

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

Friday, June 8, 6:30 p.m. Kabbalah Shabbat with Rabbi Shoshanah, vegetarian potluck supper to follow.

Wednesdays, June 13, 20, 27, 7:00 pm Pirkei Avot (Sayings of the Fathers) returns!

Saturday, June 16, 7:00 pm Movie night Jellyfish 2007 see page 9

Sunday, June 17, Feeding the Hungry call Dan Hibshman to help, 462-7471

Sunday, June17, 3-6 pm Father's Day Bash featuring Saul Kaye, pioneer of Jewish blues, and Herron Spence, our Miss Mendocino. Potluck picnic behind the shul!! Word of advice: bring lawn chairs and blankets to sit on the grass!

Friday, June 22, 6:30 pm. Kabbalah Shabbat service with R Shoshanah vegetarian potluck to follow.

Sunday, June 30 at 2:00, Amy Wachspress's launch of her new book at Mendocino Book Co., School St, Ukiah

Please note! Carol Rosenberg's e-mail address has changed. It is now <<u>carolrosenberg@pacific.net</u>>

Pirkei Avot/ Sayings of the Fathers Round 3, 7 pm, Wed, June 13

Study with Rabbi Shoshanah. Two years ago we started studying together these classic pithy sayings from the ancient rabbis of the Talmud. We made our way through chapter 1, and last year proceeded to complete chapter 2. This June, we will start with chapter 3. Chapter 3 opens with: "Know from where you came, to where you are going, and before whom in the future you will give an account and reckoning. You came from a fetid drop, you are going to a place of dust, worms, and maggots, and you will give an account in the future before the Sovereign of Sovereigns, the Holy One, Blessed Be." Sound like fun? Come join us.

Congratulations! to Eliana Gitlin and Herron Spence on graduation from high school. Eliana is off to U.C.Santa Cruz and Herron to the Miss California Pageant in June and U.C Irvine in September.

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) Congregation Eshel Avraham in Beersheva, to build a bomb shelter for their nursery school. Make out a check to KHE or you can send your own check to: Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 832, New York, New York 10115 Question? Call:

David Koppel, 485-8910 send checks to: Kol HaEmek, P.O. Box 416, Redwood Valley, CA 95470

Mazal Tov to Margo Frank and Marc Levine on the birth of their first granddaughter, Sonia Elizabeth Hudson, born Sunday 5/6/12, weighing 6 lbs 9 oz, 18 inches long, with lots of dark curly hair. Congratulations to mother Lily and father Alan and brother Lucca.

Portion of the Week and Holidays From Book Four Numbers /B'Midbar

June 2-Naso June9 Beha alotecha June 16 Shelach Lecha June 23 - Korach June 30 Hukath

We Remember

Sylvia Marans Elberg - June Vera Meyerhoff - June Daniel Rosenberg - June 1 Edward Wandrei - June 6 Helen Feinberg-Ginsburg - June 6 Thelma Cohn - June 12 Wilma Sizemore June - 16 Joseph P. Suffel - June 21 Eliot Rivers - June 31 Paul Aaron Kowarsky - Sivan 14

Mazal Tov to Avraham and Ruti Katz (in Israel) on the birth of their "very happy" grandson Simon Winslow to Avraham's daughter Teddy Winslow on April 26 (Israel's Independence Day this year). Avraham writes: "We are all very happy about it." You can contact Avraham at <u>avkat2@vahoo.com</u>.

Dale Harrison has recently had surgery for w lung cancer and is recovering. We send him and wife Laurie Spence and their children our love and prayers for his refuah shleimah/ perfect and complete healing, refuat hanefesh ve/refuat haguf/healing of soul and healing of body.

KHE Donations for April

Judith M. Corwin Rachel Elkins and Dana Thibeau Harvey and Jackie Frankle David and Linda Koppel Adina Merenlender and Kerry Heise Nancy Horowitz Moilanen Linda Posner Andrea and Dennis Patton Darline Bergere and Josh Bergere Andy Coren and Yvonne Coren Carol Orton Janice Berman Vergilia Dakin

Amy Wachspress invites you to the June 30 launch of her novel *Memories from Cherry Harvest*

A few years ago Amy read excerpts from her manuscript at Kol HaEmek on Holocaust Remembrance Day. That manuscript, now a completed novel, will be published by Counterpoint Press in June. Mendocino Book Company on School St. in Ukiah is hosting a book launch event for *Memories from Cherry Harvest* on Sunday, June 30, at 2:00 pm. The event will feature Amy reading from the book and sharing the miraculous story of her journey to publication as the winner of the Frances Fabri Literary Prize. The reading will be followed by a cherry pie buffet. Part of Memories from Cherry Harvest takes place during the Holocaust. The story charts the trajectory of a Jewish family over the course of three generations of women. Visit Amy's website (www.wozabooks.com) or her *Memories from Cherry Harvest* Facebook page for more information.

