

Novel BIU Research Displayed at Israeli President's House

Three key BIU research projects were prominently featured in an exhibition organized by the Ministry of Science at the home of the Israeli President. Prof. Arie Zaban, Director of the Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA) and its Nano Energy Center, briefed President Shimon Peres and distinguished visitors on the development of the next generation of solar cells that convert sunlight into electricity, and promise to be far more efficient, enduring and cheaper than the ones currently on the market. Dr. Eli Kolberg of the Robotics Lab in the Faculty of Engineering showcased the latest developments in the field, including his elite robot soccer team – considered one of the best in the world – and a top contender in the RoboCup 2012 competition. The founder of BIU's new Algae Biotechnology Center, Dr. Yaron Yehoshua of the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences presented the exciting breakthroughs in converting algae into biodiesel. The process employs new technology that significantly lowers costs and can transform algae into a feasible alternative to highly polluting fossil fuels within minutes.



BIU's Award-Winning Researchers

Prof. Israel Amirav, a faculty member at BIU's Medical School in the Galilee and a pediatric pulmonologist at the Ziv Medical Center in Safed, was awarded the top prize for research at the CIPP International Congress on Pediatric Pulmonology in Bangkok, Thailand. Two hundred studies from around the globe were presented during the event. Amirav's novel research, which shows that it's preferable

to treat infants through nose inhalation, rather than in the conventional oral manner, is a breath of fresh air for babies suffering from respiratory diseases.

A BIU research team won first prize in the "Systems Biology Verification Challenge," an international competition hosted by IBM Research and Phillip Morris International, which aims to improve data verification for systems biology. The genomic analysis, led by PhD student Rotem Ben-Hamo in Dr. Sol Efroni's Systems Bio-Medicine Lab, received the top award in the category of lung cancer. The goal was to find biological markers which can predict which of the two types of lung cancer a patient has and to identify the stage of the disease. Efroni, a returning scientist from the National Cancer Institute at NIH, is a senior lecturer at the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences.

As one of the up-and-coming physicists invited this year to the prestigious annual Lindau Nobel Laureate meeting on the shores of Germany's Lake Constance, 28-year-old Eldad Kepten had a unique opportunity to mingle and exchange ideas with dozens of Nobel Prize winners. Even in this highly selective environment, the BIU Doctoral Fellow of Excellence stood out from the crowd: as part of its coverage of the conference, *Scientific American* selected Kepten for a personal profile in its "30 under the age of 30" series. (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=lindau-eldad-kepten>)

Researching a Novel Nano-Medical Cure for Viral Diseases

Vecoy Nanomedicines Ltd., a privately held company based out of the Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA), is developing a new generation of nanomedicines for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C and other viral infections. The technology uses nano-scale virus traps that mimic human cells and by doing so lure and destroy virus particles. This revolutionary anti-viral approach (patent pending) has the potential to become a life-saving medical breakthrough.

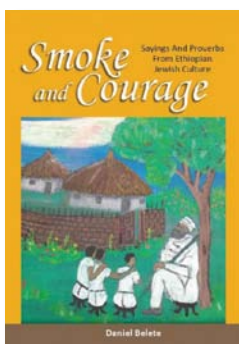


The company, which won first prize in Israel's "Start-Up of the Year" competition, is currently collaborating with Dr. Ido Bachelet, a DNA-nanotech expert, who came to BIU from Harvard University. Dr. Bachelet leads a multidisciplinary group developing and studying emerging biologically-inspired technologies. The company has also collaborated with Prof. Shlomo Margel, an authority on nanoparticles, and hopes in the future to expand cooperation to include additional BIU labs. "It is a privilege working with BINA scientists," says Vecoy CEO Erez Livneh. "BIU has cutting-edge nanotechnology capabilities and state-of-the-art microscopy."

Showcasing Ethiopian Culture

Scholars, government officials, educators and Ethiopian community leaders convened at BIU to explore the "World of Customs and Spiritual Legacy of Ethiopian Jewry: Past and Present." The conference was organized by BIU's Aharon and Rachel Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage, in cooperation with Israel's Ministry of Education and other bodies.

Sessions were devoted to ideological and practical aspects of customs, with lectures by Israel Prize Laureate Rabbi Prof. Daniel Sperber, President of the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies; Rabbi Shabtai Rappoport, head of the Jesselson Institute Beit Midrash; Ethiopian-born Rabbi Sharon Shalom, a BIU alumnus who officiates at an Ashkenazi congregation; and a prominent *kes* (priest). The ensuing panel discussion – featuring BIU alumnus David Maharat, Director of the Steering Center for Ethiopian Immigrants in the Education System, and Yaacov Malkamo, national supervisor of boarding schools (both members of the community) – examined educational facets of the spiritual and religious legacy of Ethiopian Jewry. The evening concluded with the stirring "Prayer of the *Kessim*."



