

**RECONSTRUCTING A MOVEMENT** / RECONSTRUCTIONIST JUDAISM REBRANDS NAME TO REFLECT MISSION

# Reconstructionist Judaism gets a rebrand

Leaders of the movement hope the new name — Reconstructing Judaism — will better represent the "essence" of what they do as a movement.

By **RACHEL KURLAND**

February 1, 2018, 12:27 pm |  0



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BACK TO SCHOOL

Here's what changes Jewish students heading back to school can expect

By TOBY TABACHNICK

For the new academic year, Pittsburgh's Jewish educators are promising new programs, new faces and some new spaces as well.




CREATING A MODEL

Shaler teacher leads efforts to increase, improve Holocaust education

By LAUREN ROSENBLATT

Nicholas Haberman has been teaching about the Holocaust for 13 years. This year, he is introducing a new elective and a center for Holocaust, genocide and human rights education.



SUMMER REFLECTIONS

A summer camp that was Jewish by nature, not by design

By ERIC LIDUI

Camp Machigon was not a Pittsburgh camp, nor really a Jewish camp, and yet it plays a part in local Jewish history.

These companies with local connections, and Jewish ties, foster entrepreneurship

Federation steps in to support a summer camp for Israeli victims of terror




FEMINISM IN ISRAEL

New study, by Pittsburgh author, shows feminism in Israel still faces challenges

By TOBY TABACHNICK

Despite positive strides, researcher Nancy Strichman said Israel still needs to focus on battling patriarchal structures, integrating diverse voices and connecting women activists.



GUEST COLUMNIST  
MIKE DOYLE

My consistent support for Israel

I have approached each piece of legislation regarding Israel asking if it will promote security and if it is consistent with our values? I approached H.R. 4391 in the same way.

U.S. aid to Israel / U.S. Rep. Mike Doyle co-sponsors bill that would limit defense funding to Israel

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PHILADELPHIA — Out with the old, in with the new: The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College & Jewish Reconstructionist Communities, Reconstructionist Judaism's central organization, announced Jan. 29 that it's getting a new identity.

At the end of this academic year, the rabbinical seminary outside Philadelphia known as the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College will be referred to as the College for Reconstructing Judaism, and it will fall under the organizational umbrella now called Reconstructing Judaism. (The new website, ReconstructingJudaism.org, went live Jan. 30.)

"We are, always have been, continue to be about actively engaging and creating Jewish life," said Rabbi Deborah Waxman, president of Reconstructing Judaism.

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She believes the new identity clearly communicates who they are — and she's excited the name is a verb that fully reflects its mission. "The projects we are undertaking is an active process."

The idea for the name change came about after the 2012 merger between the seminary and the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, the congregational arm of the movement.

The new name was officially approved by the board in October 2017.



RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

The Reconstructionist movement's new logo. (Photo courtesy of Reconstructing Judaism)

Waxman explained the original full name, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College & Jewish Reconstructionist Communities, was actually a

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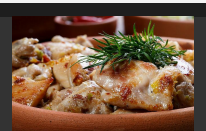
By JONAH BERGER



JNF IN PITTSBURGH

Amy Cohen to lead campaign for Jewish National Fund campaign in Pittsburgh

By TOBY TABACHNICK



LIFE & CULTURE

A quick recipe for addictive chicken

By KERI WHITE

Food columnist Keri White says she "taught lightning in a bottle" with this simple chicken recipe. The main ingredient: horseradish



EDITORIAL

What the Jewish community learned from examining organized prayer in America

By EDITORIAL BOARD

The Jewish community has recognized that religious identity has to be more than services. What we have learned may be helpful to other communities as they respond to empty pews.

WORLD NEWS



In Tennessee, Jewish incumbent beats challenger running on Christian values

By RON KAMPEAS



Major funders of Israel join criticism of its nation-state law

By JTA REPORTS



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Jeremy Corbyn no longer scheduled to address Jewish audience in London

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Eviction of Dutch Jews from Nazi-ravaged synagogue brings back bitter memories

By CNAAN LIPSHITZ

placeholder — and a tad too long. The shorter title articulates the vision more concisely.

“Too often, people [would] leave out the second part — the Jewish Reconstructionist Communities — in a way that was very, very painful to us,” she added.

The organization reached out to Reconstructionist communities across North America — more than 1,000 people over the past year — for conversations, surveys and town hall meetings about how “to revisit the essence of what we are doing and to capture and communicate the energy and the commitment that’s inherent in the Reconstructionist movement.”

The new name comes with a new logo, too: Leaves sprout out from the ground, representing “the Reconstructionist balance between groundedness in Jewish tradition and a focus on Jewish growth and reinvention,” a press release read. Below, a new tagline says, “Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.”

