

MAY 2013

IYAR -SIVAN 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

Wednesdays May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 7:00 p.m. Pirkei Avot,
Sayings of the Fathers with Rabbi Shoshanah

Friday, May 10, 6:30 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat and potluck
with R.Shoshanah, at the home of Linda Posner, 491 W.
Mendocino Ave. Willits. Directions: north on 101 to
W.Mendocino Ave (at left at the Rexal drugstore), cross Spruce
St.. The house is at the S.E. corner of W. Mendocino and Easy
St., telephone 549-1941

Tuesday, May 14 - 5:00 p.m. Celebration of Shavuot
See below!

KHE SHABBAT CAMPOUT

With B'NEI MITZVAH Vision Quest
including Ariella, Ziven, Avi, Koda.

FRI EVE-SUNDAY NOON, May 24-26,
2013 of Memorial Day Weekend
Open to young-at-heart of all ages!

LOCATION: Clear Lake State Park
with access to swimming beach, boat
rental, and hiking trails

CELEBRATING SHAVUOT

6 pm, Tuesday, May 14 - With our children, we gather to make floral wreaths with Rachel Yusem. If you are able, bring flowers and ornaments for these crowns for the children and adults alike.

6:45 pm - Offering of the First Fruits (Bikurim). Wearing their floral crowns, 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. Please have your child come with an easy to carry basket filled at home (baskets stay with you and do not go 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 poetry, music, movement, and art- starting with Carol Rosenberg and Louisa Aranow guiding us through revelation via art and language. We'll complete the evening by reading the Book of Ruth, which is traditional for Shavuot.

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
- 10) Women of the wall

Question? Call:

David Koppel, 485-8910

send checks to:

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

Portion of the Week an Holidays

May 4 - Behar-Bechukotai

May 11 - Bamidbar

May 18 - Naso

May 25- Behaalotecha

We Remember :

Joel Yossel Green - May 1
Gerald Marans - May1
Ben Rosenberg - May1
Janet Fisher - May 2
Harold Koppel - May 6
Harriet Lilly Domas - May 14
Helen Portman - May17
Nancy Brooks-Miller - May 22
Julius Markowitz - May 26
Beatrice Starosta Coren - Sivan 3
Harry Stanten - Sivan 6
Harry Rothchild - Sivan7
Paul Aaron Kowarsky - Sivan14
Herbert Rubin - Sivan 24

Congratulations to Sudi Reid on his graduation from California College of the Arts, and his success as a musician. Congratulations to his Parents Amy Wachspres and Ron Reid.

Congratulations to the following members of our congregation for the wonderful contributions to "The Music Man". Kathy Katz for delightful costumes, Amanda Katz for make up, and Melany Katz , Eli Edelman and Ari Sunbeam for their roles in the chorus and to Reid Edelman for a marvelous production.

Donations To KHE March 1, 2013 through March 31,2013

Lillian Cohen and Thomas Evans

Judith M. Corwin

Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau

David Koppel and Linda Koppel

Nancy Horowitz Moilanen

Linda Posner

Elizabeth Raybee

Jan Stephens and Gary Stephens

Barry Vogel and Janet Mandell

Lillian Vogel

Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere

Shoshanah Devorah

Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren

Carol Orton

Sherrie Ebyam

Janine Lieberman, in memory of Daniel Lieberman (grandfather to Molly and Hanna Vogel)

Lee Wachs

Dear KHE Chaverim,

The Rabbi's Fund runs completely on donations, and is currently operating at a deficit. If you feel so inclined, you are welcome to send David Koppel a KHE contribution earmarked for the Rabbi's Fund. This fund is discretionary, and helps me to cover such expenses as congregationally oriented tzedakah, attending rabbinic meetings, mileage, purchase of books and DVDs pertinent to rabbi-ing, professional dues for the California Board of Rabbis and Ohalah, the association of renewal rabbis, and other purposes that arise that I deem worthy (e.g., recently purchasing an extra-large challah to bring to the interfaith prayer meeting held by Howard Hospital, or covering first year deficits when we began our KHE campout program). I receive a modest part-time salary from KHE without any additional financial job benefits. Any payments for ceremonies such as bnei mitzvah, weddings, or funerals are put into the Rabbi's Fund.

Thanks, B'shalom oovrachah Type to enter text, *Shoshanah*

spring flowers align
old railroad tracks north and south
golden and purple

May these flowers resonate with you: poppies and lupine.

david vilner

Dear Friends,

Marc and I took over the bag lunch distribution from Cassie a number of years ago and we're now ready to pass it on to someone else as we can't commit to it on a regular basis any more. We'd be happy to occasionally hand out the lunches as it is definitely a "feel-good" activity.

Is there someone out there who will take this on, either showing up to do it yourselves or arranging for someone else to do it? It's easiest if there are two people but one person could do it. The distribution is scheduled from 1 pm and is over by about 1:20. Quick and easy!

Please let me know if you are interested. I know that we're not available for the May distribution.

Thanks,

Margo

P.S. The bag lunches are made at 10:00 a.m. the third Sunday morning of every other month at Plowshares. Then distributed at the social services building at 1:00 P.M.

