

EDITORIAL
Defending Jews' AT THE right to vote
Page 6

SPECIAL SECTION
Camps & Programs
Pages 9-12

SENIORS
Get back, Loretta
Page 15

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Gann head new CJP boss

By Brett M. Rhyne
Advocate staff

BOSTON — In an earlier than expected announcement, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the Boston-area Jewish federation, announced Gann Academy head of school Marc Baker would become its new president and CEO in summer 2018.

Baker replaces the federation's three-decade president Barry Shrage,

who announced in March 2017 that he would be leaving the organization in August 2018. Baker takes charge of New England's wealthiest charity, with an endowment of \$1.2 billion and annual revenues of \$400 million.

"I am feeling really overjoyed," Baker said. "I am excited, I am humbled, I'm thrilled at this opportunity."

Baker, who is from Lynnfield, majored in religious studies at Yale University and earned a master's degree in Jewish education from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Rabbi Danny Landes, director and rosh yeshiva of the non-denominational Pardes Institute in Jerusalem, ordained Baker a rabbi in 2004. After working at a Jewish day school in Atlanta, Baker became head of school at Gann in 2007. He

lives in Brookline with his wife, Jill, and their four children.

Shira Goodman, who along with Aron Ain served as co-chair of CJP's presidential search committee, said they "talked to hundreds of people" before narrowing the search to six finalists with whom they had "quality meetings."

See CJP, Page 4



PHOTO: MARC-A-BAKER.COM

Marc Baker



PHOTO: BEND THE ARC

Jewish protesters, including Rabbi Barbara Penzner, sit-in at the Capitol Penzner protests in DC

By Heather Alterisio
Advocate staff

WASHINGTON — Rabbi Barbara Penzner of West Roxbury's

Temple Hillel B'nai Torah was one of 86 Jewish clergy and activists arrested on Capitol Hill in a display of solidarity with the "Dreamers."

Clergy from synagogues across the nation and members of groups including the Anti-Defamation League, Bend the Arc and T'ruah occupied the Russell Senate Office Building here on Jan. 17.

See PENZNER, Page 4

Reinstein pickets for workers' rights

By Heather Alterisio
Advocate staff

BOSTON — Comparing the plight of children of tomato farmers in Immokalee, Fla. to that of the first-born Egyptian children who died in the Biblical tenth plague, Rabbi Victor Reinstein exhorted picketers at a Wendy's in Downtown Crossing to boycott the fast food chain until it agreed to support farm workers' rights.

The 15-person protest here was part of a national, 20-location effort at noon on Jan. 18 coordinated by the Jewish Labor Committee to raise consciousness among restaurant-goers of Wendy's unfair labor practices, according to JLC New England regional director Marya Axner.

In addressing the assembled, Rabbi Reinstein, spiritual leader of Jamaica Plain's Nehar Shalom Community Synagogue, invoked the Torah.

"Having read just recently a Pharaoh's edict to kill the first born of the Hebrews," he said, "it is in

See REINSTEIN, Page 3



PHOTO: BRETT M. RHYNE/TJA

Rabbi Victor Reinstein exhorts demonstrators in front of Wendy's in Downtown Crossing



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EDITORIAL

Who cares about Jews' right to vote?

What if Massachusetts held a meeting about Jews' right to vote and no one came?



This was essentially the situation on Jan. 2, when Secretary of the Commonwealth Bill Galvin called a public meeting about moving the date of September's primary and only one person showed up.

It seems the fall 2018 primary was scheduled for Yom Kippur. Therefore, in order to avoid disenfranchising state Jewry, it needed to be moved. Massachusetts law mandates a two-week window to reschedule the primary, but the previous Tuesday is of course the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

So Mr. Galvin called for public input via email and scheduled the Jan. 2 hearing. His office received 90 emails about the primary date, two-thirds of which were sent by individual Jews, including a Boston city councilor and a Somerville alderman. None of our Boston area Jewish organizations weighed in, although emails did arrive from the League of Women Voters and, crucially, the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts.

Only one member of the public appeared at the hearing, a Jewish candidate for state representative from Acton. The most noteworthy truant from the public hearing – and, it seems, Mr. Galvin's deliberations entirely – was the agency specifically charged with advocating for the Jewish community with state government: the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston.

The Boston area Jewish federation, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, gives JCRC \$1.7 million of the community's money to look out for area Jewry's interests on Beacon Hill; yet on this issue, it was a no-show. Apparently, defending Jews' right to vote is not on

JCRC's legislative agenda.

