



The Newsletter of Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley)

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

April 2007

Nissan-Iyar 5767

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

Check our web-page: www.kolhaemek.org

April 1, 10 am - 12 noon: Sunday School and Parenting Discussion Group (drop-ins welcome) with R. Shoshanah, based on *Blessings of a Skinned Knee* (Chapter 7). This discussion group will continue on Sunday, **April 22** (Ch. 9-10)

Monday, April 2, 6:00 Community Seder, Reservations required. Call Carol, 463-8526.

Friday, April 6, 6:30 Shabbat Service, dairy vegetarian *pesadich* (No bread, noodles, beans etc.) potluck to follow.

Sunday, April 15, 7:00 pm Yom haShoah with United Methodist Church. *See program on p. 5*

Friday, April 20, 6:00 pm, Round-the-Table, Singles and Family-friendly SHABBAT (bring those little ones) - candlelighting, blessings and communal dining right away (dairy/veggie potluck) with dancing, song, and story in place of our traditional Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Saturday, April 21, 7:00 pm, Ironboard Theater presents "The Journey of Vaan Nguyen." *See p. 3 for details.*

Saturday - Sunday 21-22, 5:45 Help our community prepare a meal to serve at the Homeless Shelter. Call Cassie at 468-5351 to volunteer.

Wednesday, April 26, 6:44 pm, Men's group

Tuesday, May 22: Shavuot!
look for KHE's program next month!

Sunday School Tzedakah Project

This year's Gimmel class Bagel Bag tzedakah project was very successful. The students worked very hard to get over 50 Bagel Bag lunches put together. It was amazing to watch them all work together. Unlike last year, this year almost everything we needed was donated so the amount we were able to raise was higher. The students raised \$285 to send to Darfur for Solar Cookers. That will buy about 18 ovens for 9 families. Each family receives 2 ovens and the women in the camps are being trained and paid to build them!

Thank you to everyone who participated and made this year's Bagel Bag Project a success!

Tzedakah Money Needed

When the subject of Kol HaEmek's feeding of hungry people is raised among our congregation, nearly everyone agrees that this is a very worthwhile activity. We know that our members who participate in it are very gratified, and they report that the people who are served lunches and dinners are, too.

This is not a program that operates on good feeling alone, however - it takes *money* to purchase the necessary groceries. At this time our designated funds are running low, so we're asking KHE members to help replenish them. Traditionally, Passover is a time for tzedakah. Please be as generous as you can.

Holidays and Portion of the Week

April 2 - Erev Pesach
April 3 - 10 Pesach
April 5 - Exod 33:12-34:26; Num 28:19-25
April 14 - Shemini, Leviticus 9:7
April 21 - Tazri-a-Metzora, Leviticus 12:2
April 28 - Kedoshim-Ahrei-Mot, Leviticus 19:1
May 5 - Emor - Leviticus 21:3



We Remember:

Regina L. Klayman, April
Sidney Epstein, April 1
Allen Rosenberg, April 1
Milton Coren, April 7
Leah Frankle, April 16
Allen Dale, April 17
Saul Ginsburg, April 13
Beatrice Hecht, April 20
Rose Cecelia Ray, April 21
Nathan Pelner, April 22
Pearl Horowitz, Nissan 18
Charles Sorkowitz, Nissan 28
Jessica Anne Doctors, Iyar 16

Our Sincere Condolences

To Meredith Rosenberg on the death of her father.
To Lynn Coen on the death of her grandmother, Esther Daniels.



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) Feeding the Jewish and Arab hungry 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, 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.

The ride to the end
everything gets in the way
enjoy the journey

David Vilner



In My Opinion

I think Spring is overrated! Yes I know the earth is turning green. The trees are flowering, but my nose is running. I have a long list of chores before *Pesach* (which is unbelievably early). My house and all the dishes and pots really need a good cleaning. My garden is a real mess after the winter freeze. I need to spend hours removing dead plants and replanting some of my favorites.

Yes, I do love Passover, the baking, the interesting foods prepared once a year, the gathering of friends and family. But I have noticed that each year the memories both sweet and bitter come close to the surface. I really miss the pear trees north of Ukiah that were cut down just before they blossomed. As I watch the full beautiful blossoms of the camellias fall and turn brown, I remember a devastating message of loss that I received on April 1, 25 years ago. I also remember those who came to comfort me.

As I typed the *Yahrtzeit* list into this Shema, I continued to remember all those that are missing; this is particularly poignant in our family since so many of those we loved died in the Spring. But I realize it's also true for many in our congregation, and considering this winter's news stories, it is true universally.

