



Vice President for External Relations
and Resource Development
Division of Marketing & Media

At a Glance

LATEST NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA



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1

The University was awarded a US \$7 million grant from the prestigious Helmsley Charitable Trust to establish the Helmsley Mediterranean Sea Research Center, a field that was recently thrust into the spotlight following the discovery of gas off the coast of Haifa. “The grant expresses a vote of confidence by one of the world’s leading charitable trusts in the excellence of the University of Haifa... The establishment of the Center will enable the University to expand its marine research, and, thereby, strategically strengthen Israel as a whole..” said University President Amos Shapira. The donation was widely reported in the Israeli and Jewish press, including [Globes](#) and the [Jewish Press](#).



2

It has been a busy time for Prof. Brenda Shaffer of the School of Political Sciences. She spoke at a German Marshall Fund [briefing for the European Parliament working group on the Middle East](#), together with Dr Riyadh Hodali, head of the Palestinian Solar Energy Society, on the potential for Israeli-Palestinian cooperation around the newly found gas reserves. The following day she gave a lecture at the Israeli Energy Agency (IEA), together with IEA Chief Economist, Fatih Birol, on the political and economic implications of the export of natural gas from the eastern Caspian Sea and Mediterranean Sea areas to the center of the European continent.



3

Prof. Aaron Avivi from the Institute of Evolution has taken part in a series of lectures in Britain and the US, under the framework of visits organized by the Friends of the University in both countries. Prof. Avivi reported on his breakthrough research into the power of blind mole rats to secrete a substance which gives them immunity from cancer. The research has been widely reported in the British press, including [The Daily Express](#) and the [Daily Mail](#)



4

Erasmus +, the new European Union program for Education, Training, Youth and Sport 2014-20, was officially launched and the first calls for proposals published. The program unifies, and replaces, seven existing EU programs in the field of education, training and youth. It stresses, amongst other things, the promotion of international cooperation activities. Details of the program, and how proposals can be submitted, can be found on the [Erasmus + website](#).



5

Warm congratulations to Prof. Jorge Dubcovsky, from UC Davis, who is scientifically collaborating with the laboratory of Prof. Tzion Fahima head of the Institute of Evolution, and has just won the 2014 Wolf Fund Prize in Agriculture. The prize was given to Prof. Dubcovsky for his discovery of the high-grain protein content gene. This work is of major international importance due to global deficiency in zinc and lack of protein in foods for infant nutrition. The discovery was made by the joint laboratory of Prof. Fahima and Prof. Dubcovsky, on which a patent is jointly owned by both Universities.



6

New University research reveals that 'Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)' can affect stock market prices. Shares issued in the fall and winter, when days are shorter and there are less hours of daylight, rose less following their issue than shares issued in spring or summer. "We are already aware that mood affects much of our behavior. Now, we have found that mood also has a significant impact on actions taken in the economic arena", commented Prof. Doron Kliger, head of the Department of Economics, who conducted the research together with Dr. Gregory Gurevitz and Prof. Avraham Haim, head of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management. The research was reported on the Nrg website and the Globes business newspaper, while Prof. Kliger was interviewed on Israeli Radio



7

Is it possible to create a world out of nothing? What existed before the big bang created the universe? The innovative theory of Dr. Maya Lincoln and Dr. Avi Wasser, from the Center for Study of Organizations and Human Resource Management, provides a comprehensive response to one of the most central and oldest questions in science. The theory 'Creatio ex Nihilo' published in the journal [Physics of the Dark Universe](#) constitutes the first ever breakthrough in the field of Physics based on the principles of information systems - the two researchers' field of expertise. It explains how the universe was created 'from nothing'. The research was reported on the *Nrg* Israeli website, amongst others.



8

The decoding of the oldest inscription, in Jerusalem, by Prof. Gershon Galil of the Department of Biblical Studies continues to generate media interest worldwide. The issue was further reported in [FOX](#), [Mail Online](#), [California Science & Technology News](#), [The Drink Business](#).



