the glory of Pharaoh. Let us place upon them the yoke of servitude to the end of their days. And Israel if forgotten for four hundred years.

Pharaoh orders the midwives to kill Jewish male children they deliver. They use subterfuge to avoid what their humanity tells them is an abomination and Pharaoh orders the general population to throw all male Jewish children into the Nile. The river that has caused death to so many of these children now brings life to one special child as Yochebed carefully places Moses in a reed basket and floats him down the river to be rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter, with his sister looking on. Pharaoh's plans for the annihilation of the Israelite children are defeated by women - the human feelings of the midwives, the tender sympathy of a woman of royal birth, and a sister's watchfulness. It was to the merit of pious women that Israel owed its redemption in Egypt, say our sages.

Pharaoh's daughter names the child Moses, for she "drew him out" of the Nile. It will later be G-d's turn to draw him out so that Moses can draw his people out of the land of affliction. So Moses is raised in the household of the mightiest ruler on earth, educated there, uncorrupted by the oppressive influence of slavery. Hence, when a taskmaster is severe with a helpless slave, Moses takes immediate action and slays the man, ultimately leading him to flee into the desert--to trek across the trackless wastes of Sinai to the land of Median, beyond the power of the Pharaoh; to settle down, marry, raise a family, shepherd his father-in-law's flocks, a stranger in a strange land.

A pharaoh dies, another one, possibly Ramses II, takes his place, and still the people suffer. They cry out in pain and the Lord G-d hears their pain and sends a prophet, a deliverer, a rescuer, for the name Moses also means to be rescued.

Adonai appears in the form of a thorn bush burning in the desert but not being consumed. Is it possible to imagine such a thing? A bush engulfed in flames and not turning black, shriveling, burning, but remaining green and alive: inviolable? And the Voice coming from within the conflagration. Stop. Consider the setting: the flaming bush in the immensity of the desert; the all-pervasive solitude, the anxiety, the Voice, both distant and close, insisting, probing, throbbing, burning. How could any human being, even Moses, resist that voice indefinitely. And yet, at first, Moses refuses to serve as G-d's messenger. It take Adonai 7 days to convince him, says a midrash. Moses refuses, advancing all kinds of arguments: Why me? Why not an angel? Or my brother Aaron? I am a poor speaker; also I am married and I have children; my father-in-law will object. And furthermore, what am I supposed to tell the Jews when they start asking me questions, so many questions. What shall I say? I don't even know your name!

"Tell them 'I Am That I Am and I Will Be What I Will Be,'" says the Lord. Adonai cannot be limited or defined by a mere name as if She were merely some other god. I Am, Was, and Always Will Be Everywhere In Everything, is more like it.

Moses, **I will always be with you.** And slowly the certainty of the Presence of G-d as a quality of Her being will begin to possess the souls of the coming generations.

Yet Moses wants to get back to concrete matters. Oh yeah, and what do I tell Pharaoh when **he** begins to ask me questions? This part is easy: four words that forever echo down the ages: LET MY PEOPLE GO!

And in the end Moses gives in. G-d always wins. The last word is always His, as was the first. And so Moses leaves the calm of the desert and plunges into the whirlpool of history, singlehandedly changing its course. After him nothing will ever be the same.

Moses gathers his family, bids farewell, and sets out on his journey to Mitzrayim. On his way he is assaulted by an angel. His wife Tzipora saves him: her quick move to circumcise their son is meant to remind both G-d **and** Moses of the Covenant: Moses cannot, must not die, not yet. Israel needs him - and so does G-d - and Israel cannot, must not die.

So G-d sends two old men, for by now Moses is 88, Aaron 83, down to Egypt, to save the world.

Let your people go? You mean the sub-human slaves out there? In their multitudes? Why, because your rod turns into a snake? My entire free labor force that builds cities and monuments to me? To go out into the desert to worship an invisible god that no one's ever heard of? Because this god told you so? Maybe this god will tell you how to make bricks without straw, Moses, because from here on in "your people" will have to gather straw from the stubble of the fields, and not one brick less! Not one!

AND THE PLAGUES CAME!

The river which is Egypt's pride runs with blood; from out of the reeds frogs invade everywhere; the dust of the ground takes life to become loathsome vermin; indoors and outside there is no escape from swarming flies. While all over the Land of Egypt beasts are dying of murrain, in Israel's Land of Goshen the cattle are intact. The royal magicians, seeking to compete with the wonders of Moses, become themselves victims of the plague of boils. Now the heavens begin to play their part, and rain down wasting hail, while to enhance the wonder, fire winds around the hailstones and melts them not. The Land of Egypt is one mass of desolation; but from outside, the east wind blows steadily until the swarming locusts hide the ground; at a sign from the Deliverer the west wind sweeps the locusts into the Red Sea. Then the whole scene dissolves into a darkness that might be felt; every being a solitary prisoner where he stands. At last midnight reveals the slain firstborn and Pharaoh and his people thrust Israel forth.

The plagues were far more than a dramatic humiliation of the unrepentant Pharaoh. They were nothing less than a judgment of the gods of Egypt. The plagues fell on the principle divinities that were worshiped since time immemorial in the Nile Valley. The river was a god; it became loathsome to its worshippers. The frog was venerated as the sign of fruitfulness, and it was turned into a horror. The cattle - the sacred ram, the sacred goat, the sacred bull - were all smitten. The sacred beetle became a torment to those that put their trust in its divinity. When we add to these the plague of darkness, which showed the eclipse of Ra, the sun-god, we see that we have a contrast between the G-d of Israel, Lord of the Universe, and the senseless idols of a senile civilization; as it is written "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord." So the Children of Israel, in its multitudes, leaves Mitzrayim, the narrow place, for the broader plains of the desert.



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 >
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Bob Mandel	< bobxii@hotmail.com >
Sigrid White	485-1871 < 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)