

SPRING 2011

BGU & YOU

NEWSLETTER OF BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב



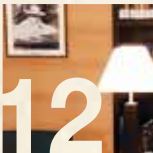
Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award Presented to Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks of Great Britain



Students and Staff Volunteer to Work with Home Front Command



Student Delegation to London Counters Anti-Israel Propaganda



When Sir Isaiah Berlin Met Ben-Gurion

Ramon Memorial Opportunity to Promote Collaboration

Ilan Ramon's legacy includes educating the next generation of Israeli astronauts, said astronaut Col. Timothy J. Creamer, speaking at the University's annual event in memory of Beer-Sheva native Col. Ilan Ramon. Organized with the help of the Rashi Foundation, together with the Ministry of Science, the Israeli Space Agency and NASA, the event honors Ramon and the entire crew of the STS-107 who perished when their space shuttle exploded, and his son, flight cadet Assaf Ramon, who was killed in a training exercise.

Creamer, who first met Ilan Ramon when he joined their training class in 1998, remembered him as a man of "enthusiasm who enlivened" everyone he met and whose personal strength came from having met the goals that he had set for himself. Speaking humorously about the experience of living on an international space station for almost six months, Creamer noted that the view from the space station was one of a "breathtakingly beautiful world, without borders," and he encouraged the crowded auditorium of high school and university students to strive to achieve their goals. "Maybe one of you will be the next Israeli astronaut," he concluded.

Deputy Chief of the Mission Design Division at NASA AMES Research Center Dr. Jacob Cohen also spoke at the event about NASA's relationship with Israel. "Every year a different group of scientists and astronauts come to Israel as part of the annual Ilan Ramon commemorative visit which gives us a chance to learn about Israeli technologies in the field," he said, adding that "NASA is very interested in international collaborations."



Col. Timothy J. Creamer, speaking at BGU

Cohen, together with Prof. Dan Blumberg, head of the University's Earth and Planetary Image Facility and a researcher with a long record of collaboration with NASA, are working together on an Israeli-USA team that includes NASA, BGU, the Lunar and Planetary Science Institute (Houston TX), Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Northrop Grumman, which has submitted a Discovery Class proposal to NASA HQ to launch a radar mission to Venus.

Currently the project is still in the design stage, but the researchers are fascinated by the challenges: "Venus has clouds so you can't see what is happening on the surface and it is too hot to be there, so long wavelengths provides the technological solution to overcome these problems," Cohen said.

BGU is powered by people



Learn more about Green Campus <http://cmsprod.bgu.ac.il/Eng/Units/green/>



Join us on Facebook <http://tinyurl.com/BGUonFB>



Follow us on Twitter <http://twitter.com/BenGurionU>



Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award Presented to **Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks** of Great Britain



L-R: Prof. Rivka Carmi, Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks and Prof. Emeritus Moshe Dariel

"All the disciplines of the modern world do not answer the question of meaning – and human beings seek meaning. That is why religion has survived and will be a greater force in the 21st century than it was in the 20th," declared British Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks at a ceremony this spring upon receiving BGU's Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award.

Recognized for his exceptional work fostering meaningful inter-faith relationships, Sacks was being honored "for his work as a widely published theologian and philosopher, whose aspirations for truth and mutual respect of all peoples guide his actions."

The Laszt Award is bestowed biennially on a religious personality of international repute, or on a person or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to society. Established in 1981 by the late Prof. Ladislaus Laszt and his wife Nelly from Switzerland, the award "acknowledges and rewards people whose deeds reflect tolerance, hope and vision – those aspects so essential to the survival of the human race."

Sacks gave his address "The Challenge of Religious Difference in a Desecularizing Age" to an overflow audience which included UK Ben-Gurion Foundation Board members Eric Charles and Harold Paisner and many local British ex-pats. He traced the success of Western civilization to the "revolutionary" strength of monotheistic religions and their inherent separation of powers.

"The single most important contribution of Judaism to the west is that the God is the only real sovereign. The most fundamental principal of a free society is that there are moral limits to power."

Relating to the revolutionary ferment taking place throughout the Arab world today in the context of religion and its relationship to power, Sacks noted that "For every Jew in the world there are 100 Muslims and 183 Christians; few things will matter more than our relationship with Christianity and Islam, and that in turn will depend on our relations with Judaism. We never attempted to convert or conquer the world, but have long recognized the wisdom of traditions other than our own," he added.

Ladislaus Laszt, who initiated the award, was a physician and successful medical researcher whose Christian wife was ostracized when she married him. According to family representative Prof. Emeritus Moshe Dariel, Laszt became familiar with BGU in its early years. In addition to his other contributions to the University, he decided to establish the award to honor those fighting against interreligious conflict. Dariel called Chief Rabbi Sacks an "outstanding example of someone who turns his faith into action."

