



5K Race  
Page 5



Adult Bad Art Night  
Page 10



Camp Chaverim  
Open House  
Page 11

# Jewish Community News

News of the Jewish VA Peninsula Community

May-June 2024/5784

## UJCVP ANNUAL MEETING 2024



Sun. June 2



11:30 AM

Come together to celebrate the work of the UJCVP and recognize the critical role each of us plays in building and sustaining our community.

### Join us as we:

- Elect our new board slate
- Acknowledge our outgoing board
- Honor this year's award recipients
- Hear the results of the Peninsula2030: Forward Together strategic plan

MEETING FOLLOWED  
BY BBQ LUNCH



RSVP



UJCVP.ORG

# Contents

## Departments:

- Fund Donations .....2
- President's Message .....3
- Campaign Corner .....4
- Education Corner .....6-7
- Area Congregations ..... 15-17

## Features

- 5K Race.....5
- Pearl Challah Bake Sale .....9
- Unwrapping Shavuot.....12

## 2024 Annual Campaign

---

In honor of the staff and volunteers who support Jewish life on the Peninsula

Linda & Howard Maltz

In honor of Sara Traster's birthday

Shelly & Geoffrey Kostiner

In memory of Joan Marks' mother

Barbara & Neal Rosenbaum

## Grand Club Fund

---

In honor of Rhoda Beckman's birthday

Joanne & Richard Gordon

## Israel Crisis Fund

---

In memory of all the Israelis who lost their lives since the October 7 attack

Linda & Howard Maltz

## Eric & Jack Luckman Memorial Endowment Fund

---

In honor of Robin Levy's birthday

Lori & Jeff Luckman

In memory of Joan Marks' mother

Lori & Jeff Luckman

## UJC Preschool Fund

---

In memory of Joan Marks' mother

Joanne & Richard Gordon

## UJC Youth Fund

---

In honor of Sara Traster's birthday

Barbara & Neal Rosenbaum



For 8th - 12th graders

FREE EVENT

More info on page 9

# President's Message - Wendy Eisner



The last two years have gone by so quickly. I cannot believe my term as president is ending. As I reflect back on all that has happened, I feel proud and sad at the same time. I am proud of all the things we are doing here at the UJCVP.

Our preschool is thriving and we have added another infant room. Camp Chaverim is bursting at the seams and continues to grow every year.

Strategic planning has been completed and has provided us an opportunity to set a road map for our future. It has forced us to take a hard look at the community and forge a path that can maintain who we are at the core but guide us as we continue to grow and serve our community. This roadmap will assist in leading us to a successful future that meets our mission and community vision.

Programming is amazing and provides us with the ability to come together and enjoy our campus, see old friends and make new ones.

Our campaign has been stable and allows us the opportunity to do all the amazing things happening here at our campus.

Although I have only highlighted a few of the many activities and programs that make us great, I would be remiss if I did not thank the village that makes our community who we are. So thank you to our staff! Nothing on our campus would happen without all your hard work and commitment to the UJCVP. Thank you to the many volunteers for your hard work and dedication, your financial support and time that make our small community great! I would like to take a moment to also personally thank Eric Maurer and Steve Marks for their commitment and hard work on our community's strategic plan. They both dedicated many hours to this project and its successful outcome would not have happened without them.

So, it is with a heavy heart that I must also acknowledge my sadness. October 7th, 2023 changed all of our lives. I am so proud of our small but mighty community which has responded to this crisis with grace and dignity. Our support of Israel and Jews around the world has never wavered and this gives me hope. We must all remember that while we have our differences, when, we join together as a community, we are a force to be reckoned with. I am praying for peace and the safe return of the hostages. Am Israel chai!

This community has given me and my family so much joy and love. I hope that I have done a small part to say thank you!

Wendy

.....

	<p>The UJC and Sarfan Center will be closed:</p> <p>Mon. May 27th in observance of Memorial Day and Wed. &amp; Thurs. June 12th &amp; 13th in observance of Shavuot</p>	
--	---	--

# Campaign Corner - Jessi Malkin



Inspiration comes from all over: a flower you had never seen before that makes you pause and look up the species, a table full of family or friends who do not gather as often as they once did, or the sounds of children laughing, playing and enjoying the warm spring. In the past few weeks, I have been inspired by our community over and over again.



There is a moment in shul that never ceases to amaze me, to the point of goosebumps... it has happened in almost every congregation I have ever visited. There is a moment, usually during the Torah service, where a natural harmonization occurs; a split second where some congregants choose a slightly higher or lower note producing an amazing moment of bliss. It is a moment that allows me to feel connected to all those around me, yet also very much myself. It doesn't last long, but it moves and inspires me every time.