For more information call Margo or email her at <margo@margofrank.com> or Dan Hibshman 462-7471

Shavuot

Shavuot is the second of three pilgrim festivals and it follows Passover by 50 days. It is also known as the Festival of Weeks, the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of the Harvest because it originally marked the end of the seven weeks of the Passover barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. At one time, Jewish men were expected to bring their first omer, or sheaf, of barley to the Temple in Jerusalem as a thanksgiving offering.

After the period of Jewish slavery in Egypt, Shavuot also celebrated Moses' return from the top of Mt Sinai with the two stone tablets containing the "Ten Commandments". These commandments are the most fundamental laws of the Jewish faith. Therefore, Shavuot is also known as the of the Giving of the Law.

Many Jewish communities in the United States observe special customs on Shavuot. These activities include reading the Book of Ruth or staying up all night to study the Torah (the five books of Moses). Many Jewish people also eat dairy foods during Shavuot. Many homes are decorated with various plants, including those with flowers. Special prayers are made and candles are lit on this day. Jewish confirmations may also take place at this time of the year.

According to Jewish custom, no work is permitted on Shavuot except cooking, baking, transferring fire and carrying objects or equipment.

Dear KHE Chaverim,

Shabbat in Casablanca - the finale of my two-week trip to Spain and Morocco. Jews have lived in both countries for at least the last 2000 years, meaning we were there before Spain became Christian, Moslem, and then Christian again, and before the Arabs and Islam arrived in Morocco. In both countries, our tour group visited neighborhoods in city after city where the Jews used to live, work, and pray. Ferdinand and Isabella did away with Jews in Spain back in 1492 (not to be readmitted officially until the late Twentieth Century), whereas Morocco lost most of its Jews in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

The premodern architecture and interior design of buildings in Morocco is astoundingly beautiful, with intricate arches, colored-tile walls and floors, sculpted stucco and stone work, painted ceilings, and inner courtyards. One would never guess from the street what lay within. This was true of the gorgeous art gallery we visited in Fes that had once been the home of a rabbi. The centuries-old medina (walled city) of Fes with its winding narrow streets still has one Jewish dentist working there. We also visited within the walls a reconstructed synagogue with its own *mikveh* down below. But most Jews in the country today live in the newer sections of urban areas.

There are about five thousand Jews living among some thirty million Muslim Moroccans today, which is how I came to attend services in Beit El, the main synagogue of Casablanca. Nothing outside indicates that one has come to a synagogue. In the courtyard of the synagogue, I met two American Jewish college students who were living with Moroccan Muslim families in the city of Rabat and learning Arabic in a study -abroad program. They had come to Casablanca especially to visit the Jewish museum there, and the Muslim man on duty had told them about the synagogue and even driven them to Shabbat services.

Calling the synagogue ahead of time, I had learned that services were to begin at 6:30 pm, but they actually commenced at 7:15 ("Jewish time" and "Moroccan time" both converging!). Kissing on both cheeks was not only customary for people assembling and later leaving, but the next morning the rabbi kissed men when they came up for an Aliyah to the Torah. I was surprised to discover that there was only one prayer book (entirely in Hebrew) in the upstairs women's section. None of the local women there were interested in reading either the prayers or Torah portion (are they literate in Hebrew?), but adhered to the traditional Jewish practice of chatting throughout the service! Except for two boys on Friday eve, who may have been local or visiting, those present were all middle-aged or older.

The current king of Morocco protects the Moroccan Jews, following a pattern that we saw in medieval Spain as well, in which the Jews fared well when they were under the protection of a supportive king. Kings in turn often made use of Jewish advisors, doctors, translators, and financiers. The Jewish Quarter was often located next to the king's palace. Jews were also craftsmen, and the silversmiths and metal workers of Morocco up to modern times were known to be Jewish. Today, Israelis are welcome to visit Morocco (I passed an Israeli tour group in Fes and met an Israeli in the synagogue), and we were told that the best dates in the market come from Israel. It's obvious that shops also cater to Jewish tourists - I'm bringing home a new chanukiah that hangs on the wall and is decorated with Hebrew lettering, the Ten Commandments, and the lions of Judah.

As one of the features of our tour, we met in small groups with local graduate students in both Spain and Morocco. In my Moroccan group was a woman studying literature and focusing on the writing of Arab women living abroad; she identified herself as a feminist and, like most Moroccan women that we saw, wore a head covering.

She told us that she would actually like to wear a face veil, but that she'd have trouble getting a job if she did so, face covering being out of vogue in Morocco (the king's wife is an engineer and appears in photos with her head uncovered). After our discussion she approached me to tell me how important it had been for her to meet me, because she hadn't known till now that Jews could be open-minded. She attributed her views to the media. I told her that, in my experience, Jews are often very open-minded. She asked for my email, and we hugged goodbye.

