

# IMPACT



AMERICAN ASSOCIATES  
Ben-Gurion University  
*of the Negev*

FALL 2012

## SAFEGUARDING ISRAEL

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**AUTHOR-TEACHER  
ETGAR KERET**

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**NEW LEADS IN THE BATTLE  
AGAINST BRAIN DISEASES**

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**WHY WE BLAME OTHERS**

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**WHEN STUDENTS  
BECOME THE TEACHERS**

# SAFEGUARDING AND SECURING ISRAEL

BY LLOYD GOLDMAN  
AABGU PRESIDENT



It's my pleasure as AABGU's new president to roll-out our fall issue of *Impact*, which continues to showcase Ben-Gurion University's innovations and cutting-edge research. We can all take pride in how quickly BGU has rocketed to world-class status as an institution of research and learning. But BGU is most definitely an *Israeli* university first.

Many of its sophisticated research programs are drawn upon to support the nation's foremost needs, be it in medicine, desert agriculture or safeguarding its citizens. In this issue, you will learn how leading scientists are working under the umbrella of the Homeland Security Institute to keep Israel and its allies safe.

Different kinds of breakthroughs in medical-scientific research also promise to resonate widely. As the world population ages, the specter of neurodegenerative disease—Alzheimer's, ALS, Parkinson's—haunts our lives and threatens to overwhelm our medical systems. Are cures possible? Or even prevention? Read about some inspiring progress at BGU.

Also of interest: research by business faculty member Dr. Rachel Barkan, whose work on why we humans tend to blame others for our own faults is attracting notice. And if the writing of Etgar Keret is new to you, we're happy to help you discover him in these pages. Keret is a world-renowned author and filmmaker who teaches at BGU and has been called a cross between Woody Allen and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Does that entice you to read his short story, which begins here?

And finally, this issue informs us about Project Kidma, BGU's basic education program for adult immigrants and community members who have never had the chance to learn. You'll be proud to learn about our student teachers, and happy to know that they are specifically preparing to be tomorrow's leaders.

I hope you enjoy the issue and look forward to reading your comments at [Impact@aabgu.org](mailto:Impact@aabgu.org).

## IN THIS ISSUE

News Briefs .....	3
Donor Impact.....	9
The Obermeyers: Feeling the Energy at BGU	
Murray H. Shusterman: A Century of Support for Israel	
Education and Research.....	11
Safeguarding Israel and Its Allies	
Etgar Keret: An Interview with the Author-Teacher	
The Challenge of Neurodegenerative Diseases	
Why the Pot Calls the Kettle Black	
Community Outreach: Project Kidma .....	21
Regional News .....	23

**ON THE COVER:** Author and BGU lecturer Etgar Keret has taken Israel and the world by storm. Read an interview with him on page 14.

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# THE 42ND ANNUAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING PLUG INTO YOUR PASSIONS AT BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

**FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS** from around the world converged on Beer-Sheva this past May to participate in BGU's 42nd Board of Governors Meeting.

The University's annual open house features three days of exclusive briefings, guest speakers, presentations by faculty and students, panel discussions, an honorary doctorate conferment ceremony, receptions, food, and friends.

The theme this year was "Feel the Energy," celebrating the University's role as a leader in alternative energy research, including renewable liquid fuels, solar, fuel cells, energy efficiency, and energy economics.

"Feel the Energy" is also a nod to the energetic spirit of innovation that can be felt at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev year-round.

Whether it's learning about a new area of research; getting to know BGU's faculty, researchers and students; or reconnecting with your "home away from home" in Israel, the Board of Governors Meeting is a great time to plug into your passions and discover how you can best make a difference at BGU.

"Get involved in a project that you personally enjoy. Do it selfishly. It will be good for you and the University," said outgoing Board of Governors Chairman Roy J. Zuckerberg, presiding over his last opening plenary session of his eight-year tenure.

## A PASSION FOR HELPING OTHERS

Toby Mower, from Baltimore, Maryland, is a retired registered nurse with a master's degree in clinical psychology. A longtime substance abuse treatment advocate, Toby saw the need for addiction treatment



Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky at the opening plenary session delivering the keynote address about strengthening the connection between Israel and the Diaspora

research when discussing the problem of addiction in Israel with students in BGU's Community Action Unit. And a new project was launched.

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**"Get involved in a project  
that you personally enjoy.  
Do it selfishly. It will be good  
for you and the University."**

— ROY J. ZUCKERBERG

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She was thrilled to be present for the inauguration of the Toby Mower Presidential Development Chairs in Addiction Prevention and Treatment. The chair incumbents will develop

the first curriculum for the prevention and treatment of addiction at an Israeli university.

## A PASSION FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

When members of the AABGU community learned that there was only one MRI machine serving the entire south of Israel, they took action. The result of their generosity came to fruition with the dedication of a new T3 MRI for BGU's Brain Imaging Research Center at Soroka University Medical Center.

Rena and Martin Blackman representing the Skirball Foundation of New York, and Sandra and Steven Finkelman and Ellen Marcus from AABGU's Greater Texas Region, attended the dedication.

**FEEL THE ENERGY OF BGU'S STUDENTS**

“You are the fuel to the infinite initiatives that our students’ dreams bring to life,” said Shir Mnuchin, international relations coordinator



of the Student Association, welcoming the delegates on behalf of BGU's some 20,000 students. “Through the students, you’ll feel the energy of the Negev.”

Following a rare rainstorm, the annual student evening was moved indoors to the Zlotowski Student Center, where students gather on campus for a range of social and cultural activities.

Mixing, mingling and Israeli dancing with students in their “natural habitat,” it’s easy to see why BGU was once again named the number one place to study by Israeli undergraduate students.

The evening’s theme was “BGU Around the World,” and the program kicked off with a surprise “flashmob” dance by students in costumes representing different countries and cultures.

A live auction gave BGU’s friends from around the world the opportunity to plug into their passions by supporting a range of student-run initiatives.

Auction items included subsidizing students’ Holocaust remembrance trips to Poland; funding information booklets for freshmen; helping bring cultural figures to campus; supporting BGU’s annual Student Day and Purim Carnival, and more.



**BACK TO SCHOOL AT BGU**

The Board of Governors meeting is a time to experience BGU’s academic excellence. This year’s “course load” featured fascinating lectures and panel discussions, including:

- A “Look into the Brain” panel that focused on how the brain processes vision. A number of BGU students and faculty presented their latest neuroscience research.
- A panel discussion about the Arab Spring, in which Middle East experts shared their perspectives on how this period of social upheaval impacts Israel’s relationship with Egypt, the Palestinians and Iran.
- World renowned historian and honorary doctorate recipient, Prof. Deborah Lipstadt, gave a lecture on how the Eichmann trial changed

the way personal testimony about the Holocaust was received by Israeli society and the world.

- Honorary doctorate recipient Dr. Debrework Zewdie, a world leader in the field of public health, spoke about the need for global solidarity in the fight against AIDS.
- The “Negev is Now” panel delved into the challenges and opportunities facing this region of Israel that is still considered part of Israel’s periphery. The discussion—at times heated—was conducted in Hebrew with simultaneous translation into English. It included heads of Negev municipalities, an IDF major general, and former BGU President and Member of Knesset Avishay Braverman.

## GETTING OUT INTO THE NEGEV

On the last day, the delegates took a *tiyul* (Hebrew for field trip) to BGU's Sede Boqer campus. Sede Boqer is home to the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert



Research and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism. It has a special energy all its own.

Here the group got a chance to visit two different research sites, including a water desalination plant where new methods are being developed to combat water scarcity, and a micro-algae production site for use in creating biofuel.

*Continued on page 8*

1. New Board of Governors Chairman Alexander M. Goren with outgoing Chairman Roy J. Zuckerberg

2. Dedicating the Roberta and Ernest Scheller, Jr. Family Foundation Entrance Plaza in the Diane and Guilford Glazer Building for the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management

3. Surprise flashmob dance at the "BGU Around the World" Student Evening

4. BGU researchers and students with the new MRI machine, made possible by the Skirball Foundation, Jacob Shochat, an anonymous supporter, and AABGU's Greater Texas Region

5. Toni and Stuart Young attend the unveiling of their inscription on the 2012 Founders Wall

6. Inauguration of the Toby Mower Presidential Development Chairs in Addiction Prevention and Treatment (Left to Right): Mort Mower; Chair Incumbent Miriyam Farkash, R.N.; Toby Mower; and Chair Incumbent Dr. Orli Grinstein-Cohen R.N.

7. Learning about water desalination at the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research

## A LIGHT UNTO THE DARKER CORNERS

BY DORON KRAKOW  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

**THE GAMES** of the 30th Summer Olympiad are now behind us, and with them the opportunity to acknowledge and recognize the victims of the Munich Olympic massacre on the 40th anniversary of their murder at the hands of Palestinian terrorists. Forty years since lax security allowed the terrorists to scale the outer fence of the Olympic Village, unbelievably with the assistance of drunken American athletes. Forty years since the utter incompetence of the German security authorities resulted in a botched rescue attempt that ended in the deaths of the remaining nine Israeli captives. Two had already been murdered inside the Olympic Village.

For four decades, the International Olympic Committee has refused to acknowledge the murdered Israelis with a moment of silence at the Games' opening ceremonies. Its claim that it does not want to compromise the "purity of the Games" through the introduction of politics rings hollow. The terrorists were the ones who compromised the Games.

Remembering the victims and excoriating the perpetrators would serve as a constant reminder of the terrorists' heinous assault not only on the Israelis, but on the fundamental value of free and open athletic competition and on the Olympic spirit in connection with which the Games are purported to be held.

It would be a loud, clear statement that the assault on the Israelis was an assault on the entire Olympic community. It was an assault on the Games themselves.

Instead, the International Olympic Committee prefers to sweep the matter under the rug, hoping perhaps that it will be forgotten. The victims were Israelis—not athletes and coaches. They were "just" Jews, after all, not citizens of the world.

Shaul Ladany was a member of the

1972 Israeli Olympic Team. A survivor of Bergen-Belsen and a veteran of the Six-Day War, he became one of the world's greatest race-walkers.

It was a twist of fate that resulted in his escape from the apartment adjoining the two others in which the occupants became hostages. He went on to become a distinguished professor of industrial engineering at Ben-Gurion University. Prof. Ladany's autobiography, *King of the Road*, details his experiences in Munich and the efforts made since to honor the memories of his teammates and coaches.

A feature in this issue of *Impact* highlights BGU's extraordinary research in fields fundamental to homeland security, emergency response, intelligence, and counter-intelligence. It is no coincidence that Israel has become a leading international expert on such matters. Nor is it coincidence that the world looks to Israel for its wisdom and expertise in contending with terrorism and responding to the acts of extremists. Our University takes great pride in the part it plays in providing this particular "light unto the nations"—a light which shines into the world's darkest corners.

We salute the memories of the Israeli athletes brutally murdered by terrorists in Munich in 1972.

**David Berger, Ze'ev Friedman, Yossef Gutfreund, Eliezer Halfin, Yossef Romano, Amitzur Shapira, Kehat Shorr, Mark Slavin, Andre Spitzer, Yakov Springer, Moshe Weinberg**

May their memories be a blessing. **ידי זכרם ברוך.** I wish you and your family a *shanah tovah u'metukah*—a happy, healthy and sweet New Year. ■



# A TOUR OF ISRAELI ART AND ARCHITECTURE

IN MAY 2012, 25 people from around the U.S. traveled with AABGU to Israel on “Brushstrokes and Blueprints,” a five-night tour exploring Israel’s vibrant, dynamic and award-winning art and architecture scene.

