

Our Founders



Joel Magalnick will serve as founding executive director of The Jewish Sound. In the run-up to this new publication's launch, Joel has been instrumental in building the vision and structure of what will be the Puget Sound region's first Jewish publication in many years. Joel brings a long history of working at the confluence of journalism and technology to The Jewish Sound. As editor and publisher of JTNews/The Jewish Transcript for more than a dozen years, Joel sought to keep the area's Jewish community connected to each other while modernizing how the paper's audience engaged with the publication. This work included overseeing print redesigns, developing and evolving multiple interconnected websites, building social media engagement, and continuing to bring in new audiences through email newsletters. In the past decade, Joel consulted with companies such as T-Mobile and Eddie Bauer on user experience strategy and produced multiple podcast series for Microsoft. He also serves on the faculty of MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, where he teaches a wide array of design courses. Through the building of The Jewish Sound, Joel has been thrilled to connect and reconnect with so many members of this vibrant, diverse community.



Donna Blankinship will be the founding executive editor of The Jewish Sound. She is a longtime Seattle journalist at The Seattle Times, Cascade PBS, Crosscut and The Associated Press. About 25 years ago, Donna was editor of The Jewish Transcript for about six years, where she started the paper's first online publication. But her more recent experience in digital media is what has been most valuable to this effort. As news editor at Crosscut, she led a team of journalists exploring how the news of the day affected people across Washington. Her team won numerous national and regional journalism awards, from Best of the West, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Washington Coalition for Open Government. She wrote a regular politics newsletter, and contributed to Crosscut podcasts, TV programs and events. She helped build Washington's only statewide voter guide, managed an award-winning people-focused databank during the COVID-19 pandemic, and mentored dozens of young journalists, some of whom are now leading their own news organizations. Since retiring, Donna has focused her time on voter education through her Civics for Adults newsletter and videos.



Karen Kalish is a connector and gatherer who moved to Seattle from St. Louis four years ago, and immediately missed the community and connection that a Jewish newspaper brings. So, she set out to find like-minded people and is the catalyst behind this project. She is excited about raising the funds to start The Jewish Sound and giving all of us an opportunity to play a part in what will be a great Jewish community builder. Karen is a serial social entrepreneur who has started three nonprofits: *Operation Understanding DC* (a leadership program for Black and Jewish high school students);

HOME WORKS! (which trains, supports, and pays teachers to go to the homes of their struggling students); and *Cultural Leadership* (which works with high school students who want to learn about civil rights, social justice, and DEI). The Jewish Sound will be her fourth! Before becoming an entrepreneur, Karen taught school, was a TV reporter in D.C. and Chicago, and was president of Kalish Communications. She earned a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School in 2000 (at age 54!) She was so proud of her degree that she enlarged it into wallpaper for her office bathroom wall. In addition to chairing the board of The Jewish Sound, she hosts fundraisers for candidates, issues and nonprofits.