One of Israel’s most highly-quoted experts consulted by the media for his political opinions.

Read the article on page 12-13
Dear Friends,

Bar-Ilan University is entering its sixth decade in full force, empowered by the warmth and support that we have been privileged to receive from you, our overseas friends, on the occasion of our jubilee. The last year has been particularly rife with adversity, the gravest trial being, of course, the Second Lebanon War. We are still mourning our fallen, healing our wounded, and praying for the return of our three captured soldiers, Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and our own BIU Mechina student Eldad Regev. We must not make light of the dangers which we face; on the contrary, we have to prepare ourselves to contend with them. Unfortunately, many of us are in a state of despondence, if not despair, over the current reality.

I, for my part, do not count myself among those who paint the current Israeli reality in somber colors. The Israeli economy is healthy; academic research is driving innovations at a dizzying rate; and patents and other world-class intellectual assets are positioning Israel as a global leader. In its fewer than sixty years of existence, the State of Israel has racked up astounding achievements. Bar-Ilan is making a major contribution to these successes. The crucial role played by the University in ensuring a strong and resilient Israel is more apparent today than ever before. Thus, for instance, an official governmental study has just ranked Bar-Ilan number three in the world in number of citations per published paper in Material Sciences!

We at BIU, with your encouragement and generous support, are poised to intensify both our scientific/intellectual momentum and our physical development activities. The task is not an easy one. We are faced with numerous difficulties and potential pitfalls, coming, for example, in the form of government budget cuts; but here as well I prefer to look at the bright side – the achievements and the fascinating projects in which we are involved.

The University has recently received a munificent multi-million dollar donation towards the construction of a new building devoted to education studies. Our one-of-a-kind Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center was just given a $2.5 million donation toward the purchase of an MRI device, the first of its kind in Israel. I am particularly proud of our achievements in the area of Jewish outreach programs, such as the special first-time learning experience for the public that we hosted on campus between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

In this magazine you will read about the affirmative activities of our University, particularly our research achievements, outreach programs and the exceptional individuals who are part of the Bar-Ilan family. We are proud to highlight some of our many accomplishments in the areas of nanotechnology, microbiology, engineering, political science, education, French culture and literature, Jewish art and law.

Among Bar-Ilan’s scientific achievements, an article by our botanist-archaeologist, Prof. Mordechai Kislev, detailing a recent discovery of ancient cultivated figs, was ranked by Discover Magazine as one of the year’s top six archaeological stories. This story features in BIU Today’s News section. Speaking of figs, it is now the season, Tu B’Shvat, to celebrate the fruits of the Land of Israel. This is a fitting time to rejoice in the fruits of our labor and to continue to plant seeds toward the future flourishing of the Jewish People.

May we continue to grow from strength to strength.

Sincerely,

Prof. Moshe Kaveh
This past June, the Bar-Ilan community lost one of its most eloquent proponents of Jewish artistic expression, as Dr. Shaindy Rudoff, founding director of the University’s masters’ program in English and Creative Writing, passed away after a long battle with cancer. She was 40 years old.

A scholar of American literature who trained at Barnard College, Columbia University and New York University, Rudoff saw the creation of a degree-granting program in English-language Creative Writing – the only one of its kind in Israel – as a personal mission. According to her colleagues, it was her talent and energy that convinced the university administration that such a program was not only desirable, but necessary.

“Shaindy believed that good art can break down barriers,” says Prof. Michael Kramer, former chair of Bar-Ilan’s Department of English and Acting Director of the Program. “She felt that Jewish identity could be strengthened by actively training writers whose work focuses on the Jewish experience. With native Israeli and foreign-born participants from all religious backgrounds – including ultra-orthodox and secular and even non-Jews – the program is giving voice to how varied that experience can be.”

In addition to providing training for aspiring writers from Israel and abroad, the program links local professional writers to their colleagues around the world. In the spring of 2006, the program hosted a literary conference that featured a joint seminar given by award-winning American Jewish writer Nathan Englander and Israeli author Etgar Keret. During the 2005-2006 academic year, program participants studied with visiting faculty including Jonathan Wilson – whose novel, A Palestine Affair, was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award and a New York Times Notable Book of the Year – and short story author Jon Papernick, who has taught writing at Boston University and Brandeis University among other places.

As the Creative Writing program prepared to take its first steps without its founding director, Allen Hoffman – the program’s permanent Writer-in-Residence – gave a personal interpretation of the traditional phrase spoken in the Jewish house of mourning: May you be comforted among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. "With the benefit of Shaindy's life and legacy, we understand that such comfort comes in the form of creative challenges: personal and communal; academic and artistic," he wrote. “May Shaindy’s memory be for a blessing!”
When he became Bar-Ilan’s new Rector in the fall of 2006, Prof. Joseph Menis received a massive mandate – to initiate and support, on a university-wide scale, the policies that ensure educational excellence. Luckily, for Prof. Menis, this is a natural transition; in his own research, he has been examining the science of educational excellence for over thirty years.

A Bar-Ilan alumnus who studied chemistry as an undergraduate and received a Masters degree in Science Teaching at the Hebrew University before returning to Bar-Ilan for his doctorate, Prof. Menis is one of today’s leading authorities in curriculum development, learning strategies, and the use of educational technology. While focusing on the dynamics of the individual classroom, Menis’ work is global in perspective – he has directed comparative studies of science and mathematics teaching in Holland, Canada, the United States, England, Australia, Japan and Israel, and was among the first Israelis officially invited to Vietnam, where he served as an educational advisor to the government. A full-time Bar-Ilan faculty member since the 1970s, Prof. Menis has held visiting appointments at Columbia University (USA), Cambridge (UK), and the University of Toronto (Canada).

According to Prof. Menis, a broad perspective is helpful when making decisions that affect the diverse population of students and researchers at Bar-Ilan. "At the University of Toronto, I recently conducted a study relating to the absorption of Chinese immigrant students," Menis recalls. "Their situation is similar to immigrant students from the former Soviet Union here in Israel. By bringing this knowledge back, it becomes possible to make the policy decisions that provide equal opportunity for educational excellence."

Over a long career at Bar-Ilan, Prof. Menis has served as Director of the Science and Mathematics Education Center, the Head of the Churgin School of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. As Academic Adviser to University President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Menis initiated the launch of a “Virtual Jewish University” on the Internet, Israel’s first venture in Web-based learning for academic credit, and among the first courses of its kind in the world.

“I have a particular interest in the use of technology to enhance the experience of different populations – especially those with learning disabilities,” Prof. Menis says. “As University Rector, I hope to make education – in all its forms – more accessible and effective for all.”
"We have come up with a process that removes silver and other heavy metal ions from the water." The two-fold result: clean water and the production of nano-silver.

Prof. Aharon Gedanken, of the Department of Chemistry, has the "silver" touch. "I have discovered how to convert metallic wastes, or shmutz (dirt), into money," exclaims Prof. Gedanken. "In my modest laboratory, my research team and I have found simple, cheap ways to recycle waste materials, create marketable items, and produce new elements for industry."

Prof. Gedanken and his research team (which includes Prof. E. Tel-Or and Dr. Benny Chefetz from the Hebrew University) have developed a process that removes silver remains and other heavy metal ions from the rivers or other water sources into which they are dumped. "In Israel many places, such as the Kishon River, are heavily polluted with heavy metal ions due, for example, to silver-manufacturing plants disposing silver ‘waste’ in the rivers," says Prof. Gedanken. "We have come up with a process that removes silver and other heavy metal ions, such as lead, copper, cadmium, among others, from the water." The two-fold result: clean water and the production of nano-silver, which is a marketable item.

The process is based on the combination of aquatic plants and a microwave oven. The team has patented a three-minute water-cleaning “flow” process using an aquatic plant and a domestic microwave oven. "When the leaves of these plants are then burned in argon the result is nano-silver, gold or lead, depending on which of these ‘waste’ items are in the water," says Prof. Gedanken. "Needless to say, this by-product is useful for industry."

Bar-Ilan University is presently looking for an investment partner to build a mini-industrial plant to make a water flow system 100 times bigger than the domestic microwave.

Prof. Gedanken has also developed a simple, cheap method of producing nano-tungsten carbide – the main chemical element in tool-cutting equipment (in one of the Israeli
market’s recent financial coups, Warren Buffet purchased ISCAR, a manufacturer of tungsten carbide cutting tools). Prof. Gedanken calls his method RAPET (Reactions Under Autogenic Pressure at Elevated Temperatures). Theoretically, the production of nano-tungsten carbide rods and tubes should improve the quality and strength of the cutting tools.

Prof. Gedanken completed his undergraduate studies (magna cum laude) at Bar-Ilan University in 1965 and went on to receive his MSc degree in 1967. He continued his graduate studies at Tel Aviv University under Joshua Jortner and received his PhD in 1973. After a brief postdoctoral period with Prof. Otto Schnep at USC in Los Angeles, he returned to Bar-Ilan in 1975 as part of the senior faculty, where he served as chairman of the Department of Chemistry from 1982-85. With over 410 scientific papers and 15 patents to his credit, he is the recipient of the prestigious Minerva Fellowship.

Over the years, Prof. Gedanken has been a visiting scientist at AT&T Bell Laboratories and at NIDDK, NIH.

In his research, Prof. Gedanken has developed novel methods for the fabrication of nanomaterials, sonochemistry, microwave heating, and sonoelectrochemistry; developed a chemical method for the preparation of multi-walled carbon nanotubes; and has published over 300 papers on nanomaterials.

Prof. Gedanken is practical about the implications of his developments. “Introducing new chemicals into the market could cost millions of dollars in order for the new substances to pass strict FDA laws,” says Prof. Gedanken. “But if you are simply improving or converting a well-known chemical, such as silver or gold, into a nano version of itself, you don’t need FDA approval and thereby can save a great deal of money.”
Ever since she was a young medical student, Dr. Tamar Tennenbaum has been fascinated with the human body’s largest organ – skin. “Skin reflects all the mechanisms of disease,” says Dr. Tennenbaum. “It is the first thing you see. Skin covers us and acts as a barrier from the outside. It is the organ that shows the first obvious signs of aging and disease. It is also a major site for cancers and for painful and life-threatening diabetic ulcers.”

Dr. Tennenbaum, who holds an MD as well as a PhD in cell biology and pharmacology, has optimized her academic qualifications to work in medically related research for the betterment of the quality of life. Following her medical and doctoral studies, Dr. Tennenbaum spent five years in the USA performing NIH-NCI postdoctoral research on the diagnosis and recognition of skin cancer. Upon her return to Israel, Dr. Tennenbaum joined the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences. “I must say that I have found the environment at Bar-Ilan to be most conducive to research – the interaction between scientists here is encouraging and helpful rather than competitive, and the University’s Technology Transfer Company (TTC) has been very supportive,” says Dr. Tennenbaum. “Our common goal is to develop therapies and technologies that will help people.”