Following the award ceremony Rabbi Sacks participated in a seminar on the topic of "Pluralism and Normativity in the Jewish Experience," with Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin and Prof. Alice Shalvi, moderated by Israel Prize laureate Prof. Yaakov Blidstein, incumbent of the Miriam Martha Hubert Chair in Jewish Law.

Blidstein is considered one of the founders of the field of Jewish political thought, concentrating on the interface of Jewish public law and social ethics. Fellow Israel Prize laureate Shalvi is a scholar and social and peace activist who has been a critical force in shaping the status of women in Israel. Rabbi Riskin is the founding Chief Rabbi of Efrat and the Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and a major spokesperson for modern orthodoxy.

During the seminar there were humorous references to Rabbi Sacks' most famous book, the widely praised *Dignity of Difference*, which argues that religion does not have to lead to a clash between rival civilizations, but rather can be used to generate tolerance, as Riskin and Shalvi have very different views regarding Judaism's role in Israel. Sacks said that "while Judaism is a score for many voices," he decried its "inability to contain our own inner conflicts."

David Ben-Gurion Medal Awarded to **Dr. Lars Hänsel**



L-R: Boris Sovič, Jonathan Claridge, Lars Hänsel and Sharon Pardo

Dr. Lars Hänsel, outgoing Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, received a David Ben-Gurion Medal from the University's Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society (CSEPS) this spring. The ceremony took place as part of the CSEPS' eighth anniversary celebrations in the presence of H.E. Ambassador of Slovenia Boris Sovič and Deputy Ambassador of the European Union in Israel H.E. Jonathan Claridge.

Director of the CSEPS and incumbent of the Jean Monnet Chair in European Studies Dr. Sharon Pardo praised Hänsel for his "critical role in the support and encouragement of Israeli-EU and Israeli-German relations" and presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation, which acknowledged his "commitment to the promotion of religious tolerance, coexistence and cooperation among all peoples."

Hänsel noted that "there might be no place more symbolically appropriate for teaching European studies than at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, not far from the place of the historic meeting between the two statesmen – Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion – which played a central role at the beginning of the European integration process."

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and CSEPS signed an agreement earlier this year to promote greater awareness within Israel of the growing importance of Europe and the European Union, and to offer the wider public in Israel, and in particular, students, the opportunity to learn about contemporary political and social developments in Europe.

Art Exhibition Examines **Romanian Identity**

An exhibition titled, "I Am a Romanian: The Tel Aviv – Bucharest Route" opened this spring with a conference attended by Romanian and Israeli artists, in the presence of H.E. Edward Iosiper, the ambassador of Romania to Israel. The exhibition examines Romanian identity as manifested in the works of twenty Romanian and twenty Israeli artists.

The Romanians are contemporary artists who deal with their national identity in the face of the accelerated changes taking place in their country, noted Prof. Haim Maor from the Department of the Arts, who curated the show together with students from the curatorial course. As part of the course requirements, each artist was profiled by a student in the course, which was incorporated in the exhibition catalogue.

In the aftermath of the overthrow of Ceausescu's regime, the massive infiltration of Western European, American and global elements into Romania has grown significantly. The exhibition features twenty Israeli artists of different generations – Romanian born, or descendants of Romanian born parents. In their works, the latter artists refer directly or indirectly to their country of origin as well as to its heritage, culture, landscape and spirit by merging old feelings and memories that still accompany them in Israel.

The exhibition, catalogue and conference were made possible through the generosity of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Tel Aviv, BGU's Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society, the United Organization of Romanian Jews in Israel, and the Association of Romanian Immigrants in Israel.



Chamber Music Course Performs its Second Concert

The players of the Chamber Music Course recently scored a rousing success playing to a packed house at their second concert. Featuring works by Corelli, Mozart, Chopin and Beethoven, the plucky amateurs took to the stage – many for only the first or second time in their lives.

“My aim is to ‘do’ chamber music at the best level corresponding to each player’s ability,” musical director Daniel Lachish said. Despite the concerts, the course isn’t about training professionals or even about putting on concerts per se, he explains. It is about learning how to play together. “One student

played a piece from beginning to end for the first time – for her, that was the whole world,” he recalled.

And the course is growing. From six groups who played in the first concert, 10 performed at the second event. There are now 14 groups in all – about 40 people. Each group meets once a week to practice. They learn not just how to play a piece but how to play a concert – listening to the acoustics of the hall and adjusting tempo as needed, Lachish said.

