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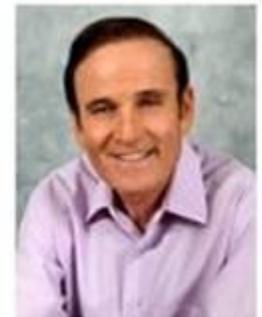
1

The University of Haifa awarded 44 scholarships in memory of the victims of the Mount Carmel Forest fire disaster of December 2010. The scholarships have been made possible thanks to a generous donation from Chairman of the University's Board of Governors, Leon H. Charney. For further reading see: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6308>.



2

University of Haifa President Amos Shapira sent out his holiday greetings and best wishes to the Christian University community. "It seems as though this [Christmas] holiday emphasizes, more than any other, the uniqueness of our University, expressed in the mosaic of relations common to members of all ethnic groups and religions," he wrote.

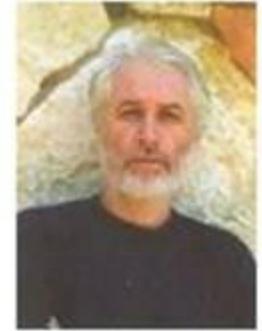


3

The torch burns ever so brightly, even in the strong winds: The navy's traditional Race of the Torch began this year as usual at the University of Haifa, in what represents the tight connection between the Navy and the University which trains, among others, the cadets of the sailors' course for their bachelor's degrees. In a tradition which began last year, the race was dedicated to Deputy Commander Itzik Melina of blessed memory who was killed in the Mount Carmel Forest fire disaster.

**4**

Congratulations go out to Prof. Philip Rantzer, Head of the Department of Fine Arts, for winning the Plastic Arts Prize for 2012 from the Minister of Culture. Among the reasons put forward for his win was the following: "The work of [Prof. Rantzer] conveys something witty and of renewal and it deals with the fine connection between cautious local current events as superimposed upon outer influences, painted in shades dipped in memory and longing, perhaps autobiographical, perhaps collective."

**5**

Dr. Brenda Shaffer, a senior lecturer at the University of Haifa's School of Political Sciences, and a world renowned expert in global energy politics, presented testimony before the U.S. Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs Oversight Hearing on "Iranian Influence in the South Caucasus and the Surrounding Region." Dr. Shaffer is currently a visiting scholar at the Georgetown University Center for Eurasian, Russian and Eastern European studies. [Listen to Dr. Shaffer's testimony.](#)

**6**

Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli of the Graduate School of Management and Director of the *Sagy Center for Internet Research* was a guest of the Mexican Friends Association of the University of Haifa, where he arrived with Mr. Michael Messinger, Executive Director of International Resource Development in the University's Division of External Relations and Resource Development. The event, which was held at the residence of the Israeli Ambassador to Mexico, included guests who came from the top tier of the local Israeli community to hear Prof. Rafaeli speak about the Internet and the business world. Prof. Rafaeli even gave a speech to the staff of the Mexican Jewish educational system regarding the use of the Internet in the educational system – they were so impressed that talks of cooperation have begun between them and the *Sagy Center*.

**7**

A delegation of diplomats and researchers from Nepal, headed by the Nepalese Minister of Education, came for a visit at the University's Center for the Study of Child Development headed by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz. The guests heard about the breakthrough research and methods at the Center, as well as the new Master's Program in Child Development – in English – and were quite impressed with the University's academic excellence. Ms. Mazal Renford, University of Haifa alumna and Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' *Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center*, helped get this delegation to the University, the first fruit of the establishment of the University's Friends & Alumni Association.

**8**

The Deputy Minister of Science of the Sichuan province of China led a delegation of government officials and academics to the University's Institute of Evolution headed by Prof. Abraham Korol, where they heard about the Institute's latest developments and research breakthroughs. This visit confirmed what most of us have already known for a long time now – the world is a small place: The Deputy Minister is a close friend of a pair of students who completed their PhDs several years ago at Prof. Tzion Fahima's laboratory, so the former naturally received from them glowing recommendations regarding both the Institute and the University.



9

The former IDF Chief of Staff and University alumnus, Gabi Ashkenazi, who serves today as Chairman of the Rashi Foundation as well as Chairman of Shemen Oil and Gas Explorations Ltd., was a guest of President Amos Shapira and Vice President of External Relations and Resource Development Amos Gaver. Ashkenazi discussed possible cooperative ventures in the areas of health and welfare, education, and The Israel Center for Mediterranean Research.

**10**

Diplomatic mission: A delegation of students from the University's Model UN Society returned from an international competition in Bonn, Germany, with two wins in the "Best Delegate" category. The students thanked the President of the German Friends of the University of Haifa, Mrs. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel, who played a big part in the delegation's successful venture.

**11**

The annual conference entitled "Academic-Community Partnership: The Struggle Against Social Exclusion" was held at the University of Haifa under the initiative and organization of the University of Haifa's Partnership in the Struggle Against Exclusion and the Advancement of Social Solidarity (flagship project), with the assistance of the University of Haifa's Office of the Rector and the Academic-Community Partnership of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The conference connected between leading researchers in the field of social services, students and social activists in an effort to present modes of thinking and community ventures that struggle against the social exclusion of various populations, to strengthen the active members, and to encourage new ventures.