That feeling hit again just before the start of Haggai Lober's one-man play, *October 7*, which was performed at the UJC earlier this May. I had been standing outside greeting people as they arrived and I was about to walk back inside to take my seat, when one of our local police officers asked me if he could come and watch the play. This officer was not Jewish and knew the play was in Hebrew, but he watched, learned, and became one with our community for the afternoon. He sat in the back and simultaneously protected and joined our community in the laughter and tears of the one-man show.

Our youth always inspire me, from the smallest smiles of our infants out for a stroll with their teachers, to our teens who continue to impress me with their ideas and intellect. Each year, I am struck with pride over the entries into the Holocaust Writing and Visual Art Competition. There is magic that happens when the winning essayists rise to read their words during our UJC Yom HaShoah remembrance program. Their words help me to know that in a world that seems full of hate, we, the UJCVP, are making a difference.

Together, we harmonize, welcome and educate. Together, we are the constant of our heritage and the change for the better. Together we can do anything.

Join with the UJCVP to inspire our future. It's not too late to make your pledge to the UJC Annual Campaign, which allows us to inspire each other.



## Sarfan Center 38th Annual 5K & 1 Mile Fun Run

**When:** Sunday, May 19th 2024, 9:00am

**Where:** Mariners' Museum

*The course will start and finish on the Mariners' Museum Southern Route (across from Warwick High School). Williams Field location.*

Visit our website to register to run/walk:  
<https://ujcvp.org/sarfan-center-5k>

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

### PLATINUM SPONSORS



### GOLD SPONSORS



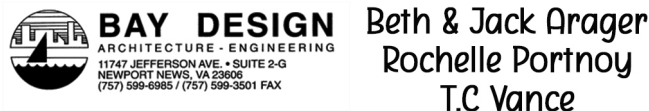
### SILVER SPONSORS



### BRONZE SPONSORS



### FRIENDS



# Education Corner

Director of Education & Program Development, Carmela Malkin Kuhn

Sarfan Center Assistant Director & Summer Camp Chaverim Director, Naioki Wood



The key ingredient to the success of our Sarfan Early Childhood Center and Summer Camp Chaverim program is the genuine, quality care our educators and camp support staff provide.

We extend our sincere gratitude for their continuous efforts in creating a safe and loving space for our families!



L to R: Olha (Infants), Becca (3s), Sasha (Infants), Anna (Infants), Lizz (3s)



L to R: Vanessa and Dee (3s)



L to R: Gavrielle, Tori and Maya (Pre-K)



L to R: Anabel, Jessica and Linda  
Not pictured: Selena (Toddlers)



L to R: Ursula and Courtney  
Not pictured: Katie (2s)



L to R:  
Kristen (3s)  
Amber (3s)  
Beth (2s)  
Corin (2s)



Coastal  
**VIRGINIA**  
Magazine  
**BEST of**  
Readers' Choice  
**AWARDS**  
2024

# 2024 WINNER

*Thank you Coastal Virginia!*

Thank you to everyone who voted for our amazing UJC Sarfan Center and Camp Chaverim!

## Sarfan Early Childhood Center

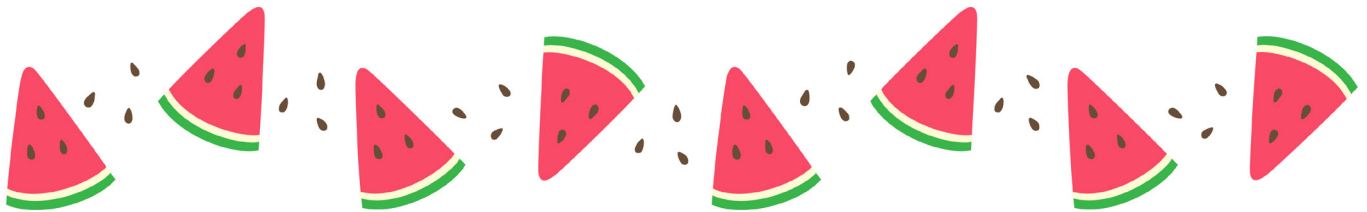
Best Child Development Center

Peninsula Bronze Award Winner

## Camp Chaverim

Best Summer Camp

Peninsula Gold Award Winner



THE UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITY  
WISHES TO CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING STUDENT  
AND HER FAMILY ON HER BAT MITZVAH

**SYLVIA RAJEC**



Don't forget to follow us on Instagram @ujcvp\_nn  
and LIKE our Facebook page!