We find this contradictory, since, in JCRC executive director Jeremy Burton's blog titled, "Urging legislative action" – published 10 days after the hearing – the agency prioritizes advocating for the rights of "the most vulnerable, including seniors and those who are at-risk of homelessness"; "young adults with disabilities, recent immigrants and refugees, and adults who have struggled to get a leg up in this economy"; and "people of color" facing a "crisis of criminalization."

Mr. Burton does mention one Jewish legislative agenda item, the JCRC's anti-BDS bill that has been in committee, unmoving, for over six months. As we have previously reported, Republican legislator Steven Howitt of Seekonk introduced an anti-BDS bill over two years ago that JCRC killed because of the agency's Democratic partisanship.

We therefore find disingenuous Mr. Burton's exhortations that "it is well past time" to pass the bill and "it serves us poorly that other hubs for international business partnerships ... have taken action to prevent discrimination against Israeli (and other) individual owned businesses while Massachusetts remains inactive."

Indeed, at the committee hearing for JCRC's anti-BDS bill, the agency could not enlist the support of even one of the many social justice organizations with which JCRC has aligned.

In the bitterest irony, JCRC's agenda includes supporting voter registration legislation that "could bring hundreds of thousands of new voters to the polls on Election Day." Would that JCRC were as proactive in ensuring Jews enjoy the same privilege.

No substance in rabbis, JCRC response to Jacobs

In discourse, there is form and substance; form should be civil and considerate in order to allow the substance to be addressed. In the issue between Charles Jacobs and APT, on one side, and the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, the Jewish Community Relations Council and Temple Isaiah on the other, it is perhaps clear that there was enough crossing the line on form to make focusing on the substance difficult, and as The Jewish Advocate

reported, led to no understanding between the parties. ["Marginalizing disagreement is not Jewish," editorial, Jan. 19, p. 6]

The substance that matters is simply Jacobs' statement that a rabbi "... not allow leaders of terror-linked groups to raise money at Boston synagogues." I read carefully all that The Jewish Advocate printed on this subject, and found no response or comment on this issue. Jacobs said that both the FBI and the ADL consider CAIR – the Council on American Islamic Relations – to be a Hamas fundraising front. There was

not even a hint in the responses to the ADL and FBI reports.

An afterthought: It is very much the social duty of Jewish institutions to be concerned about the welfare of all people, including Muslims, and it is right that they do. I would venture that peace would be close upon us when Muslim institutions begin to be as concerned about defending welfare of Jews.

DR. DAVID SHEENA
President emeritus
Beth Abraham,
Sephardic Congregation
of New England

ADVOCATE ARCHIVES

STORIES FROM OUR 115 YEARS OF JEWISH JOURNALISM

From The Jewish Advocate of Feb. 1, 1968

JUDGE DISPUTES WHO IS A JEW

TEL AVIV (JCNS)—A rabbinical court is not competent to decide who is a Jew, Judge Isaac Shiloh said in Tel Aviv district court, reserving judgment in the application by Mrs. Helen Sanduka for her husband to pay maintenance for their seven children.

Mrs. Sanduka was born in Haifa in 1936 and she and her twin sister married Moslems after the family moved to Gaza in 1945. With the Israeli occupation of the town last year, the twins decided to leave their husbands and return, with their children, to live as Jewesses.

The judge said that a rabbinical court had no competence to decide who was a Jew after Mrs. Sanduka's lawyer submitted that such a court had ruled that his client and her children were Jewish. The judge also said that a

religious court may consider a man a Jew, but that did not prevent a civil court from regarding him as a Christian.

He will consider the district court as competent to pronounce judgment only when he concludes that the children are Jews.

Should the judge decide that the children are Moslems, it will be a Moslem religious court's responsibility to consider the application.

The lawyer of the husband, Mahmud Ibrahim Sanduka, of Gaza, submitted that an Israeli court had no jurisdiction over an inhabitant of that town.

He also produced a document, issued by Gaza religious court in 1953, stating that Mrs. Sanduka had been converted to Islam from the Protestant faith and that she had changed her name from Helen to Leyla. Mrs. Sanduka told the dis-

trict court that she had been forcibly converted to the Moslem faith and that, because her father was a Christian, she was regarded in Gaza as Christian, Moslem and Jewish simultaneously.

She said that she was obliged to state that she was a Moslem after her husband accused her of being a Jewish spy, writing letters to Israel. She was determined to stay in Israel and reconciliation with her husband was out of the question.

The judge said that the children had been educated as Moslems, whatever the rabbinical court might say.

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By President Woodrow Wilson

75 years ago: Jan. 29, 1943

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50 years ago: Feb. 1, 1968

Rabbinical School Established by Reconstructionists

25 years ago: Feb. 4, 1993

Inaugurating Change and Renewal
By Nancy K. Kaufman

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