“Not all have the ability to play a hall, but

they all came with a real love for music,” Lachish affirmed.

Lachish organizes the course together with Prof. Ute Deichmann, who also appeared in three of the ensembles. “It was frightening,” she said, of getting up on stage, “I haven’t played a concert since I was in a chamber orchestra as a student.”

The next concert is planned for May 31st at 1:00 p.m. in the Joya Claire Sonnenfeldt Auditorium within the framework of a lunchtime music series of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

BGU Joins International Health Network

The Israeli Center for Qualitative Research of People and Societies (ICQM) at BGU has recently joined with the DIPEX International network to launch an innovative project seeking to incorporate the experiences of patients into the professional and public discourses through a research and website. Director of the ICQM Dr. Michal Krumer-Nevo from the Spitzer Department of Social Work explained that BGU has undertaken to develop an Israeli site based on a model that originated at the Health Experiences Group at the University of Oxford.

The original project was started by Prof. Ann McPherson from Oxford, who realized that patients have access to medical knowledge but not to other patients’ experiences. Using rigorous qualitative research methodology, she set out to empower patients while helping medical professionals improve their engagement with them.

The Health Experiences Research Group at the University of Oxford created a database of personal and patient experiences of over



A group of BGU researchers met British actor Hugh Grant, who is patron of this research project at a recent conference in London. L-R: Dr. Michal Krumer-Nevo, ICQM academic coordinator, Dr. Maya Lavie-Ajayi and Prof. Ehud Zmora, from the Faculty of Health Sciences

50 different illnesses and health conditions. The results are published on two websites: www.healthtalkonline.com and www.youthhealthtalk.com. Israel joins a number of countries that are developing their own versions of the site, including Australia, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Spain.

Speaking at the House of Lords in February,

Chair of DIPEX’s Board of Trustees Lord Andrew Stone of Blackheath noted that, “The University of Oxford is working with Ben-Gurion University to make patient experience of illness available online for free in Arabic, Hebrew and English to all communities in the region. By sharing experience of their conditions across all divides, it helps them to live better lives and increases understanding and empathy.”

A Friend in Deed

The first visit of British Ambassador to Israel H.E. Matthew Gould to BGU was dramatic, coming as it did only a few hours after a Grad rocket from Gaza landed in the heart of Beer-Sheva. In a special lecture in March for the Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society's Ambassadors Forum 2011, Ambassador Gould had no qualms about referring to the event.

"I want to stress that I and my government share the outrage of the people of Beer-Sheva," he told the packed auditorium, adding that "the indiscriminate targeting of Israeli citizens through these rocket attacks is utterly unacceptable. The mortar fire over the Purim weekend and the rocket attacks on Ashkelon, Ashdod and now Beer-Sheva signals a worrying escalation."

In a candid address, Ambassador Gould called on Hamas to immediately stop the attacks and stop other groups in Gaza from launching them, and then added that "My government firmly believes in Israel's right to defend itself. Those rights must be used in a proportional way, which will calm the situation down rather than stir it up further. In that context, the highest priority must be given to avoiding further civilian casualties." Following his BGU lecture Gould visited the site in the city where the Grad rocket had hit to see for himself the damage caused and to talk to local residents.

The Ambassadors Forum, organized by the Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society in cooperation with the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy, is designed to introduce BGU faculty and students to the central role of diplomacy in conflict resolution and negotiations. Each academic year the Forum hosts four ambassadors who give public lectures. Gould, Britain's first Jewish ambassador to Israel, assumed his position last September. He previously served in Iran and Pakistan.



H.E. Matthew Gould, British Ambassador to Israel

Referring in his BGU lecture to the relations between Israel and the UK, Ambassador Gould quoted British Prime Minister David Cameron who said his "country's faith in Israel is indestructible.

"We see Israel as a friend and ally and a strategic partner. That friendship is built on the strongest possible foundation – shared values, and a shared commitment to democracy and the rule of law," said Gould, pledging that "Britain will not compromise on Israel's security or Israel's legitimacy. That does not mean we have to agree on everything. Legitimate criticism is one thing. But those who try to undermine Israel's legitimacy are wrong, and their campaign is offensive... This Government is opposed to boycotts of Israel, opposed to sanctions, opposed to de-legitimization."

Gould noted that he aims to spend a day every month at an Israeli university, but that BGU was particularly special due to its location, diversity, development and vision. In January of this year, he hosted the first meeting of the newly-created UK-Israel Council for Life Sciences, including four Nobel Prize laureates, which he will chair, together with co-chairs Prof. Raymond Dwek of Oxford University and BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi.