**SUNDAY, MAY 26TH**  
**12:30-3PM**

**Food over the fire and good company!**

**FREE EVENT**

Open to all rising 8th graders - 12th graders

**RSVP: UJCVP.ORG**



### Senior Security Training

#### Guardian

**Thurs. May 30th, 1:00pm**

A course designed to help anyone be an active bystander.

#### Situational Awareness

**Thurs. June 27th, 1:00pm**

Learn to be aware in every environment: work, home, crowds, driving.

#### FREE EVENTS

RSVP at [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org)

Questions? Email Martha Vogel  
[mvogel@ujcvp.org](mailto:mvogel@ujcvp.org)





## Pearl Society Challah Bake Sale

Pre-order now through June 17th.

Challah orders will be made FRESH and ready for pick up at the UJC on June 20th & 21st.

### To Order:

visit [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org) --> News & Events drop down --> Pearl Bake Sale or find the pre-order link on our Facebook page



### Grants are going fast!

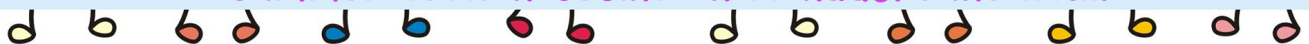
If you have any interest in summer sleepaway camp, contact Jessi Malkin ASAP for camp info.

Give your child the gift of a Jewish overnight experience, with up to \$1000 off!

For more info or to apply for a grant, email [jmalkin@ujcvp.org](mailto:jmalkin@ujcvp.org) or visit [OneHappyCamper.org](http://OneHappyCamper.org)



The Sarfan Early Childhood Center will be closed Monday, June 17th through Friday, June 21st. *summer session begins on Monday, June 24th.*



# ADULT BAD ART NIGHT

THINK YOU CAN'T DRAW? NOT SURE HOW TO PAINT?  
THIS NIGHT IS FOR YOU!

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF PROCESS ART -  
WHERE THE END RESULT IS NOT IMPORTANT

THURS. JUNE 20TH, 6:30PM

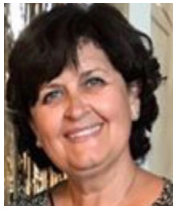


WINE AND SNACKS WILL BE SERVED  
MUST BE 21+ TO ATTEND | RSVP: [UJCV.ORG](https://www.ujcva.org)

PASSPORT MEMBERS - FREE | COMMUNITY MEMBERS - \$15/PER

## Israel Day at the J





**May 21st**  
Maya Yartsev  
Sarfan Center Pre-K teacher



**June 2nd**  
Libby Batten  
Jewish Family  
Services Director



**June 17th**  
Linda Tompkins  
Sarfan Center Mazel Tots teacher



**June 28th**  
Becca Price  
Sarfan Center  
Nitzanim 3-year-olds teacher



Israel in Our Hearts:  
October 7 Performance



*These programs were made possible by your support of the UJC Annual Campaign and the JCC Association of North America's Israel Engagement*



מתחברים | MIT-HABRIM | CONNECTIONS

**YAMIM** HASHOAH  
HAZIKARON  
HAATZMAUT

JCC Association of North America

Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism

**JUNE 16**  
11AM-12PM

**CAMP CHAVERIM**

**summer CAMP**

**FAMILY ORIENTATION DAY**

- ✓ Grab Your Camp T-Shirt
- ✓ Pick up Camp Packets
- ✓ Meet Your Counselor
- ✓ June 16th, 11am

Questions? Email Camp Director  
Naiki Wood → [nwood@ujcvp.org](mailto:nwood@ujcvp.org)  
[ujcvp.org/camp-chaverim](http://ujcvp.org/camp-chaverim)

# Unwrapping Shavuot's Meaning

## *A Reflection from Avi West, Master Teacher of Federation's Jewish Education Department*

When Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks writes that the festival of Shavuot is a “mystery wrapped in an enigma,” it definitely piques my curiosity. After all, Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks (or Pentecost, meaning “on the 50th day”), is one of the biblically ordained “pilgrimage festivals,” marking the Israelites’ journey to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the three stages of redemption from Egyptian bondage. But what makes Shavuot so enigmatic?

Shavuot often falls off the radar for many families. It falls near the end of the school year, close to family vacations, is not contrasted with major non-Jewish holidays, and, for many, is missing the rituals and gravitas that summon a family to gather together. So, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the reasons that Shavuot speaks to me and brings me to celebrate the day and its themes.

