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# THE JEWISH ADVOCATE®

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## Building bridges at Babson

The Wellesley college brings together Palestinians and Israelis and challenges them to create businesses back home.

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## Sounding the alarm

In Wellesley, Colette Avital, a former Knesset member, says Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must take the initiative on peace talks or risk isolating Israel further.

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## Boom in rebuilding

Two Newton synagogues, Shaarei Tefillah and Beth El-Atereth Israel, tout major makeovers.

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## X-Men and Shoah

An Auschwitz survivor turned superhero? The Movie Maven reflects on the propriety of using the Holocaust as the background for a comic book character.

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## Don't be a stranger

Singles columnist Tamar Caspi bemoans the way the newly smitten suddenly seem to forget their old friends.

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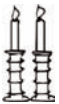
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## SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES



Parshat Korach

<b>BOSTON</b>	8:07 PM
<b>MANCHESTER, N.H.</b>	8:11 PM
<b>FALL RIVER</b>	8:05 PM
<b>PORTLAND, MAINE</b>	8:09 PM
<b>PROVIDENCE, R.I.</b>	8:07 PM
<b>SPRINGFIELD</b>	8:12 PM
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## Swinging scholars



Oren Bazer and Maya Leschinsky dance their way out at the recessional for eighth grade graduation at JCDS, Boston's Jewish Community Day School. Students were encouraged to make a creative good-bye gesture. The Watertown school has another reason to celebrate: It has raised \$2 million, to be matched by \$1 million from George Krupp. More day school photos, Page 23.

## That championship season

Shomer Shabbos boys win Brookline World Series

By Leah Burrows  
Advocate Staff

At first glance, the group of boys who rushed the mound after winning their baseball championship, jumping up and down, hugging and dousing their coach in water, may have seemed like a typical group of pre-teens.

Look closer.

Those aren't sideburns, they are the early wisps of payot. Under several of those Mets caps sit yarmulkes.

And when coach Jonathan Cohen gathered the team together for a post-game pep-talk, the first thing he did was thank Hashem.

This is a team of observant Jewish boys, and they are the World Series champs of their age group in the Brook-

Two shy of a minyan, Needham tennis team takes state title

By Lawrence Bergman  
Special to the Advocate

If it could pull in two more Jews, the boys tennis team at Needham High could form a minyan. But the team's prayers have been answered anyway. It went undefeated this year, and last week won its first MIAA Division I State Championship trophy.

Of the seven starting varsity players, six are Jewish. On the entire Rockets team, Jews account for eight of the dozen members.

The team's top two singles players, juniors Aaron Revzin and Aaron Segel, both Jewish, have been best friends since pre-school.

Why so many Jews? Bruce Revzin, Aaron's father, offered several possible



The Mets celebrate by drenching coach Cohen.

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## Russian Jews in Boston lose a hero and a friend

Bonner's death a personal loss

By David H. Goldberg  
Special to the Advocate

When Yelena Bonner moved to Boston two decades ago, it helped that her next door neighbor was a woman she had been friends with since the '70s in Moscow.

"She was like a sister to me," Ella Gorlova said Monday from her Brookline home. "I can tell you the date and time that we met. It was Feb. 13, 1974. That was the day Solzhenitsyn was arrested and sent to jail and eventually put on a plane and sent out of the Soviet Union. ...



Bonner

"This day, almost every friend and good acquaintance came to visit them," Gorlova continued. "We were very good friends of the Solzhenitsyn family. ... We entered the small kitchen and several minutes later, Miss Bonner with her husband, Andrei Sakharov, arrived."

Bonner, a giant of the human rights movement and widow of the Nobel Peace Prize winner, died Saturday in Boston. She was 88.

Gloucester resident Yuri Tuvin became friends with Bonner and Sakharov in Moscow in the '60s.

"What can I say about Yelena Bonner?" Tuvin said. "She was one of the very rare people who was always, maybe 100 percent right in any situation in politics

Continued on Page 2

## Stepping down as the conscience of Maimo

After 41 years, Rabbi David Shapiro retires from the Brookline school

By Elise Kigner  
Advocate Staff

When Maimonides School lay leaders asked Rabbi David Shapiro to become the school's religious leader, he accepted the job, but only grudgingly took on the honorific "rosh yeshiva." And, he said, he did not want business cards with that title.

But by any measure, Shapiro, who is stepping down after 41 years as a teacher, administrator and, most recently, rosh yeshiva, was a towering figure at the Modern Orthodox K-12 school.

He has seen immature middle school students grow into student body leaders; and officiated at weddings of former students and

then taught their children. As an administrator, he ensured that school policy on everything from curriculum to student clubs remained true to the intentions of Maimonides' founder Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

"I see my job as an educator, as a religious gadfly," said Shapiro,

Continued on Page 4



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# Rabbi Shapiro moving to Israel

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66. "Not as issuing rulings from on high."

Shapiro and his wife, Miriam, are moving from Brighton to Jerusalem next month to spend more time with their children and grandchildren. Shapiro also plans to prepare for publication his notes on the lectures of Talner Rabbi Yitzhak Twersky, the man who first drew him to Boston.