"When I remember Russia, I ache with longing for the village of my birth, where the beloved grandparents magically produced candy in a handshake and told stories of long ago when God spoke to humans and enchantments filled the world." So begins Wachspress's novel *Memories from Cherry Harvest*, a family saga spanning seventy years painted on the broad canvas of nations at war and in peace. Despite the challenges and heartbreak of unfolding events, three generations of women insist on celebrating life's bounty as babies are born, children raised, men loved, friendships forged, and cherry pies baked. *Memories from Cherry Harvest* is a spiritual quest that explores the physics of memory and demonstrates how the tenacity of the human spirit can ultimately withstand and overcome the memory of tragedy.



COMMENTARY by Harvey Frankle

Two years pass since my first visit to Israel and I return again a day and a half after the Six Day War with similar results: I love kibbutz life. The feeling in the air was incredibly hopeful that now that Israel occupied Palestinian territory the Arabs **had** to sue for peace: peace for land - it was a no-brainer.

I returned home at the end of the summer of 1967 to enter grad school. On my way to an M.S.W. I was allowed to practice my community organizational field work reorganizing Students For Israel, and, ultimately, briefly meeting Yitzhak Rabin, then ambassador to the U.S. when we brought him to U. of Buffalo for a speech and dinner.

Years went by and I was still turned off to Judaism as a religion, but on my great odyssey west looking for a home I decided not to stay at the Ananda Marga Yoga house in Wichita on Yom Kippur - it would just be too weird, opting instead for the University of Man in Manhattan, Kansas, before continuing my way west.

A year later I found myself publisher and head of a non-profit that published a community people's yellow pages in L.A. we dubbed "The Venice People's Rainbow Pages". What can you do? It was 1972 and we were all hippies then, weren't we? Anyway I now had sufficient gravitas to be elected to the Venice Town Council, strictly an advisory adjunct to the Los Angeles City Councilwoman of our district. This involved going to lots of meetings. At some point a young rabbi asked if we might attend a small get-together at his and his rabbi student's wife's house. We looked at each other and realized that about 95% of us who met regularly at left-wing subcommittee meetings were Jewish anyway and figured why not add one more meeting to our schedule. So, to borrow a title from the women's movement, our Jewish conciousness-raising group was born. Our bible: the Jewish Catalogue, which was to us like the Whole Earth Catalog was to the countercultural movement from which we all sprang. We spent a lot of time examining and exploring what it meant to us to be Jewish, frequently dipping into the Catalogue to figure out what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it, pretty much making it up along the way. Additionally, embedded in the drug culture where we were exploring different ways of experiencing "reality" I became aware that there was a force that was larger than myself and that the rationalist paradigm that says I only believe what I can see, taste, feel, was no longer operational. In other words I gave myself permission to believe. A midrash says that when Moses tried to part the Sea of Reeds he would hold up his staff, thump it on the ground, wave it around and nothing would happen. It took his brother-in-law, Nachshon, to jump off a cliff and into the water before it would part. It took a leap of faith and, yeah, I took it, and as Augustine says: "I believe so that I may understand," and as the Torah states "We will do and we will hear," that with the doing comes the understanding.

So we looked for new ways to express our Judaism and our faith that would make sense to us and in this way took part in the movement that we now call Jewish Renewal.

CHRONICLES IV, Part A

G-D WAS IN THIS PLACE AND I, I DID NOT KNOW

Isaac's wife Rebecca is the mother of twins. They are already battling for supremacy in her womb and, as told by G-d, they are two nations struggling. In fact, when they are born Jacob emerges grasping his brother's heel, trying to hold Esau back from being the all-important first born.

