

# IMPACT



AMERICAN ASSOCIATES  
Ben-Gurion University  
*of the Negev*

WINTER/SPRING 2008

**ARCHEOLOGY  
IN THE NEGEV:  
DIGGING YIELDS  
SURPRISES**

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**NEW PARTNERS:  
EXXONMOBIL AND BGU**

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**HOPE FOR DIABETICS**

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**BREAKING GROUND  
FOR HIGH-TECH**

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**DONORS MAKE AN IMPACT**



Dear Friends,

This year AABGU is celebrating its 36th anniversary (see page 3) and Israel is commemorating its 60th birthday as a sovereign nation. I can't think of a better way to celebrate than by showcasing how Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is fulfilling its mandate to become a scientific research and teaching center that inspires humanity everywhere.

In this issue of *Impact*, you'll learn not only about the latest cutting-edge research that is turning BGU into a world leader in many fields, but also about how the University is realizing its mission to reach out to the community and develop the Negev. Through the stories of faculty members, students, alumni and AABGU supporters lies a common thread of social action through community service that is inspiring and impressive.

Thank you for the role you have played and will continue to play in helping AABGU and BGU reach these milestones. I invite you to send your comments about this issue or suggestions for future issues to [Impact@aabgu.org](mailto:Impact@aabgu.org).

Happy anniversary,

Carol D. Saal  
President

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**ON THE COVER:** During an archeological dig in the Negev, the student excavation team takes a break under the hot desert sun. The photograph was taken by air balloon by Sky View Photography. Story begins on page 10.

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# AABGU CELEBRATES ITS 36TH ANNIVERSARY

**THIS YEAR**, American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (AABGU) is celebrating its double *chai* anniversary. In Hebrew, *chai* is equivalent to the number 18, but more significantly, it also means “life.” For 36 years, AABGU, with the assistance of countless supporters, has breathed life into what has become an oasis of innovation.

There is much to be proud of at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: its first rate faculties (colleges), departments and institutes with top level researchers leading the way in

water management and purification, solar energy, biotechnology, nanotechnology, medical research, desert studies, and many other important disciplines.

Each year, BGU attracts more than 17,000 students, the best and brightest, to its excellent academic programs. All these factors combine to form one of the most prestigious institutions of its kind in the world. BGU is also the catalyst for the essential development of the Negev and is the driving force behind providing community service and

education to all citizens of the region.

These milestones could not have materialized without the support of so many Americans who helped realize David Ben-Gurion’s 60-year-old dream to make the desert bloom. To thank all the dreamers and pioneers, AABGU is marking the occasion throughout the year with various events around the country and is offering unique anniversary funding and recognition opportunities. To learn more about how you can get involved, contact the regional office nearest you or call 800-962-2248. ■

## GREETINGS FROM AABGU’S NEW EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT: DORON KRAKOW

Doron Krakow became AABGU’s executive vice president in October 2007. Prior to joining AABGU, Krakow was a senior vice president for United Jewish Communities (UJC). His responsibilities included managing and directing UJC’s efforts in Israel and around the world. From 1992 to 2002, he was the national director of Young Judaea, America’s oldest and largest Zionist youth movement. Krakow received an MBA in finance from the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University. His first career position was as a financial analyst at IBM in New York. He resides in Tenafly, New Jersey with his wife and three sons.



**I AM PLEASED** and proud to be greeting you as the new executive vice president of American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Completing my MBA in finance a

number of years ago, I never imagined that my career would bring me here. And yet, I can’t think of a place I’d rather be.

In a few short weeks we will begin the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. We will herald the extraordinary achievements of our still young country, which has become an international leader in technology, science, medicine and the arts.

But the task of nation building is far from complete. War and terrorism serve as an ever-present threat to continued stability. Growing gaps between the “haves” and the “have nots,” diminishing levels of educational achievement and funding, and numerous social and political problems remain to be addressed in the years ahead.

The state of public and higher education has

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# EXXONMOBIL TO PARTNER WITH BGU ON NEW ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY, FUEL-EFFICIENT SYSTEM



Prof. Moti Herskowitz

## EXXONMOBIL CORPORATION

announced that it is partnering with QuestAir Technologies, Plug Power Inc. and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev on plans to commercialize an on-vehicle hydrogen production system for use in a fuel cell-powered lift truck application.

Under the arrangements, Plug Power will seek to commercialize unique technologies developed by ExxonMobil, QuestAir Technologies and Ben-Gurion University's Blechner Center for Industrial Catalysis and Process Development that take liquid fuels and convert them into hydrogen onboard the vehicle where it will be used in a fuel cell power train.

Currently, most prototype

hydrogen vehicles on the road are powered by compressed or liquefied hydrogen that is delivered to distribution points and then stored on-board the vehicles at high pressures. The ExxonMobil system uses conventional fuels—gasoline, diesel, ethanol or biodiesel—to produce hydrogen on demand, making that infrastructure unnecessary. Further, safety issues associated with transporting and storing hydrogen, both on and off the vehicle, are avoided.

"We hope to demonstrate significant infrastructure, logistics and cost advantages compared to other hydrogen vehicle systems, all while reducing the impact on the environment," said Dr. Emil Jacobs, an ExxonMobil vice

president for research and engineering, in making the announcement. The partnership agreement has sparked worldwide interest with coverage by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *BusinessWire* and a number of other media outlets.

Ultimately, the system has the potential to provide up to 80 percent more fuel efficiency than today's internal combustion engines and to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 45 percent. The immediate goal is to apply the system to lift trucks.

The agreement reflects the quality of research being done at BGU's Blechner Center for Industrial Catalysis and Process Development. Prof. Moti Herskowitz, the Center's director and the University's vice president and dean for research and development, expressed his satisfaction: "This is an incredible opportunity to see research move from the laboratory into the commercial realm." The agreement was made in conjunction with the University's technology transfer company, B.G. Negev Technologies Ltd.

Also under way at the Blechner Center is work on a "second generation" biodiesel fuel. Existing biodiesel fuels are made by combining specific vegetable oils, like soybean or rapeseed, with methanol. Fuel produced by this process has different properties than crude-derived diesel, and its applications are limited. BGU is using a novel process to develop a biodiesel fuel from a variety of vegetable oils. Its composition, although similar to crude-derived diesel, contains major improvements, including low aromatics and no sulfur. It displays improved properties and excellent lubricity that translate into good performance in preliminary engine tests. ■



Stanley Ginsburg (far left) and Arlene Ginsburg (second from the right in the rear) with their family at the Marcus Family Campus in Beer-Sheva, where the Ginsburg-Ingerman Overseas Student Program was formally named.

## GINSBURG-INGERMAN OVERSEAS STUDENT PROGRAM NAMED

**THE GINSBURG-INGERMAN** Overseas Student Program was named in the presence of the extended Ginsburg family at a ceremony on the Marcus Family Campus in December. Arlene and Stanley Ginsburg, of AABGU's Mid-Atlantic Region, brought their six children, eight grandchildren and a

nephew with them to Israel to participate in the moving event.

The newly endowed Ginsburg-Ingerman Program will allow for greater academic course offerings, a wider range of scholarships and a growing array of activities beyond the classroom. BGU's unique program

caters to international students coming from a wide variety of academic disciplines and interests. Classes are taught in English but students study Hebrew and live and socialize with Israeli students, a phenomenon that distinguishes the Ginsburg-Ingerman Program from other overseas study programs. Students can attend for a semester or full year. To learn more about the program, contact the OSP office at 212-687-7721 or [osp@aabgu.org](mailto:osp@aabgu.org), or visit [www.bgu-osp.org](http://www.bgu-osp.org). ■

## PHILADELPHIA CANCER CENTER PARTNERS WITH BGU

**IN JANUARY**, the Fox Chase Cancer Center (FCCC) formalized a five-year partnership with BGU, signing an agreement at a special ceremony at FCCC. The affiliation honors an international partnership that began in 2002 and aims to explore genetic risks of cancer and incorporate these factors into clinical practice across different cultural settings.

For the past five years, the two institutions have collaborated on programs such as defining the role that viruses play in human cancers, and understanding the basis for cancer progression. Eight research

projects are currently under way; four joint publications have already resulted, with two more in the pipeline. Forty visits have been made between the two institutions by visiting professors, and five joint symposia plus eight seminars and lectures have been held. A BGU graduate student is now working on his dissertation research at FCCC.

The partnership is the brainchild of Dr. Alton Sutnick who founded and chairs the Health Sciences Resource Committee of AABGU's Philadelphia Chapter along with Dr. Stanley Tauber.

Fox Chase Cancer Center was the nation's first cancer hospital, founded in Philadelphia in 1904. Designated a National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center since 1974, it conducts research and programs on cancer prevention, detection and treatment. ■



Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt, rector of BGU, signs the partnership agreement while Dr. Michael Seiden, president of Fox Chase Cancer Center, looks on.