Chaired by Joel Reinstein (FL), Sam and Connie Katz (PA) and Riki Dayan (CA), and organized in cooperation with BGU’s Department of the Arts, the tour offered behind-the-scenes, exclusive access to captivating architecture, artists and art, and offered a unique window into Israeli culture, history, politics, and society.

“I felt privileged to have met the array of artists who were ‘unique picks.’ They provided us with experiences we would never have had on our own,” Connie Katz shared.

The tour began with a talk by Benno Kalev, one of the most important collectors and curators of Israeli art. The next morning, the group took a trip to Bialik Street in Tel Aviv for private, curator-led tours of the former home of Israel’s national poet, Haim Nahman Bialik, and of Beit Hair, Tel Aviv’s first city hall where

Meir Dizengoff, the first mayor, presided.

Following a stop at the architecturally striking Peres Peace House in Jaffa, the tour visited the Israeli art exhibit in the new wing of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and talked with the architect. The day concluded with renowned painter and teacher Larry Abramson, offering a preview and discussion of his new work.

Fresh from a good night’s sleep, the group met the dynamic young artist

Khen Shish and then visited the new Design Museum in Holon. They also met celebrated sculptor Ofra Zimbalista in her studio and enormous gallery in Ashdod. It was then on to Jerusalem to talk with James Snyder, director of the Israel Museum, to learn about the museum’s full-scale renovation and tour the new and

1. On the balcony of Beit Hair, Tel Aviv’s first city hall—refurbished and reopened in 2009 in honor of Tel Aviv’s centennial—from which Meir Dizengoff, the city’s first mayor, delivered many addresses 2. At “Wine and Cheese,” the rooftop restaurant of the Notre Dame Center of Jerusalem. Stuart Young, Toni Young, Roberta Scheller, Ernie Scheller, Connie Katz, Sam Katz 3. Tour Co-Chair Riki Dayan of Los Altos Hills, CA 4. Meeting artist Khader Oshah in the Negev Bedouin town of Rahat 5. Painter Elie Shamir exhibiting a portrait of his father and himself in the Jezreel Valley

permanent exhibitions of Israeli art. Following a special tour with the architect of the just-rebuilt Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, the group heard a current events briefing from Member of Knesset Dr. Nachman Shai.

The fourth day began with a stop in Wadi Ara to meet woodworker Muhammad Said Kalash and innovative textile artist Buthina Abu-Milhem, complete with a delicious feast in Abu-Milhem's home. The tour continued to the magnificent Jezreel Valley and Moshav Kfar Yehoshua to meet painter Ellie Shamir and see his captivating portraits and landscapes. The group was hosted for Shabbat dinner at the stunning Caesarea home of businessman and BGU supporter Dov Tadmor.

The first stop on day five was a special sneak preview of Israel's first museum of architecture hosted by Amos Gitai, one of the best-known figures in Israeli cinema, who is also the son of one of Israel's most important Bauhaus architects. The group then enjoyed a private tour of the Haifa Museum of Art by its chief curator, Ruti Direktor, and an educational stroll through Haifa's German Colony established by the Templars in 1868.

The sixth and final day included an architectural tour of the BGU Marcus

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Family Campus in Beer-Sheva, a visit to the Open Museum in Omer, and a stop in the Bedouin village of Rahat to meet and have lunch with painter Khader Oshah and see his new works on the Arab Spring.

The tour was punctuated by scholarly talks and impromptu education by Prof. Haim Maor, distinguished artist and member of BGU's Department of the Arts, and by Dr. Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, Maor's colleague in the depart-

ment who specializes in architecture.

Connie Katz best summed up the trip: "Brushstrokes and Blueprints far exceeded my expectations, which were for something much more conventional. I came away feeling I've looked at Israel through different lenses." ■

**Stay tuned for information about the next AABGU tour in May 2014 to take place just prior to the BGU Board of Governors Meeting!**



"Brushstrokes and Blueprints" tour participants at the newly redesigned campus of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem

Photo: Oren Cohen

# LLOYD GOLDMAN BECOMES AABGU PRESIDENT

**NEW YORK REAL ESTATE** executive and philanthropist Lloyd Goldman began his two-year term as president of American Associates, Ben-Gurion



Lloyd and Victoria Goldman with Prof. Rivka Carmi (center)

University of the Negev (AABGU) on September 13, 2012. He succeeded Alex Goren, who was elected chair of BGU's Board of Governors in May.

Lloyd has served on AABGU's board for many years, and was previously first vice president. He has shared his leadership, wisdom and generosity with the AABGU/BGU community in countless ways. A member of the international board of governors of Ben-Gurion University

since 2006, this May he was appointed a vice chair.

"Ben-Gurion University is the foundation for research and development in the Negev, as well as the center of medicine and education," Lloyd shares. "I look forward to advancing these areas of development and in my new role on AABGU's board, to further promoting BGU's mission throughout the United States."

Individually and as a trustee of the Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation, Lloyd is active in the work of the international academic review committee for BGU's Joyce and Irving Goldman Medical School, named after his parents. The foundation's most recent contribution to AABGU was a \$2.5 million gift to establish a medical simulation center in BGU's Faculty of Health Sciences. The center will train future doctors, nurses and paramedics, using sophisticated technology and mannequins that simulate childbirth, bleeding, heart attacks, trauma, and a host of medical emergencies.

"Lloyd has played a central part

in both AABGU's and the University's growth and development," says Doron Krakow, executive vice president of AABGU. "He brings extraordinary insight, experience and acumen to bear as we embark on a new era of outreach and expansion.

"We are enormously proud of the partnership we have with the Goldman family. Lloyd and his sisters, Dorian and Katja, active leaders on behalf of our joint efforts, are steadfastly dedicated to Israel, to the Negev and to Ben-Gurion University."

Lloyd Goldman is principal and president of BLDG Management Co., Inc. and its affiliated entities, with significant real estate holdings that include residential, commercial and industrial properties around the United States, including the World Trade Center site. He is involved in many nonprofit organizations, including Conservation International, The Educational Alliance and the We Are Family Foundation. He is a trustee of the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System and is vice chairman of the Health System Foundation. He serves on M&T Bank's New York City Director's Advisory Council and Mortgage Investment Council.

Lloyd lives in Manhattan with his wife, Victoria, an education consultant and author of the *Manhattan Family Guide to Private Schools* (now in its sixth edition). ■

## PLUG INTO YOUR PASSIONS

*Continued from page 5*

The American delegation also stopped by the American Associates Village at Sede Boqer site, where construction is under way.

After Sede Boqer, the group enjoyed a Bedouin style desert lunch, then took in the wide open spaces of the Negev on a drive to Mahtesh Ramon (the Ramon Crater).

## CELEBRATING ROY J. ZUCKERBERG

The closing event was a gala evening in honor of outgoing Chairman of the Board of Governors Roy J. Zuckerberg at the spectacular Beresheet Hotel in Mitzpe Ramon, perched on the edge of the Ramon Crater.

The festive affair included a gourmet Mediterranean dinner, special tributes in Roy's honor, and a performance by Israeli music superstar, Noa (Ahinoam Nini). ■



Israeli singer Noa performs at the Chairman's Gala

**WALTER AND VERA**

**OBERMEYER** learned about Ben-Gurion University from AABGU's Northwest Region Director Daphna Noily, with whom they'd had a long-standing relationship. "She told us it was a newer university in the Negev desert and full of so much energy. We were convinced," Vera recalls.

The Obermeyers have generously supported the University ever since. They are members of the Founders Society and a few years ago joined the Living Legacy Society, arranging for charitable gift annuities (CGAs) as part of their estate planning. Last December, the couple visited BGU for the first time. They were impressed beyond their expectations.

"I loved the campus and the people," Walter says. "I like that it's a very young university which has done a lot already. I think they're doing a very good job, particularly with medical research." The Obermeyers prefer not to designate how their gifts will be used. "I trust them to do whatever they please with the money I give them," Walter explains.

"I like to support Israel and we like young people, so we contribute to BGU. It's important to support any institution that works with children and youth. Education is our future—and we want Israel to have a good future. We're part of the Living Legacy Society because the University looks to the future, and we believe what it's striving for is important," he adds.

In addition to visiting both the Marcus Family Campus and Sede Boqer campus, where they met faculty members and students, the Obermeyers participated in Ben-Gurion Day activities and lunched with students from the Community Action Unit.

The campus, as well as the people, struck Vera. "I loved it! Everything seemed so spanking new—the landscaping, the buildings, the sculpture." Their visit coincided with the dedication of a new sculpture named "Spring for the Negev." It was created and donated by Phlyp Koshland, which particularly sparked the Obermeyers' interest. Koshland is a descendant of Levi Strauss, founder of the clothing company where Walter worked as



**WALTER AND VERA OBERMEYER  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

## FEELING THE ENERGY AT BGU

an account executive for many years.

Vera is a retired school psychologist who, at age 50, returned to school to earn a Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy. "I really reinvented myself and my career and I'm very happy with it," she says. "My office is across the street; it takes three minutes and 50 yards to get there." She now works part-time, counseling people "with whatever they come in and

present." She has also co-authored a number of popular books on how to select the right school.

As someone who is highly sensitive to school environments, Vera found it especially interesting to meet BGU students and see how excited they are about being there, and participating in the community.

"I like that it's open to so many different ethnicities and socio-economic groups.

It's heartwarming to see that happening and it creates a very special atmosphere. The students don't have the bored look you see so often in schools—they seemed to be more mature and have more direction.

"Generally you don't find the kind of enthusiasm you see on the BGU campus. I think at BGU the school, staff and faculty care more about the students. It seemed like the students are very happy there. We saw a great spirit."

In fact, BGU's spirit proved personally transformative for Vera. "When I got home from my visit, I felt really energized by having been at BGU. So I was finally encouraged to have the knee replacement surgery I'd needed for 10 years. The University atmosphere is very empowering!"

The couple's three children have grown up to feel invested in Israel, especially their two daughters. One worked for years on a kibbutz, and the second graduated from high school in Israel, after completing her senior year there.

"We all love Israel and seeing the University grow," Vera says. "The Negev is not on most people's tourist agendas, but I think they're missing something very important if they don't go there. To experience a university that has so much energy, and is growing in leaps and bounds, is really inspiring." ■

**MURRAY SHUSTERMAN** has witnessed a lot of history, enjoyed a long career as lawyer and educator, and sustained a lifelong enthusiasm for Israel.

He was born on a *shtetl* in the Southern Ukraine 100 years ago and lived there until he was eight. He remembers the dichotomy of life in that close community.

“It was a time when they were ravaging the communities with bans. You’d worry about attacks by brigands, then Friday night you’d have a peaceful shabbat dinner...and live again. Just like the Israelis now.”

His parents were always interested in Israel but never got to see it.

He himself joined *Habonim*—the Zionist youth movement—and the passion for Israel stayed with him.

His three sons share it.

In fact, Murray came to know BGU because his middle son, Richard, spent a year at an Israeli college and rather than coming home, joined the IDF, went to Oxford

and earned a Ph.D., and then accepted a faculty position in philosophy at BGU. Richard also became a visiting professor at Temple University—where Murray earned his law degree and taught for 35 years—and AABGU’s Mid-Atlantic Region asked Murray to speak at parlor meetings.