### **1. Freedom is best balanced with responsibility:**

Americans are proud of our country, the land of the free and home of the brave. There is growing debate about defining the boundaries of individual freedoms and national laws. Judaism has important ideas to add to those discussions, contrasting the American culture of “rights” with the Jewish culture of “responsibilities.” Shavuot, a commemoration of receiving the Torah, is observed after counting 49 days from Passover, and links the freedom from bondage to the Torah teachings of our responsibilities in society to reach for the divine. The Torah concedes that humans have free will, but it makes a strong case to choose a path guided by the wisdom of *mitzvot* to live a meaningful life. Jewish wisdom can enrich the individual, but, in turn, each individual must enrich the community. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, you may ask what Judaism can do for you, but also ask what you can do for the Jewish community.

**2. A People need roots and wings:** Shavuot is also called *Yom Habikkurim*, the day commencing the offering of the “first fruits” in the Bible. The Torah commands in *Devarim*, chapter 26 that, after the Jews settle in Eretz Yisrael, they should annually bring to the Temple the *Bikkurim* — the choicest of the first fruits — of the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is known. This includes wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and dates. A basket of these fruits is given to the Temple priest, and the farmer recites a brief declaration, recounting Jewish history from Abraham through Egyptian bondage to entering the Land of Israel. This declaration to God makes the

person relive their history and express gratitude for all that culminated in the blessing of their harvest. For years, Israeli children would be celebrated as the “first fruits” of their community, parading in white clothing and wearing flowers in their hair. Shavuot is a perfect time to remember the roots of where we came from, how far we have come, and to appreciate the wings that carry our future generations.

### **3. We should strive for relationships that are**

**covenantal:** The relationship between God and Israel was defined for all time by a structure known as the *brit*, or covenant. According to biblical tradition, Israel became a community by virtue of entering into a covenant with God at Sinai. As Rabbi Amy Scheinerman explains, “A covenant is a relationship of reciprocal love, caring, and loyalty. Individuals can have covenants with one another — marriage is a covenantal relationship — but the covenant that the People of Israel has with God involves the entire people. Jewish tradition actually uses the metaphor of betrothal to speak about how God and Israel entered into a relationship of consequences when the Torah was given.” Additionally, this covenant is an integral part of our communal relationship, in addition to our connection to God. As Rabbi Scheinerman notes:

“One of the chief benefits of that special relationship is that it helps to define us as a people who have connections (relationships) with one another because we are all party to the same covenant with God. In other words, it contributes to our communal



self-understanding and encourages us to examine who we are in relation to God, and who we ought to be. [...] It reminds us that everyone in the community is a member of the covenant and important to God, and therefore, they should be important to us; no one should be permitted to slip through the cracks.”

**4. Jewish tradition is nimble and resilient, staying relevant through changing times:** The biblical profile of Shavuot was an agricultural festival that was focused on the Temple in Jerusalem, and whose rituals had great significance for that society. Now the Temple and its service is gone, and most Jews are not farmers. Over time, Shavuot has been reinvented. The fruits of *Bikkurim* have become celebrations of our human fruits. Confirmation programs have become an opportunity for parents to give thanks and students to receive Torah in their unique ways. The Torah may have been given once at Sinai, but Shavuot finds many Jews pulling an all-nighter to study and find comradery in learning in *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, studying all night on the eve of Shavuot. But while “studying” once meant reading specific religious texts, it means many things today. It could still be studying Jewish texts, or it could be lectures on art, culture, a performance by a singer, a discussion, or whatever comes to mind.

*Tikkun Leil Shavuot* is a night gathering to celebrate Jewish culture in the broadest sense imaginable. As Shmuel Rosner observes, “Shavuot has become an exciting holiday. It is the holiday of the giving of the Torah. It is the holiday of the receiving of the Torah. Not giving and receiving in the past tense – giving and receiving in the present tense.”

And now, we can more fully appreciate one of the typical symbolic foods we associate with Shavuot – the blintz. Sure, it is one of the great foods we can use to remember that dairy products are nurturing and a perfect reminder that the exodus journey ended in the land flowing with milk and honey, where we united around the words of Torah, which are like “milk and honey under your tongue (Song of Songs 4:11).” But for me, the blintz on Shavuot and the stuffed cabbage on Sukkot (and the rugelach/kreplach/wonton anytime) is best explained by Forrest Gump. Indeed, “life is like a box of chocolate – you never know what you’re going to get.” In spite of all of life’s uncertainties and challenges, Judaism suggests we serve wrapped food, and asks us to dare to unwrap life’s mysteries. Like the Torah scroll itself, we need to unroll the outside to appreciate the gifts inside. And we are encouraged to re-wrap some of the traditional “gifts” in new and exciting forms. Resolve that over your next year, you will take opportunities to unwrap the gifts of Jewish life.