In the photo from left: Harry Greenwald, AABGU chief financial and administrative officer; Jacob Shochat; Eitan Sasson; Lisa Sasson; Arnold Bengis; Lea Golan, AABGU senior director for university affairs and special projects; Shlomo Mintz; Crista Morneweg; and Dr. Michael Rahav

## AABGU BRINGS SHLOMO MINTZ TO CARNEGIE HALL

**THE WORLD-RENOWNED** Israeli violin virtuoso Shlomo Mintz graciously agreed to bring his 50th Birthday World Tour to Carnegie Hall on November 18, 2007 on behalf of AABGU's 36th anniversary. The celebratory concert

benefited the Scholarship Fund of BGU's Albert Katz International School for Desert Studies.

Mintz, considered one of the foremost violinists of our time, has performed with the most celebrated

orchestras and conductors around the world. His unusual program consisted of all 24 caprices by Niccolò Paganini, one of the most difficult repertoires written for the violin. The concert was made possible thanks to sponsors Elizabeth and David Bengis, Marlene and Dr. Samuel Halperin, Evelyn and Edmond Klauber, Dr. Michael Rahav, and Jacob Shochat. ■

## BGU APPOINTS AMOS DRORY VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**IN OCTOBER, AMOS DRORY**, who served as executive vice president of AABGU for the past two years, returned to Israel to assume a new post as the University's vice president for external affairs. In this role he oversees the departments of Donor and Associate Affairs, Public Affairs and Publications and Media Relations.

A BGU faculty member since 1977, Amos has held a number of senior positions including chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, dean of the

Guilford Glazer School of Business and Management, and dean of the University's Eilat Campus. He has most recently become the first incumbent of the Ernest Scheller, Jr. Chair in Innovative Management. In addition to his new duties, Amos will remain engaged in the Guilford Glazer School, teaching and doing research in relevant areas.

Prof. Drory has published extensively in the fields of organizational behavior and politics, work motivation and stress, conflict management, and impression management. He earned his B.A. in psychology from The Hebrew

University of Jerusalem and his Ph.D. in organizational psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia.

University President Prof. Rivka Carmi praised the appointment, ratified by BGU's Executive Committee, commenting that "Prof. Drory's familiarity both with the University and with the Associates abroad has prepared him for this critical position."



Carol Saal, AABGU president, expressed deep gratitude to Amos for the significant contributions he made in developing the organization, and all of us at AABGU are delighted to continue to work with him in his new capacity. ■

## REMEMBERING DAN KOSHLAND FRIEND OF THE UNIVERSITY

**AABGU MOURNS THE PASSING OF PROFESSOR DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR. FRIEND, DONOR AND SCIENTIST.**

**DAN WAS A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE** in modern-day science, making fundamental discoveries in biochemistry that changed the course of research. He was also a committed friend of Israel and devoted supporter of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, to which he donated generously. BGU bestowed upon him an honorary doctorate in 2005 in recognition of his contributions to science.

In addition to contributing theories that led to new understanding of enzyme and protein chemistry, cell signaling and the chemistry of Alzheimer's disease, Prof. Koshland played an important part in helping people relate to modern science. He was editor-in-chief of *Science* magazine from 1985-1995, and established the Marian Koshland Science Museum of the National Academy of Sciences in memory of his first wife, herself a scientist.

Holding a Ph.D. in chemistry, Koshland served as a group leader



Professor Daniel E. Koshland, Jr. receiving an honorary doctorate degree at BGU in 2005.

in the Manhattan Project during World War II. During his career he was variously affiliated with Brookhaven National Laboratory,

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## MBA TEAM WINS SECOND PLACE IN WORLDWIDE COMPETITION

**A BUSINESS PLAN TO PRODUCE** and market "green" biodiesel fuel made from microalgae earned second place for four Honors MBA students from BGU in the prestigious Intel-Berkeley Technology Entrepreneurship Challenge in November.

The competition is designed to showcase innovative technologies with a potential to benefit society, as well as investors. The team from the Guilford Glazer School of Business and Management competed against 20 other entries from 11 countries, and was judged by 20 Bay Area venture capitalists. The Glazer group came away with a \$10,000 check, as well as a batch of business cards from potential investors.

The project's scientific leader was Prof. Shoshana Arad, of BGU's Department of Biotechnology Engineering, who is an authority on algae growth and genetics. Avi Avidan,

a 28-year-old who holds degrees in biotechnical engineering and business administration, made the presentation. "We were given only 15 minutes to explain our project and then were grilled for 10 minutes," he reported.

The plan was entered under the company name, Negev Renewable Green Fuels (NRG Fuels). Based on Prof. Arad's research, it involves growing microalgae and converting them to biodiesel. Unicellular microalgae have the highest oil content and CO<sub>2</sub> absorption of all plants and vegetables, require little cultivation space, and can be grown in Israel in seawater-filled tubes.

It is anticipated that the system can reduce biodiesel production costs by up to 40

percent, creating an output 15 times higher than the best agricultural feedstock.

First place went to a German project on the early detection of breast cancer through intra-operative 3D imaging. A Brazilian team came in third with a navigation system for the visually impaired. ■



Photo Credit: Bruce Cook

In photo from left to right: Will Swope, vice president and general manager, Intel Corporation with BGU's Honors MBA team members Roe Arbel, Daniel Eisen, Avi Avidan, Noga Bar-El and Jerome S. Engel, executive director of the Lester Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, UC Berkeley.



## DORON KRAKOW

*Continued from Page 3*

become one of Israel's greatest challenges. Lengthy strikes (now settled) by the nation's middle and high school teachers and by senior university faculty threatened the cancellation of the current academic year. The country faces a growing need to improve its ability to compete for the talents of its finest researchers, who are increasingly drawn to more favorable conditions at universities abroad. We must play a critical role in this effort. For while Israel is not home to any of the world's natural resources, it is home to perhaps the most important resource of all: the brain power of its people.

Ben-Gurion University has been, is and will be among Israel's most important assets in fueling the nation-building agenda. The only university in Israel established by government mandate to make the desert bloom and develop the Negev, BGU is reaching out to the best and brightest faculty and students.

In November, I made my first visit to BGU in this new role. I had been to the University on several prior occasions, but never with the acute sense of focus that accompanied me this time around. And what I saw inspired me.

I met faculty members pushing the boundaries of science in bio and nanotechnology. I encountered perhaps the world's finest center for Hebrew literature. I engaged in dialogue with key players in the Robert H. Arnow Center for Bedouin Studies and Development, which has achieved previously unimaginable penetration of the Negev's Bedouin community. I attended a ground-

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### Ben-Gurion University has been, is and will be among Israel's most important assets...

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breaking ceremony, featuring Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, for the new Advanced Technologies Park (see pg. 23).

I spent an evening with students in the Open Apartments Program in Beer-Sheva's poorest neighborhood. Day by day they provide activities for children, assistance for the elderly, as well as tutoring and mentoring for students. They are the living embodiment of the University's commitment to fostering a brighter future—not just for BGU, but for

Beer-Sheva and for the entire region.

The final day of this first visit was spent in Sede Boqer. I have to imagine that in the earliest years of the University's history, many believed that being consigned to the desert was a burden to be borne. But it's hard to see that today. I spent an extraordinary hour in the middle of nowhere in which I saw tropical fish being bred in recycled water. The re-used water generated from this process was enriched with nutrients provided by fish waste, which was then irrigating plants, producing vegetation rich in natural oils used in creating bio-fuels. All of this in the midst of one of the driest regions of the world.

I can't recall how many of the faculty, students and administrators, with whom I met throughout the week, made a point of telling me that they had come to BGU because it was a place of dreams; a university on the rise; an institution rooted in Zionist ideas and ideals; an oasis of idealism in a sea of cynicism. They were inspired. And so am I.

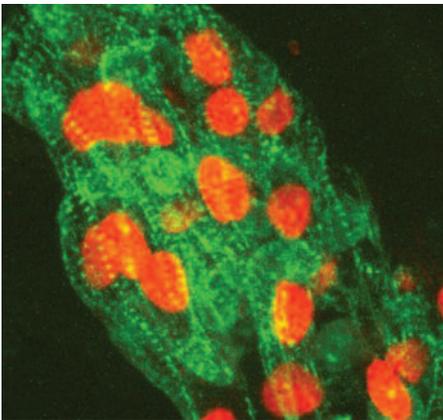
David Ben-Gurion envisioned a center for research and education in the Negev that would be a model for the world. AABGU, with your support, will play a growing part in furthering Ben-Gurion University's quest to continue to push the boundaries in every direction. ■

# ON THE CUTTING EDGE: SAVING LIVES WITH SEAWEED

**RESEARCH THAT IS UNDERWAY** right now will change our lives, but the fields are so new even their names are unfamiliar: biomaterials... scaffolds... neo-tissue engineering. These are areas that engage Professor Smadar Cohen, who chairs the Department of Biotechnology Engineering and has developed products that promise to revolutionize both laboratory research and cardiac care.

They are developed from common seaweed: a material called alginate, which is derived from algae.