Murray recalls, “Claire Winick [the region’s director] called and told me, ‘you ought to join our group.’ I did, and ended up chairing the Philadelphia chapter, serving as Mid-Atlantic region associate chair, and then I became a member of the national board and the BGU Board of Governors.”

He remains very much involved with the region, which threw him a 100th birthday party in September. In 1999, Murray received the University’s highest honor, an honorary doctoral degree.

Murray well remembers his first visit to BGU. It was right after the Yom Kippur war in 1973. “There were more camels outside my hotel in Beer-Sheva than taxicabs. The campus had a couple of buildings here and there—it was difficult to believe the potential, but the enthusiasm and commitment were there. We began making contributions.”

Over the next 25 years Murray and his wife, Judith, of blessed memory, funded the Shusterman Wing of the Medical School Library; a medical school wing dedicated to cancer research; the Career Development Chair in Microbiology; the Shusterman Greenhouse; and most recently, a travel fund for the Fox Chase Cancer Center-



**MURRAY H. SHUSTERMAN**  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

## A CENTURY OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

BGU collaboration. This facilitates travel for researchers between BGU and Fox Chase, a premier Philadelphia cancer hospital. Murray is also a member of BGU’s Living Legacy Society.

Many of the funding choices were Judith’s, Murray shares. “She was a particularly smart person and a top counselor in the school system, though if she were a student now, she’d probably have wanted to be a physician. She shared my enthusiasm for Israel and, like me, translated that into enthusiasm for BGU. She was known as one of the University’s most spirited supporters.” In 2005, the Philadelphia chapter memorialized Judith at its annual dinner.

Initially, Murray was impressed with BGU’s history. “David Ben-Gurion believed that Israel’s future is in the Negev, and proved that by choosing to live in Sede Boqer,” he says. “I believe all the people there have a commitment that’s much more than just a job—the professors are

manifestly interested in the students and their progress. And the students work in the community. I became impressed with the University’s whole philosophy and commitment.”

Murray Shusterman donates to other Israeli universities and a host of Jewish and educational causes in Israel and the U.S., “But my principal interest is BGU,” he says. “Whatever you give, you see it become real—and ultimately this research is finding cures. There’s so much satisfaction in knowing that someone is learning and doing research and you’ve been able to help that person.”

He appreciates the sincerity of the many other supporters who have become his friends through AABGU. “The people I know who have given do it not for recognition, but because they really believe in the University and what it seeks to accomplish.”

Murray continues his corporate and real estate law practice and puts in eight hours daily, all week, at Fox Rothschild LLP, the firm where he’s worked for 40 years.

“I don’t go to court anymore, but I can still analyze an agreement and surprise the other lawyers!” Until two years ago he traveled to Israel and the Board of Governors Meeting regularly, but, at his family’s insistence, has regretfully curtailed his travel.

Murray remains self-sufficient in his own apartment and continues to drive, but only short distances, he says. Sometimes there’s a conversation about moving to a group situation. “One of these days, when I’m older...maybe.” ■



# THE HOMELAND SECURITY INSTITUTE SAFEGUARDING ISRAEL AND ITS ALLIES

**SINCE ISRAEL'S EARLIEST HISTORY,** a good defense has been the first essential of survival. Today, the country looks to scientific and technological breakthroughs to ensure its future. Many of these new horizons have long been under exploration at BGU, and now, the work is being brought together under the auspices of the Homeland Security Institute.

"We realized a lot of research related to homeland security happens in isolated pockets around the campus," explains Prof. Dan G. Blumberg, the Institute's director and also BGU's deputy vice president and dean for research and development.

"We have a gold mine of good research and if you bring together people who normally wouldn't work with each other and connect their ideas, it becomes something tremendous, and more relevant to Israel and the world."

From robotics to cyber technology, remote sensing, satellites, emergency planning, and protection against conventional and nonconventional attack, every component of the Institute must have a pure science aspect, Blumberg says. "We try to balance this with relevance to daily life. Relevance is the key issue, rather than just application."

Blumberg himself is a faculty member of the Department of Geography and Environmental Development. His own research focuses on planetary geology, which led him to work with remote sensing through radar, microwave and hyperspectral data—a new technology that uses the visible and near infrared portions of the electromagnetic spectrum. Data from

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**"We want machines with human capabilities that can see, understand, detect, make decisions by themselves...on the ground, under water, in the air."**

— PROF. HUGO GUTERMAN

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these different sources plus satellite images can be fused for mapping, locating features in different environments and anomaly detection, finding anything out of place.

Often, today, the technology is created first, Blumberg notes. Then data is collected and, finally, researchers figure out how to use it. In fact, there can be an overwhelming amount of

data. "A huge data set becomes a curse to analyze," he says. "We're looking at new methods to analyze it and identify objects on the ground from hundreds of kilometers above it."

The BGU perspective is uniquely broad, Blumberg says. "We consider homeland security to relate to both physical and virtual borders, plus the medical and societal aspects of nations."

## **ROBOTS TO TAKE HUMANS OUT OF HARM'S WAY**

Blumberg collaborates with Prof. Hugo Guterman of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, whose lab researches artificial intelligence and robotics. "We want systems that will remove people from dangerous situations," Prof. Guterman says.

"Imagine being able to search large areas and reduce problems in airports, for example, so we can travel like we did 10 years ago, without wasting two hours. The problems of terrorism are not only the acts themselves but the fear of the attack. Everyone is afraid, and that affects everyday life."

Because the best machine we know is the human being, Guterman

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**Top photo:** Prof. Hugo Guterman with an autonomous helicopter robot

explains, studying human perception and cognition are starting points.

“We want machines with human capabilities that can see, understand, detect, make decisions by themselves, and remove people from the loop so they are off site. We want the machines to understand different situations, connect with each other and send information to other robot platforms—on the ground, under water, in the air—so they can collaborate.”

The challenge is highly interdisciplinary, Guterman observes.

“We need to develop a lot of hardware and software so the systems can perform at a high level and are able to deal with the unknown, recover and act like a person, whether as a pilot, driver or skipper.”

BGU has been instrumental in developing several systems already in use, including an autonomous vehicle for border patrol. Others, such as a system for handling serious fires, are under development. Rather than sending firefighters into a blazing building with an unknown fire center, a fleet of small platforms might be deployed. They will move around, survey the scene, build an ad hoc communication network among themselves and relay information to the off-site human beings.

Also in the works: small flying machines that follow objects. Potentially a group of small helicopters could enter a building, search and perform other tasks without endangering human beings. Underwater robots have already been created that can survey the depths of the sea and search for objects.

All the technology developed at BGU has applications beyond homeland protection, Guterman stresses. “We are talking to companies interested in using it to monitor the growth of crops. And we have a system to help incapacitated people who use wheelchairs and we’re working on transferring this to cars.”

**Foreground:** Prof. Dan G. Blumberg

**Background:** A nanosatellite like this is under development, which could have significant implications for Israel’s national security.

Guterman acknowledges that he is surprised by the general enthusiasm for robotics.

“Fifteen years ago we were sure we needed to do this work but didn’t expect to see wide acceptance of these systems. Today, different groups are beginning to come here and say, ‘I have a problem. Do you have a solution?’ Or, ‘this is my idea—can you do it?’”

### LAUNCHING A MINI-SATELLITE INTO SPACE

The BGUSAT planned by the Homeland Security Institute is a CubeSat—a 4" x 4" nanosatellite built to launch into space. CubeSats can be built for a tiny fraction of their standard-sized big brothers’ \$1 billion price tag. The idea was developed in leading universities over the past 10 years as an affordable opportunity to involve students in compelling research. It also gives scientists and engineers a much cheaper way to explore.

BGU is in the early stages of developing its program, “with great optimism,” says Institute Director Prof. Dan Blumberg. “We have a lot of people doing space-related work so this brings everyone together.

“Our objective is to learn what can be done with the satellite—how to miniaturize space components, apply our robotics knowledge, study the communication issues related

to transmitting data both ways, operate solar panels in space, and more. So the satellite is itself important because of its impact on future projects and Israel’s foothold in space.”

And, BGUSAT will carry research equipment. Two cameras will be on board, and other payload components are being evaluated, Blumberg says. The ultimate vision includes a fleet of CubeSats for search and rescue in cases of natural disaster or large-scale attack.

The challenges are big. Everything, including the camera optics, must be miniaturized to fit into a box the size of a soda can. One BGU expert is working to simulate control of the mini-craft and its position in orbit. A mechanical engineering group is working to build a much smaller deployment mechanism than currently exists. Scientists are also working on the application side and extraction of data from the payload.

A student team is already enthusiastically involved. Blumberg hopes to expand this soon.

No one knows yet what can be done with CubeSats, Blumberg says, but they clearly open up new horizons. They bring space beyond the sole province of government and the defense industry, and new thinking about how to use it must result.

### FIGHTING THE CYBER WAR

Prof. Bracha Shapira is an expert in artificial intelligence and machine learning. As head of the Department of Information Systems Engineering, she focuses on applying these technologies to cyber security.

The goal is to protect the world, from the individual on up to the international level.

“We look at real world problems and try to make cyberspace a little safer,” Prof. Shapira says.

“Cyber attacks are no less significant than other threats.



We rely on networks and computers and it's all connected. If someone attacks our infrastructure—systems like banks, electricity and hospitals—it could paralyze the whole economy and threaten many people's lives."

Defining and anticipating problems that could occur absorbs a lot of research energy, Shapira says. "The enemies aren't visible. And there's not just one enemy; an attack can come from any place. Early detection is important. Attackers are becoming more and more sophisticated, so to protect the system we must have the ability to look for anomalies that nobody has yet discovered: what is different? What small anomalies could aggregate to a big attack? We train the systems to handle problems."



Prof. Bracha Shapira

A lot of time goes into imagining what could happen and simulating what it could lead to. "We can't always have real data, so we simulate the attacks and develop tools and methods, then algorithms and techniques and try them on the data."

The cyber security lab collaborates with government and industry. In addition to protecting Israel from attacks on its infrastructure, projects seek to review social networks to find malware, viruses and anomalies, identify hackers, or collect information. Other projects aim to protect individuals. One colleague, with his students, created a system that identifies fake from real Facebook friends to prevent pedophiles from connecting with children.

Another current project is to prevent data leakage from organizations, both government and civilian. Shapira's lab developed new algorithms that automatically identify people who are sending e-mail or trying to publish information, intentionally or not, that should not be leaked. An additional project seeks

to protect networks from malware attack by optimally deploying NetShield protectors (a system that prevents or detects intrusion) on the network. "You can't put them every-

where because they're too expensive," Shapira explains. "We developed techniques to find optimal ways to place the protection so viruses won't spread, or will spread more slowly."

The cyber security field is increasingly attractive to students and a new graduate specialization is being introduced this year.

The curriculum was developed to meet the growing need for security experts as a key component to protecting national infrastructures and global economic institutions. The areas of focus include network security, attack identification methods, cryptography, development of secure systems, and operation systems security.

Shapira observes, "It's unbelievable to see how our lives are exposed, how much can be inferred from information on the Internet and especially on social networks. People are generally unaware of the dangers and don't take the necessary precautions."

### PREPARING TO MANAGE DISASTERS

The Homeland Security Institute also incorporates BGU's PREPARED Center for Emergency Response Research, and a graduate program in emergency medicine. Both are headed by Dr. Limor Aharonson-Daniel.

"The reality is that in Israel we have been coping with and managing security disasters for 64 years because we had no choice," she says.

"We developed certain methods for managing them, and with time improved and became more professional.