According to Dr. Tennenbaum, in the last fifteen years there has been a marked increase in understanding skin disease, leading to better diagnosis, but very few drugs and therapies have been developed to treat the various skin problems and related diseases. This void led Dr. Tennenbaum to develop and market, through her company HealOr, a topical drug in the unique form of a spray which will be the first of its kind to advance not only normal healing but also the healing of chronic diabetic skin ulcers – the terrible bane of diabetes sufferers.

HealOr, established in 2002, is a joint venture between private investment and Bar-Ilan University. The drug has passed its first FDA stage and is already being tested in human clinical trials in Israel with the cooperation of a number of prominent hospitals.
“I have come full circle,” laughs Dr. Tennenbaum. “Having conflicting feelings about engaging solely in medicine or research, I am ultimately utilizing both sciences to my advantage for the business of providing medical cures.”

“Wound-healing research is of the highest importance in the Western world,” says Dr. Tennenbaum. “Wounds are a high cause of morbidity, while pressure and diabetic ulcers are the prime cause of amputation. Until the development of our solution, there has been no real effective drug for treatment and healing of wounds.” In her laboratory, Dr. Tennenbaum uses the gene therapy approach manipulating skin cells, identifying the role of genes in skin, and then developing a way to enhance or stop development of different characteristics of skin. The focus of Dr. Tennenbaum’s lab work is on understanding “signaling” or the mechanism whereby we pass signals to the different cells in our skin through the enzyme PKC. “We found that we can utilize these enzymes to improve wound healing,” says Dr. Tennenbaum.

A multiple grant-winner, Dr. Tennenbaum has raised over $1.6 million for her research over the past eight years, including the prestigious Johnson & Johnson Focus Giving Grant. She was selected to present her research in drug development at the 25 year jubilee celebration of the program at Johnson & Johnson headquarters (November 2006). She is the organizer of an international conference on wound healing that will take place in the Spring of 2007 at Bar-Ilan University on “Wound Healing from Basic Research to Clinical Aspects” under the auspices of the ISF (Israel Science Foundation). In basic academic research as well as in biotech development, Dr. Tennenbaum continues her innovative extensive work to promote skin research and drug development to new and exciting frontiers.
The difference between theoretical science and engineering is that the engineer is always looking for close-range applicable solutions to everyday problems,” says Dr. Zeev Zalevsky, considered one of the rising stars in Bar-Ilan’s new School of Engineering. After receiving his PhD in the field of electro-optics, Dr. Zalevsky served for five years in the Israel Air force as a technical officer, then worked in a number of high-tech start-up companies before joining the University’s engineering faculty three years ago.

To achieve his goal of improving the quality of everyday life, Dr. Zalevsky is working simultaneously on several research projects in his specialty of photonics. In one case, the young researcher uses nano-optical elements to achieve “super resolution” – reducing volume and weight to achieve cheaper and smaller ways of getting better resolution in imaging systems. For instance, he is working on developing a special coating for eyeglasses that will enable people to see both far and near – as a cheap, light-weight alternative for multi-focal lenses.

Dr. Zalevsky is also working on ultra fast, low-cost, low power-consuming optical transistors and logic gates for the fields of optics communications and optical data processing that are 1,000 times faster than traditional equivalent electronic modules. This is particularly important in computer and micro-controller development as their operation speed is currently limited.

Today fibers are used as a medium to transmit information. Any problems, such as interference noises or loss of power must be “corrected” from the outside in order to remedy the distortion. Dr. Zalevsky is working on the development of “smart” fibers which will self-correct any problems from within the fiber through the use of “thinner than hair” devices inside the fiber, thereby saving space, time and manpower. One application of such “smart” fibers is in-fiber sensors for speech detection.

“We engineers do not only look for practical solutions to problems in photonics - we are also advancing Bar-Ilan’s reputation as an institution concerned with improving our country’s commercial and scientific bases.”
Dr. Zalevsky wants to convert radio frequency (RF) filters, which are now big in volume, heavy, expensive and bulky, into photons, by using simple optical elements that will save a lot of volume and weight. As this work has important military implications, for example, in electronic warfare, when it is important to discover information about signals the enemy is sending, he is working closely with the Ministry of Defense.

“In applicable science of this nature, we work in close contact with Israeli start-up high-tech companies, as well as with Bar-Ilan’s Technology Transfer Company (TTC),” says Dr. Zalevsky. “Here I must also acknowledge the support of my collaborating colleagues and University staff in my research activity. In our research, we engineers not only look for practical solutions to problems in photonics - we are also advancing Bar-Ilan’s reputation as an institution concerned with improving our country’s commercial and scientific bases.”

At this stage, Dr. Zalevsky is working out of a cramped laboratory on the south campus. He is looking forward to the completion of the Engineering Complex, now under construction on Bar-Ilan’s north campus. The Complex will consist of four distinctive buildings, providing a modern, well-equipped interactive environment for training and research. The four cutting-edge structures are the Aharon and Rachel Dahan Computer Engineering Building; the Dr. Mordecai and Dr. Monique Katz Information Technology Building; the Jesselson Family-Schottenstein Family Electronic Technology Building; and the Marc Rich Bio-Engineering Building.
The recent war in Lebanon and the often scathing international media blitz against Israel underscored the necessity of defending our country, not only by military means, but also in the diplomatic arena. In the USA public diplomacy is a well-recognized tool used to defend American policy and objectives. While Americans are leaders in training experts in public diplomacy, Israel is only now beginning to realize the crucial need to educate people in this field. Bar-Ilan University is the first university in Israel that recognized the need for a Public Diplomacy program which is a specialization track within the Interdisciplinary Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation, in coordination with the Department of Political Studies, Division of Journalism and Communication Studies, the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies, and other programs.

“Public Diplomacy is an interdisciplinary specialty that uses psychology, sociology, communications studies and international law, among other disciplines, to deal with our opponents’ efforts to manipulate the media and public opinion – particularly against Israel, the USA and other democracies,” explains Prof. Gerald Steinberg, who is also a Senior Research Associate at Bar-Ilan’s BESA Center, as well as Director of the Conflict Management Program at Bar-Ilan University.
and Negotiation program, and head of the NGO Monitor project. “Public Diplomacy is the primary means of restoring the missing context, by demonstrating the legitimacy of military actions in response to terrorism and diplomacy,” he adds.

“When Israeli professors were attacked through academic boycotts, we were successful in defeating them, using the techniques of public diplomacy,” says Prof. Steinberg, who is a key member of Bar-Ilan’s International Advisory Board for Academic Freedom (IAB). Explaining another instance of how public diplomacy works, Prof. Steinberg adds, “Palestinians are successful at manipulating the media and human rights NGOs through rewriting history and portraying themselves as victims and Israelis as ‘war criminals’. In this way they achieve their goals by garnering international support, pushing Israelis towards isolation and demonization. Public diplomacy trains people to articulately and effectively defeat this virulent form of political warfare."

Prof. Steinberg is no stranger to being interviewed. One of Israel’s most highly-quoted experts consulted by the media for his political opinions during this past summer’s Lebanon War, Prof. Steinberg is an experienced practitioner of the art of public diplomacy. This interviewer had the opportunity to see Prof. Steinberg “in action” while interviewing him for this article, when he fielded a telephone call from the BBC regarding Israel’s position on the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in Gaza. During the telephone conversation, Prof. Steinberg craftily used the art and techniques of public diplomacy to deflect the reporter’s questions by reframing the questions and giving responses that avoided reinforcing the prejudices and false assumptions.

Prof. Steinberg specializes in Middle East diplomatic and security issues, with an emphasis on arms control and CBMs, Middle East peace efforts, Israeli foreign and security policy, and the USA-Israeli relationship. He is also a consultant to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Security Council, has spoken at OSCE Mediterranean Seminars, and participates in a number of the track-two workshops on Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security.

Prof. Steinberg’s op-ed columns appear in The Jerusalem Post, and in The Wall St. Journal (Europe), Toronto Globe and Mail, Financial Times, National Review Online, International Herald Tribune, and other publications, and he is a frequent commentator on CBS News, NPR, the BBC, and more. Recent academic publications include "Europe’s Failed Middle East Policies", "NGOs Against Israel" and "The Impact of the Failure of Oslo on Israeli Politics."
The first-ever course in medical interpreting took place just before Rosh Hashana, thanks to the successful collaboration of the "Tene Briut" project (located at the Hillel Yaffe Medical Center) and Bar-Ilan’s Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies. The eighteen participants in the recent course are originally from Ethiopia themselves and trained as healthcare professionals, mostly registered nurses.

The two initiators of this program, Dr. Anat Jaffe, Head of the Endocrinology Department at Hillel Yaffe Medical Center, and Prof. Miriam Shlesinger, Head of the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Bar-Ilan University, are hoping to launch the service soon, once the technical arrangements have been completed and funding has been secured.

As for the recent graduates, who are all too familiar with the hardships encountered by non-Hebrew-speaking immigrants from Ethiopia (and elsewhere), they too are eager to begin working and to place the members of their community on an equal footing in accessing medical care.
Bar-Ilan University’s Materials Science research group has been ranked number three in the world in a recently published study in the Israel Chemical Society’s Chemistry in Israel magazine. Out of over 200 of the most prestigious universities around the globe — among them Harvard, MIT, Oxford and Cambridge — Bar-Ilan ranked third in number of citations per published paper in Materials Science.

“This statistic is a wonderful reflection of the high quality of Bar-Ilan University’s research in Materials Science,” says Prof. Chaim Sukenik, Chairman of the Department of Chemistry and a member of the Materials Science team. “We are proud of this distinction and will continue to build on our efforts in this area,” he added.

“Receiving a number three ranking is an affirmation of the top-notch Materials Science team at Bar-Ilan University,” said Vice President for Research Prof. Harold Basch. “These distinguished scientists bring millions of dollars of grants into the University every year and are truly making an outstanding impact in their field,” continued Basch.

Designated as the European Union’s “Marie Curie Training Site for Novel Fabrication Methods for Nanoscale Materials”, Bar-Ilan was previously ranked among the top European institutions for citations in materials science. This new study further strengthens the original ranking.

In the first study ever conducted on the silver content of archaeological ceramics, a joint Bar-Ilan University–Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) research team has discovered unusually high concentrations of silver in samples of many different types of pottery from late Second Temple period (late first century BCE – 70 CE) excavations in Jerusalem.

