



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

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Please note: All submissions sent by the 20th of each month to Carol Rosenberg (carolrosenberg@pacific.net)

Coming Events

All events in person and on Zoom

Saturday May 14 at 10:00 Torah study. with Paige.

Sunday May 15, 2:00 pm Feeding the Hungry at plowshares. To volunteer call Dan Hibshman at 707-462-7471

Friday May 27, 7:00 Shabbat Service with Amanda Nube.

Saturday May 28, 10:00 a.m. Torah study with Amanda

Saturday, June 4 at 7:00 Erev Shavuot Service with Rayna Grace

Sunday June 5, Shavuot- Enjoy the holiday!

Please Send Prayers of healing to:

Darline Bergere's baby grandson Samuel
& Erica and Alexander Bergere
Nancy Bertsch
Barbara Stanger

Shavuot 5782

The holiday of Shavuot this year in begins the evening of June 4th goes through Sunday June 5th. We will have a Saturday Evening in person/Zoom Service with Rayna Grace. However

The traditional ways of expressing this day are available to you and your family to observe this Festival of First Fruits.

You may choose to make Blintzes or cheese cake to celebrate this day of "milk and honey".

You may want to read aloud the book of Ruth.

You may choose to illustrate some of your favorite lines of Torah or Psalms with a picture or poem.

You may bring good things to eat to your food banks, Ukiah Plowshares or Caring Kitchen.

Or my choice, walk out into the world of nature and choose to meditate on the rebirth of the natural world.

If your mind is troubled on this day of celebration by our fellow human's actions in this world you may read from scripture. For example from the Amidah.

"For you the Lord our god, who makes the wind to blow and the rain to fall!-for blessing and not for disaster: for life and not for death: for plenty and not for famine."

Portion of the Week and Holidays

May 7 - Kedoshim, in Leviticus

May 14 - Emor, in Leviticus

May 18 - **Lag B'Omer**

May 21 - B'har, in Leviticus

May 28 - B'hukkotai, in Leviticus

June 4 - Erev Shavuot

June 5 - Shavuot

June 4 - B'Midbar, in Book of Numbers

June 5 - Shavuot

June 11 - Nasso, Book of Numbers

June 18 - Beha'alotcha Book of Numbers

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) Honoring and Remembrance Board
- 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
Call: David Koppel, 485-8910

send checks to:

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

We Remember

Joel Green Yossel	May
Ben Rosenberg	May 1
Gerald Marans	May 1
Janet Fisher	May 2
Harry Bistrin	May 4
Harold Koppel	May 6
Elenore Feldman	May 9
Harriet Libby Domas	May 14
Beatrice Starosta Coren	May 16 - Sivan 3
William X. Silva	May 15
Nancy Brooks-Miller	May 22
Julius Markowitz	May 26
Vera Meyerhoff	June
Daniel Rosenberg	June 1
Harry Stanten	June 2- Sivan 6
Edward Wandrei	June 5
Helen Feinberg-Ginsburg	June 6
Sylvia Marans Elberg	June 12
Thelma Cohn	June 12
Joseph P. Suffel	June 21
Elliot Rivers	June 29
Natalie Wachspress	Nisan 28
Sidney Kowarsky	Sivan 14
Herbert Rubin	Sivan 24
Harry Rothchild	June 10- Sivan 7
Bela Goldberg	Tammuz 7

Condolences to Lisa Rosen on the death of her beloved husband Ralph Petermann

Lag B'Omer May 18-May 19 -5782

Lag B'Omer, a minor but joyous Jewish holiday, will be celebrated on May 18-19, 2022. It commemorates the passing of second century Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the first Rabbi to publicly teach the mystical elements of Kabbalah and the author of the Zohar. At the time of his passing, Rabbi Shimon asked his followers to mark this “day of my joy” which occurred on the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, the time between Passover and Shavuot. Lag is an acronym of the Hebrew letters lamed and gimmel which have the numerical value of 33.

According to the Talmud, there are other reasons for celebration on this date. Apparently, there was a plague that affected the followers of Rabbi Akiva who had been a teacher of Rabbi Shimon. It was said that they were fighting among themselves without respect for each other. But on Lag B'Omer, the plague miraculously receded so it also became a time to promote love and respect.

It is celebrated with great joy including singing, dancing, weddings and for three year-old boys- their first haircuts. It is customary to spend time outdoors with BBQ's and bonfires and for children to play with bows and arrows. This practice stems from the association of the rainbow that appeared to Noah after the great Flood as a sign from God that the world would not be destroyed again. The Hebrew word “keshet” means both rainbow and the bow used with arrows.