"Since 9/11 the world has become more aware of the dangers of terrorism. Professionals from the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Africa come to see how we cope with ongoing threats and emergency scenarios—so we realized we have a lot of knowledge and that it was important to put it into more academic frameworks."

Now five years old, the multi-disciplinary Master's of Emergency Medicine program encompasses preparedness for disasters and emergencies, and managing them when they occur. Issues such as population behavior, community resilience, risk communication, and the social and psychological aspects of crisis are all part of the picture.

The field is so new, Aharonson-Daniel says, that parts of it are created



Dr. Limor Aharonson-Daniel, head of BGU's PREPARED Center for Emergency Response Research, leads a disaster simulation drill.

by the current generation "as we go along." There are journal articles, but the textbooks are only just being written. Some of the learning is based on drills—every student participates in at least one national drill each year, in addition to tabletop drills, in which each individual or group simulates a role in managing an unexpected scenario.

*Continued on page 31*

# TALKING WITH ETGAR KERET

Etgar Keret teaches writing in BGU's Department of Hebrew Literature. He is a renowned writer who has been called "a genius" by *The New York Times* and "the voice of the next generation" by Salman Rushdie. He was born in 1967 to Holocaust survivors and grew up near Tel Aviv. His short story collections—published in more than 30 languages in 35 countries—are funny and ironic, prompting one critic to describe him as hovering somewhere between Woody Allen and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Keret is also a screenwriter and director of films, including *Jellyfish* and *Skin Deep*, which won the Camera d'Or Prize at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.



Photo: Yanai Yechiel

**When did you begin teaching—and why?** Basically, I started getting interested in teaching a little bit after I became successful in writing. A first effect was that I was having less and less interaction with people where I was supposed to listen—people were interviewing me so I didn't have to be attentive to others. There's something very megalomaniac and egocentric about the arts. I wanted to find some counterweight to that. So I began teaching workshops about 17 years ago.

In teaching it's not about what you have to say but what *they* have to say—you help them find their voice. That puts you into the exact opposite situation than when you do an interview. So I teach not to sustain my work, but to balance my life.

I do it part-time, because I find teaching extremely exhausting.

**And why do you choose to teach at BGU?**

A good friend talked to me about BGU. I wasn't too excited because I like places I can walk to from my apartment in Tel Aviv, so BGU seemed very far. But I was invited to take part in a culture event on

the campus and immediately fell in love with it. There was something about it—I felt a strong sense of community there among the students and professors. The staff is on a first-name basis. It's like people come to learn with a feeling of camaraderie, not competitiveness. Maybe because so many students in Beer-Sheva are from other places, BGU is more integrated and closer. So I changed my mind and started teaching there.

**Do you find the experience different from your teaching at Tel Aviv University?**

It's interesting. I'm used to students in their early twenties who are very smart, very talented, most of them from fairly well educated families. In Beer-Sheva, there are people of many religions, some Bedouins, people who live in development towns in the middle of desert, so there's something a lot more organic about the population. Creative workshops are all about dynamics. So the dynamics are very interesting because of different people and voices. I didn't expect to see so much empathy and compassion, or the ambiguities in attempting to

see "the other" and connect. This totally surprised me.

**Do you find a lot of talent among your students?** Sometimes students ask, "am I good enough?" The first thing I say is that basically when you write it is first and foremost for yourself and those close to you. It's a type of primal function. I am a bad soccer player, and I don't ask that question—I play because I like and enjoy it. Don't see writing as some kind of career or test.

Some may have huge success, some won't, but the bottom line is that if someone chooses writing to be rich, it's the wrong choice. The only reason to write is because you see a need to, and that the process is rewarding to you.

**Are you surprised by the degree of your own success?**

My career as a writer has been very strange. I never submitted anything to a publishing house—it wasn't even in my set of options. I came from a town near Tel Aviv but never knew anybody who was a professional artist or even wrote as a hobby. I was studying math, philosophy and physics—I wasn't focused on literature.

But I started writing stories, liked it and showed them to my friends at Tel Aviv University.

Then I had a problem with sleeping and missed early morning classes. A professor who was a mentor asked if I could justify that with any intellectual activity at night.

“I write, but nobody likes it,” I said. He told me, “Listen, this is a university—nobody is going to say it’s awful.” So someone wrote me a letter to help me keep my stipend. Later that same person got a position as an editor and asked me to send more stories.

So this career wasn’t premeditated. Every writer has a megalomania but I hadn’t known what I was supposed to do with it.

#### How does it affect you now to be a widely read and admired writer?

I say I’m a person who writes—I don’t dare see myself as a writer. If someday I stop writing, then my existence would be in danger. I teach; I am a filmmaker; I take part in activities not totally artistic; I’m a parent, a son—I have many identities. I also write. I enjoy it; it rewards me. But I don’t see it as my exclusive identity.

#### Would you say identity is a major theme of your stories and films?

The issue of identity is very common among Jewish writers. The topic makes me feel closer to Jewish Diaspora writers than to Israeli literature—we have the same kind of questions to ask. I love Israel, but feel a greater affinity to American Jewish writers.

#### Is it gratifying to become so widely read and appreciated in the U.S.?

This new book [*Suddenly A Knock on the Door*] really made a huge change. When I worked on the audiobook project so many wonderful people were willing to read my stories—this is not something I expected, and I’m very grateful [readers include Willem Dafoe, Stanley Tucci, Ira Glass, and many others]. When you write in one culture, you can’t take for granted

that you’ll be understood elsewhere.

I didn’t expect this American experience and it created new directions. It wasn’t an overnight kind of thing, but an extremely pleasant process—things just kept happening.

#### Do you have plans for what’s next?

For a very long time, I would have said short stories or film—I have a lot of ideas, sit down and write them in different forms. Sometimes I know where I’m heading—but it can take a few years to know what I’m doing.

A story can take a long time because I’m not a systematic writer. There’s something about the process—if I take a wrong turn it’s not that easy to fix it. I can get stuck, come back, try something, maybe it doesn’t work—a year can pass. This doesn’t mean I work hard on a story, but it can take a long time.

I really like artistic operations—graphic novels, theater, film, which give you the ability to create and work with other people.

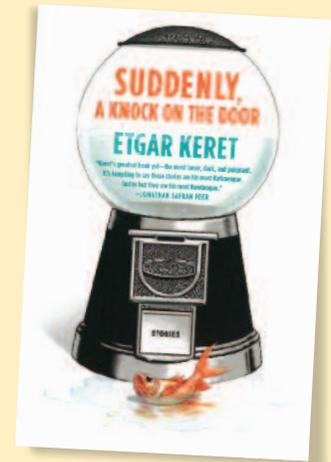
#### What is most challenging about creating a new story?

The tone is the most important thing. Sometimes you have an idea for a plot or situation but can’t find the right tone—so you change from first to third person; you change the protagonist. You have to find the voice of the story to keep it going. I don’t have any other system.

Writing is the ability to be in the present, inside the character or story—most of the time I don’t have any idea about the future. It’s easier not to think about what’s happening next. In my life there are very strong questions—will the book do well, will the medical exam be good... But when you tell the story you’re very inside the story and characters. You can be in the present. I can find myself much more emotionally connected with my characters than my own experience living my life—I’m less distracted.

Writing is an emotional lab through which you can learn a lot about your

*Continued on page 30*



## SUDDENLY, A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

BY ETGAR KERET

“Suddenly, a Knock on the Door” is the first story in Etgar Keret’s newest collection of 35 stories of the same name. An excerpt begins below and continues on our Web site at [www.aabgu.org](http://www.aabgu.org), re-printed with permission from the author.

“Tell me a story,” the bearded man sitting on my living-room sofa commands. The situation, I must say, is anything but pleasant. I’m someone who writes stories, not someone who tells them. And even that isn’t something I do on demand. The last time anyone asked me to tell him a story, it was my son. That was a year ago. I told him something about a fairy and a ferret—I don’t even remember what exactly—and within two minutes he was fast asleep. But the situation is fundamentally different. Because my son doesn’t have a beard, or a pistol. Because my son asked for the story nicely, and this man is simply trying to knock me of it.

Read the full story at [www.aabgu.org/etgarkeret](http://www.aabgu.org/etgarkeret)

## THE CHALLENGE OF NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASES

# BGU RESEARCHERS FIND BREAKTHROUGH PATHS

The longer we live, the higher the incidence of age-related diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Along with other diseases characterized by brain damage, like ALS, these conditions have long been considered not just incurable, but basically untreatable.

But today's researchers have new technologies and new ideas. This report on three promising avenues of research being pursued at BGU illuminates why these dreaded diseases are so hard to treat, what new tools in nanotechnology can contribute, and how collaborative ways of working can move us forward—even toward understanding the aging process and, eventually, countering it.

### TEAMING UP TO CURE PARKINSON'S

One of the biggest obstacles to treating neurodegenerative disease or any brain damage is how well the central nervous system protects itself from invasion. The blood-brain barrier (BBB) is a membrane that restricts the passage of most bacteria and harmful substances to the brain. But at the same time, it prevents delivery of a variety of drugs that might cure diseases such as Parkinson's, ALS, Alzheimer's, and brain cancer.

In the battle against diseases long considered incurable and untreatable, scientists are exploring a new tool: nanotechnology. The ability to create

very small sub-microscopic particles capable of penetrating the BBB to deliver therapeutics is exciting researchers around the world. After 10 years of work, a BGU team has come up with an especially promising solution—V-Smart™ Technology. It has already been licensed to a U.S. company, Lauren Sciences LLC, which will develop it for a wide range of potential medical applications.

The idea began with Dr. Sarina Grinberg of BGU's Department of Chemistry. She has been working with "green chemistry" for many years. "I became interested in a plant called Vernonia, which a biologist colleague

had brought from Kenya and started to grow here in Beer-Sheva," she explains. "Its oil contains one of the most reactive functional groups in organic chemistry."

Dr. Grinberg talked to Dr. Charles Linder, research professor at the Avram and Stella Goldstein-Goren Department of Biotechnology Engineering, and Prof. Eliahu Heldman from the Department of Clinical Biochemistry. They decided to use derivatives of vernonia oil for drug delivery and designed new compounds that could potentially be used as building blocks for the desired nano-particles. Dr. Grinberg started to synthesize these new compounds, which were named "bolaamphiphiles" because their shape resembled an ancient Indian weapon used in South America.

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**Top Photo:** Prof. Monsonogo's snapshot of the brain of a mouse with Alzheimer's symptoms, showing amyloid plaques (red) associated with the disease, and microglia (green), immune system cells that are recruited by the plaques. The blue shows counterstaining of nuclei.

Heldman, now professor emeritus and a neuroscience researcher with experience in the pharmaceutical industry, suggested the brain as a major target.

**“The basic research aim is to...apply this unique system to Parkinson’s and other diseases. This will not just provide symptomatic relief, but a cure—or, at least, retard the disease’s progression.”**

—PROF. ELIAHU HELDMAN

“The three of us met in the cafeteria,” Heldman recounts, “and brainstormed. There was an obvious need to penetrate the BBB because about 95 percent of existing drugs do not, so they can’t be used even though they’re potentially very active. So we thought we’d give it a chance and started to collaborate.”

Soon supported with funding from the University and BGN Technologies, BGU’s technology transfer company, the team worked to create vesicles—nano-sized storage chambers—from the bolaamphiphiles.

“The basic research aim is to design and synthesize bolaamphiphiles that will form nanovesicles for medical applications, particularly delivering drugs to the brain,” Heldman says, “and to apply this unique system to Parkinson’s and other neurodegenerative diseases. This will not just provide symptomatic relief, but a cure—or, at least, retard the disease’s progression.”