Lifetime Achievement Award to Prof. Zvi Bentwich

The Volunteering Unit of the Ministry of Health presented the 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award to Prof. Zvi Bentwich, Director of Center for Emerging Tropical Diseases and AIDS (CEMTA) and a member of the Department of Virology and Developmental Genetics at the Faculty of Health Sciences, for his significant contribution as a physician and researcher in the Israeli health system and his medical research in the fields of cancer and AIDS.

He was a pioneering AIDS researcher who initiated and founded the first AIDS clinic in Israel, was one of the founders of the Israel AIDS Task force and built an international reputation for his research in the field.

Bentwich serves as a volunteer consultant to the heads of leading international organizations in humanitarian action, is a member of national committees in medicine, academic committees in Israel and various professional associations.

Partnering with the Global Network for the Fight against Neglected Tropical Diseases, he also set up an intensive program in Ethiopia to eradicate Neglected Tropical Diseases which affect all the poor populations around the world and as much as a quarter of the world's population.

Green Recognition

BGU recently placed 46th on the GreenMetric rankings, a global ranking of universities and their environmental initiatives – the only Israeli university to make the list. Prof. Dan Blumberg, Deputy Vice-President and Dean for R & D, praised the senior administration's commitment to advancing a green agenda, which resulted in the recognition of the University as a Green Campus by the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection last year. "The BGU administration and staff have taken on the responsibility of public and environmental action," he continued, praising Mario Copel, the Deputy Director General for Development and Logistics in particular, for his involvement in making things happen. "The University is extremely active in this field and it is felt at all levels of campus activity, including in research, teaching 'green activities' and social involvement in the community."

Blumberg outlined recent steps taken in resource control and minimization, such as the installation of a solar water heating system for the Zlotowski Dormitory Complex. The University's control room for electricity usage is also in the process of being updated, and air conditioning on the Marcus Family Campus is focused through a central water cooling unit which is now monitored to maintain steady temperatures in all of the buildings. Blumberg also noted that the Green Council has organized two campus wide competitions to receive new energy saving initiatives. "Social change doesn't just happen," he concluded. "People make it happen."

Students and Staff Volunteer to Work with **Home Front Command**



Mayor Ruvik Danilovich greets Col. Efi Mishov of the Home Front Command's Population Department while Maj.-Gen. Yair Golan and Prof. Zvi HaCohen look on

Home Front Commander Maj.-Gen. Yair Golan and Mayor of Beer-Sheva Ruvik Danilovich were on hand in May to mark the launch of a unique volunteer project to involve BGU in the Home Front Command's emergency plans.

Some two thousand students and faculty of the University had responded to a questionnaire six months previously expressing interest in volunteering during such emergencies, as well as in the event of a natural disaster. The volunteers will be divided into groups and trained by the Home Front Command to assist throughout Beer-Sheva and the region.

The program is organized by Dr. Limor Aharonson-Daniel from BGU's PREPARED Center for Emergency Response Research, which focuses on conducting research and increasing knowledge and preparedness for states of medical emergency and disaster.

Golan praised the University for its initiative.

"You are the first and only educational institution to take up the challenge" he said. He also welcomed all research initiatives to improve the Home Front Command's capabilities that might emerge out of this pioneering project.

BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi noted that Operation Cast Lead in 2008 showed that we are all "in the same boat." Though BGU was closed during much of the period, some, "3,000 students and faculty stayed and contributed to the local community in an extraordinary way." This program, she added, will help us "channel that spirit into something organized and professional.

"This is a flagship project of the University. We placed emergency response research on the academic map. Unfortunately, if we were located somewhere else, this would remain theoretical research, but this is Israel and it may be only a matter of time before we will need to call upon you," she told the audience of volunteers.



Joint Israeli-Jordanian Training Exercise Simulates Regional Preparedness for Earthquake Event



Jordanian and Israeli rescue personnel work together at a drill in Timna this spring

Under the maxim, “He who saves a single life actually saves the whole world,” emergency aid personnel from Israel and Jordan participated in a joint training exercise in March to simulate the potential for cooperation and preparedness after an earthquake in the region.

Organized by the Israeli Magen David Adom (MDA) and the Jordanian Red Crescent (JRC), the exceptional event brought together nearly two hundred people – including trained professionals from both countries and academic faculty and students from BGU – to simulate the creation of a camp for “internally displaced persons” in Timna.

“Watching members of the JRC build a tent with two BGU students as if they had been working together forever gave me a huge feeling of satisfaction,” said Dr. Bruria Adini, a member of BGU’s Department of Emergency Medicine and one of the planners of the program. “There was this

incredible energy as both the Israelis and Jordanians found their common language and worked together. The cooperation was real and not just something we had talked about.”

