

Jewish Museum & Cultural Center

Spring / 2025



Jewish Museum & Cultural Center
Chevra T'helim Synagogue
1918-1986



Hello everyone!

Let me begin by saying that our December Hanukkah party was so much fun. Families and adults enjoyed socializing and partaking in latkes, hot beverages and crafts. We will be making this an annual happening.

Every January we look forward to spending cozy Saturday nights here at the museum for our *Saturdays at Seven* movie series. The movies featured this year were: *The Juggler*, *For the Boys*, *My Favorite Year*, and *The Night They Raided Minsky's*. We were fortunate to have Rabbi Michael Panitz, Mark Solberg and Peter Schulman as presenters for these films. It was extra special to have Peter Schulman presenting *The Night They Raided Minsky's* because his father, Arnold Schulman, was one of the film's screenwriters.

Our lecture series began on February 9th with Dr. Craig Schranz speaking on *Judaism and the Ethics of War*, followed by an interactive lecture entitled *Flags Do Not Wave in a Vacuum* given by Dr. Vered Sakal. On March 23rd Dr. Bryan Daves spoke on *Contemporary Israel: A Guide for the Perplexed*. There is still time to get your ticket to see Jewish historian and revered local Rabbi Michael Panitz speak Sunday April 6th at 2:00 p.m. His lecture is entitled *Jews from Arab Lands, The Forgotten Refugees*.

Sunday, April 27th at 2:00 p.m. a few days after Yom HaShoah, Rabbi Panitz will lead us in the rededication of *The Daffodil Project* followed by a historical review of the Czechoslovakian Holocaust Torah displayed in the museum. This Torah is one of the 1564 Czech Torahs rescued from Czechoslovakia after WWII and taken to Westminster Synagogue in 1964. It was subsequently purchased by The Brewer and Glassman families and donated to the museum.

The Daffodil Project, headquartered in Atlanta, GA is striving to plant over a million daffodil bulbs worldwide to represent the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust including children worldwide who are victims of violence. We hope you will come and support this event. Our paver project is underway. Please consider purchasing a paver to memorialize a family member or person who lost their life in the Holocaust. The pavers will be placed in our memorial garden alongside the thousands of daffodils which bloom each March. This area will be further enhanced as The Portsmouth Museum and Fine Arts Commission have sponsored a public mural featuring a mosaic of trees that will be installed on the side of a building facing the daffodils

Keep an eye out, for our on-line silent auction in May. There will be all sorts of gift cards and items to purchase.

The Zelma G. Rivin Wonderful Wednesdays Music series will begin July 30th with Francesca Hurst, pianist and classical composer, followed on August 6th by Trio Niche an ensemble specializing in the classical music period 1780-1820. On August 13 the Jae Sinnett Trio will perform. This trio has something for every serious jazz lover "from swing to fusion to funk." Bagels and Fraylox Klezmer Band will be returning on August 20th which is always an enjoyable treat.

We are planning another rummage sale for September 7, 2025.

The Jewish Museum and Cultural Center is a wonderful place to visit. If you have never been inside the museum, please contact Jennifer Priest our Interim Executive Director to schedule a tour. You can learn more about us and our upcoming events by visiting our website www.jewishmuseumportsmouth.org

Respectfully,

Karen M. Plotnick

President, Friends of Chevra T'helim, Inc
DBA The Jewish Museum and Cultural Center

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Mission Statement:

"To present an environment where visitors and the community can celebrate and learn about Jewish history, faith, and culture."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHEVRA T'HELIM, INC.

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The Juggler



In 1949, former concentration camp inmate and Berlin native Hans Muller (Kirk Douglas) immigrates to Israel where, due to psychological problems, he can't adjust to peacetime life in a strange new country.

Introduction and postscript provided

by Mark Solberg.

(1953) Drama 1:24

For the Boys



Talented USO entertainer Dixie Leonard (Bette Midler) and comedian Eddie Sparks (James Caan) deal with their relationship over the course of 5 decades from WWII to the Vietnam War era to their twilight ear in the 90s. Introduction and postscript provided by Rabbi Michael Panitz.

(1991) Musical Comedy Drama 2:18

The Jewish Museum & Cultural Center

Presents:
Chevra Cinema



Saturdays at 7

Suggested donation \$10 per person

January 4th

The Juggler

January 11th

For the Boys

January 18th

My Favorite Year

January 26th

The Night They Raided Minsky's

Expanded refreshments provided!

My Favorite Year



A aging dissolute matinee idol (Peter O'Toole) is slated to appear on a live TV variety show in 1954, and a young comedy writer (Mark Lin-Baker) is tasked with the thankless job of keeping him ready and sober for the broadcast.

Introduction and postscript provided by Rabbi Michael Panitz.

(1982) Comedy 1:32

The Night They Raided Minsky's

A young Amish woman (Britt Ekland) runs away from her home in Pennsylvania to New York City, where she hopes to act in religious stage plays but ends up performing in a burlesque theatre.