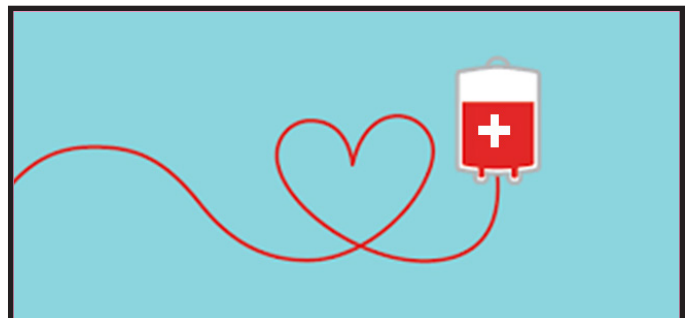


### **Kibbitz & Create**

Thursdays, May 20th & June 27th  
10am-12pm

Join our group at the J for a morning of chatting and crafting.  
All fiber arts crafts welcome!

RSVP at [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org)  
Questions? Email Jessi Malkin  
[jmalkin@ujcvp.org](mailto:jmalkin@ujcvp.org)



### **Red Cross Blood Drives**

*in the UJC Lobby*  
Wednesdays, May 22nd & June 5th  
10am-2pm

***National Blood Shortage!***  
Blood donors of all blood types are urgently needed.  
Visit [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org) to schedule an appointment

Questions? Email Sara Traster  
[straster@ujcvp.org](mailto:straster@ujcvp.org)

# FREE

## VEHICLE CRIME PREVENTION EVENT

- Catalytic Converter VIN Engraving
- Window Glass VIN Etching
- FREE steering wheel locks for Hyundai owners

Sunday, May 19, 2024  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

United Jewish Community Center  
401 City Center Boulevard  
Newport News, VA 23606

VIN engraving takes about 15 minutes per vehicle. Registration is recommended. To register, scan the QR code or visit:  
<https://signup.com/go/RAhEphd>



VIRGINIA STATE POLICE  
**HEAT**  
HELP ELIMINATE AUTO THEFT

**NICB** National Insurance Crime Bureau



**PENINSULA FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY**  
Since 1927



## DO YOUR KIDS A FAVOR.

Make your funeral plans in advance with someone you trust.  
Visit our website to learn more.

[PeninsulaFuneralHome.com](https://PeninsulaFuneralHome.com)

757-595-4424

11144 Warwick Blvd • Newport News, VA



## Adult Pickup Basketball

Saturdays @ 8:00pm  
in the UJC Gym

All experience levels welcome!

For more info, text Eric:  
617-780-2916



ב"ה

# SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES.



**Services – 10:00AM**



**Light kiddish – 11:30 AM**

For Community Passover Seder please visit our website .



**ChabadWilliamsburg.org**



**757-929-4999**

## Congregation Adath Jeshurun

401 City Center Blvd. , Newport News, VA 23606

Telephone # 757-930-0820 | Website: [www.ajshul.com](http://www.ajshul.com)

Rabbi Gershon Litt, 757-559-1836



We have entered the Counting of the Omer, the 49 days that begins at Passover and leads to the giving of the Torah on Shavuot. Hashem led us down to Egypt so that we could gain what we needed from that experience. Then, at precisely the right time, He led us out to become His Nation and receive the Torah. Both stages were essential parts of our journey towards Mount Sinai. Every moment contains our journey as a Jew, leaving the limitations represented by Egypt and building the divine connection to Torah. We have the power to harness time for productive purposes and elevate it, filling our days meaningfully. In other words, in order to achieve a goal, every day is important and “counts.”

Shabbos lunch on May 18th will be sponsored by Ari Taube.

June 22nd is available for sponsorship.

*We are happy to announce that our redesigned website is up and running thanks to Gus Altschuler and Kevin at Haven Media.*

*Please check in to find out what's new at A.J. And while you are there, see how easy it is to make a donation: [www.ajshul.com](http://www.ajshul.com)*

### Shabbos Candle Lighting Times:

May 17 - 7:50 pm

May 24 - 7:56 pm

May 31 - 8:01 pm

June 7 - 8:05 pm

June 11 - 8:07 pm (Shavuot)

June 12 - 9:11 pm (Shavuot)

June 14 - 8:08 pm

June 21 - 8:10 pm

June 28 - 8:11 pm

### Rabbi Litt's Shabbos Schedule:

May 17, June 21, July 19,  
August 30, September 20





# Congregation Emet V'Or

Truth and Light in the Reform Tradition

Office.CEVO@gmail.com  
www.emetvor.com  
757-952-3737

Rabbi Scott Gurdin  
Cantorial Soloist Dr. Jonathan Rathsam  
Musical Accompanist Dr. Ben Corbin

## Shabbat Services

Erev Shabbat services are held Friday evenings at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted.