Thus far, most existing drugs that might effectively treat neurological diseases cannot be used because the BBB can be bypassed only by direct injection. This carries risks, and also fails to effectively diffuse the drug in the brain. V-Smart™ vesicles, however,

are transported from the blood vessels into the brain so the encapsulated drug passes the BBB and is released within the brain.

The vesicles are created by a physical chemistry process that depends on self-assembly, Dr. Linder explains. Several large blocks of bolaamphiphiles are mixed together; energy is applied, and the nano particles result. The vesicles are “decorated” on the surface with functional groups to add more characteristics important for drug delivery. Ultimately, he says, “they must be stable, big enough to encapsulate enough of the drug, but small enough to penetrate the BBB, and then disrupt efficiently in the brain to deliver the medicine to the site for the drug action.”

With Lauren Sciences LLC in New York, which licensed the patents and technology, the BGU team is working on projects to develop V-Smart™ therapeutics for neuro-HIV, as well

as Parkinson’s, and is also looking to apply the technology to brain tumors, ALS and Alzheimer’s. More grants have materialized—most notably from The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research and, this summer, from The Campbell Foundation, which supports HIV research.

“Each project may take about two years to reach formal preclinical studies, which must be done prior to clinical trials,” says Susan Rosenbaum, Lauren’s chair and chief executive officer.

“We need to be patient,” says Heldman, who also serves as Lauren Science’s chief scientific officer. “Our hope is to help many people and ultimately cure these diseases. Then we’ll be very happy.”

**SLOWING ALS—AND, PERHAPS, AGING ITSELF**

When she began her research at BGU 31 years ago as a postdoctoral student in the Shraga Segal Department of



Dr. Sarina Grinberg, Prof. Eliahu Heldman and Dr. Charles Linder with a very large model of the drug-delivery vesicle they created

Microbiology and Immunology, Prof. Esther Priel worked to develop anti-cancer and later HIV drugs. She experimented with chemicals

to inhibit a protein enzyme called topoisomerase. The work earned her impressive publication credits and several patents.

A few years ago, Prof. Priel focused her research on the enzyme telomerase, now known to be associated with the aging process.

With two colleagues, organic chemist Prof. Aviv Gazit and Prof. Shimon Slavin,

a physician, she aimed to create a telomerase inhibitor that they hoped would limit cancer growth. The team created a novel chemical compound that can penetrate the blood-brain barrier and reach the brain and spinal cord. But there was a big surprise.

“It turned out that instead of diminishing telomerase activity, the compound activates it! We started to think what we could do with these activators and found many good things. The enzyme can increase the lifespan of the cell. Recently, it was shown that it protects cells from oxidative damage, and that’s important to the cell and organism. So we started to examine the possibilities.”

Experimenting with nematodes, microscopic worms, was the first step. The new compound was shown to increase the nematodes’ lifespan by 40 percent, or in some cases, even doubled the median life. “So we thought if we can protect against oxidative stress, and increase lifespan, maybe it would be good for neurodegenerative diseases. We chose to work with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.”

Mice engineered to develop ALS were used for the experiments. The compound delayed the onset of ALS and its progression and increased

the mice’s lifespan by 18 to 20 days, which is substantial, since they would otherwise live only four months.

“We can see an improvement in motor function and an increase in the survival of the motor neurons—the cells that are damaged in ALS. We think this is why we were able to delay the onset of the disease and its progression. We also proved that the effect of the compound is mediated by telomerase, and in our opinion we have what scientists call ‘proof of concept’.

“The effect of the compound exhibits a dose and time dependency. When we increase the telomerase, we increase the delay. This is not, however, a cure.”

In addition to its potential for slowing disease and, perhaps, the aging



Prof. Esther Priel

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**“I think in time a compound like ours, together with other medicines, will increase the human lifespan.”**

—PROF. ESTHER PRIEL

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process, the new compound may be useful for cell therapy. These strategies depend on taking stem cells from patients and growing them in cultures that are fragile. The new compound protects the cells from oxidative stress and other damaging agents. Prof. Priel believes this will prove a major benefit to regenerative medicine.

Priel and her team now hold several patents covering various derivatives of the original compound, and they are engaged in preclinical studies with

animals. In addition to working with ALS, they are looking at the compound’s use for Alzheimer’s, and also diabetes. Through BGN Technologies, they have contracted with a venture company in the U.S. that has provided nearly \$1 million for continued research. The team’s most recent research was published in the *EMBO Molecular Medicine Journal*.

“We’re in the early stages,” Priel cautions. “We still have a lot to learn. But it’s very exciting. Only two companies in the U.S. claim to have telomerase activators and are researching them for age-related diseases—but they produce it from plants. Ours is totally different because it’s synthesized.

“I think in time a compound like ours, together with other medicines, will increase the human lifespan. But there’s a question: Is that good? The best and most important thing we must do, first, is increase quality of life. I think a compound like this one may do that.”

### A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT ALZHEIMER’S

Since his student years, Prof. Alon Monsonogo has felt challenged by the brain’s inability to regenerate neurons, which prevents recovery from brain trauma. “Then we began to realize that the interaction of the immune system with the brain is critical to promoting recovery processes,” he recalls.

Much of his research since then, first at Harvard and for the past seven years at BGU, has focused on this interaction—the dialogue, as he calls it—between the central nervous system (CNS) and the immune system. He believes this understanding offers a great promise for treating Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative and autoimmune diseases.

“Anything that goes wrong with either system strongly impacts the other, so we have to make sure we understand the language and that the conversation is properly maintained,” Prof. Monsonogo says. “We’re trying to manipulate the immune system to

manipulate the brain.” One specific goal is to gain access to the brain, which is protected by the blood-brain barrier (BBB), through the immune system.

Monsonogo and his colleagues are experimenting with a vaccine to counter Alzheimer’s. Working with mice that possess a gene associated with the disease, they have succeeded in reducing the telltale plaque and inflammation. The treated mice show significant cognitive improvement. But creating a vaccine that is safe for humans is difficult.

“We have to really know the autoimmune setting in Alzheimer’s patients and not make the vaccine so strong that it triggers an adverse

the onset of clinical symptoms.”

One of his lab’s basic investigations is to define and understand microglia—small migratory cells that are part of the CNS structure and which, like white blood cells, protect the body by surrounding and absorbing bacteria and other microorganisms.

“A very new set of studies suggests that these immune cells, which reside in between the neurons in the brain, contribute to the neuron functioning. So in Alzheimer’s, what happens? These cells are trapped, targeted by plaques.

They’re attracted to the plaque and concentrate on it so they can no

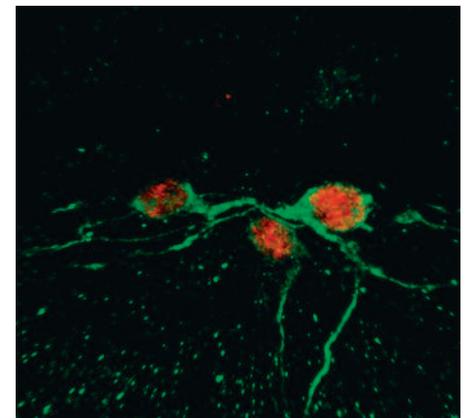
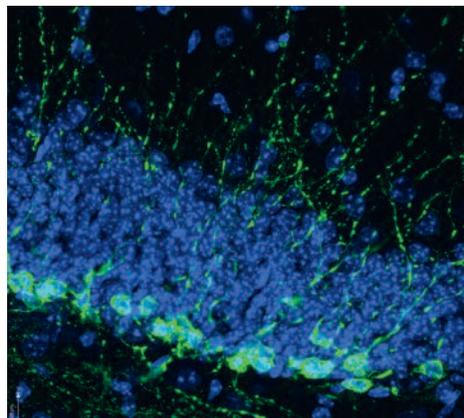
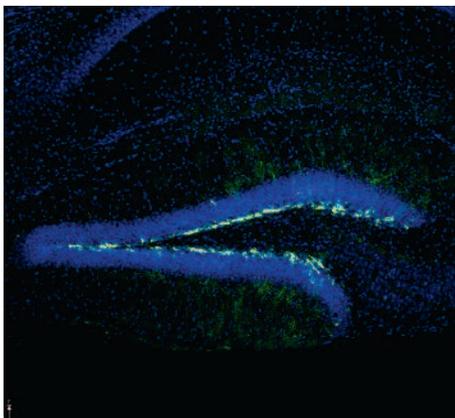
His lab also investigates the role of stress in cognitive decline. “Put mice under chronic stress and you see them lose some basic aspects of immune system functioning,” Monsonogo says. In contrast, scientists have shown that if you take mice out of the cage and enrich the environment with different toys, and a bigger cage to play and run in, neurogenesis is enhanced and cognitive functions improve.

“So if through stress, you cause a defect in the regulation of the immune system, it can have a huge impact on life quality and thus the progression of aging, Alzheimer’s and auto-immune diseases.” Research shows that the immune systems of Alzheimer’s patients do show signs of stress.

Monsonogo believes it is critical to reduce the stress in our lives. “Even the everyday kind of stress is basically not benign,” he says. “Often psychological stress translates to the molecular level and that changes us, makes us more susceptible. The immune system may play a key role



Prof. Alon Monsonogo, neuroimmunologist, Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology and Immunology and the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev



These images show neurogenesis, the formation of new neurons, in an old mouse brain’s hippocampus at three levels of resolution. The newly generated cells are green. The image on the far right shows three newly generated neurons (indicated by red) in the dentate gyrus (believed to play a part in forming new memories).

response and does more harm than good.”

It’s much too soon to talk about curing Alzheimer’s, he cautions. “It’s an extremely complicated disease. But, perhaps a breakthrough will be achieved in a few years once diagnostic markers allow us to vaccinate or treat people at high risk at very early stages, even before

longer perform their other functions adequately.

“It’s fascinating to see the dramatic changes that result, and this may shift the way we think about mechanisms that contribute to the progression of Alzheimer’s. This process may also be part of aging, causing the microglia to be less effective in repairing brain damage.”

by sensing the environment and responding to it all the time by shaping us to it. The degree to which this happens depends on genetics, the environment, individual characteristics.”

Overall, he believes that keeping the immune system in good shape through exercise, diet and stress management can help reduce age-related diseases. ■

# WHY THE POT CALLS THE KETTLE BLACK

People dissociate themselves from their wrongdoing by being more critical of others and presenting themselves as more ethical and virtuous.

**WORKING ON A KIBBUTZ** for many years, Dr. Rachel Barkan found that telling stories to children was the highlight of her day. As a senior lecturer and researcher at BGU's Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management, she still loves to tell stories. But now they are about human behavior, and are based on rigorous research rather than imagination.

She teaches organizational psychology, team building and management, and most important, she thinks, experimental research methods.

"Behavioral science is in a golden age," she says. "Everyone is doing experiments and some do wonderful work. On the other hand, not everyone is equipped with the skill required for this type of research—but they do it anyway. At this point, I think it's critical for the future of behavioral research, and imperative, to teach people how to look at the world, how to think about what they see happening and how to do good research. And good research includes the ethics of dealing with people who participate in your experiments."

Then, she believes, telling the story well determines how the work is received and its degree of influence. Dr. Barkan has backed this idea up with her own research on the impact of presentation and concludes, "There's a fine line between telling research as a story and writing scientific papers that are appreciated in the academic community."