The results are published in a recent issue of the University of Oxford journal Archaeometry, in an article entitled "The Discovery of Anomalously High Silver Abundances in Pottery from Early Roman Excavation Contexts in Jerusalem."

The research team, consisting of Prof. David Adan-Bayewitz, of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at BIU and guest at Berkeley Lab, and Dr. Frank Asaro and Robert D. Giauque of the Environmental Energy Technologies Division at Berkeley Lab in Berkeley, California, studied the silver concentrations in 1,200 pottery vessels from 38 sites in Roman Judaea (present-day Israel).

The geographical distribution of the samples with high silver cannot be explained by natural causes. The researchers deduced, therefore, that the origin of the silver is related to human activity. The researchers suggest that the anomalously high silver concentrations they found in the Jerusalem pottery samples may be analytical evidence of the wealth of the city during the late Second Temple period. The findings from this study also suggest that the measurement of silver in pottery may be a useful tool for evaluating archaeological remains and patterns of urban contamination in antiquity.
Bar-Ilan’s Rhetorics Club, which was founded just two years ago, made its first global debut as the only Israeli university team to participate in the International Debate Championship – Istanbul 2006. Although the Bar-Ilan contingent of five is not comprised of native English speakers, it scored respectably among the delegations of 150 universities (including Oxford and Bristol) from 23 countries in the competition geared for those who consider English as their primary language.

"Competing in international tournaments gives us the opportunity to meet students from all around the world and to discuss global issues with them," says Bar-Ilan Interdisciplinary Social Sciences major Adi Lavi, whose team debated whether American forces should be pulled out of Iraq and if photos of anorexic women should be banned from the media. In order to win a debate, the team must combine an interesting and convincing logical analysis with personal knowledge of the issue and effective use of rhetorical tools to draw the audience’s attention. "This method of debating is taken from the British Parliament," explains Lavi, noting that the topic to be debated is revealed only 15 minutes before the competitions begin.

The Bar-Ilan Rhetorics Club is open to students from all faculties who enjoy debating political, social and economic issues. During the year the club participates in the competitions of the Israeli Debate League.

Quantum Mechanical Predictions

Everybody knows that when you stretch something, it gets thinner. But there are materials that behave contrary to expectations: they thicken when stretched and get thinner when compressed. Known as ‘auxetic’ substances, these include some foams and special crystals. Now researchers at Bar-Ilan University and the Technion have used quantum mechanical calculations to identify chemical compounds that behave auxetically on a molecular level. So reported The Jerusalem Post in a recent article.

By using quantum mechanical calculations, a team led by BIU chemistry professor Shmaryahu Hoz predicts that there are certain molecules – a class of compounds known as polyprismanes – that behave auxetically. These are rod-shaped molecules comprised of several three-, four-, five- or six-membered rings of carbon atoms on top of each other. The prismanes, made of three- and four-carbon rings, show roughly equal auxetic effects, regardless of the number of stacked rings. The ones made of five- and six-carbon rings demonstrate significantly higher auxetic effects. Of all the variations for which calculations were carried out, the prismane made of four six-membered rings showed the strongest effect. The researchers have not yet been able to explain why prismane molecules behave auxetically. "Although prismatic crystals were discovered over 30 years ago, very few representatives of this class of compounds have been synthesized so far," says Hoz. "We hope that our insights will act as an incentive to produce more."

Profiling Software Based on BIU Research Could Help Nab Pedophiles

So much for the "anonymity" of the web. Researchers have developed new internet security tools that reportedly can determine a person's gender, level of education, and whether two pieces of writing originated from the same person – all from a typing sample of a few hundred words. The technology has important implications for helping to catch plagiarists or uncover pedophiles in chat rooms, its creators say.

In 2003, Bar-Ilan University researchers Prof. Moshe Koppel and Dr. Shlomo Argamon (the latter now at the Illinois Institute of Technology) developed a way to guess a person’s gender from his or her word usage, based on a Bayesian network that uses weighted word frequencies and parts of speech. In short, the researchers found, men don’t write the same as women.

A simplified version of their work was used to create the Gender Genie, an internet site that used an algorithm to determine a writer’s gender. Expanding on the technology used to create the Gender Genie, Neal Krawetz, a computer security consultant and researcher, has established an internet security tool called the Gender Guesser.
BIU Legal Expert Elected to UN Committee

Dr. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Director of the Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women at Bar-Ilan University, and Chair of the Advisory Committee to the National Authority for the Advancement of Women in the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel, has been elected at the United Nations Headquarters to join the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Dr. Halperin-Kaddari earned the support of 96 of the 183 countries which participated in the vote, and defeated contenders for the position from many different countries, including Hungary, Syria and Lebanon.

The committee to which Dr. Halperin-Kaddari has been appointed is among the most prestigious in the United Nations. The election of an Israeli candidate represents an important achievement after a number of years in which Israel failed in its attempts to advance the selection of its candidates to various UN bodies.

Dr. Halperin-Kaddari is a senior lecturer at Bar-Ilan University’s Faculty of Law. She earned her LLM and JSD at Yale Law School. Her fields of interest include family law, feminist critique of law, and bioethics. Her book Women in Israel: A State of Their Own has just been published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

The First Crops

A team of Bar-Ilan researchers published two groundbreaking articles in the prestigious journal Science – within a two-week period! In the first paper, Prof. Mordechai Kislev, of the Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, Anat Hartmann of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology and Ofer Bar-Yosef, of Harvard University, claimed that dried-up figs found in what is modern day Israel may have been the first cultivated crop more than 11,000 years ago. Their discovery pushed back the earliest estimates of when agriculture began by 1,000 years. It also suggests that, centuries before they figured out how to plant barley and other crops, people knew how to propagate fruit trees for sweet treats, according to the researchers.

The beginning of agriculture is quite different than previously thought, according to the second innovative paper published in Science. Unlike the common assumption that the origin was generated by a single line of human efforts which took place in one specific area, the Bar-Ilan researchers found a much more complicated effort developed by different human populations in different regions. The findings by Kislev and Hartmann and lead author Dr. Ehud Weiss, of Bar-Ilan, represent an entirely new concept in the development of agriculture.

BIU Among Research Institutes to Get $230 Million for Nanotechnology R&D

The Israeli government announced that it will strengthen funding in nanoscience and nanotechnology research centers, reported Ynetnews, the English internet news edition of the daily Yedioth Aharonot.

The government is set to finance a third of funds worth $82 million over the next five years. The new financing uses a triangle model, where both the universities and the government match all private donations. This program makes nanotechnology one of Israel’s most heavily invested in R&D fields in Israel.

Bar-Ilan University is among Israel’s top research institutions participating in the program. The funding will be invested into three channels: nanotechnology education, applied research and derived developments by companies.

BIU in the NEWS
BIU Student
Eldad Regev
Captured by Hizballah

Eldad Regev, one of the two IDF reserve soldiers captured during Hizballah’s ambush on their border patrol on July 12, is a student in Bar-Ilan’s Pre-Academic Training Program (“Mechina”) and was due to begin studying for his BA at the University.

A few days prior to his capture, Eldad contacted the Mechina in order to postpone an exam he knew in advance that he would miss due to his reserve duty. As is the University’s practice with all soldiers called to military service, the Mechina complied with his request and postponed the exam. “The sad part of the story is that we postponed the exam and made all the preparations for him to take it a few days later, but he couldn’t show up,” said Dr. Dov Levitan, Director of Academic Regional Colleges and Pre-Academic Study Programs, adding that the Mechina would make every effort to accommodate Eldad upon his return.

Since Regev’s kidnapping, the administrative division of the University’s regional college network has maintained regular contact with the Regev family, offering emotional support during their painful ordeal.

BIU and the

The following news items relate to the war in Lebanon vis-à-vis the Bar-Ilan University community.

Family of Captured Israel Soldier at Bar-Ilan University

In a poignant meeting with family members of captured Israeli soldier Eldad Regev, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh promised to urge influential friends – among them human rights activist and Canadian Minister of Justice Irwin Cotler, Harvard Law Prof. Alan Dershowitz, human rights activist Elie Wiesel and Editor and Publisher Mortimer Zuckerman – to do their utmost to push for the immediate release of all three of Israel’s captured soldiers.

“Our hearts are with Eldad, Ehud Goldwasser and Gilad Shalit, and their families, and we hope that they will be released very soon,” said Prof. Kaveh. “And as soon as they are back in our hands, we will warmly welcome Eldad Regev to begin his BA studies with us at Bar-Ilan,” he added. He also promised that the University would dispatch learning material to the soldiers if there were any way to do so via the International Red Cross. Prof. Kaveh said that Bar-Ilan would remember all three soldiers at every University event until they return home.

For information about the three captured soldiers see: www.habanim.org
The Second Lebanon War and its Aftermath

"In the long run Hizballah is going to try to turn Lebanon into Ayatollah-land led by the same Shiite fundamentalist radical ideology which today governs Iran. This is the core reason why Iran is behind Hizballah in every sense of the word and in every possible way," claims Dr. Mordechai Kedar, Research Associate of the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University.

According to Kedar, if Israel is not cautious, it will have an Iranian settlement on its northern border which will serve as a jumping rod into the Arab world and, furthermore, as a base to undermine stability in Europe. In the short run, Kedar claims, Hizballah is trying to rebuild its status within Lebanese society as the only organ which can promptly compensate the population for damage incurred during the war, a field in which, he says, the Lebanese government has appeared rather incompetent.

Kedar, who served for 25 years in IDF Military Intelligence specializing in Arab political discourse, Arab mass media, Islamic groups and the Syrian domestic arena, was among the speakers at a recent BESA Center conference entitled “The Second Lebanon War and its Aftermath.”

The conference included two panels – one on the war itself and one on its aftermath. Topics dealt with Strategic Miscalculations; Problems in the Conduct of the War; Mistakes in Preparing the Ground Forces for War; What Did Iran Learn from the War?: The View from Washington: From Disappointment to Disillusion; The Arab World Following the War; and The Political System in Israel After the War, among others.

BIU awarded a $1,000 grant to every one of its students who took part in the Lebanon war. Pictured below, some of the 623 recipients holding a cheque for the total amount of NIS 2,728 M.

Special BIU Summer Camp for Northern Youth

Bar-Ilan hosted a group of children from the northern towns of Kiryat Shmona, Hazor and Maaleh Yosef at a summer camp designed especially for them by the Unit for Youth Science Activities. This special adventure was created as a means of both removing the youth from the imminent danger they faced and making their summer vacation a more memorable one. Bar-Ilan University staff and faculty volunteered to host these special guests in their homes during their weeklong visit.
The 2006 Global Board of Trustees Meetings (Sunday June 4 – Thursday June 8) marked the grand finale of Bar-Ilan University’s 50th Anniversary celebrations.