**12**

Hecht Auditorium filled with researchers and professionals in the area of nutrition on the topic of "Childhood Obesity – Research and Ethical Dilemmas," organized by Dr. Ronit Endevelt from the University's School of Public Health, with the cooperation of the Atid Association (for the promotion of proper nutrition and dieticians in Israel), the Ministry of Health and the Kupot Cholim [Israel's Sick Fund]. During the course of the conference, new information regarding the connection between stress and gaining weight was introduced, as well as the stigma held by both patients and the public at large regarding obesity in general and in children in particular, parental influence on the treatment and prevention of obesity in children, and the financial mechanism that can encourage the Kupot Cholim to treat overweight people. "We, as a School of Public Health which has the means of advancing health and nutritional behavior, community, epidemiology, medical management and administration and occupational therapy, view this conference as a means of presenting our professional outlook, and the promotion of the health of the participants is a part of this," said Dr. Endevelt.



13

Infants who have started crawling wake up more often at night compared to the period before the crawling, reveals a new study by Dr. Dina Cohen of the University of Haifa's Department of Counseling and Human Development. For further reading see: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6311>.

**14**

Political satire programs in Israel are significant in helping viewers formulate political viewpoints, according to a study conducted by Profs. Gabriel Weimann and Yariv Tsfati of the Department of Communication and colleagues from additional universities. The study was published in several places and Prof. Weimann interviewed for the FM103 radio show and on *Radio North*.

**15**

Of Israeli high school pupils 94% access social media via their cell phones during class, reveals a new study conducted by the University of Haifa. Only 4% reported not using their cell phones at all during class. It was also found that in classes with more permissive teachers, cell phone use was lower than in classes where the teacher imposed strict discipline. "The students use their mobile phones in various ways - to surf the Internet and access social media, to listen to music, take photos, play games, and send text messages and photos," the researchers point out. "Based on our findings, there is almost no moment during any class when some pupil isn't using their cell phone." For further reading see: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6319>.

**16**

"If I were asked to stand up today in front of the Cabinet and evaluate the likelihood of war in the year 2013, I would say that it is unlikely that anyone would start a war with us," said former Army Intelligence Head (reserves) General Amos Yadlin in a seminar at the University's National Security Studies Center. The beginning of the event consisted of the annual ceremony for granting a scholarship to an outstanding student in memory of Nir Regev Z"L, a student in the School of Political Sciences and the Department of Economics who was murdered in the suicide bombing in Haifa's *Maxim* restaurant. The scholarship is granted each year to an excellent student who was also a soldier and is active in the army reserves from one of the departments in which Nir Regev Z"L studied – this year it went to Alon Sasson. "We are proud to share with you the values of giving alongside academic excellence," said President Amos Shapira to members of the Regev family who bestowed the scholarship. The words of (res.) General Amos Yadlin were published in the local media.



17

Banquets and fancy dinners held for political purposes are not a new invention: Dr. Assaf Yasur-Landau from the *Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences'* Department of Maritime Civilizations has led excavations in Tel Kabri which demonstrate that the Canaanite rulers of the settlement, established approximately 3850 years ago, during the Middle Bronze Age, held grand feasts in an effort to strengthen their political power in the region. The findings were published in *Ha'aretz*.



18

57% of the Arab public support the inclusion of Arab parties in the government coalition, according to a survey introduced at a conference dealing with voting patterns of Israeli-Arabs held by the University's School of Political Sciences. Dr. Asad Ghanem of the School, and one of the conference organizers, said that in light of the data, "the figures show that the Arab public is disappointed in the current political situation, including deep disappointment at the level of political activity in its midst. Likewise, the figures show a deep concern for the internal social and economic situation from within Arab society and about the low level of interest in the general struggle between Israel and the Palestinian National Movement." The findings were published in *Ha'aretz*.



19

Israel is ranked in the 39th place from among the OECD countries regarding the index of corruption. In an article to *The Marker* on the topic, Dr. Doron Navot of the School of Political Sciences was quoted as saying: "The ranking doesn't highlight the darker corners of the Israeli political system and it therefore spares us. The nature of the survey creates a much nicer image than what is true in reality. There are many very dark places in the public sector that are not emphasized in the survey, for example, the problem of corruption at the local level."



20

"Intelligence tests have nothing to do with learning disabilities," claims Prof. Michal Shany of the University's Department of Learning Disabilities in a *Ha'aretz* article. "It is good that the necessity of using them has been removed since they are not meant to diagnose learning disabilities in reading, writing, and mathematics. Furthermore, Israel is still lacking in valid tests to diagnose these learning disabilities."



21

How much is health an issue in Israeli party politics? Probably not much. The Parliamentary health index edited by Dr. Meir Pugatch from the University's School of Public Health found that most of the parties neglected this area.