“We live at the intersection of the past and the future,” Waxman continued. “We see the ‘relevant’ there as a promise as much as a descriptor. We think it is imperative that we both draw deeply on our rich storehouse of Jewish tradition and make certain that the Judaism we are creating for today and for tomorrow is relevant for the people who are living in Jewish community.”

The liberal organization trains the next generation of rabbis and moral leaders, working with its more than 400 graduates, fostering expressions of emerging Jewish life, and providing resources to Reconstructionist communities in the form of two summer camps as well as face-to-face and digital networks.

Reconstructing Judaism serves nearly 100 congregations across North America, 13 of which are in Pennsylvania, including Congregation Dor Hadash in Pittsburgh. The new name will advance the Reconstructionist vision in the public square more effectively, Waxman noted.

“We deeply believe that every generation is obligated to reconstruct the Jewish community, the Jewish inheritance they received to build the Jewish future and the Jewish community they want to live in,” she said.



Rabbi Deborah Waxman is the president of Reconstructing Judaism. (Photo courtesy of Reconstructing Judaism)

Seth Rosen, chair of the board of governors, added the vision is to bring the Reconstructing Judaism model to a national level and draw on the rhythm of affiliated Reconstructionists across North America.

“It was a great opportunity to meet Reconstructionists across the country and to hear what they value in our movement and why they choose to be Jews and why they choose to be Reconstructionists,” he said of the past year’s surveys. “That will be reflected not just in our name and our tagline, but in our approach over the next months and years.”

Since the 2012 merger, Rosen said they’ve all had a chance to grasp the meaning of the organization, which moved beyond denominational structures in the realm of American Jewish life. “It’s as if you had a child and then waited four years to name it. You’d have a better sense of who the person was before you picked the name.”

The name change comes at the 50th anniversary of the seminary’s founding. Reconstructing Judaism is also opening Havaya Arts, a Reconstructionist summer camp, in June; hosting a Reconstructionist convention, the first since 2010, in November in Philadelphia; and launching Evolve, a two-year project to engage Reconstructionists in analyzing 21st-century Jewish life.

Although the name change is for the organization, not the movement, Rosen said many have taken to the name to identify themselves. But time will tell. “It will emerge over time how this will be reflected more broadly.”

He believes the name evokes hope.

“By changing from the -ism to the more active word, people kind of get immediately what you’re telling them,” he said. “The world in which I lived my Judaism is very different from the world in which my grandparents lived their Judaism and my parents lived their Judaism. The Reconstructionist notion is that we continually redefine who we are and what we do to reflect and respond and to improve the world that we live in.” PJC

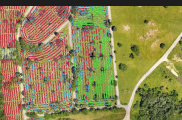
Rachel Kurland writes for the Jewish Exponent, an affiliated publication of the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.

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THE DIGITAL AGE

### Local synagogues pursue cemetery digitization projects

By JONAH BERGER

The projects are designed to offer a central place for information about the burial plots as well as make it easier for members to access records.




WOMEN'S HEALTH

### Jewish Healthcare Foundation to support new research center for maternal health

By TOBY TABACHNICK

The center will focus research on the best practices for cardiovascular health care for pregnant women and ways to address gaps in care.



CONNECTING JEWISH TEENS

### Pittsburgh educator to head national BBYO initiative

By TOBY TABACHNICK

Liron Lipinsky, who previously led J-JEP, a collaborative religious school between Beth Shalom and Rodef Shalom, will be in charge of infusing BBYO programming with Jewish content.



NEFESH B'NEFESH

### Coming Home: New immigrants ponder a new future in Jewish state

By JOSHUA RUNYAN

With an increase in the number of young families, small families and recent graduates immigrating to Israel, the poster family for North American aliyah is changing.



American Cheese Society meeting is a dairy lover's dream

By ADAM REINHERZ



FILM

### '1945' a quiet, haunting parable of post-war guilt

By TOBY TABACHNICK

The film explores a subject rarely depicted in mainstream Holocaust stories: the theft of Jewish homes and businesses by

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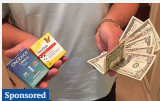
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**Team Israel star looking to make impact for Pirates**

By JONAH BERGER


After helping lead Team Israel to several wins in the World Baseball Classic, Ryan Lavanway's next move could be helping the Pirates make the playoffs.

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A person is seen from the side, sitting at a light-colored wooden table. They are holding a tablet computer with both hands, looking at the screen which displays a website with various articles and images. To the right of the tablet is a white cup of coffee on a matching saucer. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the table and some papers.

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Young Judea**


**AUGUST 12, 2:00 PM -  
AUGUST 26, 4:00 PM**

**WED**  
**15**

**Ordering Up Health & Nutrition for Seniors**  
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WED **Moishe House**

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
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Tuesday, 14 August 2018 

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