One of her recent articles proves to be a good example of how well she is able to walk this line. Published in the prestigious *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, "The Pot Calling the Kettle Black: Distancing Response to Ethical Dissonance" has provoked wide interest.

The goal of the research team—which also included Dr. Shahar Ayal from Israel's Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Prof. Francesca Gino of Harvard and Prof. Dan Ariely of Duke—was to understand the mechanisms people use when they judge others harshly for precisely the ethical failures they themselves exhibit.



Dr. Rachel Barkan

## INFAMOUS EXAMPLES

One well-known instance is the former MIT dean of admissions, famous for her harsh treatment of students who lied on their resumes or overstated their credentials. It emerged that she had never received the bachelor's and master's degrees she claimed on her own job application. Another famous example is former New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer. He zealously pursued criminals, corruption and prostitution, but was exposed as a client of a prostitution ring himself. Both lost their jobs.

The researchers supposed that this pot/kettle phenomenon is a common one, not confined to important decision-makers, and wanted to

understand the underlying psychological mechanisms.

Their experiments demonstrated that people tend to "double distance" themselves from their own transgressions by judging others more harshly and, at the same time, presenting themselves as more virtuous and ethical. This enables them to dissociate themselves from their own misconduct and bury it as implausible.

The core study involved asking one group of students to recall, and describe in writing, something they regretted having done: a time when they acted selfishly at someone else's expense, or were dishonest, untruthful, or disloyal. Participants were told at the beginning that they would shred their written reports.

"Writing simply encourages vivid recollection of memory," Barkan explains. "We were interested in the effect of an unsettling memory, not the incident itself."

In fact, raising the memory caused the participants to rate themselves low in response to the sentence, "Right now I feel I am a person of worth." But in a series of six experiments, Barkan and her colleagues found that the threat to self-image led to the pot/kettle effect.

For example, participants estimated that most people are highly likely to engage in daily misconduct, such as boarding a plane before their group number was called, or inflating their business expense report. The same group also stated that sentences like "traffic was terrible" or "let's have lunch sometime" are probably lies.

In contrast to their harsh judgment of others, these participants presented themselves as ultra-honest. For example, asked to advise a friend in a moral dilemma, they stated that they

*Continued on page 30*



# BGU STUDENTS TEACH NEW ISRAELIS AND LEARN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

**TO 25-YEAR OLD** Danny Zemene Tsega, an Ethiopian immigrant who arrived in Beer-Sheva eight months ago, studying at BGU's Kidma Program is his foothold on the future. "I'm learning much better Hebrew and also a little English, and I want to learn computers," he says. "This will help me find a real job."

Others who give their evenings to Kidma's basic education classes count success differently. Raya Pereth came to Israel from Romania 37 years ago and the Hebrew she's learned in the past two years has, she says, transformed her everyday life.

"Now I go to the bank and the teller can't fool me! I know how to read, how to calculate—everything! And now I read the newspaper and understand."

Raya relates that her classmates include women from many countries, of many ages, who come to learn so they can show their children how important education is. The fact that classes are taught right on campus, in BGU's top facilities, impresses family members and shows them what is possible.

Kidma, Hebrew for "going forward," was founded in 1991 when large

numbers of Ethiopian Jews arrived in Israel as part of the Operation Solomon rescue mission. Absorbing the adults into the Beer-Sheva community proved especially hard because few spoke Hebrew and many lacked even a basic education or were not literate in even their own language. BGU's

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**"Even more important than teaching math and Hebrew is to know about the cultural differences between people so we understand them and they understand us."**

— CASPI MATAN, STUDENT VOLUNTEER

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Community Action Unit responded by creating Project Kidma.

Two years ago, with fewer Ethiopian immigrants, Kidma opened its doors to recent arrivals from Russia and other countries, as well as people from the local neighborhoods. Many lacked the opportunity to learn when they were younger or found

their education disrupted.

Kidma gives them the chance to study Hebrew, math, English, and computers. Their teachers are BGU students who use a curriculum created by the Ministry of Education, which also supplies some training and supervision.

"As many as come, we will teach," says Vered Sarussi, who heads BGU's Community Action Unit and runs Kidma with the help of two student coordinators. "All they have to do is show us that they need this basic education and that they're serious about learning. This is a very, very important program. These are people who never had the chance to invest in themselves. Some of them are in their 50s and 60s. They just want to learn."

The 23 BGU students who teach Kidma classes are all recipients of Keren Moshe Leadership Training Program scholarships. One, Uri Ofer, has taught Hebrew and math for three years.

"It's inspiring because the people are so motivated," Uri says. "Most of

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**Top photo:** A BGU student-teacher, right, with Danny Zemene Tsega, center, and another pupil at a Kidma Purim party

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

them have hard jobs and come here after a long day. I've learned a lot—how to speak with people from everywhere. How to ask them what they feel and what they want.”

Another student teacher, Caspi Matan, also values Kidma's multicultural aspect. “Everyone learns from each other,” he says. “Even more important than teaching math and Hebrew is to know about the cultural differences between people so we understand them and they understand us.”

This past year, the program taught four subjects: math, computers and English on two levels, and Hebrew on five levels, from basic knowledge to a level equivalent to 10 years of study. Classes are held at the University three days a week. Most pupils who stay with the program take and pass internal exams and receive certificates in basic education from the Ministry of Education. This past summer, some also asked to take more challenging exams given by the Ministry so they could work on further education.

However, keeping people engaged can be difficult. Many work long hours and also have families to care for. Additionally, without cars, getting to BGU can be a challenge, as can paying for books and materials and even the nominal program fee. One hundred and forty pupils began classes last year and nearly 100 completed the year. Considering the hardships, Sarussi is quite satisfied with this achievement.

Those who stick with the program are able to function much better, she notes. “They can speak Hebrew and know how to connect, with their families, too. The children are growing up here, so their parents say it's not easy to understand them. Knowing the language helps them communicate better.”

Beyond the academics, Project Kidma teaches its participants about Israeli society and culture and incor-



porates civic and current affairs. The program celebrates Jewish holidays, holding parties for Chanukah and Purim. Special donations also supported a field trip to Jerusalem this year. It was complete with walking tours, a visit to the market, and a pita-baking experience at a local bakery. Many of the travelers said they had never been to Jerusalem—and never expected to have the opportunity, Sarussi reports.

Raya Pereth confirms that it was a special experience for her. “It showed me about achieving good things in life. I can't imagine my life without Kidma,” she sums up.

“It gives me only good. The teachers teach about everything, not just the given material. They teach for life—how to be patient and motivated and how to have goals. Being in the University makes me very proud.

I feel part of it, important. And all my granddaughters are very proud that I am going there.”

Raya spoke at the Kidma graduation ceremony, Sarussi reports, and very fluently.

“She inspired all of us.

And she makes a very good strudel!” Sarussi knows because the holiday parties and this year's special graduation event were opportunities to share each other's cultures through food, games, light-hearted Russian language lessons, and dancing.

The students who teach Kidma classes find their time equally rewarded. “The three years were very enriching for me,” says Caspi. “Our



program teaches us how to be leaders in the community and I'll take a lot of tools with me. I know, too, that wherever I am, it will be very important to volunteer, to give something back to the community—I see that the more you give, the more you get. And I know now I can cope even with a very hard job.”

A June graduate, Caspi was headed for volunteer work with a health center in Africa for three months and planned to put his newly minted industrial engineering degree to work after that.

Uri Ofer, who is taking his new biotech engineering degree to a job with a water engineering company, also hopes for a future volunteer opportunity. He found his students' progress very motivating.

“When we start the first class, for example, some people touch the computer for the first time—they don't know how to turn it on or hold the mouse. But later, they take an exam on the computer, write an essay, design it, and work with Excel, sometimes Power-Point. The difference is amazing.

“It makes me feel...proud.” ■



# REGIONAL NEWS

For information about upcoming events in your area, please visit: [www.aabgu.org/regions-events](http://www.aabgu.org/regions-events)

## GREAT LAKES

Ernie Simon, *Chair*  
 Larry Goodman, *Honorary Chair*  
 Steven Franklin, *Director*  
 (847) 983-3630  
[greatlakes@aabgu.org](mailto:greatlakes@aabgu.org)

## A PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The Great Lakes Region is home to a new partnership between The Cincinnati Children's Hospital (CCH) and BGU to develop child friendly surgical devices that will improve medical outcomes for pediatric patients. Today, most surgical devices are designed for adults.

The initiative kicked off this past spring when five leading CCH surgeons visited BGU. In this collaboration, CCH physicians will provide BGU engineers and technology researchers with information about medical device challenges and opportunities. The team at BGU will develop new devices, which will be commercialized by BGN Technologies, BGU's technology transfer company, and CCH's counterpart, CincyTech.

## FROM THE DESERT TO THE GREAT LAKES AND VICE VERSA

Prof. Alon Friedman, who heads BGU's Laboratory for Experimental Neurosurgery, spoke about "New Pathways to Understanding and Treating Brain Disease" to the Great



Steven Franklin, AABGU Great Lakes regional director; Prof. Alon Friedman; Dan Shure, president, America Israel Chamber of Commerce Chicago; and Michael Rosen, head of the Illinois Science and Technology Park

Lakes regional board and AABGU community members.

In May, Prof. Hanna Yablonka, of BGU's Department of Jewish History, gave several fascinating presentations on "The Impact of the Holocaust on Israeli Identity: Culture, Society and Politics." She also met with AABGU supporters at the home of Ernie and Judith Simon.

The region was well represented at BGU's 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting by Mort Doblin, Board of Governors member Richard Goldstein, Frances Herbolsheimer (of blessed memory), and Regional Director Steven Franklin.

## IN MEMORIAM



The Great Lakes Region and AABGU family mourn the loss of Frances Herbolsheimer who passed away in July. It was one of the great joys of her life to reconnect with Israel through AABGU. She first visited Israel over 40 years ago as a kibbutz volunteer, and felt blessed to be able to return to Israel as part of the American delegation to the 41st Annual Board of Governors Meeting, and again for this year's event. As the owner of a large farm, Frances was interested in agriculture and her legacy gift will help BGU continue to make the desert bloom. May her memory be a blessing.

**In the Photo:** Frances Herbolsheimer with BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi at the American Associates Reception, BGU's 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting

**GREATER FLORIDA**

Rich Bernstein, Alan Hurst, Billy Joel, Joel Reinstein, Lyon Roth, Dr. Rubin Salant, *Greater Florida Advisory Committee*  
 Elise Dolgow, *Director*  
 Joy Felton, *Associate Director*  
 (561) 705-0117  
 florida@aabgu.org

**BGU FACULTY IN FLORIDA**

The AABGU community in South Florida enjoyed a non-stop season of programs, including an impressive line-up of BGU faculty members speaking on a wide range of research topics. Addressing subjects from homeland security and safeguarding Israel to the David Ben-Gurion Archives, and Ladino and Sephardic humor to cutting-edge diabetes research, BGU faculty visitors included Prof. Dan Blumberg, Dr. Paula Kabalo, Dr. Eliezer Papo, and Dr. Eli Lewis.

AABGU's Greater Florida Region partnered with the Mid-Atlantic Region on a special luncheon with then-Board of Governors Chairman Roy J. Zuckerberg. Heartfelt thanks to Marilyn and Edward Kaplan and Steve Winig for co-sponsoring this beautiful event.

**TO ISRAEL WITH ART, ARCHITECTURE AND AABGU**

In May, a strong Florida delegation enjoyed unique, inspiring Israel experiences by participating in AABGU's Brushstrokes and Blueprints Art and Architecture Tour and the University's 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting.