The exercise took place during the 4th conference of the Development and Strategy Forum (DSF) comprising key officials from MDA, JRC and BGU that serves as a platform for regional cooperation, and was held in the presence of members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the European Union, who have supported the cooperative initiative since it was founded some two years ago. University Rector Prof. Zvi HaCohen, incumbent of the Maks and Rochelle Etingin Chair in Desert Research, and Mrs. Laila Touqan, responsible for gender focal points at the JRC, were among the many participants.

“It is not by chance we are here close to the sister cities of Aqaba and Eilat,” noted

Dr. Dagan Schwartz, a member of BGU’s Department of Emergency Medicine and a former assistant medical director of MDA. “Their proximity means that rescue teams are going to have to work together if we are to respond as quickly and as professionally as possible should such an event really occur.”

Planned long before the catastrophic earthquake that hit Japan less than a week earlier, the organizers of the workshop used the coincidence to reinforce the relevance and importance of the exercise.

H.E. Dr. Mohammed el-Hadid, the President of the Jordanian Red Crescent and past Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, who has been involved in promoting cooperation between the two societies, compared the situation in Japan to that of Haiti, remarking that “we can see the difference when a country is prepared.” What would have happened, he asked, if a disaster of this magnitude had happened in a country “where the culture of preparedness is not as embedded as in Japan?”

He commended the DSF initiative and BGU’s role in creating the cooperation, noting that “The seed that was planted here by Ben-Gurion University is growing into a tree that will provide the shade for us to sit under and which will protect us in the future.”

Director General of MDA Mr. Eli Bin echoed El-Hadid’s remarks, adding that it is the personal relationships that will make the difference when disaster does strike. “Today’s training event is critical and reflects our long-time association and partnership with the Red Crescent. Working together helps us advance our joint agenda and build the basis for lasting peace in the region.”



Snapshots

A glance at events at BGU



The University choir performs at the annual memorial service marking Israel's Remembrance Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism



The Security Department and Student Association used funds raised from a sale of "Lost and Found" items to prepare some 80 Passover packages for needy families



Architect Miki Chyutin (left) joins with Yael and Avishay Braverman at a symposium marking the publication of "From Vision to Reality: Architecture at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1990-2006"



Dr. Ofer Shiff from the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism hosts Dean of the Center for Jewish Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Prof. Pan Guang (center) and Prof. Zhou Guojian



Prof. Raymond Dwek from the University of Oxford and Director of Oxford GlycoSciences spoke to students from the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management about the interface between science and industry



Student Delegation to London Counters Anti-Israel Propaganda

Undergraduate Jacob Goldstein was surprised by the amount of anti-Israel sentiment that he came across as a member of the student delegation this spring to serve as a counterweight to the propaganda being distributed during "Israeli Apartheid Week" in London.

"In the beginning it was very frustrating, but after a while you let it bounce off you," he said. As a member of the student group StandWithUs at BGU, Jacob knew that the challenges would be many, but he continued, "There were so many lies – a mountain of lies that you can't break down. Most people in the audience were already convinced. Even those who want to learn start to believe the lies after they hear them over and over. They would come up to us afterwards and ask whether what they had just heard was true."

"The main idea [behind StandWithUs] is to present the different views of the Arab-Israeli issue. The organization brought an Arab, a settler, religious guy, a PR for Israel guy to talk to us. The idea is to broaden your spectrum of views," he explained.

When Jacob, whose family made aliyah from Tampa, Florida when he was 11 years old, heard about another grassroots student group who were recruiting good English speakers to go to England during Israeli Apartheid Week to try to offer a more nuanced picture of Israel, he knew that it was for him.

"The people were very serious and it had a grassroots feeling to it. There was no group telling us what our line would be. It was also pluralistic – right, left, religious, non-religious," he said, describing the 24-member group, organized by BGU alumni Alon Kimhi and Avnet Kleiner with students from around Israel. The two founders chose England because they saw

it as a hotspot and focal point of Israeli Apartheid Week activities, Jacob explained.

To prepare, the group went through a series of training sessions, including meetings with members of the Israeli government and Foreign Ministry and a number of NGOs. They also made contact with the British Union of Jewish Students (UJS) and teamed up with them to help navigate the campuses and plan events.

"Just before we left, we had a three day workshop with a public relations company. All of the meetings were in English. We did simulations of what happens when people protest at speeches. They even brought in some English people so we could get used to the accent," he said. Most of the group was comprised of native Israelis, though there were some immigrants as well.