The gala week started on Sunday, when Board of Trustees members were treated to a tour of BIU archaeological sites Tel es-Safi/Gath (biblical home of Goliath) and Tel Maresha. That evening, the Global Board of Trustees Meetings officially kicked off with the launch of the Nanotechnology Institute. On Monday Board members participated in committee meetings on the Bar-Ilan campus. Later, they celebrated the launch of the Institute of Biblical Archaeology at a magical evening at Beit Guvrin.

On Tuesday Board meetings were reconvened at the Plenary Session on campus, followed by a special program: “Becoming a Scientist at BIU: The Journey from Wunderkind to Faculty.” That evening all gathered at the Dahan Family Unity Park for the week’s central event, the impressive ceremony awarding Honorary Doctorates to distinguished recipients from around the world: Nobel Laureate Prof. Robert J. Aumann, Joseph Fetter, Nobel Laureate Prof. K. Alex Müller, Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, Aliki Rzepka, Jacob Shachar, Angela Shamoon and the Gesher Theatre.

The following day, Wednesday, BIU celebrated the groundbreaking of the Peter and Aliki Rzepka Twelve Tribes Plaza and the dedications of the Joseph and Frances Fetter Brain Research Complex and Beit Harav Jakobovits-Sami Shamoon Centre for the Study of Philosophy, Ethics and Jewish Thought and the Gradel Wing. On Thursday the jam-packed week ended with an archaeological tour of historic Caesarea followed by a festive dinner.
Bar-Ilan University will invest $100 million in a new nano center, with $30 million more to come from the Israeli government. The facility, which is currently being erected on the University’s south campus, is slated to be completed in 2008.

A total of 200 scientists in the fields of chemistry, physics, medical imaging, energy storage, water desalination and drug delivery will work in the interdisciplinary center, which will establish start-up companies to carry out commercial-industrial pilot projects for speedy transfer to the marketplace.

The Nanotechnology Institute will be an outgrowth of Bar-Ilan’s Center for Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology Research, which was set up seven years ago and includes 17 research groups.

1 Prof. Avi Ullman, BIU Rector
   Prof. Yosef Yeshurun

2 Atidim Foundation Chairman Eitan Wertheimer and recipient of the 2006 President’s Award, Mrs. Wertheimer, Patsy Landa and Benny Landa, founders of the Landa Fund for Equal Opportunity Through Education

3 Associate VP Judith Haimoff, International Board of Governors Chairman Jane Stern Lebell, Don Lebell

4 American Friends President Peter Rzepka, Global Board of Trustees Chairman Dr. Mordecai Katz, Dr. Monique Katz

5 BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, IBG Student Ambassador Ezra Yevarkhin, Eitan Wertheimer

6 Eitan Wertheimer, Prof. Moshe Kaveh
Bar-Ilan University's Institute of Biblical Archaeology, in the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, will provide a meaningful contribution to Israeli and Jewish society.

With Jewish identity, roots and heritage assuming highest importance in the continuity of Jewish life, the Institute will play a unique role in fostering a better understanding of our land, history and people.

The launch of the Institute took place at Beit Guvrin, a unique and historic site inhabited from the Biblical period onward.

On this occasion, the University conferred the AMI (Friend of Israel) Prize upon French composer Michel Legrand, in appreciation of the support that he has demonstrated toward the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Bar-Ilan celebrates Jubilee and Launching of Institute of Biblical Archaeology in the Ancient Beit Guvrin Amphitheater

The Roman Amphitheater of Beit Guvrin, illuminated by hundreds of torches and candles, provided a dramatic venue for Bar-Ilan’s spectacular Jubilee event, marking the launching of the University’s Institute of Biblical Archaeology. Billed as a celebration of music and history, the evening commenced with a festive candlelight dinner for Bar-Ilan trustees, friends and staff, followed by an artistic production intertwining the past, present and future in a site excavated by Bar-Ilan archaeologists. French master composer Michel LeGrand and his harpist wife, Catherine Michel, performed along with famed singers – the French Maria Zamora and Israel’s Shlomo Gronich and David D’or. The event also featured Bar-Ilan archaeology students who theatrically conveyed the excitement in learning about their Jewish roots through archaeology – an important aim of the new Institute.

"We’re at an archaeological site and we’re digging. Suddenly, we discover something – a piece of a pot, a fragment of mosaic, the step of a mikve… evidence of Jewish life in this country… hundreds and even thousands of years ago. So here I am, a child of the 21st century and I’m holding a shard, a piece of a pot, which a young Jewish woman held to cook or to bake with thousands of years ago. I find it amazing," says IBG Student Ambassador Silvie Neuman, a new immigrant from Antwerp, Belgium, who is an MA Dangoor Scholarship recipient at Bar-Ilan.

As Silvie recounts a story from antiquity, Shlomo Gronich, dressed in white, appears with a Yemenite shofar and begins to blow in biblical style before proceeding with a melody inspired by the Psalm "Eli Ata." Silvie tells of a Judean man who before embarking on a long journey entrusted his possessions buried in an amphora to his Philistine neighbor. When he returned for the amphora, his possessions were not to be found.
This is actually the story of the Jewish people, explains Silvie. "Hence the importance of archaeology... our assets and lost riches have remained embedded in the earth for thousands of years."

At this point, students holding broken pottery enter one at a time from the amphitheater’s different gates. Five harps strategically located around the site provide a magical musical backdrop as each student talks of another notable discovery made by Bar-Ilan archaeologists in the region:

- A shard bearing an inscription strikingly similar to the well-known Philistine named Goliath (Tel es-Safi/Gath)
- A collection of ancient Hebrew letters possibly written by Judeans that describe the struggles at the end of the 1st Temple period, as the Babylonians move toward Jerusalem (Tel Lachish)
- An Edomite marriage contract dating to the time of the Maccabees (176 BCE), which has a remarkable resemblance to later Jewish Ketuvot
- Houses (2nd Temple period) with large dovecotes – Bar-Ilan archaeologists assume that the Temple in Jerusalem was a chief consumer of the doves and pigeons, which were used in sacrifices (Tel Maresha)
- Hundreds of underground complexes hewn out in the bedrock which were used by the Jews during Bar-Kochba’s revolt against the Romans around 132 CE
- The Roman Amphitheater in Beit Guvrin (3rd century CE), used for battles between gladiators, one of whom was, according to the Talmud, the young Reish Lakish, who subsequently returned to Judaism and became the influential scholar, Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish
- Splendid buildings and fortifications from the Crusader period, 11th–13th centuries (Beit Guvrin)

During the event, Bar-Ilan Professors Amos Kloner and Aren Maeir who excavated the ancient city of Beit Guvrin and its surroundings were called up to the stage. Prof. Aren Maeir spoke about the new Institute of Biblical Archaeology which he is to head. The Institute will create a vibrant, cutting-edge and collaborative research and teaching environment, which will emphasize the connection between the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. Its ambitious agenda will include excavations, training of masters, doctoral and postdoctoral students, publications and conferences.

BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh then awarded an honorary prize to guest artist Michel Legrand for his friendship to Israel and the Jewish People. Sitting down at the piano in the middle of the picturesque Roman Amphitheater, the maestro performed some of his most famous compositions together with his wife, Catherine, and singers Zamora and D’or.

As Michel Legrand played “Papa can you hear me” (Yentl), a children’s choir suddenly appeared around the walls of the ancient amphitheater. Each child lit a candle, illuminating the area. When David D’or began to sing Hatikvah, the children’s choir joined in to finish off the national anthem and an evening that was a resounding success.
June 6  PLENARY SESSION

Director General Shabtai Lubel, Canadian Friends President Gabi Weisfeld, International Board of Governors Chairman Jane Stern Lebell, BIU Rector Prof. Yosef Yeshurun, Executive Council Chairman Yaakov Neeman, Global Board of Trustees Chairman Dr. Mordecai Katz, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Associate VP Judith Haimoff, VP for Research Prof. Harold Basch

David Gradel (England) and Joseph Fröhlich West (Australia)

Sol and Mira Koschitzky
Journeying from Wunderkind to Faculty

The Journey from Wunderkind to Faculty afforded our friends with a rare opportunity to trace the path taken by bright young minds as they evolve into distinguished Bar-Ilan University scientists and scholars.

This unique campus tour was kicked off by Prof. Haim Taitelbaum, an expert in the fields of Statistical and Medical Physics, who “launched” his Bar-Ilan career some 30 years ago, when he enrolled in the University’s program for gifted youth. Based on his empirical assessment at that time, he recalls conjecturing that he might study on campus in the future. Indeed, he went on to obtain all three degrees at Bar-Ilan University, where he now serves as a senior Physics faculty member.

A Robotics class was next on the itinerary. The tour group enjoyed a fun, hands-on experience with third graders enrolled in Bar-Ilan’s program for gifted youth. Instructor Elad Kolberg explained the intricate workings of the various robots as the adults interacted with their more junior “classmates.” The program, which is directed by Dr. Ariel Frank, reaches out to the local community with an array of stimulating activities that challenge bright young minds and nurture intellectual development.

The group then proceeded to a delightful personal encounter with two IBG Student Ambassadors, Orr Karrasin (Environmental Law and Policy) and Gabi Frei (Life Sciences), who are recipients of the University’s prestigious Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence. This pioneering fellowship program, which was established in 1999 by Bar-Ilan President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, supports gifted PhD candidates for a four-year period, enabling them to devote their full energies to their scholarly pursuits within the clearly defined time frame. Orr and Gabi spoke about their specialty fields. Editor-in-Chief of BIU’s academic journal, Law Studies, Orr lectures on Geography and Environment. Gabi specializes in immunology, seeking to elucidate the modus operandi of the immuno-modulator AS101, with its clinical implications in psoriasis and cutaneous T cell lymphoma. These Student Ambassadors, who represent the University both in Israel and abroad, highlighted the benefits of their Bar-Ilan experience – the training, tools and fertile environment that enable them to advance novel research and contribute to global science and scholarship.