Several years ago Prof. Cohen was looking for a better way to grow cells in her work with tissue regeneration—promoting the growth and repair of tissues and organs. Traditionally, to investigate how living cells behave



Rat cardiac cells cultured in AlgiMatrix.

outside the body, researchers put them on petri dishes. “But that’s not physiologically relevant,” Prof. Cohen points out. “Cells in bodies have neighbors; they’re surrounded by other cells; they have an environment. So we said if you want to regenerate a tissue, you must create an environment that mimics the body and simulates three dimensions.”

Prof. Cohen began looking at different materials and after many

experiments, settled on alginate. She used her chemistry expertise to create small sponge-like structures that provide an optimal greenhouse for cells to grow. She found that these tiny scaffolds, called AlgiMatrix, keep specific cells alive when isolated from the body and also enable them to maintain their activities for several months rather than a few days, which was the case with petri dishes.

AlgiMatrix has wide application for lab work. It offers a much more efficient way to test new drugs, Prof. Cohen explains. “Chemistry today can design 1,000 drugs per day—but you can’t test them all on animals. If we take human liver cells, and put them on very small plates of AlgiMatrix, we can use them to test the drugs, at least for initial screening.”

The product was launched in May 2007 by Invitrogen Corp., a California-based life science technology company, under license from BGU. “They heard about the work, loved it when they saw it, and immediately wanted to market it,” Prof. Cohen says. She has already developed two more sophisticated variations that are also headed for the market.

Her second discovery is so new it does not have a name yet, but is called simply BL-1040. It is an implant device to prevent the heart from suffering further damage after a heart attack, and it too is based on alginate and the

properties that make it a good matrix.

In the wake of an acute heart attack, the affected area typically becomes scarred and stops functioning. The strain on other cells causes them to die and the damage gets progressively worse. Working with a cardiologist, Dr. Jonathan Leor, Prof. Cohen found that alginate could be



Prof. Smadar Cohen, lower left, with the student team from the Dept. of Biotechnology Engineering that helped her develop AlgiMatrix.

used to create a sturdy, sponge-like scaffold that can be implanted to support the heart tissue and prevent deterioration.

BL-1040 is injected as a liquid into the bloodstream through the coronary artery during catheterization, and flows into the damaged heart muscle. There it forms a protective scaffold that enhances the heart muscle’s mechanical strength during recovery and repair. After six weeks it is naturally absorbed, leaving the heart stronger and more stable. Surprising even the researchers,

*Continued on Page 30*

# ARCHEOLOGY IN THE NEGEV: DIGGING YIELDS SURPRISES

**WHEN PROFESSOR STEVE ROSEN  
AND DR. GUNNAR LEHMANN**

directed a team of 60 students in a northern Negev excavation last summer, they were interested in transitions.

“About 1200 B.C.E. was when the late Bronze Age was changing to the Early Iron Age,” says Dr. Lehmann. “And it was the period when Egypt was leaving Palestine after ruling for 400 years, and the Philistines were coming in. We wanted to see what these transitions looked like in the rural countryside.”

The two archeologists, from the Department of Bible, Archeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, began exploring a small Philistine village

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Beyond the discoveries, the first expedition yielded a bonus—a close connection between the Israeli, German and Canadian students.

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that had been partly excavated in the 1980s. The team immediately found the Philistines’ characteristic painted pottery, agricultural installations, even a wine press and parts of a loom still in place. But digging a little deeper turned up some exciting surprises.

“About one foot down we hit the top of mud-brick walls,” Prof. Rosen relates, “two meters thick, going down more than a meter, and very, very well preserved. We don’t expect to find much mud-brick in an archeological site, because it’s sun-dried and melts when it gets wet. We know this kind of structure is an Egyptian administrative center, but to find one in the middle of what

Left: Well-preserved mud-brick Egyptian administrative buildings are visible. The round holes are pits cut into the late Bronze Age strata by the succeeding Philistine occupations.

was an agricultural field 80 years ago—it was incredible.”

The site appears to occupy about eight acres. The students—from BGU, the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, and two German universities—got intensive lessons in how to excavate mud-brick, a valuable archeological skill they would not ordinarily have developed in the Negev.

Dr. Lehmann observes that to find an Egyptian administrative center with three buildings in a flat village setting, rather than on a “tel” (official mound), could have broad significance. “Archeology neglects the villages,” he says. “This might shed some light on how the Egyptian administration and economy were organized.”

The two expedition leaders believe that the Egyptian structure was abandoned in about 1250 B.C.E. and the simpler Philistine village was deliberately built on top of it about a century later.

The newer site suggests some big-picture questions too: “If the Philistines were immigrating from the Mediterranean-Aegean world, how would they organize the territory?” asks Dr. Lehmann. “And where are the Israelites?”

One puzzle of Jewish history is that no archeological evidence has ever been found for the Exodus from Egypt. Perhaps, Dr. Lehmann speculates, the Exodus was from Egyptian overlords in Palestine rather than Egypt, and the Jews escaped to the unoccupied mountain area.

“They would probably have been

servants and farmers being exploited by the Egyptians. Maybe the Egyptians were appropriating farmlands for large buildings like the ones at the site, and the harsh conditions made them run to the mountains for a new life.”

These are just guesses, Dr. Lehman observes, but he believes the question

bone, but none has yet been found.

Artifacts from the dig were brought back to BGU for study. Later this year the site will be scanned remotely with electromagnetic equipment, which can reveal underground structure, so excavations planned for the 2009 and 2010 seasons can be done more safely.



Dr. Gunnar Lehmann and Prof. Steve Rosen with the BGU ceramic study collection.

is a legitimate one touching on a wider context beyond the scope of the excavation.

Animal bones found at the site raised hopes that those of camels would be among them. During the same period that the site was inhabited, human beings began to use camels, which enabled them to cross the desert for the first time. This opened up the important spice road from Arabia to Gaza, which ran close to the dig site. Prof. Rosen—an expert on nomadism—offered a prize to anyone who brought him a camel

Beyond its discoveries, the first expedition yielded a bonus—a close connection between the Israeli, German and Canadian students. Prof. Rosen explains: “We’re out there for a month in heat of 100, 103 degrees and everyone is working physically from early in the morning. Basically conditions are miserable and everybody suffers together. That kind of shared effort creates a bond, a rather intimate community—it’s one of the special things about archeology. It was very gratifying to see it.” ■

# DRINKING WINE: NEW HOPE FOR DIABETICS?

## CAN ALCOHOL BE GOOD FOR DIABETICS?

Health professionals have long been curious about whether a moderate consumption of alcohol might benefit people with Type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease also known as “adult onset” or “insulin resistant” diabetes.

According to Dr. Iris Shai, a senior lecturer and researcher with BGU’s Department of Epidemiology, “There have been observational studies showing that people with moderate alcohol consumption have less incidence of diabetes. But whether alcohol is beneficial to diabetics has never been investigated or proven.

“Alcohol in high amounts is unhealthy; we know that. On the other hand, one glass per day of red wine, for example, might be pretty beneficial for adults—and we suspected maybe even more beneficial for those with Type 2 diabetes.”

Dr. Shai’s research focuses on the association between diet and chronic diseases such as cardiovascular problems, obesity and diabetes. She and her collaborators—who include researchers at Harvard University—decided to investigate a possible connection between alcohol and diabetes by conducting, at the first stage, a small intervention study. For this demanding type of research, people with a specific disease are exposed to an element altogether new to them, and the results are tracked.

A pilot program was designed. One hundred and nine patients with established Type 2 diabetes, all abstainers over the age of 40, were enlisted. On a random basis, one part of the group was guided to drink a glass of wine with dinner each

evening. The rest—the placebo group—were given a light root beer. Some participants dropped out (many of whom were getting the root beer and would have preferred the wine). This left 91 people in the study.

The result after three months: in scientific terms, those who drank the

traditionally includes rigorous dietary restrictions, exercise, frequent blood sugar self-monitoring and medications.

Dr. Shai emphasizes that this study was intended only as a first step and that far more research is needed. However, the findings more than justify undertaking a full-scale two-year investigation. “Our hypothesis is that perhaps alcohol in moderation should be prescribed, but there are many aspects to explore.”

People who benefited from the research are already satisfied. Three months after the trial terminated, 61 percent of the subjects said that they believed alcohol was beneficial, and 49 percent were continuing to drink it in moderation. They also reported an improved ability to fall asleep.

The pilot study has drawn considerable interest in scientific publications, on the Internet, and among audiences to whom Dr. Shai has presented. Diabetes mellitus, Type 2, is a lifelong disease with many serious complications. It is rapidly increasing in the developed world, and the Center for Disease Control characterizes it as an epidemic. In North America, 90 to 95 percent of diabetics are Type 2; 20 percent of the population over 65 suffers from it. Moreover, it is increasingly seen in children and adolescents—perhaps as a result of obesity.

Dr. Shai notes that Israel is becoming a favored place to conduct intervention studies because patients are motivated and tend not to drop out. “So we can do very good studies with nutrition, and have many collaborations with the United States, Canada and Europe.” She has just finished a major study of weight-loss strategies and will publish the results soon.