The group in Israel included Billy Joel, Mana Liberson, Joel Reinstein and Jenny Cohen-Derfler, Marc Rabinowitz, Lyon Roth, Norman Rubenstein, Claire and George Tornay, Ruth and Marcelo Warat, and Regional Director Elise Dolgow.

Very special thanks to Joel Reinstein for co-chairing Brushstrokes and Blueprints, and a big *mazal tov* to Billy Joel for his election to BGU's Board of Governors.

**Top:** Eugene and Lois Kessler, Jerry Cohn, BGU's diabetes expert Dr. Eli Lewis, and Billy Joel. **Middle:** Zantner Foundation Dedication at the Arava Wall of the Negev Society with Marc Rabinowitz, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi, and Claire and George Tornay. **Bottom:** Brushstrokes and Blueprints tour participants: Regional Director Elise Dolgow, Ruth Warat, Mana Liberson, Marcelo Warat, Joel Reinstein, and Lisa Gladstone



**GREATER NEW YORK**

Lite Sabin, *Chair*  
 Kevin M. Leopold, *Executive Director—Northeast*  
 Liora Avitan Seltzer, *Associate Director*  
 Dana Ben-Benjamin, *Program Manager*  
 (212) 687-7721 ext. 2102  
 newyork@aabgu.org

**BORN TO WORK AT AABGU**

The newest member of the AABGU team, Liora Avitan Seltzer, associate director for the Greater New York Region, has been connected to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev from day one.

She was born to Michael and Linda Avitan at Beer-Sheva's Soroka University Medical Center, the major research and teaching hospital affiliated with BGU.

At the time, her father was studying mechanical engineering at BGU while her mother worked as a social worker. After graduation, the young family moved to Rehovot, where Liora and her two siblings grew up.

Liora returned to Beer-Sheva for her university studies and is a graduate of BGU's Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management and the Pinchas Sapir Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She has a dual degree in psychology and business management.

Before coming to New York and joining AABGU, she worked in Beer-Sheva for BGU's Honors MBA Program, where she played a key role in marketing the program and increasing its enrollment.

Liora's responsibilities include cultivation and stewardship of new and existing AABGU supporters. She is eager to share her wonderful experience at the University with AABGU's community.

"It's a pleasure to stay connected with BGU in my professional career. I have such fond memories of my time at the University and living in Beer-Sheva. I'm excited to share my passion for the University with supporters of this incredible institution in our region," says Liora.

And Liora has even more connections to BGU. Her sister, Ronit, is a second-year student at BGU's Pinchas Sapir Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her brother, Yoni, is serving in the Israel Defense Forces, and (if his sisters have any say in the decision) he'll be carrying on the BGU tradition as well.



Liora Avitan Seltzer with BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi

Last but not least, Liora's husband, Jeremy, graduated first in his class from BGU's Honors MBA Program. The newlyweds met when Jeremy, a Pennsylvania native and student at Weizmann Institute of Science, joined Liora's family for Shabbat dinner one fateful evening. The two instantly connected and after completing a year at Weizmann, Jeremy decided to transfer to BGU for its top notch education, active student life and vibrant Beer-Sheva community.

Liora has already proven to be an asset to the team and she looks forward to meeting more members of the local AABGU community. Feel free to contact her at 646-452-3693 or [lseltzer@aabgu.org](mailto:lseltzer@aabgu.org) with questions about her experience at BGU or just to say *shalom!*

## GREATER TEXAS

Sandra and Steven Finkleman, *Chairs*  
Deborah K. Bergeron, *Director*  
(713) 522-8284  
[texas@aabgu.org](mailto:texas@aabgu.org)

## BGU FACULTY CONNECT WITH THE HOUSTON JEWISH COMMUNITY

Prof. Alon Tal, of BGU's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research and one of Israel's leading environmentalists, spoke this spring at a wine and cheese reception at the home of Dr. Neil and Laura Gorme. No stranger to Texas, Prof. Tal was warmly received by many old and new friends.

Prof. Hanna Yablonka of BGU's Department of Jewish History spoke at Holocaust Museum Houston on "The Eichmann Trial: A Perspective of 50 Years." The interesting and informative event completely sold out.

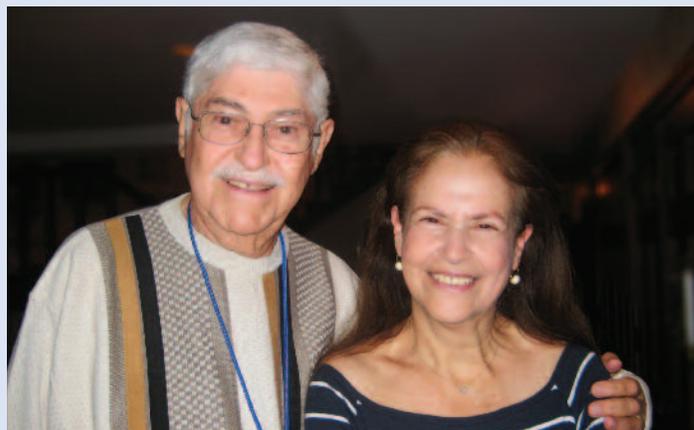
Prof. Yablonka also spoke at a special brunch at the home of AABGU supporter Zahava Haenosh, as well as at a reception at the home of Arline and Ben Guefen.

Ben Guefen and Prof. Hanna Yablonka

## LOCAL IMPACT AT BGU

At the 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting this past May, a new 3 Tesla (3T) MRI was dedicated at BGU's Brain Imaging Research Center at Soroka University Medical Center.

An anonymous couple and other donors from the Greater Texas Region supplied a significant portion of the funds for this much-needed MRI. Steven and Sandra Finkelman and Ellen Marcus represented the region at the ceremony.



A Texas-sized *mazal tov* to Stephen K. Breslauer of Houston and Ellen Marcus of Austin, who were recently named vice chairs of BGU's Board of Governors by the newly elected chairman, Alexander M. Goren.

**CARRYING ON A HOUSTON TRADITION**

Once again the fall regional board meeting was held in the Finkelmans' *sukkab*. The agenda featured an update on community events in the coming months, a discussion of the 12th Annual Gourmet Kosher Dining Extravaganza, and a delicious meal prepared by Sandra.

Houston philanthropist and businessman David Barish will be honored at the upcoming Extravaganza on February 5, 2013, and will receive AABGU's David Ben-Gurion Leadership Award.



Steven and Sandra Finkelman and Ellen Marcus are recognized by BGU President Rivka Carmi at the 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting for the Greater Texas Region's generous contributions to the Negev's new MRI.

**MID-ATLANTIC**

Jack R Bershad, *Regional Chair*  
 Connie & Sam Katz, *Philadelphia Chapter Chairs*  
 Marla & Dr. Robert Zipkin, *Philadelphia Chapter Vice Chairs*  
 Claire Winick, *Director*  
 Andrew L. Demchick, *Associate Director*  
 (215) 884-4510 midatlantic@aabgu.org

**CELEBRATING BGU'S OVERSEAS PROGRAM**

Longtime community leaders and Ben-Gurion Society members Stanley Ginsburg and Ira Ingerman hosted a luncheon in May with alumni of the Ginsburg-Ingerman Overseas Student Program (OSP), Zahava Mandelbaum of Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Jeremy Kaplan of the College of New Jersey. BGU's study abroad program was named in honor of these generous benefactors who have supported its development for nearly 30 years.

Stanley shared his memories about the request made by then-AABGU national president Isaac Auerbach, of blessed memory, to save a fledgling overseas program at BGU. After consulting with his friend and business partner, Ira, they wholeheartedly agreed to get involved.

Both men strongly believe that giving young people an opportunity to experience Israeli culture and learn about the country and its people, while studying at an outstanding university is an effective way to develop new advocates for Israel on American college campuses. OSP has had over 1,000 students since its inception and continues to grow.



**COMMUNITY EVENTS BRING NEW FRIENDS TO AABGU**

The Mid-Atlantic Region continues outreach efforts with events, including:

- BGU's Dr. Henriette Dahan Kalev's compelling presentations on "The Iranian Threat to Israel" to over 200 congregants at Main Line Reform Temple and Temple Sholom
- A well attended first-time event in Pittsburgh in July to introduce the community to AABGU
- Profs. Eilon Adar and Avigad Vonshak's visit in September for the kickoff reception to the region's annual tribute brunch, and a synagogue presentation and parlor meeting
- The joyous 100th birthday celebration of Murray H. Shusterman, member of BGU's Board of Governors, at the beautiful historical landmark home and farm of Aileen Whitman in September
- Roberta and Ernest Scheller, Jr. hosted the patron party in October supporting the annual tribute event



**Left:** The Philadelphia chapter's annual community tribute event will be held on November 11, 2012 at the Ritz-Carlton. The event will honor Charlotte and Dr. Carroll Weinberg, veteran leaders and generous donors, serving currently as Philadelphia chapter associate chairs. It will also celebrate the 40th anniversary of American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. **Right:** Stanley Ginsburg; Jeremy Kaplan; Zahava Mandelbaum; Andrea Meiseles, director of the North American office for international academic affairs; and Ira Ingerman.

**NEW ENGLAND**

Max Schechner, *President*  
 Kevin M. Leopold, *Executive Director — Northeast*  
 (800) 962-2248, ext. 2012  
 newengland@aabgu.org

**NEW ENGLAND VISITS BGU**

Members of the AABGU community in New England recently visited Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. They included Bernice Krupp and her son, George Krupp, as well as Fred Hopengarten and Betty Herr.

The Krupps are longtime friends and supporters of BGU, and it is always wonderful when they have the opportunity to visit the University they helped build.

Bernice and George met with Dr. Paula Kabalo, the founding director of the Israel Studies International Program, a graduate level program taught in English at the University's Sede Boqer Campus. Dr. Kabalo explained her research at the David Ben-Gurion Archives, and the uniqueness of BGU's Israel Studies program, the only one of its kind in the country.

The Krupps also toured the old city of Beer-Sheva with its Turkish-era buildings. Bernice and George left amazed with the developments at both BGU and in the city since their last visit.

Fred Hopengarten and Betty Herr, along with their families, have been extremely generous to BGU over many years. They were eager to learn more about the advancements being made at the University. They were filled with excitement as they toured the campus and met with Prof. Georgy Burde of the Department of Solar Energy and Environmental Physics. Prof. Burde is the incumbent of the Edward and Bertha Rose Chair in Desert Meteorology, established by their aunt and uncle.

Fred was particularly moved when he recognized many of the names on the Founders Wall, and that so many others share his interest in BGU and the Negev.



Dr. Paula Kabalo with Bernice and George Krupp



Fred Hopengarten and Betty Herr at the Founders Wall

At the end of their visit, Fred said he will send over 25 cousins framed pictures of himself and his wife standing next to their aunt's and uncle's names.

If you would like to visit BGU, contact Kevin Leopold at 646-452-3703 to arrange a tour tailored to your interests.

**NORTHWEST**

Sonny Hurst, *President*  
 Daphna Noily, *Director*  
 (415) 927-2119  
 northwest@aabgu.org

**CONNECTING THE BAY AREA TO ISRAEL**

The Northwest Region is always intertwined with Israel, whether it's BGU faculty members spending time in the Bay Area, the strong Israeli community who make their home in Northern California, or AABGU supporters traveling to the University.