Postdoctoral study was the next focus as the group became acquainted with Yaeli Bloch, who was beamed across the screen. Yaeli received a special Bar-Ilan scholarship that supports her postdoctoral studies in Communications at Columbia University in the US. Upon her return to Israel, she is to join Bar-Ilan’s academic faculty, enriching its ranks with her expertise. The group also met in real time with another outstanding Bar-Ilan product, Dr. Benjamin Shmueli, who this year will be conducting postdoctoral research and teaching a course at Duke University Law School in North Carolina. A lawyer who is an authority on legal intervention in relationships between parents and children, Dr. Shmueli has lectured on the Bar-Ilan campus, is a training development advisor in the IDF Intelligence School, and is co-editor of a new law review that deals with family issues.

The final stop on the day’s journey was the laboratory of Dr. Yaron Shav-Tal, the Jane Stern Lebell Family Fellow in the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences. Dr. Shav-Tal is a prototype of the promising young talent “adopted” at the onset of their professional careers. Fellowships such as these enable scientists to establish their labs and embark on novel inquiries that will help improve the quality of human life while reenergizing the Bar-Ilan faculty ranks with fresh blood and new specialty fields 50 years after the University’s founding. Dr. Shav-Tal briefed the group about his cutting-edge cancer research in the dynamic processes occurring during gene expression as they viewed the simulated activity of cancer cells on the computer screen.
The 2006 Honorary Doctorate Ceremony held at the Dahan Family Unity Park was a glittering affair in which a distinguished and varied group was honored. Among the recipients, Jacob Shachar received his doctorate for his contributions to society through his personal battle for road safety, and for his contribution to the University towards the development of the Phoenix Road Safety Academic Curriculum at BIU.

Angela Shamoon was honored for her contribution to academia in Israel, and for her dedication to enhancing Sephardi culture and tradition in Israel and abroad, as well as for her family’s contribution to the University. Aliki Rzepka received the honorary doctorate for her contribution to Jewish education here in Israel, and for her contribution to the University. Joseph Fetter received his doctorate for the deep dedication he has displayed both toward his community in the United States and toward the University, which benefits from his continued and consistent support.

Prof. K. Alex Müller, winner of the 1987 Nobel Prize in physics, and Prof. Robert J. Aumann, winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize in economics, were awarded honorary doctorates in the sciences. Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, Chief Rabbi of the city Migdal Haemek and Israel Prize recipient was awarded for his contributions to Israeli society. The Gesher Theatre was awarded the first honorary doctorate (in the area of culture) bestowed upon a theater by an Israeli university.
Sami Shamoon, Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, Yaakov Neeman

Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Dr. Mordecai Katz, Joseph Fetter, Prof. Mario Mikulincer, Gary Fetter

BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Leora Halevy, Aliki Rzepka, President American Friends Peter Rzepka, Dina Berniker

Dr. David Jeselsohn, Prof. K. Alex Müller, Executive Council Chairman Yaakov Neeman, BIU Rector Prof. Yosef Yeshurun

National Secretary Canadian Friends Patty Friedland, Gesher Theatre General Director Ori Levy, Gesher Theatre Artistic Director Yevgeny Arye, International Board of Governors Chairman Jane Stern Lebell, Joseph Fröhlich West

Angela Shamoon, Yaakov Neeman, Jacob Shachar

Prof. Moshe Kaveh, British Friends Chairman Conrad Morris, Canadian Friends President Gabi Weisfeld, Prof. Robert J. Aumann

BIU Friends in Israel and Abroad

Sami Shamoon, Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, Yaakov Neeman

Prof. Moshe Kaveh, British Friends Chairman Conrad Morris, Canadian Friends President Gabi Weisfeld, Prof. Robert J. Aumann
CORNERSTONE LAYING CEREMONY FOR THE PETER AND ALIKI RZEPKA TWELVES TRIBES PLAZA

Bar-Ilan University broke ground for the Peter and Aliki Rzepka Twelve Tribes Plaza on the University’s north campus in Ramat Gan. The Plaza will serve as a meeting place for University faculty, students and others, and will be used by the tens of thousands of students, scholars, scientists and University guests traversing the north campus on a daily basis.

DEDICATION OF THE JOSEPH AND FRANCES FETTER BRAIN RESEARCH COMPLEX

The Joseph and Frances Fetter Brain Research Complex, in the Leslie and Susan Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center, was officially dedicated on June 7. This state-of-the-art laboratory cluster brings together, under one roof, researchers specializing in the various disciplines essential for understanding the brain and how it works. Comprising the entire second floor of the Center, the Complex includes sophisticated research laboratories, an innovative computer lab and a meeting room. The Complex serves six researchers who specialize in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence, personality and consciousness, life empowerment, emotional processing, neurological imaging and psychopharmacology.
Located on BIU’s north campus, the five-story building is home to the University’s Departments of General and Jewish Philosophy. This significant undertaking links the proud legacy of the highly respected Jewish leader of Britain and the Commonwealth, the late Lord Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits z”l, with the concepts of ethics and morality aspired to by Dr. Sami Shamoon. The building also is graced by the Gradel Wing, sponsored by Dr. David and Susan Gradel, the Shlomo Moussaieff Centre for Kabbalah Research, an impressive entrance hall, auditorium, classrooms, faculty offices, library and the publication offices of the noted philosophy journals “Philosophia” and “Da’at”.

June 7

DEDICATION OF THE
BEIT HARAV JAKOBOVITS-
SAMi SHAMOON CENTRE FOR
THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY,
ETHICS AND JEWISH THOUGHT
AND THE GRADEL WING

Minister of Tourism Yitzhak Herzog is welcomed to the dedication of Beit HaRav Jakobovits-Sami Shamoon Centre by Director of Special Gifts Vera Muravitz and Mervyn Muravitz

Susan and Dr. David Gradel, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Drs. Sami and Angela Shamoon, Alexandra Shamoon, Shoshana Schreiber, Lady Amelie Jakobovits, Milla Gradel and Rebecca Gradel in front of portrait of the late Lord Rabbi Jakobovits
“Our system has closed the gender gap in mathematics, has improved self-regulated learning and has shown improved results for both high and low achievers in school.”

Until recently Prof. Zemira Mevarech was the Vice Rector of Bar-Ilan University. In this capacity she was responsible for the academic advancement of Bar-Ilan’s large student body, as well as for the quality of its teaching and the level of research performed at the University. With her background in the field of education, she has initiated and is actively developing a number of groundbreaking educational programs. She recently took some time out of her jam-packed schedule to share some of the projects she is working on.

Among her many projects, within the context of her research in the School of Education, Prof. Mevarech has created a teaching method to improve the math thinking of children, a method she calls IMPROVE. The method is based on teaching elementary and high school students how to use meta-cognitive thought processes – to think about the problem – not merely to memorize by rote.

“We have had wonderful, wonderful findings,” enthuses Prof. Mevarech. “We have hard data proving that our system has closed the gender gap in mathematics, has improved self-regulated learning and has shown improved results for both high and low achievers in school.” The IMPROVE system is presently being implemented in 450 schools throughout Israel. “It has proven so successful that we are now expanding this method into other subjects – such as computer science,” says Mevarech. “In effect we teach the student how to think – and we’ve proved that it works!”

In addition to her hands-on work with IMPROVE and e-learning, Prof. Mevarech is the Israeli representative in a prestigious international ongoing educational study called PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) involving over 50 highly-developed countries. This study is conducted under the OECD (Organization of Economic and Cooperative Development), whose purpose is to
assist members of the organization develop the economic and social status of their country’s citizens.

“Since our country scored in the lower third compared to the other countries in reading, math and science when the first results were published in 2002, one outcome of our conclusions was the creation of the Dovrat Committee to improve education in Israel,” says Prof. Mevarech, who conducts her research in this study together with fellow educator Dr. Bracha Kramarski.

Prof. Mevarech was recently awarded the prestigious Landau Prize for Education, including a grant to conduct her research in PISA.

Prof. Mevarech’s career in education began with her teaching mathematics in the school system, followed by a stint as school principal, before joining the faculty at the Bar-Ilan University Churgin School of Education and eventually heading the School. She is a former Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. A graduate of the MESA (Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics Analyses) program of the University of Chicago, Prof. Mevarech has been working for more than two decades on the development of large- and small-scale studies involving innovative instructional methods that combine high-tech technologies.

Bar-Ilan’s Churgin School of Education is the largest in the country, with over 2,000 students and faculty in undergraduate, graduate and teaching diploma programs. Prof. Mevarech is aware of the need to constantly streamline better methods of study, not only in the School of Education, but in every department of the University. As such, she is working on integrating metacognitive methods into high-tech learning. Prof. Mevarech heads the e-learning unit at Bar-Ilan University and is expanding it so that all students will have access to it in as many courses as possible.
Dr. Bracha Yaniv is a proud member of the world’s one-and-only Jewish Art department. Dr. Yaniv has long been deeply concerned about the lack of Jewish identity among many Israelis. “My primary mission is to shore up Jewish identity in young people through the study of Jewish art,” says Dr. Yaniv, former Director of the University’s Interdepartmental Division of Judaic Studies in the Faculty of Jewish Studies, of which Bar-Ilan’s unique Department of Jewish Art, established fifteen years ago, is an integral part.

“Our Department has Jewish art experts in every period – from ancient to modern,” says Dr. Yaniv. Research and study subjects include architecture and interiors of synagogues throughout the ages, manuscripts of the Middle Ages, illuminated Ketuboth (marriage contracts) of the Renaissance, Hebrew printed illustrated books from the sixteenth century onwards, and modern art from the nineteenth century up until today, among others. Dr. Yaniv is the editor of *Ars Judaica: The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art: The Michael J. Floersheim Memorial for Jewish Art*. Michael J. Floersheim z”l (who was awarded an honorary doctorate from Bar-Ilan University in 1987) was known for his generous support of charitable causes, as well as his great love for Jewish art and Judaica. This international publication was endowed in his memory by his wife, Dr. Yonat Floersheim, and their only son, Alexander Floersheim.

The Journal comprises a collection of articles on Jewish art over the course of time, written by researchers in the Department and from other universities in Israel and abroad. Volume 2 includes a number of “unusual surprises.” Among them, Dr. Yaniv has discovered the meaning of the strange and imaginary, as well...
as recognizable animals carved on eighteenth century Eastern European Torah arks. Another question addressed in Volume 2 is that related to configuring the unfigurable (or G-d), or how does G-d appear in Jewish art?

Dr. Yaniv’s own study of Jewish art began with an analysis of ceremonial objects – such as Torah cases and textiles – which adorn and protect the Torah scroll. Her current research focuses on Torah arks and wall paintings in Eastern European synagogues. Based on both field work and the examination of archival material located mainly in Poland, this research is supported by the Israeli Academy of Science.