22

In a *The Marker* article about employees who are not interested in retiring despite their reaching the legal age of retirement, the Head of the University's Department of Gerontology, Dr. Israel Doron, emphasizes that following a decade where many failed attempts were made to contest the Retirement Age Law in this country, the courts have agreed for the first time with the claim that this law harms individuals' legal rights.



23

Prof. Shulamit Almog from the University's Faculty of Law was recently interviewed in *Ha'aretz* about various topics related to her research interests and social activism. Regarding the publication of her new book "*Law and Film*" she said, "Every issue, no matter how important or trivial, is quickly brought forth before the Supreme Court so that it may intervene and decide in the matter; and still, when we look at Israeli culture, there just aren't many films that deal with law."

**24**

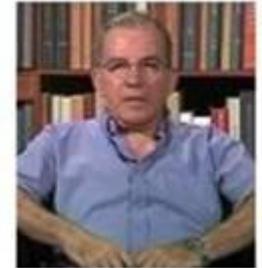
4,000 blind mole rats were investigated over a period of 40 years at the University's Institute of Evolution; not a single one developed cancerous cells according to the Institute's Prof. Aaron Avivi. Prof. Avivi gave an interview to "*The Economist*" in light of his additional research into this fascinating creature.

**25**

Prof. Yoav Lavee of the University's School of Social Work interviewed for a *Ha'aretz* article on the dramatic rise in the number of children from single-parent homes: "The trend is probably a result of an increase in the number of women who choose to have children out of wedlock, by sperm donors for example, and also in homosexual families in which the partners cannot legally marry each other in Israel and therefore are listed as single [in surveys]."

**26**

Dr. Avinoam Idan of the University's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management spoke recently at the Sderot Conference about the claim that the export of gas brings with it economic prosperity: "The UN's Human Development Report demonstrates that the largest exporters of oil and gas are not ranked very high. That is, the myth that prosperity is dependent upon the export of gas is erroneous."

**27**

"Despite the fact that journalists believe they know the political system very well from the outside, they require a cooling off period in order to learn its secrets from the inside," said Dr. Uzi Elyada from the University's Department of Communication at the Israel Press Council's conference, published in *Walla*.

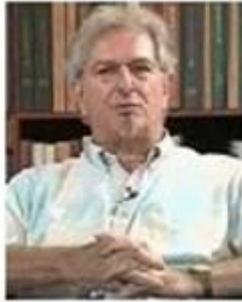
**28**

In a *The Marker* article about media commentary and forecasts regarding the upcoming elections, Prof. Gabriel Weimann of the Department of Communication says that the problem is not just in the empty utterances, but also due to the fact that none of the commentators are required to account for faulty assessments. "Journalism is the most transparent profession in the world, and the commentators are supposed to treat what they report as most sacred, but the culture of calling for accountability simply does not exist [in Israel]," he said.



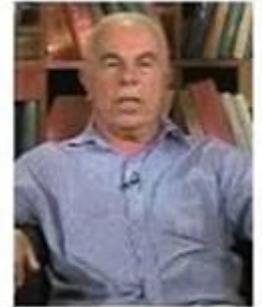
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Prof. Eli Somer of the University's School of Social Work gave an interview for *Galey Tzahal* radio about the phenomenon of dissociation. "It's a mechanism that we all have. All of us at times go into states of daydreaming, staring and disconnection; children and others who undergo extremely traumatic experiences sometimes activate defense mechanisms that compartmentalize the traumatic memories, file them away, send them to a different place outside of consciousness in order to allow that person to bear the experience and later the memory of it," he said.



30

Prof. Kais Firro of the University's Department of Middle Eastern History interviewed for *Reshet Bet* radio regarding what was said by Syrian President Assad about his being interested in the success of any maneuver that would serve the interests of the Syrian people: "I interpret these words in the same manner in which I believe the Syrian Minister of Communication and Technology did yesterday. He said that no one can force [the Syrians] from higher up to do their bidding. That is, he [Assad] doesn't want to commit to any Russian or U.S. plan that will bring him to his downfall."



31

Does crony capitalism exist in Israel or not? Prof. Emanuel Gross of the Faculty of Law and Dr. Doron Navot of the School of Political Sciences, both members of the commission on crony capitalism established in 2010 by the former State Comptroller, present their views in a *The Marker* article. "Israel is ruled by an economic oligarchy," said Prof. Gross, while Dr. Navot presented a similar viewpoint: "It is clear that Israel has a problem of crony capitalism and that the wealthy have an exaggerated influence over the government."



32

Beware of mushrooms! A 58 year-old man who picked a poisonous mushroom which looked like an edible mushroom has been admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The mushroom was sent to Prof. Solomon P. Wasser of the University's Department of Evolutionary and Environmental Biology who determined that it was, in fact, poisonous. "There is a pattern of a kind of yellow scarf near the root of the poisonous mushroom. Sometimes the people who pick it don't pay attention, or they don't pick it by the root. Its ingestion could cause death," he said in an *"Israel Today"* article.