Introduction and postscript provided by Dr. Peter Schulman



(1968) Musical Comedy 1:39

Thank you to the Cinema Committee: Dr. Peter Schulman; Rabbi Michael Panitz; Mary Barnes; Mark Solberg and Brendan Wagner who made our January 2025 Cinema Series a grand success. Despite cold and one snowy evening, we had a total of 104 patrons during the run of the series. We collected a total of \$790.55. We believe this is a record. Our enhanced reception was due to the support provided by



There are five Saturdays in January 2026 so mark your calendars now!



A Reminder about the **“Rivin Circle”**

National statistics show that less than 8 percent of Americans ever think to put a gift for charity in their wills or other estate plans. You can plan a legacy gift which will offer thoughtful and creative ways to prepare for the future, while generously supporting the Jewish Museum and Cultural Center (JMCC) in Portsmouth, VA. Join the **“Rivin Circle,”** and leave a legacy that reflects your passion and remains an inspiration for generations to come.

Your gift can support any aspect of the JMCC —including:

- Expansion and care of our archives
- Curatorial research and exhibition development
- New program development
- Region-wide educational initiatives
- Capital improvements to our existing historic structure

Whether you wish to put your donation to work today or benefit the JMCC after your lifetime, the Jewish Museum and Cultural Center is committed to developing planned gifts that are meaningful to each donor, and tailored to fit their financial and estate-planning goals.

You can join the “Rivin Circle” by making a legacy gift that supports JMCC’s future. To learn how, please contact the Museum - 757-391-9266 or jmccportsmouth@gmail.com.

Preserving the past for our future.

Currently the Rivin Circle has 6 members who have committed to the future!

Won't you consider joining?

Jewish Museum & Cultural Center

2025 Arthur Z. Steinberg Lecture Series

Jewish Topics for Contemporary Times

Sundays at 2:00 pm

Judaism and the Ethics of War

FEBRUARY 9

Dr. Craig Schranz



Navy veteran, emergency room physician, Jewish Scholar and local leader, Schranz will discuss Jewish morals and how they relate to modern wartime ethics.

Flags Do Not Wave in a Vacuum:

***National Victories and Individual Dilemmas -
An Exploration of Modern Jewish Identities***

MARCH 16

Dr. Vered Sakal



Through the art work of Israeli photographer Adi Nes, Sakal will address contemporary questions about unity, diversity, and identity.

***NEW DATE**

Contemporary Israel: A Guide for the Perplexed

Renowned professor in the School of Public Affairs at American University, specializing in politics of the Middle East, Daves will discuss the political landscape in modern day Israel.



MARCH 23

Dr. Bryan Daves

***NEW DATE**

Jews from the Arab Lands: The Forgotten Refugees

Jewish historian, revered local Rabbi, and professor of History and Religious Studies, Panitz will discuss the timely topic of Israel's resettlement of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.



APRIL 6

Dr. Michael Panitz

**\$20 PER LECTURE
\$60 FOR THE SERIES OF 4
STUDENTS \$10 WITH ID**

**Jewish Museum & Cultural Center
607 Effingham Street, Portsmouth**

For more information and to purchase tickets go to www.jewishmuseumportsmouth.org/upcoming-events OR call 757-391-9266



Contributions December 16, 2024 – March 25, 2025

GENERAL

Barry Ashburn	Howard Horwitz	Ron Reshefsky
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IN HONORARIUM

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Cheri Levin

The Jewish Museum and

Cultural Center

is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax-exempt.

As we expand The Daffodil Project, we are offering pavers for sale. They can be inscribed as a memorial or a celebration of life. The goal is to sell 100 pavers, providing a 10' x 10" area to use for outdoor programs. To date we have sold 24!

Details can be located at this website:

[Donate to Friends of Chevra Thelim d/b/a Jewish Museum](#)



[Brick Fundraising Campaign](#)



Chevra Thelim Genealogy

We have received requests to include the history of founding Chevra Thelim families in each newsletter. Listed below is information on the Reshefsky Family. If you have information on a founding family and would like to have it included in a future newsletter, please email us at jmccportsmouth@gmail.com.

We request a \$300 donation for a 1/2 page of genealogical information and a \$500 donation for a full page.

This issue is provided by the descendants of **Max and Mary Reshefsky**. Max was a signatory on the original purchase/loan documents and first President of Chevra Thelim.

