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1

Some 17,700 students, over half of whom are enrolled for advanced studies, began the new academic year on Sunday, October 21, 2012 at the University of Haifa, about 300 students more than the previous year. The University recruited close to 50 new researchers over the summer, most of them scientists returning from abroad - bringing the number of researchers at the University to about 600, an all-time record for our University. "As every leading research university does, the University of Haifa has always considered excellent academic research and teaching its primary goal," University President Amos Shapira said as he met with students and faculty around the campus. On the day the academic year began, Shapira interviewed for *Galey Tzahal* and a special program dedicated to the beginning of the academic year in *Reshet Bet*. He did not forget to invite all his interviewers for a visit to our beautiful campus.



2

President Shapira also had a very emotional encounter with Prof. Emeritus Arie Melnik who was his lecturer at the University 30 years ago when President Shapira was an undergraduate student at the Department of Economics. Shapira was also Prof. Melnik's teaching assistant. "That was a remarkable generation; after studying, these students would enter the most senior positions, not only in the business sector but also in education and security. But Amos was my best student," said Melnik. "That's obvious - I chose him to be my teaching assistant."



**3**

The American Society of the University of Haifa (ASUH) held a farewell reception, hosted by Chairman of the Board of Governors, Leon H. Charney, and Tzili Charney, for Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, who stepped down as President of the University of Haifa after eight years at its helm. In his remarks, Prof. Ben-Ze'ev said, "Leon Charney helped us to fulfill a great dream - the *Leon Charney School of Marine Sciences*. We owe it to Leon that the University won the government bid to oversee a national consortium in which all Israeli universities will be participating." "I am proud to have partnered with Aaron over the last eight years to build one of the best universities in Israel," said Leon Charney. "The Marine Sciences School that we built is structured in such a way that the best marine scientists in the world are coming to Israel to participate in our program." For further reading: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6070>.

**4**

Chess Grand Master Boris Gelfand, first runner up in the Chess 2012 World Championship, was the guest of Vice President for External Relations and Resource Development Amos Gaver on a recent visit to the University of Haifa. While on campus, Mr. Gaver and Vice President and Dean of Research, Prof. Michal Yerushalmy, presented Mr. Gelfand with the University's initiative for a chess research project. It turns out that the game of chess, regarded as a highly intellectual game, has hardly been academically researched and the proposed research project would investigate the qualities of an excellent chess player and how learning the game of chess affects children. The project would also establish an international program to train chess teachers and trainers. The following faculty members will collaborate on this project: Prof. Roza Leikin from the Department of Mathematics Education, and Prof. Martin Golumbic and Mr. Shay Bushinsky from the Department of Computer Science. Mr. Gelfand said that "it is a great honor that the University of Haifa decided to develop this research project and curriculum to study the game of chess and has asked me to join it."

**5**

"The University of Haifa is proud to take part in this important campaign aimed at promoting awareness of breast cancer," said President of the University Amos Shapira just as the University's Eshkol Tower was lit up in pink for the night of 16-17 October, 2012, as part of a campaign to promote breast cancer awareness. For further reading: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6040>.

**6**

Hundreds of lawyers, justices, researchers and lawmakers convened for the traditional University of Haifa Faculty of Law conference titled "This Year in Law". This conference was organized by Prof. Amnon Reichman and it reviews all the legal trends of the past year and shines a light on the expected trends of the coming year. Keeping with tradition, the keynote lecture was delivered by a Supreme Court Justice. This year it was Supreme Court Justice Noam Solberg. His lecture was widely publicized by *The Marker*, *Globes* and more.



**7**

Prof. Nitza Ben-Dov and Prof. A.B. Yehoshua from the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature and Dr. Michal Daliot from the Department of Asian Studies participated in a conference held at Doshisha University in Kyoto Japan. The conference was held in commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and Japan. Prof. Ben-Dov's lecture was titled "The Hebrew Culture: A World of Words and Travels." Prof. Yehoshua spoke about the author-critic relationship in Israel and Dr. Daliot spoke about the translation of Japanese literature into Hebrew.

**8**

The 36<sup>th</sup> session of the International School began with a festive ceremony and greetings from Prof. Hanan Alexander, Dean of Students and Head of the International School. This session includes students from the US, Germany, China, Poland, India and more. The students at the International School were joined by over 80 students who began studying at the various international programs offered by the University such as the Master's Program in Peace and Conflict Management, the Master's Program in Holocaust Studies, the Master's Program in Art Therapy and the Master's Program in Maritime Civilizations.

**9**

More than 500 Israeli youths logged out of Facebook and joined the largest community archaeological dig that took place at Tel Esur and recently completed its third season, headed by the University of Haifa. "For our first season, three years ago, youths living within a few kilometers of the site barely knew of its existence. It's very fulfilling to see how they are already familiar with the location and are full of anticipation to join the excavations," said Dr. Shay Bar of the University of Haifa who is directing the excavations. This year too, Dr. Bar does not hesitate to credit the young participants with some fascinating discoveries: female figurines from the Late Bronze Age (1400 B.C.E.), a scarab dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., an early kitchen and storage rooms. For further reading: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6037>.