Jacob and his group went to six British universities. They went straight from the plane to the London School of Economics, considered one of the more anti-Israel campuses in England. "The first thing we saw were huge Eden mineral water bottles filled with red water to symbolize Palestinian blood," he recalled.

"We set up a stand with Israeli food. We started talking to people and a large crowd gathered," Jacob said, "It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. Nobody attacked us physically."

Their stand was in the middle of a whole street covered with material on the Arab cause and portraying Israel as an apartheid state. "I remember one particular student. She was studying religions of the world – I was just amazed that she had no clue about what was happening, but she had heard bad things about Israel... and so was against it," he recalled.



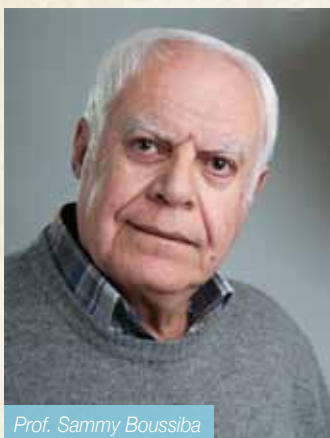
Jacob Goldstein (foreground) in London

In Leeds, the group had to face a mock checkpoint with people dressed as Israeli soldiers stopping everyone and refusing to let them pass until they had checked their bags.

For a first effort, the trip was a reasonable success, Jacob believes, and the two BGU alums are already planning more. "There has never been an Israeli delegation on the campuses to fight for Israel – in that sense, I think it was a success. Whether it will change sentiment on campus is another matter. Diplomats from the Israeli Embassy told us they judged success as not being thrown out of the hall and being allowed to give a lecture.

"There was definitely a feeling when we walked off a campus that we had achieved something. We had brought another point of view, which would not have been heard had we not been there. Of course, there is a lot more work to be done. For the UJS it was a great success because they were not alone and the Israeli viewpoint was well represented. We have built a bridge that we hope to strengthen in future years."

Excellence recognized



Prof. Sammy Boussiba

Prof. Sammy Boussiba

Elected to American National Academy of Sciences

Prof. Sammy Boussiba, director of the French Associates Institute for Agriculture & Biotechnology of Drylands at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research and incumbent of the Miles and Lillian Cahn Chair in Economic Botany in Arid Zones was recently elected as a member of a committee appointed by the American National Academy of Sciences to examine the "Sustainable Development of Algal Biofuels."

Boussiba is world-renowned in algae research and heads the Landau Family Microalgal Biotechnology Laboratory, which numbers more than 20 staff members, including researchers, technicians and graduate research students.

His research interests include developing the biotechnology for large-scale production of *astaxanthin*-rich-*Haematococcus*. The work also involves research concerning basic aspects of carotenogenesis and the physiological aspects facilitating the

survival of *Spirulina* in extreme alkaline environments, as well as the biochemical and molecular components involved in these activities.

Through BGN Technologies, the technology transfer company of BGU, the MBL recently signed a research and development collaboration agreement with PTT Chemical Public Company Limited (Thailand) for the production of dihomogamma-linolenic acid (DGLA – Omega 6) using BGU's proprietary mutant strain of the green microalgae *Parietochloris incise*.

Prof. Uri Ram Awarded Distinguished Alumnus Award

Prof. Uri Ram, head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from his alma mater, the New School for Social Research, New York.

Ram is the author of several recent books including *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (Routledge 2007) and *Israeli Nationalism: Social Conflicts and the Politics of Knowledge* (Routledge 2011). His research interests focus on the dialectics of the globalization of Israeli society, especially the encounter between the "global" and the "local".

Ram also researches the history of sociological thought in Israel, especially the transition from "mainstream" to "critical" sociology, as he described in his book *The Changing Agenda of Israeli Sociology: Theory, Ideology and Identity* (SUNY Press 1995).

Prof. Amir Sagi Elected President of the ISIRD

Prof. Amir Sagi, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and a member of the Department of Life Sciences and the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev, was recently elected as President of the International Society for Invertebrate Reproduction and Development. Sagi's research interests include comparative and applied endocrinology, crustacean biology and desert aquaculture. Since 2001 he has served as Vice President of the Society.

Between the years 2004 - 2008 he established the program in Marine Biology and Biotechnology at BGU's Eilat campus and served as its Director. From 1997 - 2001 he was the incumbent of the Murray and Judith Shusterman Career Development Chair in Microbiology and he is the current incumbent of the Lily and Sidney Oelbaum Chair in Applied Biochemistry. From 1997 - 2007 he won awards for excellence in teaching from the Student Association and the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

Five patents have been registered by his research team and he has presented countless articles at international conferences and research institutions around the world.