Some recent faculty visits include:

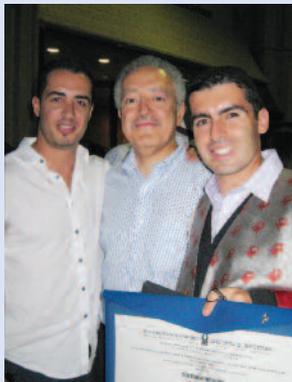
- Prof. Miri Amit, dean of BGU's Eilat Campus, gave the keynote address at the "Breathe: Women's Wellness



Prof. Miri Amit spoke to a group of 40 residents at the San Francisco Towers, hosted by Vera and Walter Obermeyer.

Symposium” at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto, as well as several community presentations

- Etgar Keret, BGU faculty member and Israel’s most popular short story writer, spoke at the San Francisco JCC
- Prof. Alon Tal, faculty member at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, was on sabbatical at Stanford University’s Center for Conservation Biology



**Left:** Ben-Gurion Society member Eric Benhamou (center) with his sons Manny (left) and Ori, recent graduate of BGU’s Medical School for International Health (MSIH) **Right:** Lorry Lokey and Joanne Harrington with BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi in the Living Legacy Garden on the Marcus Family Campus

The region was well represented at BGU’s 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting. Attendees included Coby and Riki Dayan; Harry and Carol Saal; Zvi and Ricki Alon with their daughter, Dorielle; Joe Nadel; Dvora Ezralow; Shamy and Daphna Noily, regional director.

Congratulations to Harry and Carol Saal on their new positions on BGU’s Board of Governors. Harry recently became a governor, while Carol, a longtime governor, was appointed a vice chair.

**SOUTHWEST**

Ruth Flinkman-Marandy, *Campaign Chair*  
 Philip Gomperts, *Director*  
 (310) 552-3300  
 southwest@aabgu.org

**PRODUCTIVE FACULTY VISITS BRING COLLABORATIONS AND NEW GIFTS**

The Southwest Region recently hosted a number of important visitors from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Southern California.

Prof. Eilon Adar, head of the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at BGU’s Sede Boqer campus, met with his counterparts at UC Irvine and made presentations to top level faculty. This visit led to UC Irvine’s chancellor and three deans visiting BGU, which resulted in the signing of a memorandum of cooperation in various fields.

BGU’s diabetes expert, Dr. Eli Lewis, shared his latest research at several speaking engagements. Dr. Lewis addressed a large gathering of BGU supporters at the Beverly Hilton. He also spoke at a parlor meeting to some 40 guests, hosted by Judith and Richard Gould and Ann and Fred Stern at the Sterns’ home in Newport Beach. As always, Dr. Lewis was an eloquent and compelling speaker.

Prof. Ron Folman, of BGU’s Department of Physics and head of both the Atom Chip Laboratory and the Nanofabrication Facility, shared his insights into the very small world of atoms with members of the local community.

Regional Campaign Chair Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and her husband, Ben Marandy, were the gracious hosts



**Top:** (Front) Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and Ben Marandy, (Back) Dr. Eli Lewis, Dr. Bernard and Judith Franklin **Bottom:** Janis and Avi Rojany; Jacob Segal, chairman of the California Israel Chamber of Commerce; and Larry Field at the Beverly Hilton where Prof. Folman spoke

of a meeting with Prof. Folman in their elegant home in Century City. The following evening, Prof. Folman shared his research with BGU supporters at the Beverly Hilton.

During Prof. Folman's visit, two significant pledges were made in support of his research:

- \$3 million from Ruth Flinkman-Marandy and Ben Marandy will fund a new atom chip and quantum optics research and development facility at BGU

- \$1 million from the Henry and Anita Weiss family will help further nanotechnology research at BGU

Heartfelt thanks to these generous supporters and friends for helping BGU continue to be an oasis of innovation in Israel's Negev desert. And, congratulations to Ruth Flinkman-Marandy on her recent election as a governor on BGU's Board of Governors.

## WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE

Edie and Art Hessel, *Washington D.C. Chapter Chairs*  
Keren M. Waranch, *Director*  
(240) 482-4844  
wash-balt@aabgu.org

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE AREA OF ADDICTION

The Washington/Baltimore Region congratulates Toby Mower, AABGU supporter from Baltimore, on the inauguration of the Toby Mower Presidential Development Chairs in Addiction Prevention and Treatment. Toby and Morton Mower were in Beer-Sheva in May for the dedication ceremony during BGU's 42nd Annual Board of Governors Meeting.

While at BGU, Toby, a longtime substance abuse treatment advocate, gave a lecture on battling addiction to faculty and students in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University's Leon and Mathilde Recanati School for Community Health Professions.

### COMMUNITY EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

In April, the region worked with the local Jewish National Fund chapter to bring BGU's Prof. Alon Tal to speak to supporters of both organizations. The event was hosted by Bryan Cave, LLP, thanks to regional board member Daniel Prywes.

Prof. Tal discussed "Practical Dilemmas in Greening the Negev: Common Challenges for BGU and JNF." Thanks to Samuel Halperin, AABGU national and regional board member, for bringing together these two groups of Israel supporters.

In July, the region partnered with the Embassy of Israel for an event featuring Prof. Zvi Bentwich, head of BGU's Center for Emerging Tropical Diseases and AIDS. Prof. Bentwich spoke about how BGU is helping fight AIDS in Africa, and specifically in Ethiopia.

### PUT BGU ON YOUR ISRAEL ITINERARY

Several members of the local AABGU community recently made their first visit to BGU. Thanks to Ira and Marcia Wagner, Larry Paul and Joye Newman, Jeff and Jessica Rum, and Emile Bendit for spending time at the University.



**Top:** Jeff Rum and his family (right) visit BGU's Center for Women's Health Studies and Promotion. **Bottom:** Larry Paul and Joye Newman enjoy time with students at BGU.

Contact the Washington/Baltimore Region office to arrange your tour of BGU.

### WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Welcome to David Speer, new development assistant in the region's office. David is a native of Baltimore. He previously worked for Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Mercer County, New Jersey.

For more information about upcoming Washington/Baltimore events, visit: [www.aabgu.org/regions-events/washington-baltimore/](http://www.aabgu.org/regions-events/washington-baltimore/)

## ETGAR KERET

*Continued from page 15*

own character and personality in a safe environment—not one where you can hurt other people or look bad. You can just *be*—watch whatever is going to happen. You can be more sincere with yourself.

**Do you teach students a process for writing?** I have my own style of writing—I don't think everybody should write that way. It's individualistic. Everybody should find their own process, point of interest and attitude.

In the U.S. [where Keret briefly taught at Wesleyan University and at an international writer's program in Iowa], I encountered many students

talking about creative writing as a craft. I don't see it as that, but as self-expression. I tell them, I know you have a concept of the well-written story—but I want to introduce the concept of the good story: the passion, the yearning, the stakes you have in it. Craft means something can be beautiful but sterile. If you have a pile of well-constructed paragraphs it won't produce a better story than someone who stutters, sweats, but has something he wants passionately to tell.

**What do you most want your students to learn?** First and foremost, to find the story they want to tell. Often it's not the first one. You often have expectations about writing something important—"literature"—and have

many presuppositions and predispositions toward what you should and shouldn't write. That's one thing you need to get free of. If I talked to you in a room with TV cameras, you would speak differently. If people try to switch to a higher register—and think they're making a speech to the entire world—that puts them far away from their own wishes and desires.

**If you lived somewhere other than Israel, would you be a different writer?**

If I lived elsewhere I would write other stuff. The short over-the-top condensed form goes very well with the conflict and feeling of tensions of Israel—that often appears in my stories. I would like to think that Israel is the best place to write. ■

## THE POT AND THE KETTLE

*Continued from page 20*

would never lie to their significant other, engage in wardrobing (returning a piece of clothing after it was worn), or hire someone who implied he could access competitors' files.

### VALIDATING RESULTS

This behavior did not emerge in other groups that were asked the same questions after recalling an instance of their own worthy behavior, a neutral daily event, or even a failure that made them feel sad or disappointed.

The findings of the carefully designed experiments support the premise that when people are unable to rationalize or justify their own ethical failure, they solve the internal tension by using a double-distancing mechanism. They dissociate themselves from their wrongdoing by being more critical of others and presenting themselves as more ethical and virtuous.

"I particularly like taking the lead provided by folk wisdom," Barkan says. "Everyone knows the saying, the pot calls the kettle black, and almost every language has its own version.

But demonstrating it empirically, and understanding the underlying mechanisms of the behavior, is not trivial.

"The research carries a lesson and stimulates thoughts about possible intervention. This is the essence of research—going backward from the phenomenon to its underlying mechanisms, and then forward, aiming to change behavior and encourage people to behave more ethically."

To underscore how important it is to understand our own and other people's behavior, Barkan cites another study some of her colleagues are carrying out. This compares the ethical codes of Washington politicians and New York businesspeople. One finding: politicians and businesspeople both consider the other group very unethical compared to their own. This affects their mutual expectations, behavior to each other and their own actions.

"If you think about the potential for a dangerous relationship between these two groups," Barkan points out, "you see that people can ask for a favor they wouldn't do themselves because they assume the other side is cheating left and right."

Barkan takes the ethics of psycholo-

gy seriously, as well. "When I teach research methods, I dedicate extra time for ethics. I argue that an important part of being a good researcher is respecting people and their privacy, and asking whether an experiment's potential benefit is worth the cost experienced by participants."

Barkan is an enthusiastic member of the BGU community. After earning her degrees in Israel and finishing postdoctoral work at Indiana University, she weighed two job offers in the United States and decided that returning to Israel was important to her. She visited BGU to give a talk and found herself pressed to accept a position there.

"They weren't just offering me a job; they offered me a home. It was different, a chance to become one member of this big extended family. And that's the way it's been ever since."

In 2009, Barkan was severely injured by a missile strike on her way home from campus. "I am so appreciative of the way the BGU community supported me during my recovery," she says.

"Being a community and an extended family is not a strategic position for the University—I believe it's the only way BGU knows how to carry itself." ■

## SAFEGUARDING ISRAEL

*Continued from page 13*

“We choose situations that may seem unrealistic, but sometimes materialize—in one case, a major fire, and in another, a bus accident occurring over the border. Last year we simulated a severe cyber attack that damaged vital systems, so all the problems had to be solved without communication.”

The challenge: “We’re always prepared for what has already happened. We teach to be prepared for what hasn’t happened yet.”

Aharonson-Daniel is enthusiastic about a new program oriented to Americans and other non-Israelis that will open next year, to be operated jointly with Columbia University. Participants will attend four days per week for a year and top students who choose to write a research study can stay for a second year. Classes will be in English, with a broader focus on international crisis preparation systems.

Aharonson-Daniel finds BGU exactly the right setting for this work. “The whole university is open to the community and we don’t compromise the academic level to do that.”

A few years ago she learned that Beer-Sheva did not have enough people to answer the phones during missile attacks, so she asked President Rivka Carmi if she would support student recruitment for the purpose. Prof. Carmi wrote to everyone on campus.

“We got an enormous response. Now we have a database of 3,000 people willing to volunteer and we can staff the whole city!” ■

**The Homeland Security Institute is currently a virtual one, with plans for a building once funding is secured. Enthusiasm is high: There are already collaborations forged among researchers from different fields and labs. Strong support from both the Israeli and U.S. governments exists, and there is interest in security technologies investment from industry.**

**For more information about BGU’s Homeland Security Institute and funding needs, visit [www.aabgu.org/homeland](http://www.aabgu.org/homeland) or call your closest AABGU regional office.**

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