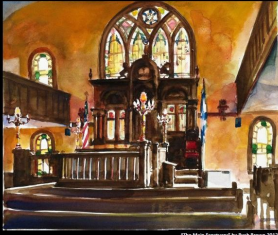




# THE MAINE JEWISH MUSEUM

## Celebrating Jewish Art, History, and Culture in Maine

### THE MAINE JEWISH MUSEUM



Celebrating  
Jewish Art, History, and Culture  
in Maine

Maine Jewish Museum  
267 Congress St.  
Portland ME 04101  
207-773-2339  
[mainejewishmuseum.org](http://mainejewishmuseum.org)

Hours: M-F 10:00-4:00  
Often later, call ahead.  
OPEN SUNDAYS  
12:00 - 4:00 PM

**Nancy Davidson**  
Curator in Residence  
[nancyd.mjm@gmail.com](mailto:nancyd.mjm@gmail.com)  
207-239-4774

**Nanci Kahn**  
Photography Curator

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Steven Brinn  
President

Aaron Shapiro  
Vice President



Dear friends of the Maine Jewish Museum,

As many of you know, on Thursday May 21st at about 1pm in the afternoon, our beloved Etz Chaim Synagogue and Maine Jewish Museum caught on fire. Fortunately because of the effectiveness of our sprinkler system and excellent response from the City of Portland Fire Department, the fire was quickly contained to it's point of origin, the main sanctuary Ark on the second floor. While the Ark did sustain a lot of damage to its interior walls, the exterior can be restored and the four torahs inside were not burned but did sustain water damage.

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In fact, almost the entire building sustained very serious water and smoke damage, and as you can see from the photos, almost every wall, ceiling, and floor needed to be removed and will need to be rebuilt. The beautiful stained glass window above the ark also sustained significant damage as did the domed ceiling above it to a lesser extent.



We are hopeful that the insurance coverage we have between the Maine Jewish Museum (who will have the responsibility of managing the restoration of the entire facility ) and Etz Chaim,

will cover a great deal of the restoration work. However, as we started to plan out the restoration, we soon discovered the need to make several changes that we have wanted to make for a long time, but hadn't done due to the cost. The Boards of both organizations have concluded that now is the time to make these improvements to the facility while it is being restored.

They include but are not limited to:

- \* **making the Fineberg Community room more user friendly by adding a coat room and second ingress/egress ;**

- \* **finally adding back the original painted stars to the domed ceiling**

- \* **improvements to all office space in the building to make them more private and effective;**

- \* **and restoring some of the garden grounds damaged by the exterior work being done to our facade and by the fire department.**

**We estimate that this extra cost will exceed \$50,000.**

In addition and just as significantly due to Covid-19, both organizations, which have been closed since mid-March, will now be closed at least through September. Because of this, both organizations will experience significant operating shortfalls this calendar year.

While again, insurance will cover some of the income shortfall, the Maine Jewish Museum has had to postpone it's major annual fundraising event, the 2020 Maine Jewish Museum Hall of Fame

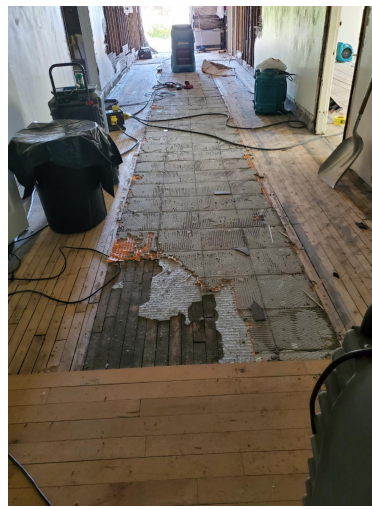
Induction Ceremony presented by Suzi Osher in Memory of Alfred Osher, until next spring. Etz Chaim will most likely have to rent space to hold services including High Holiday services elsewhere or virtually, and the Board is concerned it will impact the level of dues received. **We estimate that our combined budget shortfalls will surpass \$70,000 for the year.**

**Due to both of these significant impacts from the fire and the virus, totalling \$120,000, the Boards of both organizations have approved starting a joint Fire Restoration and Operating Fund that will be used for the improvements noted above, not covered by insurance and also help both organizations with operating shortfalls in 2020.**

We know these are trying and unstable times for so many of us, but ask that you consider us in your philanthropic plans as we do our best to restore this beautiful building that contains so much history, emotion, and meaning for so many families. We want to once again proudly open our doors and invite all of you back for services, museum events, art exhibits, new historical exhibitions and before long to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Etz Chaim

Synagogue! You all helped when we lovingly restored the building to its original grandeur 12 years ago, and we know that you will continue to be there to support us now in our time of need.

**Thanks so much to those of you who have already contributed!! Your contributions, both large and small have given us great confidence that our goal will be reached!**



Please click the link below to make a donation to the Etz Chaim Synagogue/Maine Jewish Museum Fire Restoration and Operating Fund, and you will play a key role in ensuring that these two organizations and this historic building will be here for all to enjoy for another 100 years!

Be well, be safe and thank you for your consideration.

Mark Aranson, President of Etz Chaim Synagogue  
Rabbi Gary Berenson  
Steve Brinn, President of the Maine Jewish Museum

<https://mainejewishmuseum.org/donate/>



Maine Jewish Museum



The mission of the Maine Jewish Museum is to honor the contributions and diversity of Maine's Jewish immigrants in the context of the American experience. Through exhibits and programming, the Museum seeks to build bridges of appreciation and understanding with people of all backgrounds.

Join us in celebrating Jewish ART, HISTORY and CULTURE in Maine.

Maine Jewish Museum, 267 Congress St, Portland, ME 04101

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