Dr. Taleb Mokari wins Krill Prize

Dr. Taleb Mokari of the Department of Chemistry and a member of the Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology has been awarded a prestigious Krill Prize for Excellence in Scientific

Research 2011. Dr. Mokari received the Prize for his work on developing novel nanostructures for renewable energy applications.

Mokari has received the Chorofas Award (2004), the Eshkol Scholarship from the Ministry of Science, Israel (2005-2007), the Intel-Dean Prize (2005), the Kaye Award for Innovation (2005), the Israel Chemical Society Award (2006), the Schlomiuk Prize for Outstanding Ph.D. Thesis (2007), the Fulbright Fellowship for Postdoctoral Studies (2006-2007), the Ilan Ramon Fellowship for the best Fulbright Fellow (2007), and the IUPAC Prize for Young Chemists (2006).

He joined BGU in 2009 and has continued to excel, winning Dean's honors for excellent researcher from the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 2010, and a Ma'of Fellowship established by the Kahanoff Foundation in 2011.

Dr. Zvi Reich Wins 2011 Kinneret Prize

Dr. Zvi Reich from the Department of Communication Studies was awarded the 2011 Kinneret Prize for Communication, Society and Environment presented by the Kinneret Academic College, in cooperation with the Tel Aviv Journalists Association and Channel Two Television and Radio.

According to the citation, Reich was recognized for research that he carried out with colleagues Molly Bentman and Oded Jackman on communication and information during emergencies, which was compiled in cooperation with all of the relevant professional bodies in Israel.

The prize committee noted that "the work of Reich, Bentman and Jackman will help to fill the large existing space in the relationship between government authorities, the media and the general public. This work clearly illustrates the desired relationship between academic research and the possibility of implementation for public wellbeing. Indeed, the work, based on extensive research knowledge, recommends to the different authorities techniques and tools in dealing with crises and emergencies, and in activating effective communication under these circumstances."

Dr. Sarab Abu-Rabia-Queder Receives Ministry of Science and Technology Grant

Dr. Sarab Abu-Rabia-Queder of the Department of Man in the Desert at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research and incumbent of the D.E. Koshland Jr. Family Career Development Chair in Desert Studies has been awarded a grant from the Israel Ministry of Science and Technology for her research study, "Avenues of Economic Participation for Rural Bedouin Women."

The study, to be carried out with Dr. Avigail Morris of the Arava Institute, seeks to examine patterns of informal economic participation of rural Bedouin women, with the aim to find ways of strengthening their economic empowerment. It will focus on four unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev through analysis of the contextual differences between them.

Abu-Rabia-Queder's research focus is on gender and development in Bedouin society

in Israel. She recently published a book on the first Bedouin women in higher education (Magnes Press, Hebrew University), and has co-authored the book *Palestinian Women in Israel: Identity, Power Relations and Coping* (Van Leer Institute, Hakibbutz Hameukhad).

Dr. Alberto Bilenca wins Grant from the Gates Foundation

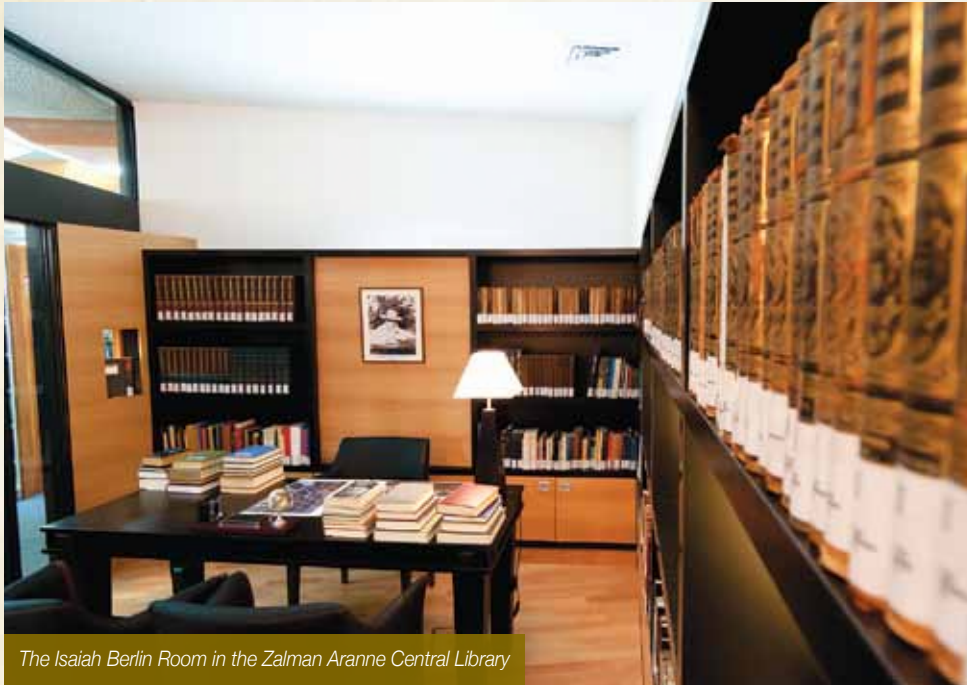
Researcher Dr. Alberto Bilenca of the Department of Biomedical Engineering and a member of the Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology was awarded a Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Eighty-eight grants were awarded this year to "explore bold and largely unproven ways to improve global health." Winners were selected from more than 2,500 proposals from approximately 100 countries.