"The most important kinds of Torah arks, from my perspective, are the exquisitely carved wooden arks from Eastern Europe – all of which were destroyed during World War II," says Dr. Yaniv. "I feel that by publishing articles about these ‘lost arks’, I am returning to life an important part of Jewish culture that has been destroyed."

The Torah arks, carved in wood, were designed by Jews who were influenced by local figurative art. According to Dr. Yaniv, this influence of local art inspired the Jewish craftsman to visualize Jewish ideas in a way which until then didn’t exist in the Diaspora. These Torah arks are particularly daring in their nature, according to Dr. Yaniv, since artists felt free to visualize Biblical texts and metaphors.

Dr. Yaniv says that her research in Jewish art has, over the years, brought her to an appreciation of Jewish tradition and, indeed, to an observant lifestyle. "By bringing our Jewish roots to light, I feel that I am touching history and helping others to discover and appreciate our heritage," concludes Dr. Yaniv.
"Life is too short to concentrate on only one topic. I have many interests," says Dr. Gary D. Mole, Chair from 2002 to 2006 of the Department of French Language and Culture in the Faculty of Humanities. Dr. Mole describes himself as "flexible" in terms of his willingness and ability to discourse on any area of French literature and philosophy. But with all his erudition in the field in general, it is clear that the youthful academic's main enthusiasms are skewed toward Jewish-French themes. Indeed, much of his research has focused on leading French-Jewish twentieth-century writers, as well as those who are concerned with Jewish themes, the French poetry of those deported to concentration camps during the Second World War, and questions of Jewish identity in France from 1945 to 1980.

"My principal areas of research expertise are twentieth-century French literature and intellectual thought," says Dr. Mole. "I have a particular (but not exclusive) interest in literature of the Shoah and the deportation from France, and discourses of Jewish identity, although I have also published on a number of pre-twentieth-century topics, such as medieval and eighteenth-century," he adds.

Although he speaks English in the cultured accents of the Cambridge-educated Englishman who he is, Dr. Mole is fluent in French and both writes and lectures in that tongue. Recipient of the prestigious Israeli grant, Milgat Alon, Dr. Mole has written, edited and translated a number of books. His English translation of Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures (1994) by French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, was followed by Lévinas, Blanchot, Jabès: Figures of Estrangement (1997), in which Dr. Mole centered on the relationship of the philosopher Lévinas, essayist and novelist Maurice Blanchot and poet Edmond Jabès to Jewish themes and concerns. In his second book Beyond the Limit-Experience: French

Dr. Mole’s current research project is a book-length study of discourses of Jewish identity in France from 1945 to 1980. It will include chapters on major Jewish and non-Jewish French thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Memmi, André Neher, Maurice Blanchot, Robert Misrahi, Emmanuel Lévinas and Alain Finkielkraut. Apart from his books, Dr. Mole has also published numerous articles and chapters on topics related to his research on the deportation and the Shoah, such as the issue of the female voice in the camps and analyses of the writings of a number of Jewish-French poets, political activists and communists. Many of his articles have been written in the French language, although his books are in English. His works have been published in the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, Israel, France, Denmark and Italy.

Dr. Mole is well-considered as a dynamic and stimulating lecturer according to his students, who hail from France, Francophone countries, the former Soviet Union and Israel. "Our department provides BA, MA and PhD degrees to an ever-increasing number of students," says Dr. Mole. "And, in keeping with the Bar-Ilan credo of combining academic with traditional Jewish studies, ours is the only French department in the world to systematically offer courses with Jewish themes. In any given year, students can take optional courses in such subjects as Francophone literature of the Jewish Maghreb, the influence of the Bible on French literature, and the French literary, cultural and cinematic representations of the Jew, anti-Semitism and the Shoah."
The law is generally considered a dry, coercive system, detached and universal in its practice. In the law's insistence upon appearing utterly aloof and unemotional, it often appears to be indifferent to expressions of healing or care. In the last decade, courts in the USA have addressed this lack through the development of problem-solving courts that deal with the “human” side of the law. Therapeutic jurisprudence, alternative dispute resolution, and restorative justice or mediation studies are the theoretical backbone of this new development.

Dr. Michal Alberstein, who teaches jurisprudence, therapeutic jurisprudence and community negotiation in Bar-Ilan University’s Faculty of Law, would like to see Israeli courts follow this American trend.

“I am always looking for new paradigms in order to understand the law in a more therapeutic, problem-solving, holistic way,” says Dr. Alberstein, who has an LLM and SJD from Harvard Law School. “Although I am theoretical in outlook, I always try to stay in touch with the real world and its problems.”

In aid of her visionary goal, Dr. Alberstein teaches twenty-eight third-year students who are enrolled in Community Mediation, one of the University’s mandatory law clinics. The clinic is sponsored by the Florence Unger and Samuel Goldenstein, M.D. Interdisciplinary Center for Law, Rationality, Ethics and Social Justice. “Mediation and dispute resolution are ways to help law students achieve broader perspectives, helping them to use alternatives in order to better internalize the law, making it more real for them,” says Dr. Alberstein, whose teaching style centers on making the law “alive” for her students, by engaging them in active discourse.

In the Dispute Resolution clinic, law students are trained by a professional legal mediator, Adv. Ora Bar-Gil, and then sent to elementary or high schools. There, under Bar-Gil’s direct supervision, the students are assigned with classes and are responsible for training the schoolchildren in negotiation and conflict resolution techniques. In explaining the techniques taught, Dr. Alberstein gives the example of
two children who splattered mud on the car of the school advisor. The mediator arranged a meeting between the ‘victim’ and the ‘perpetrators’. The ‘victim’ spoke first, explaining how hurt she was and how she felt personally violated by the ‘attack’ on her car. Face-to-face with the ‘victim’ the children felt so bad that they not only apologized, they also offered to make amends by washing her car, and later by writing a letter to the class about the importance of nonviolence. “In the end, everyone felt that this was a positive experience for all and far more educational than the typical punishment or letter to the parents,” concludes Dr. Alberstein.

“In addition to the educational law clinics program, my goal in the realm of restorative justice is to provide psychologically-supervised mediation in certain kinds of criminal cases,” says Dr. Alberstein.

Therapeutic jurisprudence is another one of Dr. Alberstein’s interests. “Lawyers should look at the total picture – the social background is very important,” she says. In therapeutic jurisprudence a team (consisting of a lawyer, psychologist, and social worker) works together to effect justice. The medical and legal fields also work together in a multidisciplinary way to resolve issues related to trauma, collective trauma and public health – subjects that have obvious Israeli relevance. Dr. Alberstein organized an international conference on Trauma and Memory. A book of articles resulting from the conference is soon to be published: Trauma and Memory: Reading, Healing and Making Law.

“In the USA today jurors no longer speak about alternative but rather appropriate legal measures,” says Dr. Alberstein, whose latest book is A Jurisprudence of Mediation (Magnes Publishing). “After alternatives to conventional legal mechanisms have already been brought to Israel, my goal is to bring such ‘problem-solving’ courts to our country, as well. The ‘community’ is very strong at Bar-Ilan. The University does not merely talk in a detached way about human rights – it’s all about reaching out to the community helping children and providing social justice for those in need. How appropriate that Bar-Ilan University, with the support of the Florence Unger and Samuel Goldenstein, M.D. Interdisciplinary Center for Law, Rationality, Ethics and Social Justice, is a pioneer in this country in teaching alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice.”
May 2006
- Conference: Third Annual Conference on Israeli Music (Center for the Study of Israeli Musical Folklore)
- Symposium: The Jubilee Nanotechnology Symposium
- Lecture: “And the Children of Israel Camped There – United in Body and Spirit” by 2006 Honorary Doctorate recipient Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, Chief Rabbi of Migdal Ha’emek

June 2006
- Lecture: “The Development of Superconductivity Research in Oxides” by Nobel Laureate and 2006 Honorary Doctorate recipient Prof. K. Alex Müller

July 2006
- Conference: “Accessibility of Investigation and Testimony for People with Disabilities” (School of Social Work)
- Workshop: “The 7th International Regional Spectral Model (R.S.M.) Workshop” (Department of Geography and Environment)
- Seminar: “International Principals Seminar” (Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora)
- Salute to New Immigrants: “Salute to 150 New Immigrant Students” (Dean of Students Office)
- Conference: “The Annual Conference of the Phoenix Road Safety Program” (Interdisciplinary Department of Social Sciences)

September 2006
- Lecture: “Women, Learning and Teaching” with the participation of former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau and Rabbi Mordechai Elon (Midrasha for Women)
- Science Fair: Meeting between BIU scientific researchers and youth from the north and from Sderot (Youth Science Division and the Atidim Project)

October 2006
- Conference: Second International Conference on “Russian-Speaking Jewry in Global Perspective: Power, Politics and Community” (The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality)

November 2006
- Conference: “Second Lebanon War and its Aftermath” (Begin-Sadat [BESA] Center for Strategic Studies)
- Memorial Ceremony: “Yitzhak Rabin: Eleven Years” (Office of the Campus Rabbi and Student Union)
- Conference: “Internet Researchers Conference” (Interdisciplinary Science, Technology and Society Program)
- Scholarship Award Ceremony (Yeshayahu Horwitz Foundation: Center for Complexity Science, Academic Secretary)
- Conference: “Trauma and Post-Trauma: Personal and Collective Aspects” (Department of Psychology)

December 2006
- Ceremony bestowing special scholarships upon students who served in the Lebanon War (Dean of Students Office)
- Lecture: “The Secret Messianic Vision of Rabbi Nachman of Breslev” in memory of Bar-Ilan University founder Prof. Pinkhos Churgin z”l (Berman Department of the Literature of the Jewish People)
- Meeting between the chairs of UNESCO in Israel and the Secretary of the Israel Committee to UNESCO Daniel Bar-El (The Josef Burg Chair in Education for Human Values, Tolerance and Peace, Churgin School of Education)
- Study session for students who traveled to Jewish sites in Saloniki and Greece (The Naime and Yehoshua Selim Salti Center for Ladino Studies)
- Seminar: Kaniel Departmental Seminar on the occasion of bestowing the Prof. Pinkhos Churgin z”l Prize to Dr. Dov Stuczynski (Department of Jewish History)
- BA Ceremony (Nitzavim Program, Special Study Program for the Security Forces)
- International Conference: "Advances in Classical and Quantum Chaos" (Department of Physics)
- Ceremony bestowing Prof. Pinkhos Churgin z’l Prize (Churgin School of Education) to Doctoral students
- Study day for Hesder Yeshiva students (Office of the President)
- International Conference: Honoring Justice Ahaon Barak (Faculty of Law)
- Conference: 12th Jerusalem Studies Research Conference (Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies)
Awards, Distinctions and New Appointments

Dr. Abraham Bell, of the Faculty of Law, was awarded the Alon Grant.