- May 17<sup>th</sup>** – Rabbi led services
- May 24<sup>th</sup>** – Shabbat in the Home
- May 31<sup>st</sup>** – Lay led services
- June 7<sup>th</sup>** – Rabbi led services
- June 14<sup>th</sup>** – Cantor led services
- June 21<sup>st</sup>** – Rabbi led services
- June 28<sup>th</sup>** – Lay led services

## Special Events & Other News

- May 11<sup>th</sup> – Homemade bagels and lox event at CEVO. Tentative starting time will be at 5:30. RSVP's required.
- May 13<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> – Board Meetings
- May 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> – Lag B'Omer
- June 10<sup>th</sup> – Shavout



All are welcome to visit! Our location:  
101 Production Drive, Suite 101, Yorktown, VA 23693

 [fb.me/CEVOcommunity](https://fb.me/CEVOcommunity)

# RODEF SHOLOM TEMPLE

FOUNDED IN 1913 AND A MEMBER OF THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM.

*We are: Warm, welcoming and steeped in the rich traditions of Judaism...Egalitarian and Eclectic  
Living personal Jewish journeys across a spectrum of participation...Looking forward to seeing you!*



## In-Person and Zoom Services:

Minyan: Monday & Thursday @ 7:45 a.m.  
Kabbalat Shabbat: Friday @ 6:00 p.m.  
Shabbat Morning Services: Saturday @ 9:30 a.m.

Contact the Temple Office for Zoom information.  
Please see our website for more information.

401 City Center Blvd. Newport News, VA 23606  
757-826-5894

[www.rodefsholomtemple.org](http://www.rodefsholomtemple.org)  
[office@rodefsholomtemple.org](mailto:office@rodefsholomtemple.org)



# Temple Sinai

Founded 1955

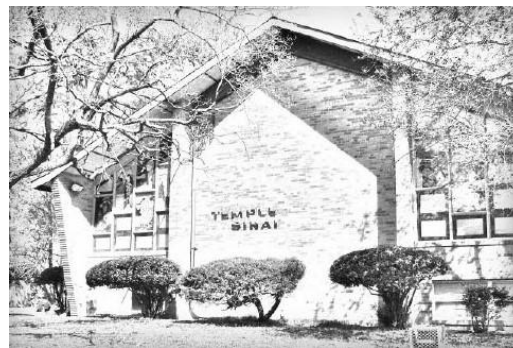
11620 Warwick Boulevard  
Newport News, VA 23601  
757-596-8352

*Rabbi Severine Sokol*

## Reform Jewish Temple of the Virginia Peninsula

Our warm, inclusive congregation welcomes all guests, including Jews by heritage, Jews by choice, secular Jews, interfaith families, couples, singles, children, and LGBT+ members.

If you would like to attend services, contact Mary Beth in the Temple Office 757-596-8352.



### Worship Services

- Saturday, June 1st, 10:00 a.m.- Shabbat Service followed by light Kiddush luncheon
- Friday, June 7th, 5:00 p.m. – Abridged Shabbat Service/Dinner & movie “Mr. Saturday Night”
- Friday, June 14th, 7:30 p.m.- Shabbat/Shavuot Service
- Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – Shabbat Service followed by light Kiddush luncheon
- Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm. – Confirmation Service for Evan Schorr

### Save the Date:

Friday, June 7th, 5:00 p.m. - Temple Sinai Film Series: Jews in Hollywood: On the Screen, Behind the Scenes. Join us for this special program – Abridged Shabbat Service followed by dinner and a brief discussion led by Fred Levy. Film: Mr. Saturday Night.

### Religious School

Our Religious School fosters an inclusive social-emotional Jewish learning environment featuring innovative and fun programs in partnership with special institutions and educators. Check it out!

For more information about services or Religious School, contact Mary Beth Colgan at: [admin@nnsinai.hrcoxmail.com](mailto:admin@nnsinai.hrcoxmail.com) or (757) 596-8352.

### Temple Sinai Film Series

#### Jews in Hollywood: On the Screen, Behind the Scenes

Join us for this special program. Abridged Shabbat service followed by dinner and a film with a brief discussion led by Fred Levy!