**10**

President Obama's middle name, Hussein, makes Israelis - both Jewish and Arab - perceive him as less pro-Israeli, reveals a new study conducted by the University of Haifa and the University of Texas. The study has just been published in the journal *Political Behavior*. "Even though the Israeli public has extensive information about the American President and his positions, their opinions can still be swayed by cultural cues, such as a name that in this case is perceived as Arabic," says Dr. Israel Waismel-Manor of the University of Haifa who co-authored the study. For further reading: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6014>.

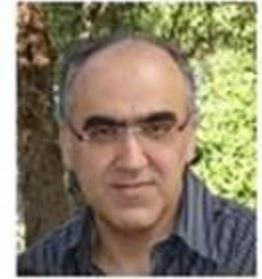


**11**

A link has been discovered between Alzheimer's disease and the activity level of a protein called eIF2alpha. This has been reported in a new study conducted at the University of Haifa's *Sagol Department of Neurobiology*, recently published in the journal *Neurobiology of Aging*. According to Prof. Kobi Rosenblum, Head of the Department, altering the performance of this protein via drug therapy could constitute a treatment for Alzheimer's, which is thought to be incurable. For further reading: <http://newmedia-eng.haifa.ac.il/?p=6042>.

**12**

The tension between the West and Iran continues to send media from all around the world to Dr. Soli Shahvar, Head of the *Ezri Center for Iran & Gulf Studies* from the Department of Middle Eastern History. Over the past few weeks, he has been interviewed by the French journal *L'Express*, the Australian *ABC network*, *BBC Persian Television*, as well as "It's All Talk" on *Reshet Bet* radio where he said that in his opinion, the probability that Iran would launch a limited missile strike against Israel is very low indeed, but that in light of hesitation on the part of the US to place strict restrictions on Iran, it is nevertheless still a possibility for which we must prepare.

**13**

Right before the High Holy Days, we reported about an international conference at the University of Haifa, the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Zoology, organized by Prof. Abraham Haim. There was complete agreement among all the researchers on the panel chaired by Prof. Haim on the topic of artificial light: night-time artificial lighting is a health hazard. The international community [published](#) many articles on the subject.

**14**

In a *The Marker* article about modern libraries, where one no longer has to keep quiet, the University's own *Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library* was mentioned. The Library Director, Ms. Pnina Erez, explains that "one of the goals was to give the library back its original characteristic as a multi-disciplinary meeting place."

**15**

There is a correlation between high temperatures and the development of heart defects in fetuses – this was the discovery of Ms. Keren Agay-Shay, a graduate student at the University's School of Public Health, who carried out the research with the cooperation and assistance of researchers from other universities, and with funding from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Environment and Health Fund. "One of the conclusions arising from the study is that global warming may also lead to an increase in the number of heart defects in babies," she said in interviews for *Yedioth Aharonot* and *YNET*.

**16**

Dr. Yaron Vansover of the Department of Learning, Curriculum and Teacher Education is convinced that classroom teachers should go back to telling stories like they once did, around a campfire. "Most of the attention is focused on issues concerning the curriculum – what should be taught and what to ask on the high school proficiency (bagrut) examinations. But there is absolutely no public debate about whether or not the existing teaching methods encourage interest among the students," he said in an *Ha'aretz* interview.



**17**

A new article in *The Marker* finds a sharp rise in the number of older workers in Israel, despite a decrease in their numbers in the other OECD nations. The Head of the Department of Gerontology, Dr. Israel Doron, tries to explain: "The ethos that determines that work is our life, and the Zionism that sanctified work at any age, makes retirement a difficult and complex process [in Israel]. While it is legitimate for people in countries such as Spain and Greece to retire and catch some rays at 50, the situation here in Israel, one of the countries with the longest life spans in the world, is such that we suffer from workaholicism which is not age-dependent." Dr. Doron also expanded on the topic in an opinion piece for the paper where he claimed that we must free ourselves from myths: older workers do not really take jobs away from the younger employees.

**18**

Prof. Kais Firro of the Department of Middle Eastern History interviewed for the *Channel 10* program "London and Kirschenbaum" about the London protests over the assassination of a senior Lebanese intelligence agent, apparently by Syria. "The political polarization in Lebanon has reached an all time high... and I think this will lead to civil war... If the Lebanese elite are not able to reach a compromise, I believe the situation is perilous," he said.

**19**

Prof. Emeritus Sam Rakover of the Department of Psychology interviewed for the *Reshet Bet* radio show "Six" about a new research study which finds that our most creative ideas come to us when we daydream.

**20**

A recent *Yedioth Aharonot* article cites the growing suicide rate in the West among people suffering from depression, and how this phenomenon leads the physicians to unconventional solutions, such as pills based on hallucinogenic drugs. The article also mentions the research of Prof. Yoram Yovel, Co-Director of the Institute for the Study of Affective Neuroscience, who is attempting to use synthetic opium (buprenorphine) as a treatment for suicidal depression.