“We do believe you are what you eat,” she observes. ■



Dr. Iris Shai

wine experienced a statistically significant drop in fasting plasma glucose, from a mean of 139.6 mg/dL to 118 mg/dL. The control group experienced no real change in this measurement. In other words, for those drinking wine, blood sugar level measured before meals was markedly reduced—the major goal in treating Type 2 diabetes.

“We expected a biochemical reaction but were surprised by the magnitude of the reduction,” Dr. Shai says. “To reduce the glucose level from 139 to 118—no pill can do that. This is exciting.” Treatment for diabetics

# PLAYING WITH PANDEMICS: SCIENCE MEETS THE VIRTUAL WORLD

**DOES THE BOOMING WORLD** of cyber games offer a new way to predict human behavior in critical situations?

Dr. Ran Balicer thinks so. An epidemiologist and public health physician with Ben-Gurion University's Department of Epidemiology, he has

**"I saw some surprising similarities between virtual epidemics and what I'm studying...there's real potential to use these sites as a platform for real science."**

—DR. RAN BALICER

a serious focus: studying infectious diseases such as influenza and planning how to mitigate epidemics and worldwide pandemics. With an M.D. and a master's degree in Public Health, he is involved in shaping Israel's response to infectious disease outbreaks and his research is



An avatar from the virtual world of *Second Life*, an online role-playing game with nearly 11 million participants.

published in international journals.

So he was surprised when an article he wrote for the publication *Epidemiology* ignited wide discussion both in the popular media and the scientific community. Called "Modeling Infectious Diseases Dissemination through Online Role-Playing Games," the article suggests using virtual reality as a platform for some "real world" studies.

"It was one of those projects where you have an idea in the middle of the night but hesitate to write it up because it's not typical," Balicer says. "But my colleagues thought it was a very good and useful idea to submit."

Dr. Balicer had heard about an unusual event in the "World of Warfare," a favorite virtual game for nine million players around the world. Subscribers construct their own elaborately rendered characters, called "avatars," and through them, play fantasy combat games of escalating difficulty.

To keep things lively for advanced players, the game administrators introduced a disease called Corrupted Blood. They gave an evil character named Hakkar the power to infect opponents with a sickness that weakened or even destroyed them. Unexpectedly, the disease spread like wildfire, because players can "transport" to other locations at will and their virtual pets could carry the infection. Eventually the game managers added new features to counter the epidemic and mollify thousands of furious players.

"I saw some surprising similarities between virtual epidemics and what I'm studying," Balicer says. "I read players' blogs and became more and



Dr. Ran Balicer

more convinced that there's real potential to use these sites as a platform for real science."

Increasingly, scientists depend on mathematical modeling and projection, he explains. In his field, these techniques are used to predict when epidemics will take place and the impact of different interventions. "Traditionally we try to assess various parameters of pathogen characteristics and human behavior and then use the computer to predict how disease spreads. But it's hard to incorporate different unique human attributes, and very challenging mathematically to incorporate a lot of groups with different behavior patterns.

"In the virtual world each character is controlled by a real person making decisions about how to adapt at any given moment. This gives much more lifelike behavioral patterns of people in the face of an epidemic." There are many striking differences between

*Continued on Page 31*

# NEW TOOL DETECTS GROUNDWATER POLLUTION—BEFORE IT HAPPENS

“**WHATEVER YOU APPLY** on the surface—waste from industry, agriculture or accidental liquid spills—may one day pollute groundwater,” says Dr. Ofer Dahan, a BGU lecturer and research hydrologist. “And groundwater is our most important water resource.”



Dr. Ofer Dahan

Protecting this resource from man-made pollution is difficult. It takes years, or even a decade, for contaminants to cross the vadose zone—the soil and rock layers between the land surface and the water table—and be identified in groundwater. Traditional monitoring methods rely on testing the groundwater itself. “But once the contamination has been detected, it’s too late: the groundwater is already polluted,” explains Dr. Dahan, who is with the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

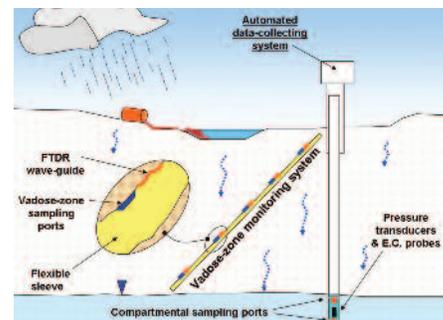
Now Dr. Dahan has developed a new monitoring system that can sample the infiltrating water and identify contamination before it reaches the aquifer. It is called the Vadose Zone Monitoring System. The apparatus can be installed beneath locations with a potential for pollution, such as gas stations, land-

fills, waste lagoons and agricultural facilities, including greenhouses and animal husbandry sites. The system signals contamination in the vadose zone long before it reaches the groundwater. “Such an early warning system is crucial, so that remediation procedures can be started and can be efficient,” Dr. Dahan says. There are feasible and relatively efficient remediation and cleanup technologies for the vadose zone, while groundwater cleanup and remediation is complicated, extremely expensive and may be employed too late to reverse the damage.

Groundwater pollution is a central issue throughout the world. Until now, no groundwater or aquifer remediation has been fully successful, in spite of multi-billion dollar investments. Today, environmental awareness is growing, and with it, a greater demand for effective pollution monitoring. Solid waste dumps, petroleum stations, wastewater treatment plants, chemical industries, and many more human activities that may pollute soils and groundwater need close and careful inspection. This may be provided by the Vadose Zone Monitoring



System, which is specially designed for monitoring water flow and contaminant migration in the subsurface.



Dr. Dahan did not set out to create a new product, he says. His research involves tracing the movement of contaminants and he looked for a tool that would provide continuous real-time information on the vadose zone’s flow process. “I found out that no such system or instrument was available. So we said if it doesn’t exist, we’d try to develop it. I’ve been working on it for five years and ended up with an efficient system capable of tracking contaminant migration in the subsurface.”

The new monitoring technology is being used for hydrology studies in Spain, Namibia and South Africa, as well as in Israel. Dr. Dahan has reported on the system in several journals and made a number of presentations to research audiences. BGU’s technology transfer company, BG Negev Technologies, is currently exploring possibilities for capital investment and markets.

The Vadose Zone Monitoring System, its developer says, will give governments and environmental protection organizations “more power to protect the groundwater from man-made pollution and ensure quality of water and, as a result, our quality of life.” ■

AABGU's 10 regional offices around the country play a vital role in helping BGU develop the bold new vision for the Negev, the focus of the future of Israel and the world. Regional events include symposia, luncheons, dessert receptions, gala evenings and missions to Israel. The following pages provide a glimpse of the regions' recent and upcoming activities. We invite you to get involved and become infused with the spirit of discovery.

## GREAT LAKES

Judy Rosen, *Director*  
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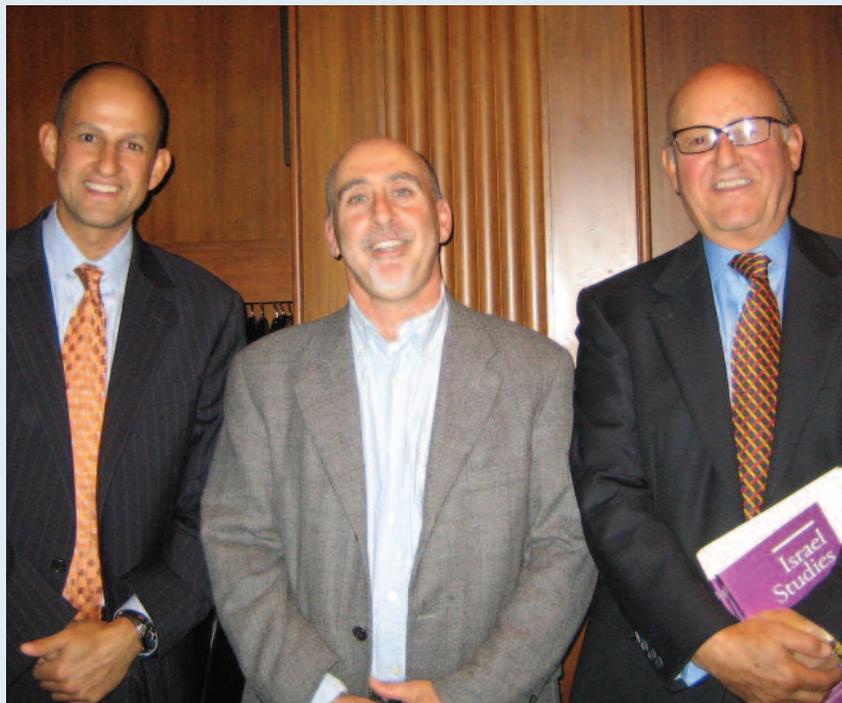
Prof. Ilan Shelef, head of the Neuroradiology Unit, Soroka University Medical Center, spoke at a June luncheon hosted by the law firm Funkhouser Vegosen Liebman & Dunn Ltd. The event was co-sponsored by the American Israel Chamber of Commerce. The group was impressed with Prof. Shelef's presentation on advances in brain imaging.