*Mr. Saturday Night* - 6/7 @ 5 pm - RSVP by Tuesday 6/4  
RSVP to Mary Beth: [admin@nnsinai.hrcoxmail.com](mailto:admin@nnsinai.hrcoxmail.com) or (757) 596-8352



### Lunch & Bingo on Thursdays

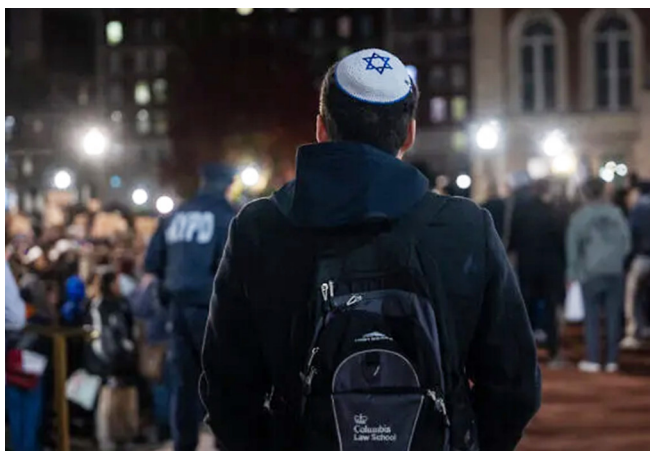
Lunch for ages 60+ - \$2.50  
Lunch for Passport Members - FREE!  
*Additional charge for bingo cards.*

Bingo begins at 11am, lunch is served at 12:00pm

-- No GRAND CLUB on JUNE 13th --

Email Carmela:  
[carmela@ujcvp.org](mailto:carmela@ujcvp.org) for more info or to RSVP

## **‘We would like to speak in our name,’ Jewish Columbia students say in viral open letter**



*Hundreds of Jewish students at Columbia University have signed an open letter defending their support for Israel and decrying harassment they've faced surrounding the school's pro-Palestinian encampment. The 1,200-word letter began making the rounds three weeks after pro-Palestinian students set up an encampment at the school, sparking a controversial nationwide movement calling for divestment from Israel. The encampments have spread to dozens of other campuses, including in the Commonwealth. Below is the letter:*

Over the past six months, many have spoken in our name. Some are well-meaning alumni or non-affiliates who show up to wave the Israeli flag outside Columbia's gates. Some are politicians looking to use our experiences to foment America's culture war. Most notably, some are our Jewish peers who tokenize themselves by claiming to represent "real Jewish values," and attempt to delegitimize our lived experiences of antisemitism. We are here, writing to you as Jewish students at Columbia University, who are connected to our community and deeply engaged with our culture and history. We would like to speak in our name.

Many of us sit next to you in class. We are your lab partners, your study buddies, your peers, and your friends. We partake in the same student government, clubs, Greek life, volunteer organizations, and sports teams as you.

Most of us did not choose to be political activists. We do not bang on drums and chant catchy slogans. We are average students, just trying to make it through finals much like the rest of you. Those who demonize us under the cloak of anti-Zionism forced us into our activism and forced us to publicly defend our Jewish identities.

We proudly believe in the Jewish People's right to self-determination in our historic homeland as a fundamental tenet of our Jewish identity. Contrary to what many have tried to sell you – no, Judaism cannot be separated from Israel. Zionism is, simply put, the manifestation of that belief. Our religious texts are replete with references to Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem. The land of Israel is filled with archaeological remnants of a Jewish presence spanning centuries. Yet, despite generations of living in exile and diaspora across the globe, the Jewish People never ceased dreaming of returning to our homeland — Judea, the very place from which we derive our name, "Jews." Indeed just a couple of days ago, we all closed our Passover seders with the proclamation, "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

Many of us are not religiously observant, yet Zionism remains a pillar of our Jewish identities. We have been kicked out of Russia, Libya, Ethiopia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Poland, Egypt, Algeria, Germany, Iran, and the list goes on. We connect to Israel not only as our ancestral homeland but as the only place in the modern world where Jews can safely take ownership of their own destiny. Our experiences at Columbia in the last six months are a poignant reminder of just that. We were raised on stories from our grandparents of concentration camps, gas chambers, and ethnic cleansing. The essence of Hitler's antisemitism was the very fact that we were "not European" enough, that as Jews we were threats to the "superior" Aryan race. This ideology ultimately left six million of our own in ashes.

The evil irony of today's antisemitism is a twisted reversal of our Holocaust legacy; protestors on campus have dehumanized us, imposing upon us the characterization of the "white colonizer." We have been told that we are "the oppressors of all brown people" and that "the Holocaust wasn't special." Students at Columbia have chanted "we don't want no Zionists here," alongside "death to the Zionist State" and to "go back to Poland," where our relatives lie in mass graves. This sick distortion illuminates the nature of antisemitism: In every generation, the Jewish People are blamed and scapegoated as responsible for the societal evil of the time. In Iran and in the Arab world, we were ethnically cleansed for our presumed ties to the "Zionist entity." In Russia, we endured state-sponsored violence and were ultimately massacred for being capitalists. In Europe, we were the victims of genocide because we were communists and not European enough. And today, we face the accusation of being too European, painted as society's worst evils – colonizers and oppressors. We are targeted for our belief that Israel, our ancestral and religious homeland, has a right to exist. We are targeted by those who misuse the word Zionist as a sanitized slur for Jew, synonymous with racist, oppressive, or genocidal. We know all too well that antisemitism is shapeshifting.