A new book of Ethiopian folk sayings introduces Israeli readers to dozens of Amharic adages and their wisdom through colorful caricatures, accompanied by the Hebrew translation. The book, which won a prize from the Israeli Ministry of Absorption, may soon appear in English (pictured: *Smoke and Courage* by Daniel Belete), says its literary producer Zur Glasner, a BIU undergrad.

Flagship Torah & Science Program Spawns National PhD Fellowship Forum

The media was in the limelight at the 29th session of the *Nitzotzot* Torah and Science Forum, which probed ethical and halakhic dilemmas confronting investigative reporters, and the journalistic ethos of the public's right to know. Yehuda Yifrach, head of the legal desk of the *Maariv* – *Makor* Rishon group, addressed the gathering, as well as Dr. Tsuriel Rashi of BIU's School of Communication, and *Nitzotzot* founder, Rabbi Shabtai Rappoport, who heads the Jesselson Institute Beit Midrash.

Nitzotzot, which regularly convenes academicians, scientists and the general public, has also made headlines with the debut of its offshoot *Nitzotzot Shachar*, a year-long seminar for outstanding doctoral candidates. Open to religious and secular men and women from all Israeli universities, the new program grants fellowships to top talent in diverse fields to examine research breakthroughs

from a Jewish perspective. Presenters include PhD candidates, faculty, as well as rabbinical scholars.

This year, 18 fellows were chosen to participate in the monthly sessions, which focus on such subjects as the Sociology of Medicine, Creativity and Neuropsychology, Cancer and Immunotherapy, Rationalism and Decision-Making, and the Legal Status of Refugees. At the year's end, the program will host a conference together with New York's Columbia University, and showcase the session conclusions.

BIU Jewish Studies Lecturer Ranks in Israel's Top 10

Ynet.com has named Dr. Boaz Shpigel as one of Israel's "Top Ten Most Popular Lecturers" in a list which rates faculty from the nation's academic institutions. The key to his success: "The fascinating biblical and talmudic texts and material which illuminate the students' world, and at times, even touch their hearts and souls," says the Talmud lecturer at the Helene and Paul Shulman Center for Basic Jewish Studies, adding that the mix of seriousness, humor, and an unconventional teaching style also makes his classes popular."

Creative Writing News

US guest poet David Caplan, the author of three books of poetry and poetry criticism, led a two-day fall seminar organized by BIU's Shaindy Rudoff Graduate Program in Creative Writing at the Stern House in Jerusalem. Caplan explored with participants minimalism and maximalism in contemporary American verse and prose, and discussed old and new literary techniques.

Canadian writer and filmmaker David Bezmozgis gave a masterclass for BIU creative writing students and alumni followed by a literary evening open to the general public co-hosted by Keter, publisher of the Hebrew translations of his books. Bezmozgis read from his first novel, *The Free World*, and discussed his work and creative process with Dr. Marcela Sulak, the Shaindy Rudoff Program Director. A *New York Times* Notable Book for 2011, the novel tells the story of a Latvian Jewish family emigrating from Riga to the US. The *New Yorker* listed the Riga-born author as one of the 20 most promising fiction writers under the age of 40.

Program Director Dr. Marcela Sulak's translation from the Czech of the 19th-century poetry collection: "A National Bouquet of Folk Stories" by K. J. Erben has just been published by Twisted Spoon Press. *Spoon River Poetry Review* has nominated Dr. Sulak for a 2012 Pushcart Prize for her poem "Mercy: A Double Sonnet." BIU Creative Writing alumna Janice Weizman has published her first novel, *The Wayward Moon*, (Yotzeret Publishing), which has been nominated for the Sophie Brody Award for Jewish literature. The next issue of *Ilanot Review* on the theme of "Foreign Bodies" will be online January 10th (<http://ilanot.wordpress.com>). The journal is edited by Program alumni.

Broken Mirrors: Human Rights, the Media, and Israel

What is the relationship between human rights organizations and the media? Is the press interested in human rights? Can human rights organizations and the media create a productive public dialogue on human rights? These were some of the panels highlighting a conference hosted by BIU's School of Communication and Center for International Communication, which focused on the interaction between the media and human rights organizations, as well as the unique test case of Israel.

A guest lecture was delivered by Dr. Pierre Sané, President of Imagine Africa Institute, former Assistant Director of UNESCO, and Secretary General of Amnesty International. Supreme Court Justice (ret.) Dalia Dorner, President of the Israeli Press Council, gave the closing lecture.

Covering a broad range of views, panelists included reps from the IDF Spokesman's Unit, Israel's Media Watch, Keshev - the Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel, the Israel Democracy Institute, NGO Monitor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, *The Times of London*, Israeli newspapers, and Boston University.