In a return visit to Chicago, Prof. Avigad Vonshak, director of BGU's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research (BIDR), spoke at the home of Shuli and Barukh Binah, Israel's consul general to the Midwest. A crowd of BGU supporters enjoyed his presentation, wonderful views of Chicago and a delicious dinner. The following day, Prof. Vonshak spoke at the home of BGU supporter Mili Kirsh, who invited guests for a "Lunch & Learn." The cutting-edge research in solar technology, alternative energy, desert agriculture, and water purification under way at our desert campus was his subject.

Prof. Alon Tal, also from the BIDR in Sede Boqer, spent a full day in Chicago meeting with friends of BGU. He spoke at a special luncheon program hosted by BGU supporter Ellis Goodman, and talked about his passion for the environment and how privileged he feels to be part of BGU—the university that cares. In the afternoon he was hosted by the Chicago Jewish Community Relations Council, which invited local environmental professionals to hear what is happening in the Israeli environmental movement. Congregation Beth Or, AABGU and the Jewish Community Relations Council co-sponsored Prof. Tal's evening remarks at Congregation Beth Or, where he was warmly welcomed and spoke on the topic, "What is Jewish about Jewish Environmentalism?"



Mili Kirsh and Prof. Avigad Vonshak



Paul Goodman, Prof. Alon Tal and Ellis Goodman

## GREATER BROWARD/DADE

Billy Joel, *President*  
Stuart Bart, *Chair*  
Samuel Borger and Lenore Shulman, *Co-chairs*

Aliza Ranish, *Director*  
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Seated: Arlene Simmons, Lenore Simmons, Dr. Bernard Simmons.  
Standing: Commissioner Robert Diamond, Regional Director Aliza Ranish,  
Executive Vice President Doron Krakow, Rubin Salant, Marcela Liberman,  
Arlene Cogan, Don Gustin

The region held a luncheon board meeting on October 17 to introduce Doron Krakow, executive vice president of AABGU. Held at the Emerald Hills Country Club in Hollywood, Florida, the event drew more than 50 regional board members and guests. That evening Rubin Salant and Marcela Liberman hosted a dinner for Krakow and guests Sandra and Billy Joel, Arlene Cogan and Don Gustin, Dr. Bernard and Lenore Simmons and Commissioner Robert and Arlene Diamond.

The Greater Broward/Dade Region launched a luncheon and lecture series called “The Buzz from BGU.” The inaugural event was held October 22 with guest presenter Dr. Leslie Lobel of the Department of Virology and Developmental Biology. He gave a thought-provoking presentation on combating epidemics and various viruses.

Prof. Arie Moran, deputy vice president and dean for research and development and a senior member of the Department of Physiology, spoke on heart health on November 8. On December 3, Danny Rubinstein of the Department of Middle East Studies gave a briefing about the current Middle East situation. All three events were held at the Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort.

Our annual gala will take place on Sunday, March 16 at the Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort in Sunny Isles Beach. BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi will bestow an honorary doctorate degree upon Rubin Salant (see pg. 25). Additionally, the David Ben-Gurion Award will be presented to Adele and Samuel Borger, Neomi and Michael Dezer, Sandra and the Hon. Billy Joel, Rina and Yoel Saraf, and Ethel and David Sommer.

## GREATER NEW YORK

Lite Sabin and Jessica Sillins, *Co-chairs*  
Kevin M. Leopold, *Director*  
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Nearly 250 friends and well-wishers attended the Greater New York Region’s gala dinner at the Grand Hyatt on October 24. This wonderful event celebrated the 10th anniversary and dedication of the Robert H. Arnow Center for Bedouin Studies and Development at BGU and paid tribute to Bob Arnow, the man who made it possible.

Eugene M. Grant and Michael W. Sonnenfeldt were the gala’s honorary chairs, and Dorian Goldman and Marvin Israelow served as dinner chairs. BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi remarked, “Bob’s impact on the community as a



Robert H. Arnow, Joan Arnow, Michael Sonnenfeldt



From left: Joseph and Roya Nazarian, Adelle Nazarian, Lolita Goldstein, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi, Anita and Albert Nazarian, Regional Director Kevin Leopold, Michael and Maryann Nazarian

whole, and on these young students' lives in particular, has been tremendous.”

The event raised more than \$500,000, which will be used to establish the Robert H. Arnow Scholarship Endowment for Bedouin students at BGU. The scholarships will not only allow Bedouin students to fulfill their dreams of a higher education, but also help them integrate into the broader Israeli society.

The Greater New York Region hosts a variety of exciting programs throughout the year featuring BGU scholars and researchers, as well as other guest speakers.

On January 23, Dr. Simon Barak, of the Albert Katz Department of Dryland Biotechnologies, presented “Uncovering the Secrets of Survival in the Negev.” The lunch and learn event commemorated the holiday of Tu B’shevat, the birthday of the trees.

Our goal is to engage people living in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut with groundbreaking University news and developments. Our get-togethers are always informative, and encourage direct dialogue between our guests and distinguished speakers.

## GREATER TEXAS

Steven and Sandra Finkelman, *Chairs*  
Deborah K. Bergeron, *Director*  
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The Greater Texas Region hosted BGU Prof. Dan Bar-On in August. Three days of events were organized for him in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he and his wife Tammy were guests of AABGU donors David and Lea Soifer. More than 100 new faces joined us at the various venues to learn about Prof. Bar-On’s expertise in conflict resolution.

Prof. Bar-On, of the Department of Psychology, is the founder of the Martin-Springer Center for Conflict Studies and Negotiation. He also co-directs the non-governmental organization PRIME, the Peace Research Institute in the



David Soifer, Lea Soifer, Prof. Dan Bar-On.

Middle East. He is internationally known for his pioneering research on the psychological and moral effects of the Holocaust on the perpetrators' children, and has led groundbreaking healing sessions between children of survivors and children of perpetrators. He spoke about his current work in Israeli and Palestinian high schools to bring respect and understanding about the other on which hope for true peace rests.

In January, the region hosted "From the Desert for the World," a symposium in Houston, featuring three faculty members from the University's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research. Sandy Breslauer and Arline Guefen

chaired the event and Houston's Mayor Bill White and AABGU Executive Vice President Doron Krakow were special guests. During the event Sandra and Steven Finkelman were installed as the new regional chairs and warm appreciation was extended to Margo and Jeff Ackerman, outgoing chairs, for having done an outstanding job.

On Thursday, March 13, 2008, the region will host its Seventh Annual Gourmet Kosher Dining Extravaganza at the Intercontinental Houston Hotel, honoring Dr. Roy S. Herbst, professor of medicine at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

## MID-ATLANTIC

Jack R Bershad, *Regional Chair*  
 Ann Waldman, *Philadelphia Chapter Chair*  
 Ernest Scheller, Jr., *Philadelphia Chapter Chair*  
 Richard Seidenberg, *South Jersey Chapter Chair*

Claire Winick, *Director*  
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A pattern of frequent activity continues in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

In July, Prof. Avigad Vonshak, director of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, addressed members of the board of directors at lunch. That evening, he attracted 25 guests to a Negev Forum reception at the home of Rhoda Temkin and Gene Muchnick. Addressing the subject, "Turning Curses into Blessings, a Concept for Negev Development," Prof. Vonshak was an impressive



Rabbi Neil Cooper presents Paul and Rose Astor with the David Ben-Gurion Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Philadelphia Chapter Tribute Dinner.



Co-chairs of the Negev Forum Committee welcome Prof. Vonshak. Pictured are: Sam and Jodi Greenblatt, Prof. Vonshak, Lisa and Perry Kahn, Roslyn and Charles Epstein. Co-chairs not pictured: Mona and David Zeehandelaar.

speaker. In August, BGU's rector Prof. Jimmy Weinblatt addressed the leadership.

The summer heralded the beginning of an active campaign in support of the annual tribute dinner and journal, which this year honored Rose and Paul Astor. In September, the kickoff reception was held in the home of Rita and Avram Woidislawsky, where a provocative program was presented by Prof. Richard Isralowitz of the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work. In October, Jack and Helen Bershad hosted the Patron Party. We were honored by the presence of BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi.

The many months of effort came to a successful conclusion at the tribute dinner in November. Held at the historic Union League in Philadelphia, it was attended by 250 people. The ad journal raised \$150,000, and the total income exceeded \$1.1 million. Moreover, new friends became engaged in our activities.

In October, the board sponsored the "Shalom Luncheon" hosted by Jack Bershad to thank Prof. Amos Drory for his outstanding tenure as executive vice president of AABGU and to welcome Doron Krakow to this leadership position.



Prof. Rivka Carmi discusses the role of Ben-Gurion University in fulfilling the vision for the Negev.

## NEW ENGLAND

Max Schechner, *President*  
Howard Shrut, *Vice President*  
Mark Goldman and Ralph Kaplan, *Co-Chairs*

Ben Shamir, *Director*  
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The New England region was delighted to host several distinguished professors from Ben-Gurion University during the past few months.