We are profoundly grateful that they found their way to Portsmouth, VA and provided their large family the privilege of American citizenship. They were fortunate to escape the Russian Tsar's pogroms as well as avoid service in the Russian army. As of this date we can confirm that they had

9 Children

31+ Grandchildren

70+ Great Grandchildren

120+ Additional Generations

Max Reshefsky b. Poland 1848 d. Portsmouth, VA 1929
Miriam Weiss b. Poland 1854 d. Portsmouth, VA 1905

Hyman Resh b. Poland 1871 d. Portsmouth 1950
 Annie Senator

Nathan Reshefsky b. Poland 1872 d. Chicago 1950
 Annie b. Poland 1872 d. Chicago

Sarah Reshefsky b. Poland 1875 d. Portsmouth 1942
 Joseph Berman d. Portsmouth 1907

Annie Reshefsky b. Poland 1877 d. Portsmouth 1912
 Herman Heimanson

Charles (Reshefsky) Miller b. Poland 1880
 Fannie Miller

Rebecca Reshefsky b. 1882 New York d. Portsmouth 1950
 Peyser Abraham b. 1877 New York d. Portsmouth 1950

Sam (Reshefsky) Miller b. 1883 New York d. Portsmouth 1934
 Ida

Bonnie Louis Reshefsky b. 1889 New York d. Portsmouth 1939
 Rebecca Merkel b. 1887 Baltimore d. Portsmouth 1939

Lillian Reshefsky b. 1891 New York d. Portsmouth 1978
 Joseph Davis b. 1890 d. Portsmouth 1943

2025 Arthur Z. Steinberg Lecture Series

We appreciate the sponsorship provided by TowneBank. This gift provided the reception that followed each lecture. Support from our community partners enables us to offer a diverse offering of program.



Building & Grounds Updates

Spring has been busy for the Museum. In December we discovered that there was rodent damage to some of the wiring in the attic. We had this repaired and consulted the pest control company. The unexpected electrical repair was \$867. It turns out that squirrels penetrated the Museum through an opening under the roof line. The City of Portsmouth was behind in their tree trimming,

Using the City's new See-Click-Fix app, we had this addressed in a few weeks. Accel Pest and Termite Control began remediation work on March 25. Work will conclude on April 2. This is an unbudgeted expense of \$5,225. We thank the following Board members who made gifts to help underwrite this repair: Minette Cooper; Ed Kramer; Rick Rivin.



A long awaited addition to our Daffodil Project, we will have a border installed around our beds and they will receive fresh mulch. While the expense to maintain the beds are in the budget, the one time expense of the border is not. This is a \$1,700 project. If you wish to make a gift to help underwrite these expenses, you are welcome to mail a check payable to JMCC, P. O. Box 7962, Portsmouth, VA 23707, or you can give online using this link: [Donate | Jewish Museum and Cultural Center | Portsmouth](#)

Jewish Museum & Cultural Center
2025 Arthur Z. Steinberg Lecture Series
Jewish Topics for Contemporary Times

***Jews from the Arab Lands:
The Forgotten Refugees***
Sunday, April 6 at 2:00 pm



Dr. Michael Panitz

Jewish historian, revered local Rabbi, and professor of History and Religious Studies, Dr. Panitz will discuss the timely topic of Israel's resettlement of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.

Tickets: \$20, Students \$10

This program is sponsored by:



Jewish Museum & Cultural Center
607 Effingham Street, Portsmouth



**Jewish Museum
&
Cultural Center**

607 Effingham Street
Portsmouth, VA 23704
Phone: 757-391-9266

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Organization
U. S. Postage
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Visit our website:

www.jewishmuseumportsmouth.org



Upcoming Events—SAVE THE DATE!



April 27, 2025 2:00 pm—4:00 pm Spring Daffodil Project Rededication and Holocaust Scroll #62

May 10, 2025 9:00 am—3:00 pm Steeple—Steeple

May 12-24, 2025 —Annual Online Auction

May 29, 2025 5:00 pm—7:00 pm, Auction pick up and Wine & Cheese

In the News:

March 14, 2025 WHRO Public Media [Portsmouth synagogue turned museum keeps local Jewish culture alive](#)



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**
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HGF
The Helen G. Gifford
FOUNDATION

Jewish Museum & Cultural Center

Zelma G. Rivin Wonderful Wednesdays 2025 Summer Music Series



July 30

Francesca Hurst
Solo Pianist

Opening Night Reception - 6:30 pm

Francesca Hurst presents "Reflections" a program which features a variety of composers from traditional classical, Japanese haiku, nocturnes and jazz.



August 6

"Trio Niche"
Violin, Cello & Fortepiano

The Music of Jefferson's White House

This fortepiano trio was formed by seasoned baroque musicians to bring a historical sensibility to repertoire from the turn of the nineteenth century.



August 13

Jae Sinnett Trio
Jazz, Swing, Blues

Local Jazz Artist and Composer

Renowned jazz drummer Jae Sinnett will bring the house down along with Allen Farnham on piano and Terry Burrell on bass as they perform original compositions.



August 20

Bagels & Fraylox
Klezmer

Back by Popular Demand!

Hampton Roads very own Klezmer Band returns for the third year in a row. Clap your hands and stomp your feet to the high energy sound of Bagels and Fraylox!

ALL CONCERTS BEGIN AT 7:30 PM
\$30 PER CONCERT
\$75 FOR THE SERIES OF 4

Purchase your tickets [HERE](#)
or visit www.jewishmuseumportsmouth.org
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ARTISTS
CLICK ON THEIR PHOTO

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607 Effingham Street, Portsmouth