We are proud of Israel. The only democracy in the Middle East, Israel is home to millions of Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Middle Eastern descent), Ashkenazi Jews (Jews of Central and Eastern European descent), and Ethiopian Jews, as well as millions of Arab Israelis, over one million Muslims, and hundreds of thousands of Christians and Druze. Israel is nothing short of a miracle for the Jewish People and for the Middle East more broadly. Our love for Israel does not necessitate blind political conformity. It's quite the opposite. For many of us, it is our deep love for and commitment to Israel that pushes us to object when its government acts in ways we find problematic. Israeli political disagreement is an inherently Zionist activity; look no further than the protests against Netanyahu's judicial reforms – from New York to Tel Aviv – to understand what it means to fight for the Israel we imagine. All it takes are a couple of coffee chats with us to realize that our visions for Israel differ dramatically from one another. Yet we all come

from a place of love and an aspiration for a better future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

If the last six months on campus have taught us anything, it is that a large and vocal population of the Columbia community does not understand the meaning of Zionism, and consequently does not understand the essence of the Jewish People. Yet despite the fact that we have been calling out the antisemitism we've been experiencing for months, our concerns have been brushed off and invalidated. So here we are to remind you: We sounded the alarm on October 12 when many protested against Israel while our friends' and families' dead bodies were still warm. We recoiled when people screamed "resist by any means necessary," telling us we are "all inbred" and that we "have no culture." We shuddered when an "activist" held up a sign telling Jewish students they were Hamas's next targets, and we shook our heads in disbelief when Sidechat users told us we were lying. We ultimately were not surprised when a leader of the CUAD encampment said publicly and proudly that "Zionists don't deserve to live" and that we're lucky they are "not just going out and murdering Zionists." We felt helpless when we watched students and faculty physically block Jewish students from entering parts of the campus we share, or even when they turned their faces away in silence. This silence is familiar. We will never forget. One thing is for sure. We will not stop standing up for ourselves. We are proud to be Jews, and we are proud to be Zionists.

We came to Columbia because we wanted to expand our minds and engage in complex conversations. While campus may be riddled with hateful rhetoric and simplistic binaries now, it is never too late to start repairing the fractures and begin developing meaningful relationships across political and religious divides. Our tradition tells us, "Love peace and pursue peace." We hope you will join us in earnestly pursuing peace, truth, and empathy. Together we can repair our campus.



401 City Center Blvd.  
Newport News, VA 23606  
757-930-1422

*Electronic Address Service Requested*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Newport News, VA  
Permit No.10

# UJCVP Community May/June 2024 Calendar

**Sunday, May 19, 2024**

9am - 5K Race & 1 Mile Fun Run

**Tuesday, May 21, 2024**

4pm - Hebrew School

**Wednesday, May 22, 2024**

10am-2pm - Red  
Cross Blood Drive

**Thursday, May 23, 2024**

11am - Grand Club/Bingo

**Saturday, May 25, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

**Sunday, May 26, 2024**

12:30pm - BBYO Lag B'Omer

**Monday, May 27, 2024**

UJC CLOSED SARFAN  
CENTER CLOSED

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

10am - Kibbitz & Create  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
1pm - Senior Training: Guardian

**Saturday, June 1, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

**Sunday, June 2, 2023**

11:30am - UJC Annual Meeting

**Wednesday, June 5, 2024**

10am-2pm - Red Cross Blood  
Drive

**Thursday, June 6, 2024**

11am - Grand Club/Bingo

**Saturday, June 8, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

**Wednesday, June 12, 2024**

UJC CLOSED  
SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Thursday, June 13, 2024**

UJC CLOSED  
SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Saturday, June 15, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

**Sunday, June 16, 2024**

11am-12pm - Camp Chaverim  
Open House

**Monday, June 17, 2024**

SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Tuesday, June 18, 2024**

SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Wednesday, June 19, 2024**

SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Thursday, June 20, 2024**

SARFAN CENTER CLOSED  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
6:30pm - Adult Bad Art Night

**Friday, June 21, 2024**

SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Saturday, June 22, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

**Monday, June 24, 2024**

First day of Camp Chaverim  
First day of Sarfan Center  
Summer Session

**Thursday, June 27, 2024**

10am - Kibbitz & Create  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
1pm - Senior Training:  
Situational Awareness

**Saturday, June 29, 2024**

8pm - Adult Pickup Basketball