It is also celebrated with huge parades of children that were started by the Lubavitch Center in Brooklyn, NY, to celebrate Jewish unity and now have become popular throughout the world. It is customary to eat carob on this day as Rabbi Shimon and his son were able to subsist on that food during a period of hiding from the Romans.

Rabbi Shimon is buried on Mount Meron in Israel which has become a pilgrimage site for Orthodox Jews and is flooded with partyers on this holiday. It is also the site of the deadliest civilian disaster in the history of Israel when, on April 29, 2021, more than 100,000 people gathered there to celebrate Lag B'Omer. They became trapped in a narrow passageway and a slippery slope caused some to begin to fall which resulted in a torrent of bodies crushed together. Forty-five people died and 150 were injured. The Israeli government has taken steps to increase safety at the site which, once again, will host thousands of celebrants on this holiday.

Submitted by Vicki Patterson

Anyone interested in a cross-stitch Pesach table cloth ?
Nancy Merling is looking to give away, at no cost, a large rectangular table cloth for Pesach. You will need to finish the embroidery work. The design on the cloth is 1/4 complete. Call Nancy at: 707-456-0639

Shavuot June 5-6 2022

It took 49 days for the Israelites to walk from Egypt to Sinai and on the 50th day, they were given the Torah. Shavuot means “weeks” to mark the 7 weeks of travel they endured. This was, at first, a harvest festival to celebrate the barley harvest by offering sheaves of the grain at the Temple. Counting the Omer –omer means “sheaf” – starts after the second Seder of Passover and lasts every day for 49 days. Every evening after sundown, the day is counted with the blessing:

“ Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha’Olam asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tizivanu al sefirat ha’omer. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to count the omer.”

After the blessing, the number of the day is counted- “Today is the first day, etc.”- for 6 days and then, both the day and the week are enumerated.

Shavuot became, however, associated with the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai on the 50th day and today it is celebrated with flowers, all night study, dairy foods and, in Israel, water fights. It is a holiday for expressing commitment to Jewish ideals and life and continues the story of Exodus to its conclusion and is a metaphor for the journey from slavery to liberation. It is customary to read the Book of Ruth during this holiday. Her story begins as Ruth, a Moabite, is widowed when her Judean husband, a son of Naomi, who settled in Moab to escape a famine in Judah, dies. Naomi ‘s husband also dies along with another son who leaves a widow, Orpah. Naomi wants to return to Bethlehem but encourages the women to go back to their families. Orpah goes back but Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and utters the famous words, “ stay; “Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, there will I be buried.”

They arrive back in Judah during the harvest and Ruth eventually marries Boaz and becomes an ancestor of David. She is seen as an example of *chesed* “loving kindness”, loyalty, generosity and commitment. Her acceptance of Judaism is seen as analogous to the Jewish people’s acceptance of the Torah.

Dairy foods are customary for this holiday. Some say it is because at this time of year, many milk producing animals were flourishing due to the abundance of grain. Others say it is because the Torah is like the honey and milk mentioned in the Song of Songs. In any case, cheese, cheesecake, blintzes, noodle kugel and yogurt with fruit are popular foods for this holiday.

Submitted by Vicki Paterson

Judaism Unbound: podcasts on Jewish food *By Vicki Patterson*

I recommend a listen to the series of podcasts from Judaism Unbound on the topic of Jewish food. They are fascinating, educational and thought-provoking. Each is around one hour in length. They range from Podcast 315 to 320.

The first (315) called “Torah Portions- Eating Biblically” is by Elaine Goodfriend, an author of one of the essays in “Feasting and Fasting, The History and Ethics of Jewish Food” (NYU Press, Jan 2020). Using quotes from the Bible and archeological evidence, she recreates the actual sorts of food that Biblical Jews ate. She points out that many people imagine today’s “Jewish” food as what ancient Israelites consumed. For example, many see matzoh as a traditional food when, in fact, she says the bread of ancient times was more like the pita bread of today and like that of other neighboring cultures. From Biblical evidence, she describes the original Jewish diet as based on milk from goats and sheep, grain, wine and seasoned oil with very little meat. The meat that was eaten probably came from unruly, smelly male goats who were more likely to be slaughtered due to the difficulty of keeping them compared to other animals. She discusses the origins of kashrut, Jewish dietary laws not based on hygienic practices as many think today but rather on a more spiritual basis. One reason might be to practice the discipline required by God, to follow God’s will. Another reason might be to exemplify the idea that “you are what you eat”- keeping to meat from animals that ruminates – peaceful animals that don’t eat blood- to encourage rumination in humans as a practice to promote peaceful. These laws are not specified in Biblical text but grew alongside Jewish culture. I haven’t read the whole book this essay comes from but I have ordered it and look forward to the other essays in the book. The discussion on the podcast is fascinating ranging from where the prohibition of pork comes from to answering whether ancient Jews drank beer.