It's in Spring that we are in touch with those who will not see the trees blossom, will not swing a bat against a ball, or drive down the highway with the windows open and their favorite music playing.

It's at this time of year I try to call or e-mail those I haven't seen all winter. I try to check out the faces of those with whom I speak and be careful with what I say. I try very hard not to assume that everyone loves the so-called gentle season. I try to be particularly thoughtful of those who have seen many Aprils in their lives. A good *Pesach* to you all,
Carol

IRONING BOARD THEATER PRESENTS "THE JOURNEY OF VAAN NGUYEN" Saturday, April 21, 7 pm, at the Shul

This unusual film examines the pilgrimage of a Vietnamese-Israeli returning to her ancestral home after being born in the land of Israel. Vaan Nguyen is a prominent poet, fashion journalist, and blogger in Israel. Her father was one of the many "boat people" who fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975 and one of the few who were given asylum in Eretz Yisrael. Now, when the time has come to go back home, they depart for Vietnam, hoping they can reclaim their confiscated lands. Their journey becomes a parable on loss of identity and on the fate of Everyman.

The film series invites all ages and persuasions to see this unusual document, so characteristic of the present age's challenge to human identity and loyalty. The film lasts an hour and 22 minutes. A brief discussion usually follows each screening. Participants are invited to bring cushions, food, drink, and friends. Donations welcome.

Review of "Sarah & Hagar at the Well" by Margo Frank

I couldn't quite decide until the last minute whether or not I wanted to attend the performance by the Israeli women. David Smith-Ferri also had an event that night that was tempting. In the end, I chose the performance at the shul, figuring it was my only chance to see these women perform. A few days later I was sharing my response to it with Shoshanah and she asked me to share it with everyone.

For me, the performance was about the power and necessity of speaking one's truth, being heard and witnessed and then finding a way to come together with "the other." They spoke about the importance of letting go of our old stories, the ones that have defined us and held us back, and then writing new stories that reflect the truth of the present moment.

continued on page 7

Purim Review and Many Thanks

by Carol Rosenberg

Nancy Moilanen and Elizabeth Raybee know how to throw the best parties! The Shul looked wonderfully Middle Eastern! They selected excellent performers and musicians. Elizabeth wrote a great Purim-spiel, the cast was outstanding. Michael Feldman and Nancy Merling provided excellent food. The dancers were a delight. The auction and raffle were “a wee tad confusing” but that didn’t stop us from donating a goodly sum to Kol HaEmek.

We want to thank all of you who participated. We had a wonderful time!

Sunday continued the Purim experience. There were games for the children arranged and managed by Tal Sizemore and Adina Merenlander. Also an excellent children’s Purimspiel written by Bella Feldman and performed by the Gimmel class. Acorn provided the music, the raffle was fun, there was an unending supply of hamantashen brought by one and all, and the traditional reading of the Megillah was completed! Thanks to many volunteers, including Sara Esserman Melville, who worked with the children, and Dan Hibshman and Helen Sizemore, who managed the money. Divora Stern and daughter Maya supervised the kitchen and many, many more people helped, too. As soon as we know all our expenses we will share how much money we raised.

The Board is in the process of prioritizing our wish list for our congregation and the Shul. All willing to share their visions, comments and suggestions are encouraged to communicate your ideas and volunteer your help. (See below)

Possible New Shul Projects!

What would be your highest priority?

100 comfortable chairs for High Holidays
Storage shed for the chairs and other items
Stairs for the deck
Railings for the deck
Shade for the deck
New windows for the building that lock properly!
or repairs to current window locks
Ceiling insulation/Ceiling fan
Repair and audio/film system (to make it reliable)
Meditation garden with benches and a windbreak,
and many more!

Remembering the Holocaust

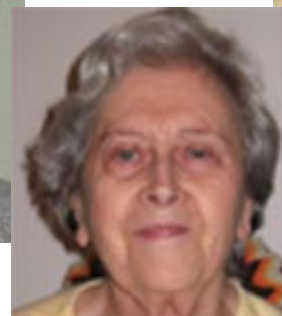
This year for our Yom HaShoa (Holocaust Remembrance Day) gathering on Sunday, April 15, at 7 pm, we have a doublehonor. Members of our own congregation will share with us their personal experiences during the Nazi years, and members of the Ukiah United Methodist Church will be co-sponsoring the evening with us in our Shul. The evening will feature live music, lighting of memorial candles and recitation of kaddish, but will focus on the individual stories of Bela and Avram Goldberg, and Rene Durand.

