OUR PRESIDENT

Trail-blazing leader visits the Northwest to inspire, learn

*The Jewish Sound*
February 27
In 1935, Lithuania-born Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote “Judaism as a Civilization,” a book that reimagined the religion as a way of living and became the foundation for the Reconstructionist Movement.

Four Rabbis, Five Opinions on Israel Elections and Bibi

*Jewish Exponent*
March 25
Amid all the voices providing post-game analysis of the Israeli elections, there have been some predictable — and not so predictable — responses from various religious segments of the American Jewish community.

OUR FACULTY

Rabbis, ministers, imams denounce SEPTA ad

*The Philadelphia Tribune*
April 10
In many ways Masjidullah in West Oak Lane is the bridge between the three Abrahamic faiths present in Philadelphia. The edifice at the corner of Washington Lane and Limekiln Pike was once a synagogue before it was home to the West Oak Lane Church of God — who sold it to the mosque.

Netanyahu in Congress: Confronting a Train Wreck

*Huffington Post*
February 19
Having made an annual gift to Israel (usually through my local Jewish federation) without a break for 41 years, I have always supported the Zionist vision of a democratic, pluralistic state that -- while majority Jewish -- would always treat every citizen equally.

Standing With American Muslims, Upholding American Values

*Jewish Exponent*
March 10
With news from Paris, Copenhagen, North Carolina and Iraq filling the morning papers these days, many of us are wondering: What is going on in the Muslim world? How are Muslims in America responding and, most importantly, how can Jews and Christians ally with Muslims to help uphold the values of religious pluralism on which America is based?

Social Media Roundup: First Quarter 2015

Overview
We continue to gain Facebook and Twitter followers at a higher rate than during the same quarter in 2014.

Facebook Highlights
- Several posts reached between 2,000 – 4,000 people.
- We gained 75% more followers in the first quarter of 2015 than we did in the first quarter of 2014.

Twitter Highlights
In the first quarter we gained 71 new followers, which is a 31% increase over the number of followers we gained in the first quarter of 2014. We averaged roughly 3,000 impressions per month.

Robust use of RRC.edu continues, with 26,582 unique page views in the first quarter of 2015 (excluding any traffic coming from RRC internal accounts).
A Guide to Jewish Practice Author's Event with Rabbi David Teutsch

Jewish Exponent
March 10
Please join editor Rabbi David Teutsch and two contributors, Rabbi Jacob Staub and Rabbi Deborah Waxman, for a stimulating discussion on *A Guide to Jewish Practice Volume 3 - The Life Cycle*.

Who Gets to Say What Is 'Islamic?'

Huffington Post
February 25
"It is Islamic. Very Islamic!" That was Graham Wood's description of ISIS in his recent cover story for *The Atlantic Monthly* "What Isis Really Wants and How to Stop it."

Politicians and religious clerics denounce anti-Islam bus ads

Philadelphia Daily News
April 6
In a show of solidarity, interdenominational clergy and elected officials gathered yesterday at the Masjidullah Mosque in East Mount Airy to denounce the anti-Muslim advertisements that have stirred controversy since a federal judge last month ordered SEPTA to run them on buses.

A Time for Free Speech... And More of It

Huffington Post
April 9
When Justice Louis Brandeis affirmed the freedom of speech in a Supreme Court decision in 1927, he was well aware that such liberty made possible the "dissemination of noxious doctrine." As Jews and Christians in Philadelphia prepared for the weekend in which we celebrate Passover and Easter, just such sickening sentiments began appearing on 84 buses in our public transit system.

The Recent Attacks on NIF: Who, What and Why

Huffington Post
March 18
Those of us committed to democracy vigorously defend freedom of speech as an essential tool for effective democracy and a substantial benefit guaranteed by it. The enemies of democracy on both the extreme right and the extreme left use freedom of speech as a weapon.