9

Prof. Arnon Soffer, incumbent of the *Chaiklin Chair of Geostrategy*, leads tours of Berlin every summer showing the geography of the Holocaust. He was interviewed on the subject on TV's *Channel 1* where he said that "Despite being a Sabra [Israeli born], ever since I can remember the Holocaust never leaves me. That was the case as a child and was true this morning," He also commented on Israel Radio that "You can see the Holocaust on a map. Only by looking at this can you understand the hopelessness of a Jewish mother to a small child, who was surrounded by the Nazi empire from the Oceans to the Urals."



10

The opinion of University Chairman of the Board of Governors, Prof. Alfred Tauber was quoted in an open letter written by an alumnus of New York University to the NYU President. The letter, which has aroused considerable media interest, expressed the author's disappointment at the NYU President's lukewarm condemnation of the Israel university boycott. Prof. Tauber has corresponded with the alumnus, who has been a journalist for more than 30 years, saying "The intervention of academics in political issues undermines the foundation of academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas." The letter was published internationally in [Forbes](#), [FreeNewsPos](#) and Forbes Israel.



11

[TIME magazine](#) has published an article on threats posed to the State of Israel and their effect on the peace process with the Palestinians. It quotes Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor, of the National Security Studies Center, "I think the historic moment is here in a sense...As the commonality of interests between Israel and the Gulf States and Egypt grows greater, it might be worth taking steps on the Palestinian front that otherwise wouldn't be justified, in order to cultivate and cement relationships that are crucial to Israeli national security. I think this is what John Kerry is pushing."



12

"The Kibbutzim that remained socialist tended to be the wealthiest", said Prof. Michal Palgi, head of the Institute for the Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, in an article on the success of the 'Plasson' factory – which has floated shares on the London Stock Exchange - from Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael. Prof. Palgi describes how combining capitalism and communal life maintains the collectivist character of the kibbutz while integrating into the global economy so that it continues to exist. "Today there are about 270 kibbutzim in Israel, of which about a fifth remain collective communes" says Prof. Palgi, "The kibbutzim that found themselves in dire economic situations...had to say goodbye to their egalitarian system." The issue was reported internationally, including the [Washington Post](#), [The Oakland Pres NEWS](#) and [Bloomberg](#).



13

How has Jewish thought influenced the development of science? This was the question posed recently by the Jewish American publication, [Moment Magazine](#). Among those consulted was Dr. Jonathan Ben-Dov from the Department of Biblical Studies, who responded that "Between the time of cuneiform science in the first millennium BCE and Roman Egypt, there are several hundred years of a 'black hole'. Jewish writers filled this black hole with very interesting astronomical material we know from the Dead Sea Scrolls."



14

The *Haaretz* newspaper recently quoted Prof. Zvi Eisikovits from the School of Social Work, in an article on the latest issue of the Hebrew Journal of Society and Welfare, devoted to the subject of domestic violence. Prof. Eisikovits mourns the fact that Israel has not established a movement against domestic violence similar to that in the USA, and is highly critical of the Ministry of Social Affairs and social workers.



15

Prof. David Bukay from the School of Political Science has published an article in the [Jerusalem Post](#) where he claims that it is up to us to use all resources possible to stabilize the Assad regime. "The alternative to military regimes are the Islamic regimes, with the forefront of the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaida affiliated groups... Executing Saddam Hussein, killing Muamar Gaddafi; and ousting Hosni Mubarak....[would be] a grave mistake...Again, not because they [are] liberal, democratic or compassionate .. but because the alternative is much worse in every way."



16

"Saddam explained to the Arab armies that 'when we will all gather around Israel, and will be at a stage where we can simply win a war against them, the Israelis will give us an ultimatum – go home or we will bomb the heart of your capitals, and the first will be Bagdad'" cited Prof. Amazia Baram, head of the Center of Iraq Studies, in his comments for Israel's *Channel 2*, which dealt with Saddam Hussein's recordings which have been recently made public.