Bela and Avram were both born in Poland, but their paths through the Holocaust years took very different directions, with Bela landing in Auschwitz, while Avram fought in the Red Army after serving a stint in Siberia. Rene grew up in France, son of a non-Jewish doctor and Jewish mother, and his experiences provide yet another perspective on life during the war years. Each of these "elders" of our community has a moving tale to tell. We encourage you to come to hear and honor them, and to bring your young people (b’nei mitzvah-age and up) and friends for this unique occasion. By the way, Bela and Avram were invited to tell their story in Santa Rosa last year, and were asked to come back again this year. The occasion has such meaning for them that they have agreed to appear in Santa Rosa on Sunday afternoon and to be with us the same evening. This is the first time that Rene will be sharing his story in a public setting.

Bela and Avram moved to Ukiah a few years back to be closer to their children, Betty Idarius and Joel Goldberg, and their families. Rene and his wife Pat recently returned to Mendocino County (they participated in the local Jewish community years ago) and are looking forward to the birth of their first grandchild in April.



Rene



Bela



Avram



at Mariposa Institute
near Ukiah, California



Gathering Round The Mountain A Shavuot Mindfulness Retreat

Co-sponsored by practitioners in the Thich Nhat Hanh practice tradition of socially engaged Buddhism and Kol HaEmek (Voice of the Valley) Congregation, the Jewish Community of Inland Mendocino County

Co-facilitated by Rabbi Shoshanah Devorah, Dharma Teacher Lyn Fine,
Jo-ann Rosen, Susan Schulman, Alexa Singer-Telles

Friday, May 18 – Sunday, May 20, 2007

Retreat begins at 7pm, registration begins at 3:30pm,
soup and salad will be available at 6pm.

Those coming just for Fri Night Shabbat service are welcome to soup and salad - \$5 or veggie dish requested.

In Jewish tradition, Shavuot is a time to remember and experience the giving and receiving of the Torah teachings at Mt Sinai. At this retreat, we will gather together "on the mountain" to focus on three Shavuot themes from Jewish and Buddhist perspectives: revelation and awakening; gratitude for the first fruits; and the commandments and commitments of living in community. We will enjoy nourishing mindfulness practices such as silent meditation, mindful walking in the beauty of nature, and deep relaxation. Friday evening we begin with a Kabbalat Shabbat (singing) service. On Saturday night you may choose to join in the tradition of all-night study, including innovative practices for deepening awareness and resting time. Everyone is welcome--no prior experience with mindfulness, meditation or Jewish practice/traditions is necessary.

Information/Registration: Susan Schulman, email susanschulman60@comcast.net

Participation: Full participation is expected although the free Friday night service is open to all. Commuting OK.

Accommodations: "indoor camping" sleeping on the floor, in a heated room with carpet, please bring your own mat and bedding. Some beds are available. E-mail Alexa, alexast@jps.net to reserve. Outdoor camping available.

Food: Our meals are vegetarian/dairy, but the kitchen has not been koshered for traditional observance. Upon registration, each participant will be requested to bring some prepared food. If you have special needs or concerns about traditional Shabbat observance, food, or accommodations, please call Rabbi Shoshanah, 707-467-0456

Accessibility: Site is wheelchair accessible but not easily.

Fee: \$100-\$75 (sliding scale) before May 4 and \$120-\$95 after May 4 (no one turned away for lack of funds)

Dana: An offering of generosity may be made at the retreat, as is the tradition at many retreats in the Buddhist tradition

Counting the Omer: a daily meditation on attributes such as compassion and justice. Done between Pesach and Shavuot.

Info on how to count will be included with your confirmation letter. Counting begins on 4/2/07. This is an optional activity.

REGISTRATION - You will receive a confirmation letter and directions. All registration must be received by May 12.

Retreat Participation (please check): full/residential full commuter Fri Night Service & Dinner only

Total Fee \$ _____ Scholarship Donation Welcome \$ _____ Amount Included \$ _____

Name _____ Phone _____ CellPhone _____

Address _____ E mail _____

Prior experience with meditation? Yes No Prior experience with Jewish practice? Yes No

Special concerns or needs _____ (use back of flyer for more room)

Please make checks payable to **Mariposa Institute** and send to **Susan Schulman, 5358 Shafter Ave, Oakland, CA 94618**

Dear KHE Chaverim,

Anyone who grew up around a traditionally observant Jewish household can most likely remember all the scurrying to get the house thoroughly cleaned before Passover. I remember my first year in Jerusalem seeing neighbors pull every bit of furniture out of their small apartment so that they could clean the inside of their home without hindrance and then clean the furniture before returning it to the apartment.