The Work of Selma Marches On

Jewish Exponent
March 17
The 1965 march in Selma, Ala., changed America. President Lyndon Johnson wrote on March 15, 1965: "At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom."
Interfaith group holds conference on climate morality
*The Philadelphia Tribune*
February 27
The timing of Philadelphia Interfaith’s Power & Light to have their annual conference seemed providential. The group that has previously organized rallies against crude oil bomber trains coming through the Philadelphia area gathered on the heels of an oil train’s derailment in West Virginia on Tuesday, Feb. 17, and the eve of another in New Jersey on Feb. 23.

Does New York Jewish Federation Bear Some Blame for String of Charity Scandals?
*The Jewish Daily Forward*
February 11
Does the New York Jewish federation’s network of charities have a corruption problem? New York’s Jewish not-for-profits are falling like dominoes.

Too Much Insularity May Be Problem at Scandal-Ridden Jewish Social Service Agencies
*Nonprofit Quarterly*
February 12
In New York, four large, high-profile Jewish social service agencies have been rocked by major scandal in recent years. These agencies are linked (along with around 95 others) by one network: the UJA-Federation of New York.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello: A Jewish view of gay marriage
*Bradenton Herald*
January 8
As they walked together toward the bridal canopy, the chuppah in Hebrew, their steps were slow and measured. But it was not only the solemnity of the moment that created the pace. There was something more.

Forsaking one promise about dead bodies to honor another
*Newsworks*
January 7
Rabbi Linda Holtzman made a promise to her partner years ago that, despite her fascination with death, she would never touch a dead human body. When a member of her synagogue confesses to her that he is dying from AIDS — and requests that she prepare his body for burial in the traditional Jewish way — she promises to honor his wishes.

Opening the Door to Jewish Spirituality
*The Jewish Journal of Massachusetts*
February 26
For over half a century Rabbi Arthur Green has taught Jewish
mysticism, Hasidism and theology. He recently noticed a new trend.
“Young people are asking a question that was never asked in my
generation.

OUR STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

After disillusionment, finding his way back to Judaism
Philadelphia Inquirer
April 6
As a boy growing up in Cherry Hill, Michael Perice was in awe of his
rabbi, Fred Neulander. "I remember him standing up there in front of
hundreds of people," says Perice, now a rabbinical student. "He was a
master orator. He was magnetic."

Islamic radicalism poses dilemma for Jews in interfaith dialogue
Jewish Telegraphic Agency
February 3
After the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris last month, Kari Alterman
heard from every one of her Detroit-area Muslim dialogue partners, all
of them calling to express their sadness and concern. They just didn't
do so publicly.

Unconventional congregation engages first rabbi
Virginia Beach Beacon
February 26
When Ellen Jaffe-Gill arrived in Hampton Roads, she didn't intend on
taking on the leadership of a temple as a rabbi. God had other plans.

Calling All Jewish Millennials: Here's How To Host Your Own
Passover Seder
Huffington Post
April 2
Ella Fainaru was a college student at Columbia University, separated
from her family in Tel Aviv, Israel, when she realized how much she
missed celebrating the Jewish holidays. She missed the traditions, the
songs, the food and all that went along with the occasions.

Local Rabbis on the Israeli Election
Chicago Tonight
March 24
Last week’s election in Israel has brought strong reactions from many
quarters and especially from American Jews -- with opinions ranging
from strong support for the outcome to blistering criticism. While
political debate within Israel is famously raucous, the American Jewish
community has, in general, stood steadfastly behind Israel's
governments and actions.

Netanyahu's speech viewed by some as serious, but overly political
WDEL 101.7 FM
March 3
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial speech in
front of Congress was viewed by most of Delaware's Congressional
delegation, with those present finding the address to be serious but
Blacks and Jews: oppression not the same
New Jersey Jewish News
January 28
Juxtaposing ancient biblical texts with the recent police shootings of unarmed black men in Ferguson, Mo., and Staten Island, Rabbi Amy Small told a gathering of about a dozen people just two days after Martin Luther King Day that despite the similarities characterizing the persecution and subjugation of Jews and blacks throughout history, “our oppression was not the same.”