As the two children grow older their differences become stark. Esau is the hunter, the athlete, volatile, impulsive, violent, shallow. Jacob stays close to the tents. He is the shepherd, contemplative, clever, perhaps spiritual, perhaps touched by G-d.

The parents know the difference. The question Rebecca, in her wisdom, asks, is who would be the more successful at ensuring the continuity of the family and its unique faith in an unseen deity who has promised this tiny family of nomads a world-shattering role in the affairs of humanity. Could it be a son who is wholly of this earth, whose sole enjoyment and sport is to hunt and to kill, who will sell his birthright in an unthinking, uncaring way for a bowl of stew? Whose hunger is entirely on the physical plane not far different from that which he hunts? Rebecca thinks not. Isaac may need some convincing. Not about which son fits and which doesn't, perhaps, but about how to defy a millennia-old tradition of the blessing of the first born as the inheritor and progenitor of the family tradition. When Esau marries Hittite women without regard to the now established family tradition of returning to Haran, the ancestral homeland, to continue the race, his fate is sealed. The plot that Rebecca hatches to transfer title of the family's future to Jacob may have been a subterfuge within a subterfuge. Isaac, who supposedly can no longer see, sends Esau on a long journey to hunt, kill, and prepare a meal for him. This effectively gets him out of the way for a significant period of time - certainly enough time for Jacob to slaughter a sheep and to prepare a meal. The set piece that follows --was this a stealing of a birthright or a mutual recognition of the way things must be? Did Isaac truly know he was blessing Jacob? Did Abraham truly know that G-d would not ask him to sacrifice Isaac? It would seem so. G-d only knows.

Esau is now so angry that Jacob must flee for his life. Jacob the homebody, the unadventurous, the timid, must leave home for the first time, perhaps never to see his mother and father again because his own twin brother is trying to murder him!

His first night alone under the stars could have been the loneliest, most terrifying night of his, or anyone's, life. Instead, it was a transformative experience. He dreams of Heaven's Gate: a stairway with angels going up and angels going down, so that in the midst of this utter aloneness, where humanity is nowhere to be found, angels will always be with Jacob. G-d tells Jacob She will always be with him and that he and his children will inherit the Land and be a blessing to all the nations of the world . Jacob wakes up. Confused by the wilderness in which he finds himself, shaken by the dream's power, and frightened by the message, he wipes the sleep from his eyes and whispers, "Wow! G-d really must have been right here, in this place, and I, I did not know!" If, in other words, I had known that G-d was here I would never have gone to sleep. Because the beginning of knowing about G-d is being fully present where you are, paying attention, being awake. Now a layer of spirituality is added to Jacob's existence. If G-d was here and I did not know, Jacob ponders, then maybe He's other places as well, maybe all places. Jacob anoints the stone pillow he attributes to his revelation with oil so that he may recognize it when he returns 20 years later, and names the spot Beth El, House of G d.

to be continued

Dear KHE Chaverim,

I'm glad to share with you that on Sunday, September 9 of this year, we will gather for a day of "Civil Discourse." Many of you expressed interest in exploring the topic of Israel/Palestine at our Annual Community Meeting last winter and in the questionnaire sent out to everyone afterwards. This special day is in response. There will be room to hear a spectrum of views and concerns regarding Israel and Palestine as voiced by you. And the day will be set up as a kickoff for further gatherings of folks who would like to continue engaging together. We have not chosen the date of September 9 accidentally, but because it falls one week before Rosh HaShanah, and will become our program for Slichot this year. Slichot usually falls on the Saturday night of the week before the New Year, and focuses on preparation for the inner work of the High Holidays. Slichot means "forgivenesses," or "pardons" or "sorries," and relates to the clearing we need to do to return to our truest and purest source, to be at one with ourselves and others and God. So instead of convening Saturday night for this (it's typically been a sparsely attended occasion at KHE), we will be meeting on Sunday to focus on Slichot in the context of Israel/Palestine, and to focus on Israel/Palestine in the context of Slichot.