Prof. Ilan Shelef, head of the Neuroradiology Unit of the Diagnostic Imaging Department at Soroka University Medical Center in Beer-Sheva, fascinated BGU supporters with “Advances in Brain Imaging at Ben-Gurion University.” Prof. Shelef established the first MRI and the only brain-imaging lab in the Negev, which serves the entire Negev population.

Portland, Maine was the site for a gathering of BGU friends who came to hear Prof. Arie Moran speak about cardiac health and BGU. He is the deputy vice president and dean of research and development at BGU, and a leading researcher in cardiac health.

Dr. Iris Shai of the Department of Epidemiology visited Boston recently. A world-renowned expert on diabetes and obesity, she shared her groundbreaking research with local donors.

“Jews in American Politics” was the subject addressed by Prof. Fred Lazin, speaking to a few hundred men of the Brotherhood of Temple Israel in Sharon, Massachusetts.

Prof. Lazin is the Lynn and Lloyd Hurst Family Professor of Local Government and the director of the Department of Politics and Government.

When Prof. Rivka Carmi made her first trip to Boston since becoming BGU’s president, she brought with her a fresh vision for the Negev, including BGU’s vital role in bringing development and peace to the region. She highlighted innovative programs in community health, education and science that aim to help the local population and make the most out of the desert environment. She spoke



Marjorie Schechner, Howard Shrut and Max Schechner with BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi (second from the right).

about BGU’s new Advanced Technologies Park—how it will not only provide employment for the bright minds graduating from BGU, but will also bring new companies and jobs and enrich the local population. (See pg. 23.)

## NORTHWEST

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 Daphna Noily, *Director*  
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Many Israelis have settled in the Silicon Valley area, and reaching out to them has been one focus of our regional efforts. Several BGU alumni are among them. Our numerous events for the Israeli community recently included a Kabbalat Shabbat with internationally famous Israeli author Sami Michael, graciously hosted by Eta and Sass Somekh in their beautiful home. Michael was in the Bay Area for a symposium on Iraqi Jewish literature co-hosted by Stanford University, BGU, the Taube Foundation for Jewish Culture, AABGU and several other groups.

Another speaker, Prof. Yigal Schwartz—head and founder of BGU's Heksherim, the Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture—spoke about Hebrew and Israeli literature in Israel and around the world. Heksherim is currently working on a four-year



Founders from the Northwest Region visiting David and Paula Ben-Gurion's gravesite overlooking the Zin Canyon in Sede Boqer. Sitting on the rock: Mark Bloomer from Seattle; Riki Dayan from Los Altos Hills, CA; Audrey Jaffe from Bellingham, WA; Jacob (Coby) Dayan from Los Altos Hills; and Dvora Ezralow from Los Angeles. Back: Bernard (Bun) Jaffe from Bellingham, WA and Regional Director Daphna Noily.

project to create a new lexicon of literature that includes Israeli writers from the establishment of the State of Israel through the present.

In November, 13 AABGU supporters participated in the Oasis of Innovation Anniversary Mission to BGU, celebrating AABGU's 36th year of support and commitment to the University. Led by Riki and Jacob (Coby) Dayan of the Northwest Region, the mission included BGU founders from California, Washington, New Jersey and Florida. Highlights included two days at the Marcus Family Campus in Beer-Sheva; meeting with the University's top leadership and faculty members; lunching with students; dining with the deans; seeing the Open Apartments Program in action, where students live for free in apartments in impoverished neighborhoods in exchange for community service; and a full day at Sede Boqer, home to the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research and the Ben-Gurion Archives. Shabbat in Jerusalem concluded the week, which was a memorable experience for all attendees.



Rachel and Sami Michael with Sass, Eta and Tali Somekh at a Kabbalat Shabbat hosted by the Somekhs.

## SOUTHEAST

Madeline Pargh, *Regional Chair*  
 Norman Rubenstein, *Central Florida Chapter Chair*

Linda Slavin, *Director*  
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For four fabulous days of learning, looking and fun, Central Florida Chapter Board Members Norman

Rubenstein, David Krinker, Bill Sholk and Dr. Mark Klafter, accompanied by Regional Director Linda Slavin, became acquainted with BGU. The group met with students, researchers and professors, as well as BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi. A highlight included visiting with the student residents in the Open Apartments, a program the chapter adopted.

Nashville in November was the setting for the General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities. The Southeast Region represented BGU with games, goodies and even a fish pond in the desert. Many visitors stopped by to share stories and learn about BGU.

To bring BGU to Nashville we began with Professor Avigad Vonshak, director of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research (BIDR), hosted by Lisa and Michael Pote in July. Thirty-five guests, most new to AABGU, participated. We also met with members of former Vice President Al Gore's Climate Project to discuss the work of the BIDR.

People are buzzing about the new luncheon lecture series, "The Buzz from BGU," which kicked off the season with Dr. Leslie Lobel, a virologist. His presentation on "Combating Pandemics and Bio-Terrorism" kept guests spellbound.

"The Middle East...Now What?" continued our Buzz series in December featuring Danny Rubinstein, *Ha'aretz* journalist and lecturer in BGU's Middle East Studies depart-



David Krinker, BGU President Prof. Rivka Carmi, Bill Sholk, Norman Rubenstein and Dr. Mark Klafter at BGU during the Central Florida Chapter Future Leadership Mission in November.

ment who spoke before several audiences. The next lecture from the Buzz series will take place in March featuring world-renowned diabetes and nutrition expert Dr. Iris Shai (see pg. 12).

Be sure to see the next issue of *Impact* for a complete update on the region's Miracle in the Desert Gala Dinner Dance that honored Lore and Eric F. Ross at The Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach on January 17.



Prof. Avigad Vonshak was hosted by Michael and Lisa Pote in Nashville.

## SOUTHWEST

Ruth Flinkman, *Campaign Chair*  
 Philip Gomperts, *Director*  
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Major donors Ralph and Doris Martin, together with Doris's sister, Rae Harvey, attended the dedication ceremony of the Martin-Springer Center for Conflict Studies and Negotiation at Ben-Gurion University this fall. Their generous gift to this center will enable BGU to continue its important work for peaceful coexistence throughout the world, especially between Israel and its neighbors.

An interesting symposium, focusing on showing that investments in Israel in general, and in the Negev in particular, are not only very viable but also important to the country's future, was hosted by Campaign Chair Ruth



Front: Kay Siegel; Diane Glazer; Regional Campaign Chair Ruth Flinkman; Guilford Glazer; Dr. Haim Kedar-Levy. Back: AABGU Executive Vice President Doron Krakow, Regional Director Philip Gomperts.

Flinkman. The symposium was held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on October 11 and a full-capacity audience was enthralled by the four presentations that were moderated by Zvi Alon, BGU board of governors vice chairman and

AABGU board member and past president.

The four presenters were: The Honorable Shai Aizin, economic consul for Israel; Dr. Haim Kedar-Levy, director of the Honors MBA program at BGU and an expert on Israeli financial phenomena; Prof. Amos Drory, founder and former dean of the Guilford Glazer School of Business and Management, currently BGU's vice president for external affairs; and Prof. Joseph (Yosi) Kost, of the Department of Chemical Engineering.

## WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE

Edie and Art Hessel, *Washington D.C. Chapter Chairs*  
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AABGU supporters Dava Berkman, Linda Segal and Hazel Keimowitz at a private benefit featuring Actor-Singer Mandy Patinkin.

The Washington/Baltimore Region is off to a strong start this year following the recent appointment of its new director, Keren Waranch. Waranch knows Ben-Gurion University well, having been a student there for a semester as part of the Ginsburg-Ingerman Overseas Student Program in 1994. Since her experience at BGU, which was also her first time in Israel, Waranch has devoted her professional life to organizations supporting the State of Israel.

While working for Young Judaea, Waranch led a summer teen program in Israel and Prague and later recruited for its post-high school Israel program. Most recently, she was the assistant director of financial resource development for The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. When asked about her decision to work for AABGU, Waranch says, "How could I not? Ben-Gurion University was the

The presentations demonstrated how new products, developed through BGU research, can result in successful commercialization by attracting investors. It was also shown that the installation of infrastructure is the key to attracting industrial companies to the Advanced Technologies Park (ATP) and is necessary in order to create the much-needed jobs in the Negev. Among the attendees were three representatives from KUD International LLC., the company contracted to develop the park (see pg. 23).

impetus for my connection to Israel and my decision to work professionally in the Jewish community. I owe it all to BGU."

The Washington Chapter held its first event of the year in October at the home of BGU Founders Ahuva and Frank Dye. The dessert reception and stimulating presentation featured Professor Eilon Adar, director of the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at the University's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

On December 10, the region co-sponsored a benefit for the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, featuring Mandy Patinkin, the Tony and Emmy Award-winner best known for his roles in *Evita*, *Yentl*, *Chicago Hope* and, most recently, *Criminal Minds*. The Arava Institute fosters environmental protection and collaboration between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Graduates receive a master's degree from Ben-Gurion University.

The region sponsored four more fascinating presentations in January with Professors David Newman and Raz Jelinek of the Departments of Politics and Government and Chemistry, respectively. An exciting year of activity lies ahead.