Rabbi speaks at NUDivest event on Israel-Palestine conflict
The Daily Northwestern
January 29
Rabbi Brant Rosen, co-chairman of the Jewish Voice for Peace rabbinical council, spoke Thursday night to a crowd of about 60 students, faculty and Evanston community members about the importance of demonstration and conversation regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Earth-based Judaism takes root in Sonoma
Jweekly
January 29
People are drawn to West Sonoma County for a variety of reasons: wine, romantic getaways, country roads, gorgeous coastline, food. But nobody goes there to plug into the Jewish environmental movement. Until now.

Rev. John Steinbruck And The Power Of One
The Jewish Week
March 31
If a picture is worth a thousand words, a life counts for a million or more. I recently attended a memorial service for Rev. John Steinbruck, who died March 1 in Delaware at the age of 84.

US interfaith leaders leave Holy Land with deeper sense of possibilities
Episcopal News Service
February 4
A tapestry of words such as “vulnerability” and “fragility,” “courage” and “dignity” were woven into a common thread as Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders from the United States concurred that they’d been transformed by a weeklong pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Religion Update Spring 2015: In Profile
Publishers Weekly
February 27
“Contemporary culture greets aging with fear and loathing,” Dayle A. Friedman says. “We dread dying, and anything that hints of it.” Rabbi Friedman—founder of Hiddur: The Center for Aging and Judaism at
the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pa.—is the author of Jewish Wisdom for Growing Older: Finding Your Grit & Grace Beyond Midlife (Jewish Lights, Mar.).

Advisors hope to broaden religious, spiritual life
The Swarthmore Phoenix
March 5
Last month, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Managers deliberated the state of on-campus religious and spiritual life, and the importance of enhancing it.

Wellesley hires interim rabbi to serve as Hillel director
The Wellesley News
February 4
Two months after the abrupt dismissal of Jewish chaplain David Bernat and Hillel Director Patti Sheinman, the College has hired Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz to serve as interim rabbi and Hillel director.

There’s a new rabbi in town
The Swellesley Report
March 31
Wellesley College has appointed Audrey Marcus Berkman as the new Rabbi and Director of Wellesley College Hillel, beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Rabbi Audrey Berkman chosen to head Wellesley Hillel staff
The Wellesley News
April 8
Following a semester-long search and input from students, faculty, staff and alumnae, Wellesley College announced the appointment of Rabbi Audrey Berkman as the new Rabbi and Director of Wellesley College Hillel. Rabbi Berkman will begin her role in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Who Gets to Criticize Your Religion?
Interfaith Family
March 19
I remember the day I introduced our kids to The Prince of Egypt. I loved this movie, and I was excited to be sharing it with them. Then my partner entered the living room: “How can we teach our kids these stories?!” The slavery, the plagues, and worse, God as a killer of babies.

Temple Emanuel hires assistant rabbi
Jewish News
March 25
Temple Emanuel of Tempe has announced that it has hired Jason Bonder to fill the role of assistant rabbi and educator.
OUR COLLEGE

Where Are All The Non-Orthodox Rabbis?
The Jewish Daily Forward
February 18
Lev Meirowitz Nelson grew up at a Conservative Jewish day school and a Conservative synagogue. When he decided to apply for rabbinical school, however, he didn’t even consider a Conservative seminary.

Is American Judaism Ready for Interfaith Rabbis?
New Republic
January 26
By his sophomore year at Brown University, Lex Rofes knew he wanted to pursue a career in Judaism. Whether as a rabbi or a teacher, he was committed to working in the service of American Jewry. So when a recruiter from a rabbinical college came to speak in his junior year, Rofes made sure he was in attendance. “I was certainly thinking of it as a real option,” he said.

Rabbinical College considers ordaining interfaith rabbis as Jewish intermarriages rise
World Religion News
February 2
It’s a firm policy among most rabbinical colleges in the US that those who are in interfaith relationships may not be admitted or ordained. While the number of interfaith couples across a number of denominations is growing steadily, Jews in interfaith relationships are basically excluded from pursuing a faith-related career such as rabbi or teacher.

Pursuing Peace in a World at War
Jewish Exponent
January 14
While the world’s attention was captivated by violence in Paris last week, a different, quieter, drama unfolded in suburban Philadelphia. Over four days, eight rabbinical students and five rabbis at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote immersed themselves in the study of “The Rabbi as Rodef Shalom/Pursuer of Peace.”