Egypt in the Era of Pres. Morsi & the Muslim Brotherhood

Who is the real President Mohamed Morsi? What are US Strategic Interests in the Middle East, particularly with regard to Israel-Egypt Relations in the Era of Mohamed Morsi? How will the Egyptian Economy Fare under the Muslim Brotherhood? These are the highly pertinent issues discussed by Israeli academicians and young scholars at the winter meeting of BIU's "*Forum Mazat.com*," which is open to the public. The participants also gain a historical perspective of Israeli security facing Egypt.

Founded by Prof. Michael Laskier of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies in 2007, "*Forum Mazat.com*" hosts three events annually on such subjects as Moroccan Jewry, Algeria, and the bridge between Judaism and Islam. Next year it hopes to hold a large gathering to mark the 40th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War.

Play Therapy Expert Offers Counsel During Operation Pillar of Defense



With tens of thousands of Israeli children living in trepidation from ongoing rocket attacks, BIU lecturer Dr. Suzi Kagan was "enlisted" by the Israeli media to provide valuable psychological counsel and tips for coping with fear and anxiety among the younger set. The founder and of the President Association for Play Therapy-Israel who teaches at the Continuing Education Unit of BIU's Weisfeld School of Social Work was widely interviewed in the radio and press. Among her recommendations to parents: limit children's exposure to news broadcasts, encourage them to watch entertaining kids' shows, don't leave them alone at home when danger lurks, provide lots of hugs and dole out chocolate in the shelter. In the coming weeks, she plans to take a group of her students and grads down south to an orphanage to run play therapy sessions for youngsters who need extra emotional support. In the past, she has organized similar outreach trips, such as following the 2010 Carmel Fire.

Conference on Corporate Governance

Convening experts from around the globe, the Ackerman Conference on Corporate Governance featured a distinguished roster of speakers, including Prof. Luigi Zingales of the University of Chicago, who delivered the keynote address on "The Value of Integrity" and professors from Oxford and Northwestern, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Cornell, Florida State, Univ. of Naples, who lectured on such topics as financial regulation, emerging markets, capital flows in business groups, concentrated ownership, and hedge fund activism.

New BA Programs in English Lure Dozens from Around the Globe

BIU's English-language BA programs have attracted 58 students from Belgium, Ukraine, Spain, South America, Italy, UK, North America and other locations, who are studying in three tracks: Interdisciplinary Macro Social Sciences (Economics, Political Science, Sociology); Interdisciplinary Micro Social Sciences (Criminology, Psychology, Sociology); and Communication and Political Science. Courses are taught both by distinguished veteran faculty as well as talented new recruits. Impressed with the "high caliber of education," a student from Europe was excited to learn that his economics professor studied at the University of Chicago under the renowned economist Milton Friedman. Rachel Yeger, formerly of Teaneck, NJ, says the program "is exactly what I wanted and is enabling me to gradually integrate into Israeli society while succeeding academically. I love the program, and it has given me the opportunity to make aliya.

As the Israeli university with the largest number of new immigrants, BIU is home to over 400 *olim*, most of whom are from English-speaking countries. In recent years, there has been a steady rise in "Anglo" students (both immigrants and non-immigrants). Currently more than 300 North Americans and other English speakers are enrolled in the regular University degree programs, the English-language BA tracks, and the one-year "Israel Experience."

BIU Pres. Prof. Kaveh Lectures to Seniors at Retirement Center



BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh took time off from his busy university affairs to lecture to residents of the nearby Shalva Retirement Center and Nursing Home on "Science, Rationality, Faith and Mysticism in the 21st Century." A top Shalva official noted that "the lecture was received with great excitement and interest" and "was very different from what residents are used to hearing." So much so, that the seniors have asked the BIU President to return to the podium at their home.

BIU Students Party at Rehabilitation Hospital



Bar-Ilan students bring Hanukkah festivity to patients at Raanana's Beit Levinstein Rehabilitation Hospital during the annual Hanukkah visit organized by the BIU Student Union

Photo credits: Nataly Tarshish

Eye-Catching Exhibits Provide Welcomed Entrée into Wurzweiler Central Library



A collection of Israeli stamps spanning the history of the State – marking special milestones and paying tribute to prominent individuals – is currently on display at the entrance to BIU's Central Library. Previous displays have included a photo exhibit of life in Egypt and Israel following the Arab Spring, and a colorful array of paper cuts, microcalligraphy, and other art forms crafted by Jewish Art majors in workshops which afford hands-on experience in various techniques.



Artwork by BIU Jewish Art students (clockwise) Yael Kaufman, Alice Abo, Orly Danieli and Dor Holzman