Bilenca's project uses the principles of optical polarization/speckle and cellphone technology to create a low-cost, portable probe to quickly and accurately diagnose malaria in field settings. In collaboration with Linnie Golightly, MD, from the Weill Cornell Medical College, Bilenca will be developing a noninvasive diagnostic probe that creates images that depict the malaria pigment (hemozoin crystals) in blood following malaria parasite infection, as well as micro-obstructions in the circulatory system that result from the infection.

In contrast to commercially available malaria tests, this probe will avoid the need for blood collection, therefore maximizing medical safety, patient comfort and test rapidity.



When Sir Isaiah Berlin Met Ben-Gurion



The Isaiah Berlin Room in the Zalman Aranne Central Library

New photos and correspondence between Sir Isaiah Berlin OM, FB and David Ben-Gurion were recently added to the Isaiah Berlin Room in the Zalman Aranne Central Library. They were donated by Berlin's son Peter Halban after a recent visit to BGU to see the room. The materials include photos of Berlin and Lady Aline Berlin visiting Ben-Gurion in Sede Boqer and letters exchanged between the two men.

Little known to most students and faculty is that 90 percent of the renowned philosopher and thinker's books have been integrated into the Aranne Library collection. Most of them are readily available on the public library stacks, making it possible, and even probable, that students doing research may have used a book that once belonged to Isaiah Berlin.

Located on the 3rd floor of the Aranne Library, the Isaiah Berlin Room echoes his original study at the University of Oxford. A faux fireplace opposite his desk and a

reproduction of a painting that hung in his office is complemented by Berlin's own books, arranged in the same order. There are also copies of Berlin's own works, as well as books about him and his writings.

Outside the room, an exhibit of books personally dedicated to Berlin by such wide-ranging notables as Gershom Scholem, Richard Nixon, Anna Akhmatova and Lord Weidenfeld of Chelsea, are displayed.

But how did the great Isaiah Berlin's library end up at BGU? While a great admirer of Israel and of the Negev, Berlin lived his life in Oxford, England and it was surely more likely that his library would be left to his college.

And yet, after Berlin's death in 1997, then Chairman of the University's Board of Governors Lord Weidenfeld approached his widow Lady Aline Berlin and her son, Peter Halban, about the notion of donating his library, comprised of several thousand volumes, to BGU. The two were receptive to

the idea and Prof. Ilan Troen was invited to view the library.

The two asked Troen why Berlin's library, particularly the large collection of books in Russian, should come to the Negev. Troen replied that there were probably more Russian-readers in Beer-Sheva than in Oxford or London, the other two locations Lady Aline and Halban were considering.

Lady Aline and Peter Halban eventually decided to send Berlin's library to BGU through the Berlin Charitable Trust and the British Friends of Ben-Gurion University. They had two stipulations: that the books be placed in the appropriate section of the library so that they could be used rather than become a monument to the revered thinker. To commemorate Berlin, they asked that a reading room be established in his name. In both cases, it is the University community which has benefited from their generosity.


Receive BGU & YOU Online


To subscribe, send an e-mail to newsdesk@bgu.ac.il and it will arrive directly into your inbox.

Produced by the Department of Publications and Media Relations
Editor: Faye Bittker
Text: Patricia Golan, Ehud Zion Waldoks, Jacqueline Watson-Alloun
Translation: Jacqueline Watson-Alloun
Photos: Dani Machlis, Eugene Nestorovsky

Design: www.image2u.co.il

Further details of the research projects described here may be obtained from: newsdesk@bgu.ac.il, Tel: 972-8-646-1753

 Join us on Facebook
<http://tinyurl.com/BGUonFB>

 Follow us on Twitter
<http://twitter.com/BenGurionU>

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
P.O.Box 653, Beer-Sheva 84105, Israel
www.bgu.ac.il, Vol.2 No.1