After graduating from Yeshiva University in New York, where he took classes with Rabbi Soloveitchik, Shapiro and his wife moved to Boston so he could study Jewish history at Harvard with Rabbi Twersky, who was well-known both as the Hasidic leader of the Talner shul in Brighton and as a scholar. Rabbi Twersky's wife, Dr. Atarah Twersky, is a daughter of Rabbi Soloveitchik.

To earn money, Shapiro taught Judaic studies part-time at Maimonides. Soon, he said, "I fell in love with what I was doing here."

He abandoned his doctoral studies – though he stayed close with Rabbi Twersky as a congregant at the Talner shul – and became associate principal at Maimonides in 1974. Four years later, he was promoted to principal, a job he held until 1999. He then returned to teaching Jewish history, Jewish thought, Talmud and Bible classes. He also focused on his writing, publishing in 2004 the book "Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik on Pesach, Sefirat ha-Omer and Shavu'ot."

Shapiro became Maimonides' first rosh yeshiva in 2006. He said lay leaders created the position out of concern that there was a vacuum in religious leadership at the 74-year-old school.

In the past, he said, Rabbi Soloveitchik and then Rabbi Twersky had always provided the religious guidance for the school. Rabbi Soloveitchik's wife, Dr. Tonya Soloveitchik, first headed the School Committee. In 1967, she was succeeded by her daughter Dr. Twersky, who resigned in 2004.

"[Lay leaders] said to me, 'Somebody has to now take responsibility for the nerve center of the school, for the religious decisions that have to be made,'" Shapiro recalled.

But he was hesitant about taking the job. He knew he would take a lot of heat for his decisions, and he was a little uncomfortable with the title, which the lay leaders insisted would command respect. In the end, he told them: "I will take the responsibility, but understand that I am not an oracle."

Shapiro said he frequently consulted with day school leaders at other Modern Orthodox schools and other rabbis, particularly those at the four synagogues that serve nearly 90 percent of Maimonides students: Young Israel of Brookline; Young Israel of Sharon; and Beth El-Atereth Israel and Shaarei Tefillah, which are both in Newton.

Shortly after his appointment, Shapiro learned that, for several



Rabbi David Shapiro congratulates new Maimonides graduates, from left, Aaron Zwiebach, Noah Swartz and Seth Katzman.

*'I see my job as an educator, as a religious gadfly, not as issuing rulings from on high.'*

**Rabbi David Shapiro**

years, a political student club had attended a convention for the Junior Statesmen of America and debated political issues during Shabbat. After consulting with rabbis and other day school leaders, he called off the annual trip. While the students observed halacha by not using microphones or taking notes, Shapiro told them that the convention was not in the spirit of Shabbat.

Even as rosh yeshiva, Shapiro didn't always get the final word in religious and moral matters. He remembered once having a discussion with his juniors about their use of a word that he and his generation considered vulgar because it originated as a sexual term. The students countered that it no longer had that connotation, and that language evolves through usage. "I lost that debate," Shapiro admitted.

He recalled another junior who came to him upset over a sexually explicit scene in Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man," which was assigned reading. "Why are we reading this?" the student asked. "Why should we be subjected to these images of naked women being thrown around by men?"

Shapiro told the student he would discuss the matter with the English faculty to see if they could find a different book that could express the same message in a more appropriate way.

"Rabbi Shapiro's collaborative nature, and his tirelessness in building consensus, even in those areas where he could have the undisputed last word, makes his leadership that much more powerful," said Nathan Katz, the school's executive director.

Hearing students talk about their lapses in halachic observance frustrated Shapiro, but he said he knew many became more observant after high school through a Hillel rabbi on campus, or through a seminary or

yeshiva teacher in Israel. His role at Maimonides included helping students find yeshiva and seminary programs in Israel.

Dr. Kalman Stein, who worked with Shapiro from 1978 to 1997, first as an associate principal, and then as a co-principal, said Shapiro's most important contribution to the school was helping it maintain the ideology of its founder. Stein said Shapiro was able to influence teachers and students in the school because they felt comfortable talking with him. "He is someone who is a real people person," said Stein, now principal at the Frisch School in New Jersey. "He became very much involved with the lives of the kids and the families."

Mike Rosenberg, Maimonides director of alumni and community relations, said Shapiro was able to connect with students in conversations about prayer and other religious matters.

"He is able to convey, at a kid's level, that they are part of a chain, that they are part of a tradition that goes back thousands of years," he said. "He tries to reach them at the level of just making an effort. Don't get frustrated, don't give up, you won't get an answer, you won't have an epiphany, but think of it as an opportunity."

In Israel, Shapiro will be working on a book based on Rabbi Twersky's lectures at the Talner shul, Congregation Beth David. For 20 years Shapiro attended these lectures and took notes. When the lectures were on Shabbos, he held the rabbi's words in his head, and wrote them down after Havdalah. After Rabbi Twersky died in 1997, Shapiro began giving his own talks at the shul based on the late rabbi's lectures. He also helped to lead Beth David, which relocated to New York this spring.

Shapiro said he is confident the teachers and administrators he hired over the years will continue to make decisions in line with the teachings of Rabbis Twersky and Soloveitchik. Middle and Upper School principal Rabbi Yaakov Jaffe, for example, is a student of a student of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, Rabbi Soloveitchik's son-in-law.

"I am comfortable that I am leaving the school in very capable hands," Shapiro said.