Prof. Bilha Fischer, of the Department of Chemistry, was awarded the 2006 Juludan Prize for the Application of Exact Sciences to Medicine.

Dr. Gila Kurtz, of the Department of Political Studies, was awarded a prestigious Prize for Excellence from the University of Maryland for her contribution to e-learning.

Prof. Michal Lavidor, of the Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center and the Department of Psychology, is one of five outstanding researchers (and the only Israeli) to receive the prestigious Marie Curie Excellence Award for 2006.

Dr. Yoram Louzoun, of the Department of Mathematics, was awarded the Yuldan Prize.

Dr. Ronny Miron, of the Department of Hermeneutics, was awarded the Alon Grant.

Prof. George Moschytz, Director of the School of Engineering, won the distinguished UEEE, Circuits and Systems Van Valkenburg Prize.

Prof. Moshe Orfali, Dean of the Faculty of Jewish Studies, was appointed a member of the Real Academia de Historia of Spain.

Prof. Arie Reich, of the Faculty of Law, was awarded a grant from a commission of the European community for his proposal to establish the Jean Monnet Teaching Module.

Prof. Yaron Shav-Tal, of the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, was awarded the Alon Grant.

Prof. David Tzuriel, Director of the Pinkhos Churgin School of Education, was appointed editor of the prestigious International Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology.

The Naime and Yehoshua Selim Salti Center for Ladino Studies awarded prizes recently (Advancement of Creative Visual Art based on Ladino Heritage) to talented artists in the visual arts who produced works of art relating to Ladino culture. Ruth Kestenbaum Ben Dov won first place for her depiction of an ornamental curtain covering of the Torah ark; Yossi Galanti placed second for his photographic collage; and a special prize was awarded to Dr. Yoel Peretz for his Ladino-inspired animated cartoon.

World-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind is the recipient of the prestigious international Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) award for his design of The Wohl Centre building at Bar-Ilan University. The Wohl Centre was constructed through the generous support of the Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Charitable Foundation, and is dedicated to the memory of Vivienne Wohl z”l.

The Wohl Centre is the first building in Israel to be designed by Daniel Libeskind, whose work includes the acclaimed Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Imperial War Museum-North in Manchester, and the master plan design for New York’s Ground Zero memorial.
This past spring, Bar-Ilan students and faculty gathered at the Anna & Max Webb and Family Psychology Building for an unusual lecture. The speaker was one of the world’s most successful businessmen, Sheldon Adelson, Chairman of the Board and principal owner of Las Vegas Sands Corp., the parent company of The Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada and Venetian Macao Limited in Macao, China. A dynamic entrepreneur and business visionary, Mr. Adelson came to the campus to share his personal story – and to inspire young people to reach for success.

In his introduction, University President Prof. Moshe Kaveh praised Adelson’s support for the Jewish State. Adelson, who is married to Israeli internist Dr. Miriam Adelson, was instrumental in convincing corporations like Microsoft and Motorola to open in Israel.

After a brief video describing Adelson’s varied interests – alongside his casino and real-estate ventures, he built the world’s first privately-owned convention center and created COMDEX, a gathering of computer professionals that became the world’s largest trade show – Adelson described his earliest job as “owner” of a street corner in his hometown of Boston, where he hawked newspapers, and eventually, paid back his first capital loan. “The first and most important lesson I learned,” he said, “is to be honest with people.”

Adelson attributes his success to his willingness to look beyond traditional business paradigms. He introduced new models in the Boston banking system, development, and became the first travel operator in the world to own his own airline. “The idea is to get past the way things have always been done,” he said. “There’s always a better way.”

Throughout his talk, Adelson emphasized the universal truths about business practice, rather than dwelling on industry-specific details. “You don’t have to be an expert in every field,” he said, pointing out that while he directed a massive computer conference, he knows nothing about computers. “A successful entrepreneur is someone with a risk-taking mentality who has the courage of his convictions. You have to believe you can do things that other people can’t. And in 60 years I have not failed. Not once.”
Giving Special Needs Students Equal Opportunity

The Bar-Ilan community will soon celebrate the publication of a very special article. The research was conducted by severely learning-disabled students who participated in a course on the Bar-Ilan campus initiated and operated by the Trump Institute of Beit Issie Shapiro – a national organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

The article, which will appear in the next edition of Sachish – an Israeli special education journal – has already been presented by its authors at an international conference. According to Dr. Benny Hozmi, founder of the program at Bar-Ilan, this publication is just one example of what can happen when special needs students are given equal opportunity.

"Parents are often told that disabled children can’t succeed academically," says Dr. Hozmi, a Bar-Ilan alumnus. "But learning is a basic right. Some students cannot enter university by the main gate – so we created a special path just for them."

The path Dr. Hozmi created is a course in “practical” psychology that introduces basic psychological models. “By teaching real psychology—in an accessible way—students discover where they stand in relationship to the models. This gives them practical tools for a better life,” he says.

The initial connection for the program came from Jules Trump, a Beit Issie Shapiro and Bar-Ilan supporter who is active in a wide range of projects related to the disabled. Later, the program was adopted by another generous sponsor of Bar-Ilan and Beit Issie Shapiro, Dr. Gabi Weisfeld.

Dr. Weisfeld recently visited the campus where she was honored for her continuing support.

Dr. Ruthie Birger, Head of the In-Service Training Unit at Bar-Ilan’s School of Education and coordinator of Beit Issie Shapiro activities on campus, sees the program as a way of opening up new possibilities. Rachel Freiberg, mother of one of the participants, agrees, saying that seeing her son present research at an academic conference was “like seeing him born anew.”

Beit Issie Shapiro is now developing advanced courses for program graduates, and is establishing a performing arts school in coordination with Seminar HaKibbutzim.

“Eventually, I’d like to see an entire university established for students with special needs,” says Dr. Hozmi. “The Bar-Ilan program is an excellent first step.”
For Karin Carmit Yefet, 26, a Bar-Ilan graduate currently completing her doctorate in Law at Yale University, academic learning is a gateway to giving. “I come from a family of teachers,” says Yefet. “There would be no better way to spend my life than in training the next generation of Israeli jurists.”

Balancing academics with social activism, Yefet caught the eye of the legal community long before her acceptance to Yale. At Bar-Ilan, she published articles and edited law journals while still a student, and served as teaching assistant for several law school courses. At the same time she worked for ELEM, the University’s legal aid organization. Outside the university, she founded a legal aid center in her hometown of Afula, and volunteered with learning-disabled children. After graduating as class valedictorian she won a plum position as law clerk to Justice Jacob Turkel of Israel’s Supreme Court. Still, Yefet declares that her achievements cannot be attributed to talent alone. “There were so many prayers that helped me get the job with Judge Turkel,” says Yefet, who chose Bar-Ilan because of its traditional religious atmosphere. “And going to Yale – it was a miracle. The Yale program admitted only 23 people from around the world. It was the hand of G-d.”

Today, Yefet continues to work on her dissertation from her parents’ home in Afula. Her research focuses on issues of divorce, something that she sees as both legally challenging and socially significant. “I wanted to work on something that would affect people’s lives,” she says. “In New York, civil divorce law takes Jewish law – the need for a get – into account. I’m interested to see what will be the eventual influence of the constitutional revolution in Israel on issues of family status.”

Karin Carmit Yefet gives grateful credit to those who have helped her along the way, particularly the International Sephardic Education Federation (ISEF), that granted her the scholarship that enabled her to go to Yale. She also hopes her story will inspire the creation of more scholarship opportunities for students like her, who come from financially-disadvantaged families. “Donors should know that, when they help a student, they’re doing something important.”
Shortly after completing her university finals this past summer, Bar-Ilan undergraduate Shana Sprung was off to Le Havre, France with the Israel National Women’s Flag Football Team. Thanks to her impressive performance as offensive quarterback, the Israeli team won second place in the 2006 championship of “Flag Oceane,” Europe’s largest and most prestigious flag football tournament. Last year, Israel scored even better, earning the 2005 title. “It’s an amazing opportunity to represent your country,” says Shana, a second-year student in Bar-Ilan’s Interdisciplinary Program in Social Sciences.

Shana is a founding member of the WAFI (Women’s American Football in Israel), which was established three years ago in Jerusalem. Her only prior experience was playing tackle football with her brothers and cheering from the stands. Like most of her teammates, Shana is an observant Jew who dons modest attire on the field (i.e. long shorts that cover her knees). Since playing on Shabbat is out of the question, the games convene on Sunday or another day. And no matter where the team is – the Dominican Republic, Finland or France – provisions are made for strictly kosher food.

Although she has diabetes, the Miami-born Jerusalemite (since age three) does not let the illness get in her way. “When the defense goes on, I monitor my glucose level.” Pulling out a small monitor from its wallet-size case, she pricks herself. (“It takes all of ten seconds.”) If it’s too low, she downs some juice or candies to raise the level. If it’s too high, she injects insulin on the spot – “in and out,” she says, noting that usually the number drops while engaging in physical exercise.

Shana looks forward to the weekly Wednesday night practices, which she finds refreshing. “I learn throughout the day, letting it all out in football,” remarks the athlete who is “expanding her horizons” on campus as she studies criminology, psychology, anthropology and sociology. “Maybe, one day, I’ll start a Bar-Ilan team,” she muses.
The path taken by Yisrael Spero, 28, who recently completed law school at Bar-Ilan, may best be described by a verse from Ecclesiastes: there’s a time for every purpose under heaven.

Passionately devoted to Torah study, Spero chose Bar-Ilan largely because of the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute of Advanced Torah Studies (known as the Machon) program that allowed him to continue learning Torah while earning his academic degree. “It was always clear I would go to Bar-Ilan University,” Spero says, pointing out that he is a third-generation Bar-Ilan “legacy”– his father, Prof. Moshe Halevi Spero, an American-born clinical psychologist, teaches in the School of Social Work, while his grandfather, Rabbi Shubert Spero, holds the Irving I. Stone Chair in Basic Jewish Thought and teaches Jewish Heritage Studies as part of Bar-Ilan’s Core Curriculum.

During his army service in a Hesder unit, Spero split his time between learning – at Yeshivat Kerem B’Yavneh – and commanding a search and rescue unit. Soon he was splitting his time again – between Torah study and BIU courses in business and commercial law. “I participated in the Practical Rabbinics Machon program which trained rabbis and their wives for work in Israeli communities. We studied rhetoric, arbitration and psychology, based on the idea that, to be effective, community rabbis need this training, as well as an academic and Torah background.”