Why even aim to combine Israel/Palestine programming with Slichot? It has not been unusual for discussions of Israel/Palestine in Jewish communities to become highly accusative, defensive, and divisive, and deteriorate into intense vitriolic projection of feelings onto others present. We do not want this to happen in our community--it is not a helpful response for us or for the well-being of Israelis or Palestinians. It has been suggested that this can happen because, regarding Israel, we Jews may see ourselves (consciously or not) as either prophets or guardians, with the former focusing exclusively on Israel's faults, and the latter defending Israel at all cost. I sense that we have been generally wise and caring and fortunate in our KHE community. When Dorit and Ibtisam presented "At the Well of Sarah and Hagar" several years back, I was concerned beforehand that the program might evoke violent responses from folks who chose to show up (remember, we publicized it in the paper and with posters, too). Oh, no, said our performers, we bring people to tears. And they did, in a great resonant response to a heartfelt outpouring of difficult experiences they and their Jewish and Muslim families had lived through. That was when I really heard for the first time that to really want peace, we must care for the well-being of both sides.

And I remember a KHE Tisha B'Av that came after fighting between Israel and Hizbollah in Lebanon. When we finished reading the very graphic Biblical description of the siege and destruction of ancient Jerusalem, we went around our circle and each person had the opportunity to express what was arising for them re modern Israel and recent events. There was no cross conversation, simply listening. Tisha B'Av is a holy and sad occasion by its very definition, and the heavy sanctity of the occasion provided a container for our thoughts and feelings and prayers.

Folks from our KHE community joined me on a trip to Israel several years back to discover our heritage in this ancient land. KHE then adopted an Acco non-profit which served both poor Israeli Jews and Arabs, and which we had visited, as an optional address for your tzedakah funds (and we continue to suggest Israeli options for your tzedakah). A year ago we had a celebratory Shabbat dinner to hear stories from my stay in Eretz Yisrael. I have written columns from Israel during each of my subsequent trips, sometimes touching on Israel/Palestine issues, sometimes not.

(When you go back to wherever to visit family and friends, travel for professional purposes, or head for a vacation, do you always focus on the larger political and ethnic strife, social inequalities and injustices that exist in that place?)

Continuing to track our KHE programming touching on Israel/Palestine, I do need to mention two instances in which ruffled feathers ended communication. In the wake of a big and energized annual community meeting a few years back, folks who felt critical of Israel policy re Palestinians started an email group to encourage communication around their positions. I signed on to the group, and followed all the emails, but never actively participated. Within a relatively short time, it seemed that the main correspondents were no longer folks who were members of the KHE community. Some weren't even local, and I would categorize these latter as "guardians" as defined above. On the other hand, a local very vocal "prophet" on this list declined to even receive our emails of KHE events. The list then shut down. One of the original proponents of the email project said to me recently that he felt the list had been taken over by pro-Israeli advocates. I was surprised to hear this view. What I witnessed were emails coming from battle positions, ready and eager to do full fight. It seemed that the voicing of different views engendered finger-on-the-trigger responses, rather than open-hearted listening with a desire to learn. Folks didn't want to hear positions different from their own. Granted, this is my take on what happened, and if you were a participant, yours may differ.

The second instance of communication interruptus was when Israeli Vice Consul Ismail Khaldi came to KHE to share his own autobiographical story as a Bedouin Israeli from the Galilee (we had invited him to speak specifically on this topic), and was faced with folks in the audience who wanted a platform to speak their positions on Israel. I recall Carol Rosenberg standing in the aisle to attempt calm in the heated back and forth between a "prophet" and someone whose mother lives on a kibbutz on the receiving end of missiles from Gaza. Our guest speaker invited folks to continue such a discussion when he wasn't present, and said he was prepared to address the topic he'd come for. When the next person from the audience proceeded to give a political speech rather than ask a question, Khaldi abruptly walked out. Quite surprised by the turn of events, I followed after him, since we'd come together. I heard from others who stayed that the room split between those who felt we'd rudely dishonored an invited guest, and those who were annoyed that they couldn't address what to them were important issues. For my own part, I felt badly that I'd acceded to Khaldi's request to introduce himself and moderate as well, so that I hadn't had an opportunity to set a tone for the evening. I was quite taken aback by the sudden turn of events.

In the fall of 2010, Shantam Zohar came to KHE and told us of his path as a young Israeli eager to serve in an elite army unit, and how his army experiences actually reshaped his outlook. Reading from his book "Mideast Tango: A Story of War and Awakening," he moved everyone present to our core. And yet there was no more than a minyan of people who attended, if even that. I couldn't help wondering if the fact that the publicity described him as an Israeli soldier from an elite combat unit had simply turned off the folks who say they care so much about peace in that part of the world.