Mandy Patinkin with Regional Director Keren Waranch.

Photo credit: Linda Segal



From left: Mayor Yaakov Turner; Marvin Suomi, chief executive officer of KUD International; Prof. Rivka Carmi; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert; MK Prof. Avishay Braverman; Eli Yishai, minister of Negev and Galilee development.

Photo credit: Fairchild Photography

# BREAKING GROUND: BUILDING A HIGH-TECH CENTER IN THE NEGEV

## MAKING THE DESERT BLOOM —

David Ben-Gurion's dream for the Negev—has always meant much more than making it green, observes David Bareket, the University's vice president and director general. "It means economic development, becoming an internationally recognized high-technology center, attracting excellent people."

A major step toward accomplishing these goals was taken on November 18: ground was broken for the Advanced Technologies Park (ATP), to be built on a 150-acre site adjoining the University and Soroka University Medical Center. The event, a highlight of Ben-Gurion Day, was co-hosted by University President Prof. Rivka Carmi and Mayor of Beer-Sheva Yaakov Turner as project partners.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert attended the ceremony, symbolizing the government's commitment to the ATP. He told some 300 guests that the

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**"The global model is a university surrounded by industry. It's all happening here."**

—MEMBER OF KNESSET  
PROF. AVISHAY BRAVERMAN

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government plans to invest more than \$250 million in the park's development, which he called "a cornerstone

of a comprehensive plan to bring quality employment opportunities to the region."

The Israeli Defense Force is already committed to relocating a number of its units to the Negev—another sign of the government's commitment to developing the region. Several thousand engineers and high-tech people who work on the army's surveillance and computer systems will locate in and near the park, and thousands of soldiers, officers and their families will move to the Negev.

"This brings the Negev and Beer-Sheva a lot of hope for real development," Bareket says, "and of course the University will benefit a lot."

KUD International LLC, a United States-based global investment and development company that is part

## NEGEV DEVELOPMENT

of the Kajima Corp., has agreed to partner with BGU and the municipality of Beer-Sheva. The company will coordinate financing, planning, design and construction. KUD is establishing an investment fund to provide capital, and will market space to some of the world's leading companies.



Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed the government's clear commitment to developing the ATP.

The ATP will be Israel's first university-based industrial park. It will include research labs, residential and administrative space, a world-class conference center, a 300-room hotel, and an incubator for high-tech and biotechnology start-ups. Bareket, who is responsible for the University's side of the project, says the incubator is especially important.

"Many of our University scientists and researchers come up with ideas and patents, but right now the infrastructure to develop and commercialize them isn't available in Beer-Sheva. Soon they'll have good opportunities right within the park."

The ATP is expected to attract major high-tech companies, Bareket says. "We have an excellent university producing 5,000 graduates a year, including 2,000 engineers and 1,000 in the life sciences. The high-tech companies are looking for quality manpower and the supply is here. Right now the Negev is not on the map of high-technology and we are going to change that."

Both the national government and the Beer-Sheva municipality will be offering financial and tax incentives to

attract related companies and industry. The ATP will leverage the leading-edge research already under way in many BGU departments and at the Soroka University Medical Center.

The park's impact on the local economy is expected to be huge. High-tech companies need a wide range of services and employees in addition to sophisticated specialists, so many jobs will be created. Further, companies that become part of the ATP will draw highly educated people, who will help build the region up and improve its education system.

More than half of BGU's students are not from the area, Bareket notes. "They love Beer-Sheva and would stay if they had employment. Enabling the students and graduates to stay here, with their families, is one of the park's major goals." The ATP will also advance BGU's strategy

materialized overnight. Nine years ago, Member of Knesset Prof. Avishay Braverman, BGU's president from 1990 to 2005, proposed the concept. He was a special guest at the groundbreaking ceremony and Prof. Carmi thanked him for his vision. "The global model is a university surrounded by industry," Prof. Braverman commented. "It's all happening here."

Longtime BGU supporter Jim Breslauer, formerly of Sun Microsystems, is the consultant to the president on the ATP. Uzi Zwebner, former director general of the Eilat municipality, has been appointed to head the project. The first stage of development focuses on infrastructure. Bareket anticipates that this will take a year, and building will occupy about two years. Thus tenants can take residence in approximately three years.

"We're building a center that will



Schematic for the new luxury hotel that will be part of the site.

of attracting the best students and scientists to the University. For researchers, being able to work at the park and participate in joint ventures is a big plus.

The ATP is not an idea that

have international influence and will be important to developing a first-class university," says Bareket. "The eyes of everyone are on BGU, and we will succeed." ■

**BACK IN 1972, RUBIN SALANT —**

a New York native who transplanted to Seattle—needed financing for his first apartment building project.

“One of the first banks I went to was owned by Jack Spitzer, who was soon to become the international president of B’nai B’rith,” he recalls. “Jack and I got to know each other, became friends, and when the construction was complete—and I had repaid my loan—he came to my office and said, ‘It’s time for you to learn about *tzedakah*.’ The way he said it was so strong, with such determination, it was impossible to say no. So I made my first contribution.”

Over the years Salant’s RS Development Company flourished. He was one of the first builders to introduce condominium living to the Pacific Northwest, and developed thousands of housing units in that area and beyond. Salant also became owner-manager of the Everett-Pacific Hotel. And all the while Spitzer, a notable philanthropist himself, urged Salant to ever-higher levels of generosity. “He was right there teaching me to be philanthropic.”

In 1989, Spitzer, who was president of AABGU in 1984, introduced Salant to Ben-Gurion University. “I started to give, but not to significance in Jack’s eyes.” Then Salant went to visit the University and his enthusiasm was ignited. “The energy level of the president and the students, who I spent a lot of time with, was amazing, just amazing. I had the opportunity to see the very beginning. It’s grown in leaps and bounds to so many buildings, so many students—the place is full of activity.”

Salant returns to BGU every year with his family. His name was inscribed on the Founders’ Wall in 1992, the Gate of the Future in 2002 and the Ben-Gurion Wall in 2006. He has generously contributed to numerous endowment funds, and established the Salant Scholarship Fund. Retired now and living in Miami, he is strongly committed to



**RUBIN SALANT, MIAMI, FLORIDA**

## IT’S ABOUT TZEDAKAH: PLANTING THE SEEDS

fundraising there and hosts many events for BGU.

Perhaps closest to his heart is his involvement with the Spitzer-Salant Building for the Department of Social Work. “Building this school was Jack Spitzer’s idea and he came to me a number of years ago and said he needed a partner to finish the building. I wasn’t ready at that time to contribute that large an amount, in addition to what I was giving every year—but the man was very persistent. He flew into Miami with his wheelchair; we had lunch; he told me he would really, really appreciate it if we split the building.

“While I was making that decision, he flew back to Seattle, and passed away. I informed his family that I would finish the building and committed to it at that time.”

Does he find it rewarding to support the University so actively? “Very much,” Salant says, “especially since

there’s so much evidence about how prolific the students have become. And all the beautiful ‘firsts’ that Israel comes up with show what Israel is capable of doing and is doing. Like inventing the cell phone, and work in solar technology, making saltwater useable, nanotechnology...

“Planting the seeds: that’s what Israel does, and what philanthropy does.”

In 2004, Rubin Salant’s contributions were recognized with BGU’s prestigious Negev Award, presented to him by Israel’s current President Shimon Peres. In appreciation for his continuing generosity to BGU and the Jewish community, University President Prof. Rivka Carmi will present Salant with an honorary doctorate degree at a gala event on Sunday, March 16, 2008 at the Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida.

Salant supports many other Jewish causes and has served on boards and fundraising committees for the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish National Fund, Greater Seattle Jewish Federation and more. With Jack Spitzer, he co-founded B’nai B’rith in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Asked why he thinks supporting Jewish causes is important, Salant said, “It’s obvious but hard to put into words. It’s my identity—my Jewish identity—that’s been threatened so many times, from having to fight anti-Semitism in the streets of Brooklyn growing up, to looking at the sadness of the Holocaust.

“Now more than ever we should pull together, be heard as one voice. American Jews have a particular obligation. Everywhere I go, I see all around me programs encouraging Jewish people to participate in their heritage.

“When I open up my home to American Associates and invite friends and neighbors, we show DVDs of what’s happening in Israel today, what’s happening at BGU—and how important the University is to the lifeblood of all Israelis.” ■

**SUSE SMETANA'S** first contribution to BGU was a donation of eyeglass frames more than 10 years ago.

She kept in contact with Professor Richard Isralowitz of the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work, and one day, he sent her a newspaper clipping. It showed a small room crowded with elderly people and physicians. According to the caption, the people were being treated in a private home that was "donated" once a week so that medical services could be available to those without access to care.

Smetana also knew that Israel was welcoming large numbers of immigrants from Ethiopia, and many were arriving with eye infections. "They had a great problem getting to a doctor in time because they had no transportation," she recounts. "I thought something could be done about it. So I devised the possibility of having a fully equipped office on wheels that could go around where these people live, bringing the volunteer physicians. I offered them a bus."