This "practice" of cleaning includes dusting each book in a home. I can remember standing on a ladder with assistance from my daughter and taking each book off the very high wall shelves (our ceilings were over twelve feet), dusting the book and shaking it. Some years we used a feather duster; then we graduated to a vacuum attachment. I hate to admit it, but for days afterwards, we'd both be sneezing and snuffling from all the free-floating dust in the room.

Now cleaning one's house at least twice a year (before Pesach and before Rosh HaShanah) has its virtues. And some say it stems back to the ancient necessary practice of cleaning the family granary of any old leftovers and possible molds, etc., before filling it with the newly harvested spring grain. This dovetails nicely with the prohibition of having any hametz (yeast) in your home during Passover week. Halachically (legally according to Jewish law), one needs to clear out all hametz from one's house before Passover; the custom of meticulously cleaning one's house to attain that goal is just that, custom.

And then the first sheaves of the first grain to ripen, barley, were brought to the Temple in Jerusalem at Passover. This offering of the new sheaves ("omer" is a sheaf in Hebrew) marked the official beginning of the spring grain harvest, which continued throughout the Land of Israel for 49 days, until the next big holiday of Shavuot. Shavuot means "weeks" in Hebrew, and farmers counted 7 weeks between Passover and Shavuot as they harvested first their barley, and then their wheat. This period is known as the Counting of the Omer. At its conclusion, the 50th day, Shavuot was celebrated with an offering at the Temple of the first two loaves of challah baked from the new wheat. Only then did people begin to bake and eat bread from the new wheat harvest.

The Counting of the Omer is still a mitzvah today. Congregations and families have special Omer calendars, so they can fulfill the commandment of counting each day between Passover and Shavuot. We start counting on the second day of Pesach (day one of the Omer) and finish on day forty nine, the day before Shavuot. This is a rote counting accompanied by a daily blessing, which can be made more fun for kids with an Omer calendar with eye-catching illustrations and with a page to flip each day.

Since most of us are not farmers depending on the harvest for our daily bread in the coming year, this counting does not have the relevance it once did. But we can trace these 49 days of the Omer as paralleling our path from the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai, from the awesome Pesach experience of release from slavery to the awesome Shavuot experience of revelation. As is so often noted, with the Exodus we took ourselves out of Egypt, but we hadn't (haven't?) yet taken the Egypt out of us. Grumbling, backsliding, complaining, rebelling, missing the comforts and familiarity of our slavery, we made our way to the Holy Mountain. And with everyone present (yes, you and I, too) we witnessed the presence of the divine and received the Torah.

Centuries ago, kabbalists came up with a way of helping us to trace our journey from Pesach (miraculous freedom) to Shavuot (revelation and commitment). Each day of Counting the Omer has been transformed into a next step along our path, preparing ourselves for receiving the deepest Torah we can, for committing our lives to manifesting the divine qualities that make up the Tree of Life within each of us. Many of you have danced with me the Hokey-Pokey *Eitz Chaim* dance in which we move through the Godly qualities of *chesed* (loving kindness), *gevurah* (restraint, strength), *tiferet* (balance, harmony), *netzach* (victory, endurance), *hod* (radiance, glory), *yesod* (foundation) and *malchut* (all of us!) as they are expressed via our bodies.

Rabbi's Letter, continued

Kabbalists recognize that counting the Omer (*Sefirat ha Omer*) gives us a week to focus on each of these seven qualities, or *sefirot*. The seven days of each week give us an opportunity to focus on the seven sefirot within each *sefirah*. So the first day of the Omer, we look at *chesed* of *chesed*; the second day, *gevurah* of *chesed*, and so forth. The second week we move on to the *chesed* of *gevurah*, and then the *gevurah* of *gevurah*, and so forth. Thus, each day our perspective changes as we look at who we are vis-a-vis the particular aspect of that day's *sefirah*, and how that particular accounting (*sefirah* comes from the root "to count") can move us forward on our consciousness journey.

Now this might sound quite abstruse and abstract, but there are many guides these days to help us Count the Omer as part of our personal journey. Two booklets I have used are Rabbi Yonassan Gershom's "49 Gates of Light" and Rabbi Ted Falcon's "A Journey of Awakening." You're also invited to peruse the World-Wide Web, and discover which one of the many listings under Counting the Omer appeals to you. From a superficial scanning, I liked the Daily Omer Meditation offered by <CountingtheOmerwithAish> but other listings with Aish didn't appeal to me. <WelcometotheHomeCalendar> is a fun way to let Homer Simpson lead you through the Omer, but is not intended as a consciousness raiser.

