

## Lawyer to tackle topic that hasn't received its due

**Shlomo Kapustin**  
Correspondent

TORONTO — Charles Wagner refuses to take the credit for the lineup of legal talent at B'nai Brith's coming law seminar.

Wagner, chair of the Estate and Trust Group of the B'nai Brith Lawyers' Division, attributes the

event's attraction to the organization itself.

"For Ian Hull [a leading attorney, who will speak at the breakfast event] to be involved, who is not Jewish, it's a testament to B'nai Brith and the regard in which it is held in the community at large."

The seminar, to be held March



CHARLES WAGNER

23, will feature five speakers (including Wagner), who will rotate among tables of legal and accounting professionals in an informal fashion. Sponsored by TD Waterhouse Private Client Services, the event will take place at the Village Shul, in midtown Toronto.

"It's an organization that's very grassroots," said Wagner of B'nai Brith. "When I was a young student, David Matas [B'nai Brith's senior legal counsel and a human rights lawyer] and Irwin Cotler were inspirations to me. They helped beyond their own interests.... There's a need for continuing legal education for lawyers who serve the Jewish community [to deal with] specific questions that have a Jewish slant to them."

Still, the veteran Toronto estate litigator does acknowledge his role in planning the coming legal shindig.

"I helped facilitate the program by using my contacts within the legal industry to get highly qualified professionals to make themselves available to our constituency."

At next week's event, Wagner, who is also the president of the Thornhill Jewish Chamber of Commerce and the former CEO and corporate counsel of Success Business College, will discuss the legal significance of insane delusions resulting solely from Parkinson's disease, a topic that he said hasn't received the attention it deserves. When he researched the subject for a case involving a will that had been created by someone suffering from such a delusion, he returned empty-handed.

After consulting with Dr. Nathan Herrmann, of the department of psychiatry at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, he became more fully aware that Parkinson's can lead to delusions — both from the disease itself and from medications used to treat the disease.

The fruits of his investigation? Wagner's paper on the topic, co-written by Dr. Herrmann, will also appear as an article in the inaugural edition of the B'nai Brith Law Journal, to be published in March. All seminar attendees will receive a complimentary copy of the journal.

For information about the seminar or to register, please contact Hyla Reichmann at B'nai Brith Canada. She can be reached by phone at (416) 633-6224, ext. 128, or by e-mail at hreichmann@bnai.brith.ca.

## NY federation cuts 11 per cent of its staff

**Jacob Berkman**

NEW YORK (JTA) — America's largest Jewish federation became the latest major organization to downsize in the face of the recession.

The UJA-Federation of New York, which raised some \$153 million in its annual campaign last year, said last Wednesday that it was cutting 52 employees — slightly more than 11 per cent of its staff.

The layoffs, along with the decision to eliminate 20 staff positions that are now unfilled and other administrative cuts, will save the federation an estimated \$7.4 million, federation officials said.

Thus far in 2009, the federation is 10 per cent behind in its fundraising pledges compared to the previous year and it is 12 per cent behind on collections. The federation's \$675 million endowment has also shrunk by 25 per cent, making the cuts necessary, its top professional said last Wednesday.

"We took a very broad look at the situation and we are doing everything we can to hold our agencies as a whole together," said the federation's executive vice president and CEO, John Ruskay. "We made a commitment to see where we were at the first of the year.

"The state of the economy is increasingly grim. Cash collections are down. And by end of January we have been working diligently about this and trying to figure out how to do this as carefully and deliberately as possible."

The organization, which funds hundreds of non-profits in New York and abroad, also will reduce allocations slightly. And it will use money from its endowment to pay for an \$8.9 million deficit it anticipates for 2010. The federation also has cut travelling expenses, reduced its budget for events and instituted a salary freeze.

Sixty per cent of the layoffs came from the professional side

and 40 per cent were administrative.

Staffers laid off were informed individually last Wednesday. Ruskay sent an e-mail to the entire staff announcing the cuts.

Ruskay does not anticipate further cuts in the foreseeable future.

"We believe we have made a very careful projection for right now and the year beginning July 1, and assuming the floor doesn't drop out of either the economy or the campaign, we think we are set for the next 15 months at least," he said.