Podcast 316, “What’s for Dinner this Shabbat?” presents a conversation with leaders from OneTable.org, a non-profit that invites people to Shabbat dinners around the country by providing funding, sharing and enjoying Shabbat dinners together. They provide advice and tools to help people host Friday night dinners (There is a link to a very irreverent British TV show called “Friday Night Dinner” about a British Jewish family but be forewarned-some of it, though funny at times, is quite tasteless!) The podcast participants discuss the most popular Friday night food –what people call Jewish food- is most often Israeli food. They ask if take-out food is appropriate for Shabbat dinner (it is) or should the dinner be home cooked. They wonder about what constitutes “Jewish” food. They discuss the evolution of so-called Jewish food like cooking in oil for Hanukah or hamentashen for Purim. It is a lively and entertaining program.

Podcast 317 –“ Food is Spiritual Practice” discusses the evidence from the Bible for a plant-based Jewish diet. The author of Jewish Veg cites Genesis 1 and 9 and Isaiah 11 and 65 as evidence for this requirement. The podcast provides links to a vegetarian Passover Seder online on April 20 at 4pm PT (\$18.00) and a Jewish vegetarian Haggadah which underscores the humane treatment of animals and reasons for adopting a plant-based diet.

Podcast 318- “Grass-Fed Meat” is really about plant-based eating and “Impossible” meats. The participants run a vegan kosher butcher shop – GrassfedRochester.com- which offers vegan meats like corned beef, pastrami, shawarma and even bacon and ham, all of which are kosher and contain no actual meat products. They mention that some Rabbis would not describe their Impossible Pork as kosher, not because it contained

Vicki's quotes from pod casts continues

any meat but because it carried the label of “pork”

Podcast 319- “Gastronomic Judaism as Culinary Midrash” is

led by Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus, the author of the book of the same name. He is a professor of religion at Wheaton College and he sees his midrash as applying tradition to some things that are new in Jewish life. He calls it “transgressive eating”. For example, he discusses whether the custom of many Jewish families to eat a Christmas Eve dinner at a Chinese restaurant is “Jewish”. Are food choices Jewish by prescription, by family traditions or by holidays? This is important, he says, because food choice is central to Jewish identity. Where lies the conscious effort to label some foods as “Jewish”? He discusses the idea of “treif” food as well as other Jewish concepts around food choice. There is a link from this podcast to an episode of the Canadian Yiddish comedy show on You Tube called YidLife Crisis where a Jewish family goes to eat Chinese food on Christmas Eve.

The final podcast in this series is 320- “Seders In the Streets” which I haven’t yet listened to but if it is anything like the others, I’m sure it will worth while!

KHE Donations for February-March 2022

Thank you

Lucy Bayer

Judith Corwin

Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau

Judith Fuente and David Nelson

Jay Joseph and Jennifer Joseph

Nancy Bertsch

Carol Park and Steve park

Elizabeth Raybee

Sam Goldberg

Leon Springer and Nancy Marotta Springer

Margo Frank and Marc Levine

Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere

Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren

Joel Cohen

Fruits: a poem for Shavuot

from the Velveteen Rabbit

The fruits of my hands
bright origami cranes
minced garlic and chiffonaded kale
clean t-shirts, folded.
The fruits of my heart
poems of yearning and ache
text messages that say I love you
in a hundred different ways.
The fruits of my mind
sentences and paragraphs
eloquence and argument
new ideas casting bright sparks.
The fruits of my soul
the harmony that makes the chord
prayer with my eyes closed tight
in breath of tearful wonder.
I offer the first of these
the best of these
in my smudged imperfect hands
from my holy imperfect heart.
I have been in tight places
I've cried out -- and You heard me!
Now I stand on the cusp
of flow and abundance.
I give You these first fruits
not because they're "enough"
but because I want to draw near
to You, now and always.

Praying

by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Rain Song-Michael Riedel

Rain! Rain!
We should be weeping
with joy,

Our tears joining
your procession
from the heavens

to the parched and
patient earth,



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

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Board Members

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Brit Mila: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or your home; Robert Gitlin D.O. (465-7406),

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial)) Helen Sizemore (367-0250)

Community support: Willits, Divora Stern (459-9052), Ukiah, Margo Frank (463-1834)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-5351)

Rabbinical Services/Special Ceremonies are available; send your e-mail request to Sherrie Ebyam