Today, Spero is interning at Gornitzy & Co., a leading firm specializing in international commercial law. This is just what he hoped for when he began law school – “as a bi-lingual, bi-cultural individual, this is where I can make the biggest contribution,” he says. Still, Spero hopes someday to devote himself to community rabbinics in addition to practicing law.

“Learning and teaching Torah is what I love,” he says, adding that his most intensive Torah study now takes place on the train between his home in Bet Shemesh – where he lives with his wife and three children – and his office in Tel Aviv. “I believe that part of what G-d wants of us is to be working in order to settle and strengthen the Land of Israel. At the moment, it’s difficult to balance the two. But I have time.”
For most children, language acquisition is as easy as listening to a lullaby. Hard-wired to sift through sounds, a baby’s brain automatically builds the synaptic connections that will form the basis of speech, and will eventually jump-start the process of learning to read and write. But what about children whose mother tongue is Arabic, where the spoken dialect bears little resemblance to the written word?

“Oral language skills definitely affect how children learn to read,” says Dr. Elinor Saiegh-Haddad, a psycholinguist who, after completing her PhD under the Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence program at Bar-Ilan, has been teaching in the University’s Department of English. “This is problematic for native Arabic speakers because Arabic is diglossic – there is a split between the language used in formal texts, and the spoken vernacular. This means that, for young children, learning to read in Arabic can be as challenging as learning a foreign language.”

In Israel, says Saiegh-Haddad, the picture is further complicated by the need for most native Arabic speakers to learn additional languages – generally Hebrew and English – a situation she has examined in studies of reading acquisition in the bilingual child. Along with her studies of normal readers, Saiegh-Haddad is also looking at children in the Arab sector who suffer from disabilities such as dyslexia.

“The common theme in all my work is the connection between language and thinking,” says Saiegh-Haddad, who grew up speaking Arabic in the Galilee town of Kfar Yassif. Saiegh-Haddad’s unique work – she says she may be the only linguist in the world studying diglossia and the acquisition of Arabic literacy – has garnered significant recognition including the International Reading Association’s Reading/Literacy Research Award in 2003 and fellowships from Denmark’s Center for Reading Research, the Rothschild Foundation and the Israel Science Foundation.

Saiegh-Haddad stresses that, while her research may have implications for the prevention and treatment of reading problems in the Arab sector, her goal is to understand basic processes.

“A big part of my work involves performing reading assessments in the field,” she says. “By analyzing the results of these tests we can isolate the factors that have a real impact on literacy levels. This work may eventually form the basis of better teaching methods for the early grades, which would, in turn, give more people – whatever their mother tongue – better access to higher educational opportunities.”

And educational opportunity is what convinced Saiegh-Haddad to choose Bar-Ilan as her home base. “I spent a number of years at other institutions,” Saiegh-Haddad says, noting that she could have pursued her doctorate at Haifa University, where she taught in the Department of Foreign Languages between 1990 and 1998. “But the support I received from the Doctoral Fellows Program made all the difference. I’m glad to hear that Bar-Ilan is expanding this program – not only will this attract more high-level students, it will allow them to do full-time research. For older students, who often have families to support while they work on their degrees, this is a great help.”

Saiegh-Haddad’s continuing research on language acquisition is bound to be a great help to Israeli society as well, as it seeks to integrate all people – Arabs, Jews and a host of bilingual immigrants – into a single, high-functioning, literate society.
BIU Friends are a dynamic and central component of Bar-Ilan University. Following are some of the activities of our Friends in Israel and around the world.

Note: All photo captions are from left to right unless otherwise noted.

**USA**

BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh greeting Mojgan Khagan, Joshua Danial, Mojdeh Danial, Ethan Danial, Robert Danial, Majid Khagan, Jewish Studies Programs Director of Development Shai Solomon and IBG Student Ambassador Omid David Tabibi.

Director of Social Involvement Hadar Shuvi, International Director of Planned Giving and Foundations Chen Harkov, Leah Horack, Ted Weinberger, Chaim Fraiman, Steve Adelsberg, Dean of Students Prof. Shmuel Shulman.

David and Amy Scharlin and children Naomi, Marnie, Elie and Howie.

Maria Finkle Woman of Valor Scholarship in Law student recipients surrounding Maria Finkle, Shai Solomon (second from left), Finkle Student Counseling Center Director Prof. Shraga Zim is standing behind Maria Finkle.
Max and Anna Webb and their family visited BIU in June on the occasion of Mr. Webb’s 90th birthday

Granddaughter Tatiana, Anna Webb, Co-chairman West Coast Friends Max Webb and Department of Psychology Chairman Prof. Miriam Faust

West Coast Friends Associate Director Karen Paul Reuven, Anna Webb, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Max Webb and Alice Schoenfeld at a birthday celebration for Mr. Webb at the Alhambra restaurant

Granddaughter Sabrina, Dorit Kaveh, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Max and Anna Webb, Tatiana, Prof. Miriam Faust, Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center Administrator Henia Gali, Batya Horowitz and Associate VP Judith Haimoff

Gitta Frankel, Ramat Gan Mayor Zvi Bar, Anna Webb, Yitzchak Frankel, Max Webb, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Karen Paul Reuven, BIU Director General Dr. Shabtai Lubel at the Alhambra
Academic Secretary Mordechai Mishan, Canadian Friends President Dr. Gabi Weisfeld and Canada Desk Coordinator Adina Appel (seated respectively 3rd, 4th and 5th from left) surrounded by students at a dinner in honor of the Weisfeld IDF Combat Veteran Scholarship recipients

National Secretary Canadian Friends Patty Friedland and Canadian Friends President Dr. Gabi Weisfeld enjoying the festivities during the Board of Trustees meetings

Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies Director Prof. Efraim Inbar, Executive VP Canadian Friends Dov Altman, Prof. Reva Heft-Hecht, Dr. Thomas O. Hecht, former MK Moshe Arens and BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh at the dedication of the new offices for BESA

Dr. Thomas O. Hecht and Prof. Reva Heft-Hecht at the dedication of the BESA offices and seminar room
**GREAT BRITAIN**

**AUSTRALIA**

Ethan Wertheimer, Board member Michael Abeles, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh at the Nanotechnology Launch

Vera Muravitz welcomes Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Fröhlich West to campus

Danny Elkanati (Israel Discount Bank), Dr. Anthony Julius (guest lecturer), Director of Special Gifts Vera Muravitz, UK Friends Chairman Conrad Morris at the Bar-Ilan business breakfast sponsored by Israel Discount Bank in London

Dr. Naim Dangoor, BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh and Associate VP Judith Haimoff at the conferment of an Honorary Doctorate upon Dr. Naim Dangoor in London
EUROPE

1 Managing Director Rich Foundation Avner Azulay, Chairman Rich Foundation Marc Rich (Switzerland) and Director of European Operations Doron Schlesinger during the 2006 Board of Trustees week.

2 Doron Schlesinger, Dr. Ernst and Eva Strauss (Switzerland) at the Nanotechnology Launch during the 2006 Board of Trustees week.

3 BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Dr. Bracha Yaniv of the Dept. of Jewish Art and Dr. Yonat Floersheim, donor of the Ars Judaica, at a luncheon honoring her, on campus.

4 Prof. Ron Goldstein, Doron Schlesinger and BIU VP for Research Prof. Harold Basch at the award ceremony of the Taubenblatt Prize for Medical Research.

5 Alain Ziegler, Evelyne Ziegler, Doron Schlesinger and Arik Yelin at the Yiddish event at the residence of the Ambassador of Israel to UNESCO David Kornbluth.

6 Paul S. Guggenheim, Arik Yelin, Doron Schlesinger, Lea C. Guggenheim and BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh at a Bar-Ilan dinner at the Guggenheim home in Geneva.
IBEROAMERICA

Iberoamerican Desk Chairman Prof. Izak Yohai, Executive Council Chairman Yaakov Neeman, Global Board of Trustees member Eng. Israel Feldman (Mexico), BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh at the 2006 Honorary Doctorate ceremony

Prof. Izak Yohai, Global Board of Trustees member Zoltan and Lya Gaspar (Venezuela), Rivka Yohai, Rosita Feldman, Eng. Israel Feldman, Iberoamerican Desk Coordinator Sara Abramovicz

JEWSH DESK

Greta and Eli Hirmes and son Alan in the Midrasha classroom dedicated in memory of Greta’s parents Bessie and William H. Cohen

President of the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies Prof. Daniel Sperber (4th from left) addressing a group including Greta and Eli Hirmes (1st and 2nd from right) in the Machon Succah
SUCCAH EVENT

A highlight of the year was BIU’s Annual Presidential Succot event for the University’s leadership and friends, which took place on October 11, 2006 in the Succah of the King David Hotel, Jerusalem.

1. Ezra and Batya Levin, Fanya Gottesfeld Heller
2. Dr. Zvi and Tzippy Katz (Israel), Jemima and Dr. David Jeselsohn (Switzerland)
3. BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, Co-chairman West Coast Friends Jack Nagel, Jack and Renee Slomovic
4. Jack Nagel, Judy and Dr. Edward Steinberg, Leora Halevy and American Friends of BIU Executive VP Brig. Gen. (res.) Yehuda Halevy
5. Lady Carmel and Sir Ian Gainsford (England), IBG Student Ambassador Orr Karrasin, Prof. Moshe Kaveh
Prof. Moshe Kaveh presenting a special facsimile of the original manuscript of the Prayer for the State of Israel, purchased by BIU for its rare book collection, to Renee and Jack Slomovic

Prof. Moshe Kaveh presenting a special facsimile of the original manuscript of the Prayer for the State of Israel, purchased by BIU for its rare book collection, to Dr. Monique Katz and Chairman of Global Board of Trustees Dr. Mordecai Katz
The Israeli Friends of Bar-Ilan University Business Forum at the Residence of U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Richard Jones, May 4, 2006

1 Prof. Jacob Frenkel, BIU President
   Prof. Moshe Kaveh, and
   Prof. Stanley Fischer, Governor
   of the Bank of Israel

2 Prof. Stanley Fischer, Executive
   Council Chairman Yaakov
   Neeman and Stef Wertheimer

3 Associate VP Judith Haimoff,
   Yaakov Neeman, U.S. Ambassador
   to Israel Richard Jones, and David
   Azrieli who received the Bar-Ilan
   University Business Forum Award

4 Arcadi and Irene Gaydamak and
   Director Division of External
   Relations Amos Gaver

5 Tzviya Levaiev Alazarov and Director
   of Donor Relations Israel Desk Shira
   Ben-Or
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