

# At a Glance

LATEST NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA



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1

Israel's President Shimon Peres recently met with President Amos Shapira, Rector Prof. David Faraggi and Prof. Zvi Ben-Abraham, Head of the Mediterranean Sea Research Center of Israel (MERC I) and the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences. The University representatives explained the economic and national security importance of Mediterranean research to the strength and prosperity of Israel. Following the meeting President Peres urged the University to "write Israel's 'vision for the sea' just as Ben Gurion had given us a 'vision for the Negev'". He even offered to back seminars where Israeli and foreign experts, together with key industry players, could discuss the future opportunities inherent in the sea. The University President responded that "sea research needs people with vision, and I am happy that we have found such a senior patron as the President of Israel on this important issue so fundamental to the future of the State of Israel".



2

Boston Jewish Federation Representative, Eve Rubinstein and Liron Ben-Yaakov of their Boston-Haifa Connection initiative recently visited the University of Haifa campus as part of the partnership's annual steering committee currently taking place in Haifa. They met with Acting Vice President for External Relations and Resource Development, Rachel Kaverman and Executive Director of the department, Michael Messinger who reported on the University's programs supported by the Connection. They also discussed possible expansion opportunities in the future. The Boston Haifa Connection currently supports a range of projects including: treatment for children of Ethiopian origin at the Interdisciplinary Clinical Center; Haifa Hillel center's activities' on campus; and a student program exchange program between the Faculty of Law and Boston. The cooperation also goes further: many staff and faculty members volunteer in the various committees which run the Connection's activities.



3

The new representative of the Hecht Foundation in Switzerland, Thierry Bloch, joined the Chairman of the Foundation Dr. Harry Sessler on a visit to the Hecht Museum. Director and Curator, Ofra Rimon took the guests on a tour of the museum, guiding them through the various exhibitions. Mr. Bloch was impressed, learning much about the displays at the museum and indeed the history of Israel.



4

The Department of Music recently organized a very successful [Jewish Music Day](#) which included six concerts and an academic symposium on the topic. Hundreds of guests attended to listen to performances of arrangements of Ladino songs, cantorial and choral works and music for synagogues. Other concerts included one to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of composer Leibu Levin who wrote Yiddish songs, and a performance marking the 120th anniversary of the death of Louis Lewandowski, with the Yakar Choir (Jerusalem). The event, now in its second year, also included a wide range of seminars on Jewish music. The event received widespread media coverage in Israel, including in the newspaper ['Haaretz'](#) and the [TLV1](#) English language broadcasting network.



5

"Israel should consider establishing an official foreign aid agency in cases of disasters abroad" said Foreign Ministry Director General Nissim Ben-Sheetrit. "There is no doubt that this is one of the most important tools that a state has to change its image in the world" added Sheetrit at a conference to mark the three year anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The conference was organized by the Department of Asian Studies in the presence of Japanese ambassador to Israel, Hideo Sato. Ben-Sheetrit stressed that the chief motivation for sending this aid was just the desire to help and not specifically to improve Israel's image. However, he said that beyond Israel and the country receiving assistance there is little awareness about Israeli aid which therefore does not impact on Israel's image around the world. The conference was reported in the [Jerusalem Post](#).



6

["Conditional citizenship"](#) is the title of a conference held by Jewish-Arab Center which reported on the conclusions of a group which has for the last eighteen months been examining the effects of Israel's laws on its Arab population. The Conference was chaired by Dr. Yousef Jabareen of the Faculty of Law and Dr. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The event hosted a number of speakers including various researchers and professionals in the field as well as Knesset members who shared their personal experiences on the subject with the audience.



7

8

The University has opened a new gallery. The Central Archive Gallery, run by Director Rona Perkis, was inaugurated with an exhibition of photos by photographer Oscar Tauber who was well known in Haifa in the 60s and 70s - and who took many of the first photos of the University. The exhibition is curated by Prof. Sharon Poliakine Dotan, Head of the School of the Arts, and the opening ceremony was attended by Vice President and Director General Baruch Marzan and Head of Human Resources, Sarah Tzezana. Tauber's children and relatives as well as University staff and faculty members also attended. The exhibition will run until the end of May.



Congratulations go to Justice Einas Salameh, a graduate of the Faculty of Law who was appointed as Chief Magistrate of Haifa. Judge Salama completed his Masters degree at the Faculty in 2009 and has served as a judge since 2002.



9

Two University faculty members have published articles in the prestigious New York Times. [Dr Inna Gaisler-Salomon](#) of the Department of Psychology penned a piece about her joint study with Prof. Micah Leshem and Ms. Hiva Zidan about the [effects on a fetus of stress experienced by a woman prior to pregnancy](#). Prof. Brenda Shaffer of the School of Political Science published an opinion piece on the controversy surrounding the [water supply in Lake Urmia in Iran](#).



10

Arab children are at a greater risk of mortality caused by unintentional injuries, compared to Jewish children. This was the conclusion of a report summarizing over 20 years' research by Prof. Orna Baron Epel of the School of Public Health and Dr. Michal Ivankovsky of the *Beterem – Safe Kids Israel* non-profit organization. "Intervention at an individual, family, community and society level could reduce the risks to Arab children, combined with better monitoring" said Prof. Baron Epel. The study was reported on the Israeli news website *Nrg*.



11

Congratulations are also in order to Dr. Motti Charter of the Department of Evolutionary and Environmental Biology who has received a [Special Achievement Award from the International Owl Center in Minnesota, USA](#). Dr. Charter was given the award for his research on the behavior of barn owls and common owls. Dr. Charter received the award during the International Owl Festival held in the United States. He used the visit to install Barn Owl nest boxes on different farms in the area.



12

[Prof. Eli Avraham](#), head of the Elizabeth and Tony Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism, published an opinion piece in the *Haaretz* newspaper, in which he explains that underlying the boycotts against Israel is the same old anti-Semitism, "why do boycott advocates have double standards toward Israel? I mean, why not take a single step towards boycotting other countries? Why not boycott China, Morocco, Russia or Turkey which govern areas surrounded by controversy" Is the Left in Europe boycotting Saudi Arabia, where women are forbidden to drive a car, ride a bike to work or work in certain professions?"



Prof. [Daniel Statman](#) of the Department of Philosophy published an opinion piece in the [Jerusalem Post](#) on the debate over conscription of *Haredim* (ultra-orthodox). Prof. Statman discussed the "historical clash between two fundamentally different views of Judaism": one where the ideal Jewish society is achieved by "a state of affairs in which as many Jews as possible spend as much time as possible in the study of Torah" and the other where "Torah study is mainly an instrument for the improvement of behavior in the real world, and it is this behavior that is at the heart of Judaism".