We show Jewish films once a month at the Shul. Quite a few of them have been Israeli, and a number have focused on Israeli/Arab and Israeli/Palestinian themes. On occasion, during services, I have brought in excerpts from poet Yehudah Amichai, author Amos Oz and other modern Israeli writers. At High Holidays last fall, someone spontaneously shared a poem by an American Palestinian. And we have included Israel, and all the inhabitants of the land, in our prayers for peace. Young Israelis, passing through, have read Torah for us on Simchat Torah, which was a first for them, having grown up in secular homes. Over a period of months last year, I attempted to make contact with representatives of the local Muslim community, but to date, no meeting has come of this. This April, on Yom HaShoah, Maya Schwartz touched us all with her story of her years as a child in France under Nazi rule. Concluding this episode in her life, she felt called to relate how marvelous for her back then was the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and how elated she felt when she heard the news. regarding Israel.

And thus concludes my summing up of how Israel/Palestine has been a part of our KHE experience since my arrival in 2003. This year we are trying something new.

We have folks in our community who are skilled in mediation, and we have folks who have first-hand familiarity with Israel and/or organizations espousing one view or another. But our Board and I agree that it is to our advantage for this initial venture in focusing directly on our feelings and opinions re Israel/ Palestine to bring in a skilled and experienced outsider. Rachel Eryn Kalish (Google if you are curious) is a facilitator who has served communities in this capacity for years. I first met her at a retreat of the Board of Rabbis of N. California when she led a session for rabbis on being able to safely express our feelings/ thoughts, etc., regarding Israel. She is looking forward to working with people in our community to plan and lead our Slichot day, and then we will see what emerges as we move forward.

So mark the date: Sunday, September 9th.

And it's not too early to say if you are interested in reading Torah at High Holidays or leading some other part of our services Please contact me now.

B'Shalom oovrachah/ In Peace and Blessing, Shoshanah

Some observations from Shoshanah on Jew and Arabs in Israel from her recent trip:

Regarding my recent trip to Israel this spring, I noted that the roadside restaurant we happened to stop at in the Galilee was run by Arabs and served classic Arabic food. Israelis, both Jewish and Arab, and tourists enjoyed the Tiberias hot spring waters together. The person who sold admission to the spa and the person who guarded valuables were both Arab. The gas station attendant at a big highway intersection was an Arab from Nazareth, and a local Galilee policeman was also Arab, this time Bedouin. (I mention this last distinction because many Israeli Arabs today see themselves as Palestinians whose nationality (citizenship) is Israeli. Ishmael Khaldi, the former assistant consul for Israel in the U.S. northwest, and who hailed from the Galilee, identified himself as a Bedouin Israeli as distinct from a Palestinian Israeli.) Back in urban surroundings, I sat down at a cafe near Tel Aviv University, and was witness to a spirited conversation at the next table. Some six young adults, male and female, clearly identifiable as students from their garb and manner, were chatting away animatedly, with others pausing to join them and their conversation for a few minutes before moving on. I could identify them as Arab only by their happening to be speaking Arabic otherwise, to me they were indistinguishable from university students anywhere in the modern world. All of these observations made me feel good about the interweaving that is occurring among Israeli Jews and Arabs, all of whom are citizens of the state. And yet after a soccer game in the Jerusalem stadium, hundreds of young fans of the local team moved over to the nearby shopping mall and shouted anti-Arab slogans, attacked Arab workers in the center, and were very rude to Arab shoppers. Mall security and local police were slow in responding and slower still to press any charges. This was headline news. And during my stay a heavy barrage of rockets over successive days poured down on the western Negev Israel communities which have been targeted from Gaza for years now.

Film Jellyfish 2007

Israeli co-directors Etgar Keret and Shira Geffen's ensemble comedy drama Meduzot (aka Jellyfish, 2007) weaves together multiple seriocomic tales of intersecting lives, set against the deep azure backdrop of Middle Eastern seascapes. Affording equal emphasis to each tale, Keret and Geffen first hone in on Batya (Sarah Adler), a young woman employed as a caterer, whose firm places strongest emphasis on weddings.



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
- To offer 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 (good deeds)
- To offer membership in exchange for financial and other contributions and allow all to participate regardless of the ability to pay

Kol HaEmek Information & Resources

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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)