Psalms reminds us: "Help us to treasure each day," and Counting the Omer is certainly a tool for doing so. And remember, while we don't bring offerings to the Temple these days, we still have the mitzvah opportunity to offer tzedakah on both of these major holidays. May our spring harvest be abundant, and may our offerings be generous. Although we each create our own footsteps along the way, may the companionship of our fellow travelers give us support and heighten/deepen our sense of participation in this awesome journey.

B'shalom oovrachah, In peace and blessing, Hag Sameach, Joyous Holiday, Shoshanah

This spring at our Shul we'll be celebrating Pesach with a communal first-night seder and then Shavuot May 22 with food and talent offerings from our children, followed by open learning sessions for adults. For those of you ready for more of an immersion, you are welcome to the "Round the Mountain" retreat the weekend before Shavuot, see page 5.

"Sarah & Hagar" continued from page 3

My ideas of what "peace work" means changed. When they do the peace tent in Israel, the tent of Hagar and Sarah, all agendas are left outside. To them, peace work does not mean pushing my peace agenda, but rather setting aside my agenda and making peace with the opposition.

Peace work means that we don't compare our suffering with the suffering of others. The slaughter of Palestinians happened in 1948. The Holocaust happened during WWII. These women did not question or compare their suffering.

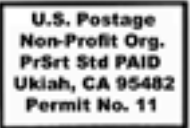
I was also impressed when they told us about the many individuals and groups who are doing peace work in Israel and the Palestinian territory.

At the end of the performance and discussion, they encouraged us to buy the items they had for sale, including Dorit's powerful art work.

I kept being drawn back to one painting of a figure, wrapped in gauze, sitting in a cave-like space. It was haunting and I wasn't sure I wanted to actually live with it in my home. I decided to ask Dorit about it. She told me that it was the first piece she did when the Intifada started and she was living in the US. Out of that place of pain, of turning to rock, had come the impetus to create. I knew I had to have this piece, to hang it on the wall of my own art studio. To use it as a reminder that out of destruction and suffering, creativity can emerge.



Kol HaEmek/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.

Our Mission is to express and support Judaism in the following ways:

- To provide a space for religious study and prayer
- To share life cycle events through meaningful Jewish traditions
- To offer and sponsor Jewish education for all ages
- To be inclusive of all partnership and family configurations
- To include interfaith families and Jews-by-choice
- To network with other Jewish communities
- To educate and share our culture with other Mendocino County residents
- To be a foundation for *tikkun olam* (healing of the world) as a community through socially just actions and education, and by mitzvot (good deeds)
- To offer membership in exchange for financial and other contributions, and allow all to participate regardless of ability to pay

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

Kol HaEmek	468-4536
Board Members:	
Carol Rosenberg, President	463-8526
Dan Hibshman, Vice President	462-7471
David Koppel, Treasurer (Financial committee)	485-8910
Bill Ray, Secretary	459-5850
Nancy Merling (Rabbi's Council)	456-0639
Divora Stern	459-9052
Alan Acorn Sunbeam	463-8364
Steven Levin	462-3131
Robert Klayman	462-5067

Address changes (e-mail, etc): contact David Koppel davekoppel@yahoo.com or call (485-8910)

Brit Milah: Doctors willing to do circumcisions in their office or in your home: Robert Gitlin, D.O. (485-7406);

Sam Goldberg, M.D. (463-8000); Jeremy Mann, M.D. (463-8000); Sid Mauer, M.D. (463-8000),

Chanan Feld, Certified Mohel (510-524-0722). **Assistance with the ceremony, contact the Rabbi** (see below)

Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial): Eva Strauss-Rosen (459-4005); Helen Sizemore (462-1595)

Community Support: *If you need help (illness, family crisis) or you can be called on when others need help;*

in Willits, call Divora Stern (459-9052); In Ukiah, Tal Sizemore (462-1595): Lake County (*Volunteer needed, call a board member*)

Editor of the Shema: Carol Rosenberg, Dan Hibshman & Tal Sizemore (carolrosenberg@sbcglobal.net)

Interfaith Council: Cassie Gibson (468-5351) (Food preparation for homeless in Ukiah)

Jewish Community Information and Referral: Bay Area activities and services (415) 777-4545 or toll free at (877)777- 5247.

Library: At the Kol HaEmek shul, 8591 West Road, Redwood Valley; open at shul events and by appointment

Movies-at-the-Shul: Bill Ray (459-5850)

New Members: Carol Rosenberg (463-8526)

Rabbi's Council: assists with community and calendar planning; **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)