OUR CONGREGATIONS

Why Some Synagogues Are Using Mission Trips To 'Heal The World'
Huffington Post
January 19
Christian missionary work spans the globe. But Jewish mission trips? Your average American synagogue is not planning a congregational visit to a poor corner of the world. But a few are starting to, and some
rabbis are lobbying for more to follow.

In Haiti, Finding Our Mission By Helping Others
The Jewish Week
January 20
When I accepted an invitation from the Israeli organization, Tevel B’Tzedek, to travel to Haiti a few months after the devastating earthquake in 2010, little did I know that it would lead to one of the most fulfilling projects of my rabbinic career.

Beth El in Hammonton celebrates ordination of its spiritual leader
Jewish Community Voice
January 7
Disconnected from religion after her bat mitzvah, Abby Michaleski was seeking a more meaningful and joyous connection to Judaism when she discovered Temple Beth El in Hammonton.

Mission trips aren’t just for Christians anymore as Jews aim to ‘heal the world’
Religion News Service
January 15
Your average American synagogue is not planning a congregational visit to a poor corner of the world. But a few are starting to, and some rabbis are lobbying for more to follow

Is the Jewish culture slipping away?
Canada.com
January 31
It used to be you were Jewish or you weren’t. The former spoke bits of Yiddish: “mazel tov, you schmuck,” ate rye, kimmel and black bread, and every Friday, there was chicken soup on the stove. The latter ate Wonder Bread and Campbell’s chicken noodle — cuisine we envied.

Believers seek common ground as Passover, Easter converge this weekend
Baltimore Sun
April 3
When Ilise Marrazzo was growing up, Easter was one of her favorite holidays. But the celebration often left her feeling perplexed. Her father was Catholic, and she loved candy and Easter egg hunts as much as the next kid. But as a Conservative Jew, she knew few others who observed even the cultural aspects of the Christian holiday.

"Sounds of Peace and Justice" brings out talent, fun and praise
Montgomery Media
March 3
It was night of diversity, commonality and music at Mishkan Shalom on Feb. 28. The event, “Sounds of Peace and Justice” brought together an ecumenical crowd of Jews, Muslims and Christians, creating a new musical community with songs and inspiring stories.

Fairfield County’s only Reconstructionist congregation closes
Connecticut Jewish Ledger
March 18
In February 2013, on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, the Fellowship for Jewish Learning reinvented itself as Selah: Fairfield County’s Reconstructionist Congregation. Last month, after a two-year run, Selah closed its doors. The decision was announced by the Selah board to congregants and friends in a brief email on Friday, Feb. 13.
OUR CAMP

Program connects discount-seeking families with camps eager to broaden their recruitment base
Jewish Telegraphic Agency
January 16
Andrea Lass’ son and daughter had their hearts set last year on going to Camp JRF, a Jewish overnight camp recommended by their friends. But with her husband recently laid off, the New Jersey mom didn’t see how the family could manage the expense, even with a scholarship.

OUR MOVEMENT LEADERS

Education ‘visionary’ Linda Jum dies at 61
New Jersey Jewish News
March 11
Linda C. Jum, Jewish educator, Reconstructionist movement leader, and advocate for Jews from multiracial backgrounds, died March 9. She was 61.

Mt. Airy author ‘a megaphone’ for women around the world
Chestnut Hill Local
March 20
Longtime Mt. Airy resident Betsy Teutsch is embarking on a book tour with the recent release of “100 Under $100; One Hundred Tools for Empowering Global Women.” Three years in the making and published by She Writes Press, the author outlines over 100 initiatives that cost under $100 each, empower women around the world and encourage readers to get involved and become educated on global issues.

Jewish Leader Linda Jum’s Death at 61 Galvanizes Her Chevrah Kadisha
Jewish Journal
April 1
Not all of us get to plan our own funeral. Organize our own taharah. Write our own obituary. But Linda C. Jum willed herself from a coma into consciousness in the days before she died on March 9, and rehearsed her exit.