Everywhere we went, I was very open about telling people I am Jewish and had just come from Israel, and never sensed any negative response. This is in contrast with the advice of a woman I had met in Israel who had grown up in Casablanca, and was physically attacked as a child because she was Jewish. She warned me not to tell people I was going to the synagogue, but I would never have found it had I not done so. And Moroccan Jews (those living there today as well as those visiting from abroad) and Muslims annually co-celebrate the spring hillula (anniversary of the death) of a saintly rabbi from the 1800s by gathering at his grave outside the city of Ouezzane.

Almost half of the Muslim population of Morocco today is Berber, from the mountain peoples who preceded the Arab conquest in the seventh century. I have met Jews in Israel who have told me they were of Berber background, and our Moroccan guide (Berber himself), told me that there were ancient Berber tribes with names like Yitzhak and Yosef, so presumably, he said, they were Jewish Berber tribes. Jews are thought to have arrived along with the ancient Phoenicians, and certainly with the Romans. But most of the Moroccan Jews of recent centuries were descended from the Jews of Andalusia who fled to North Africa (along with the Spanish Moors) when times got hard for them and the Golden Age of Spain came to an end.

I earlier wrote a column for this May Shema focusing on the fortunes and misfortunes of the Jews of Toledo, Granada, Cordoba, and Seville- on their up and down relations with various Christian and Muslim regimes, on their great cultural contributions and cooperation with their neighbors, and what you can see today of how they once lived. Alas, I was just writing my final sentence at the end of our first full day in Morocco, sitting outside at dusk in the high hills of the Rif mountain range, looking out over the beautiful blue and white houses of the medieval town of Chefchaouen, settled by Jewish and Muslim refugees after the expulsion orders of Spain, when some mysterious phenomenon erased my entire article, never to be recovered. And so this column, written a week later in airports and in flight back to California, highlights my more recent experiences in Morocco.

Before signing off, I do want to share with you a surprise regarding Jewish life in Spain. There are famous Spanish born rabbis, poets, merchants, philosophers, doctors, and statesmen- all male- but what do we know of educated Jewish women? The Sefardic center of Cordoba features sketches of several local women. Since this information was not available to take away, I photographed the wall plaque and present it's contents to you in the adjacent page.

We are an amazing people with a fascinating history. Our own chapter is being written right here and now in Mendocino County.

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

Remarkable Medieval Spanish Women

LUBNA

A native of Cordoba from the 10th Century. this woman enjoyed great intellectual prestige due to her extensive knowledge of and studies on calculus, metrics, and arithmetic. She formed part of the circle of Jewish intellectuals protected by the doctor Hasday Ben Shaprut. An expert on calligraphy, she was given organizational work in the famous library of Caliph Hakkam II, the most important place of knowledge at that time.

FATIMA BINT ALMUNTANNA

The chronicles mention this woman when she was at her oldest. One of the most profound thinkers in the Sufi tradition, the Murcian Ibn Arabi, emphasizes in his work the presence of two wise old women, Sams Umm el Faquara (Sun, mother of the poor) and Fatima bint al Muntanna, who he praises as having been his teacher. Both were Sevillian women who lived on the outskirts of the city. Judges and wise men came to listen to their pronouncements and thoughts.

WALLADA THE Omayyad

During the 11th century, this aristocrat belonging to the Caliphal family played a leading role in public life in Cordoba. It is said she gave the most prestigious literary salons in the city. A prolific artist and poet, her satirical poems dedicated to one time lover Zaydun, one of the great Andalusian poets, became famous. She had a reputation for being provocative, she used to walk through the streets of Cordoba with her poems embroidered on her clothes. Her character has inspired numerous contemporary narrative works. She died during the siege of Cordoba by the Almoravids.

HAFSA AL RAKUNIYYA

This woman of Berber origin, from Granada, lived there during the 13th century. She is considered to be one of the most outstanding poets from Al Andalus. She worked as a teacher and tutor in the Court of Granada. Her passionate relationship with the poet Abu Yafar was highly commented on at the time. As a result of the influence she enjoyed and the knowledge she possessed, she together with members of the military, nobles and other poets, came to form part of the embassy before the Court of Rabat. It is said that she had extensive knowledge of medicine. She died in Marrakech.

THE WIFE OF DUNAS LABRAT

The name of this Cordovan woman is not known. Investigative research by lecturer E. Fleisher from Hebrew University of Jerusalem refers to this woman as a protagonist of the period called the Middle Ages. Such prominence stems from a manuscript. recovered by Fleisher that reproduces a poetic text attributed to the wife of the poet and philologist Dunas ben Labarat to be the oldest preserved sample of poetry written by a woman in Medieval Spain. Researchers Angel Saenz-Badillos and Judit Targarona comment that it is an exceptional achievement considering the social and cultural role given to women in traditional Jewish education.



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 >
Judy Corwin	462-4661 < jmcsrcp@gmail.com >
Nancy Merling, Vice President	456-0639 < nancymerling@att.net >
Carol Rosenberg	463-8526 < carolrosenberg@pacific.net >
Sherrie Ebyam	530-414-1104 < ebyam@sbcglobal.net >
Mark Levin	467-9037 < mlevin@pacific.net >
Bob Mandel	696-271 < bobLXVII@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