That projection includes whatever fundraising hit the federation anticipates from its donor base that lost money in the Ponzi scheme of Bernard Madoff, whose victims were heavily con-

centrated in New York.

New York joins other Jewish federations in enacting layoffs. Earlier this month, the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland announced that it was laying off 25 employees and trimming \$600,000 from its operating budget.

Some of the federation staffers in New York apparently were caught unaware, according to one laid-off employee.

"There was no warning," said the employee, who did not wish to be identified. "The management did everything to assure us they would do everything to avoid layoffs. When we had to negotiate our union contracts, we agreed not to take a cost-of-living increase to avoid layoffs."

## LIKUD, LIEBERMAN CLINCH DEAL

JERUSALEM (Arutz-7) — The Likud party took the first official step towards a new coalition government shortly after midnight Sunday and signed up the Israel Is Our Home (Yisrael Beiteinu) party. Its chairman, Avigdor Lieberman, will be foreign minister, but both parties left the door open for Kadima leader Tzipi Livni to join a national unity government.

The 14-page agreement was signed with the understanding that there would be changes if Livni were to change her stance and complete a unity government. The three parties together would have a total of 70 Knesset seats, far more than the absolute majority of 61 needed to defeat a no-confidence motion and remain in power.

Despite reports of behind-the-scenes contacts between Livni and Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu, there are no indications that she is about to back down from her demands that the Likud accept a "two-state solution."

The agreement with the Likud gives Yisrael Beiteinu five ministries in total, in addition to foreign affairs. The ministry of public security will be headed by Yitzchak Aharonovitch, and the tourism ministry will be operated by Stas Mizezhnikov. Uzi Landau, who switched to Yisrael Beiteinu from the Likud, will be minister of infrastructures, and Sofa Landver will be minister of absorption and immigration.

Yisrael Beiteinu agreed to settle for legislation to allow civil marriages between two non-Jews, leaving the issue of civil marriages in general to be discussed in a special committee.

The Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu previously agreed that Yaakov Ne'eman, who is not a Knesset Member, will be justice minister. The defence ministry will be headed by first-time Likud MK Moshe (Bogie) Ya'alon, former IDF Chief of Staff.

Netanyahu and his top aides were set to meet with representatives of the Sephardic religious Shas party on Monday. Other coalition partners, assuming Kadima does not join, are United Torah Judaism (UTJ), Ichud Leumi (National Union) and the Jewish Home parties.

## York University forming task force

*YORK cont. from page 1.*

operating contrary to the sanctions against it," said Daniel Ferman, president of Hillel at York.

Aaron Rosenberg, Hasbara at York president, said this is "yet another example of the smoke and mirrors tactics of the York administration to demonstrate that everything is under control when rules are arbitrarily, selectively and unfairly enforced while the campus climate becomes more toxic every day."

In fact, the very next day, according to a media release issued by Sammy Katz, Canadian campus coordinator for Hasbara Fellowships, graffiti found in a men's washroom stated "Boycott Israeli Apartheid." Someone scribbled "why?" underneath, to which the

perpetrator replied, "So we don't let the Jews get away with everything."

According to Katz, the graffiti is "further proof that tensions are escalating and that IAW has led to antisemitism."

Campus security was informed of the incident.

Katz had also posted a video on YouTube showing a non-student in Vari Hall ranting against "the Jewish."

According to a statement issued by B'nai Brith Canada, "promises made by the York president and his top administrators to Jewish community leaders, including a senior B'nai Brith Canada delegation, apparently have fallen by the wayside.

"In light of recent events on campus, B'nai Brith Canada can

only conclude that the president's assurances that he would reassert his jurisdiction to prevent hate on campus have not been met," stated Frank Dimant, executive vice-president. "It was B'nai Brith Canada's proactive campaign that alerted government, the community and Church leaders to the mini-Durban happening on campus. B'nai Brith Canada will continue its aggressive awareness campaign until such time as law and order are restored on campus."

York University, in a press release earlier this week, said it was forming a task force made up of professors and students, which will be mandated to review the current tensions on campus and seek remedial measures.

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