The program funded by Suse Smetana—who is now 87 years old and lives in a retirement community—is called Negev Project Vision. With the resources she provided, a mobile eye unit with vision screening equipment was created, and the country's main provider of health services, Kupat Holim Clalit, agreed to operate and staff it. For a decade the unit has traveled around the Negev with a physician and a nurse, addressing vision needs of immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union, the elderly and the poor.

The need is great. Immigrants coming from Ethiopia have lived in destitute circumstances with poor diet and inadequate health care. As a result, vision impairment is common. Poor vision undermines the ability to function properly, often resulting in depression, isolation and loneliness.



**SUSE SMETANA  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

## GIVING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

The project's outcomes were reported in a medical journal by Prof. Isralowitz, Project Vision's director: 80 percent of the people screened were found to be in need of eye care, and half had vision disorders that

**"I've always been involved in charity work and supporting Jewish lives, whether money or no money."**

—SUSE SEMETANA

could be corrected by eyeglasses. When interviewed, the people treated said that improved vision gave them a higher quality of life with fewer physical difficulties, more independence and more social involvement.

"It has been a remarkable story and it is the direct result of Suse Smetana's ongoing support," Prof. Isralowitz commented. "For the social work students who continue to coordinate the project, it's been of considerable value because they see donor support being translated into evidence-based community outreach activity that results in improving people's lives."

Negev Project Vision is considered a model program and has been internationally recognized. To Smetana, it's the individual results that are rewarding. "It made me extremely happy and is the highlight of my life that I have been able to make a difference in the lives of other people. I received some photos, including one of a middle-aged man married for many years who said he was able to see his wife for the first time."

Suse Smetana was born in Berlin but in 1933, left to live in Paris, and then Quito, Ecuador, for 10 years. She came to the United States in 1946. "I've loved every minute and I'm very grateful to be living here," she said. A widow now, she worked in the past as a saleswoman for I. Magnin and Saks Fifth Avenue in addition to working side by side with her husband in a family-owned business.

"I've always been involved in charity work and supporting Jewish lives, whether money or no money," she says. "And I'd collect money for organizations." She gives mostly to Jewish organizations. "I specialize in universities," she says, "because I'm interested in young people."

This past year, the venerable Project Vision van came to the end of its run. Suse Smetana donated the funds to purchase a new one.

"There's no greater satisfaction in life than making a positive change in other people's lives," she explains. "It gives so much satisfaction, so much more than buying something expensive for yourself." ■

**COMING FROM TOWNS** with small Jewish communities, H. Fred and Velva G. Levine met as students at the University of Oklahoma. They settled in Wichita, and moved to Houston in 1974, where they still live. From their earliest days together, they were committed to the idea of giving back. With success in the energy business, their determination to translate their faith into action grew.

“The first thing we did when we achieved our financial goals was to figure out how we were going to give it away,” Velva Levine recalls.

They are generous supporters of civic, medical and cultural endeavors, but strengthening and enhancing Jewish life is their main focus. “We feel that if we don’t take care of our own people, no one else is going to,” Velva states. “So the main focus of our philanthropy is the Jewish community, whether it be in Houston, in Israel, or around the world.”

The Levines are active supporters of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, and through it have endowed a mission subsidy program that brings hundreds of the area’s Jewish people to Israel to experience it first-hand. “We’re hoping that these people will become passionate about Israel and about Jewish causes, just as we have, and that they in turn will be inspired to give back to the Jewish community,” Velva says.

During a February 2007 mission trip, the Levines were introduced to BGU and learned about Kidumatica, a program that helps gifted Israeli teenagers, many of whom are underprivileged, enjoy sophisticated math and increase their chances for a higher education. The program is run by Dr. Miriam Amit, professor of Mathematics Education and chair of the Department of Science and Technology Education.



**VELVA G. AND H. FRED LEVINE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

## L’DOR V’DOR: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, A PASSION FOR PHILANTHROPY

“We visited with Prof. Miri Amit and were very much impressed with her,” recounts Fred. “The Kidumatica program is truly a blessing to Israel and the emphasis on mathematics is very pertinent to the enhancement of life there. Prof. Amit is so enthusiastic about her goals for this program.”

Thanks to a generous endowment from the Levines, now Kidumatica will expand to reach many more students. A “Virtual Kidumatica Community” is planned, enabling teenagers who live far from the University or who lack the means of getting there to participate. The Velva G. and H. Fred Levine Scholarship Fund will also establish “International Kidumatica,” adding programs in Australia, the United States and

possibly other countries.

Kidumatica exposes 7th to 10th graders in the Negev region—most from Israel’s lowest socioeconomic bracket—to creative mathematical thinking. As members of the Kidumatica Club, they are encouraged to solve complex problems and develop abstraction abilities through mini-courses at BGU, special activities, individually guided research programs, and competitions. This year, over 50 percent of the prizes in Israeli academic competitions have been awarded to Kidumatica members, despite the fact that the Negev student’s scholastic achievement is generally lower than the national standard. Further, the Club effectively brings Jewish and Bedouin young people together on common ground in a spirit of camaraderie. The program’s success has earned it international attention.

Fred and Velva Levine see their philanthropic philosophy as *l’dor v’dor*: from generation to generation. They have encouraged their children, Bob and Dana, to become actively involved in Jewish organizations and interests. “We’re very proud that now they and their spouses, Julie Levine and Guillermo Guefen, share our passion and commitment to philanthropy,” Fred says. “We know they, too, will pass this philosophy on to their children, our wonderful grandchildren Andrew and Stephanie Levine and Solomon and Ahava Guefen.

“One thing we’ve learned from our experiences is that charitable giving is an on-going lifelong commitment. There is an ebb and flow to it, during both good and bad times. But we’ve also discovered that once we’ve given our money to a worthy cause, we never miss it. And we’ve never regretted it.” ■

# BGU GRADUATES: HIGH ASPIRATIONS, REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Thousands of the University's alumni play significant roles in almost every sphere of life in Israel and elsewhere in the world. All carry with them the unique experience of having been part of a university that is deeply involved in the community. When they leave BGU, most are ready both to succeed professionally, and to continue their passionate commitment to community. Beginning with this issue, *Impact* will share news of what some alumni have chosen to do with their lives and how BGU has made an impact on them.

**HAIM EMIL DAHAN** earned his advanced degree in mathematics and computer science in 1986. Living in the United States for many years, he founded several high-tech companies.



Haim Emil Dahan at the recent dedication of three new Ofanim mobile classrooms.

"When I returned to Israel I knew that I wanted to devote half my time to philanthropy and education," Haim said. He founded both the ASYD Investment Company, and Ofanim, a nonprofit organization.

Ofanim brings supplemental education directly to children in areas where there are few opportunities. "There is a wide educational gap between these remote disadvantaged communities and communities close to the well-established center of the country," he says.

Ofanim "drives" education to children in outlying areas in specially outfitted buses with state-of-the-art

facilities. Each specializes in a different subject: computers, math, electronics and art.

Trained BGU graduate students serve as instructors and mentors to children in first through sixth grades, and teach classes for parents. The most popular class is "Who's Afraid of Computers?"

Haim relates that Professor Sam Bergman, one of the pioneers in computer science at BGU had "a huge impact" on his life. "At the time, computers were not well known, and he encouraged me to study. To this day he is an important figure for me, and probably one of the reasons for my wanting to extend opportunities to underprivileged kids."

**RUTH GOREN**, class of 2007, earned a master's degree in education despite leaving school after 10th grade. "I loved learning, but I felt school wasn't for me," she explains. "I sort of home-schooled myself." Ever since then Ruth has been interested in what is called "open" or "democratic" education. This model encourages full participation by the students and gives them freedom to choose their own focus and activities.

"It has always bothered me that this kind of education is usually available only to the elite," Ruth says. Once at BGU Ruth discovered that the



Ruth Goren

University's Department of Education "is very open to ideas—to progressive education and community involvement." She joined BGU's Community Action Unit, made up of students who participate in educational and social programs to help the area's children and adults.

Today Ruth lives in Beer-Sheva and runs The Open Clubhouse, a free after-school learning center for elementary school children in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods. The children are given hot meals in addition to a variety of enrichment activities, including theatre, art, science, sports and access to a library. BGU students work as volunteers.

Ruth has no doubt that her experiences at BGU influenced her choice of profession. "The emphasis at the University is on what one should aim for, not just what exists."

Alumni are invited to join BGU's Alumni Association. To get involved and learn more, write to [alumni@bgu.ac.il](mailto:alumni@bgu.ac.il) or visit [www.bgu.ac.il/alumni](http://www.bgu.ac.il/alumni). ■

# RESCUE MISSION: HELPING ISRAEL'S DARFUR REFUGEES

By Elisheva Milikowsky

Elisheva Milikowsky is 25 years old and a fourth year student at the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work. Last year, through her department's fieldwork, she came in contact with refugees who fled genocide in Darfur, Sudan. Her concern for their plight took her far beyond her course requirements. She became, in the words of the newspaper *Ha'aretz*, "a one-woman rescue mission" and the expert the military, journalists, social organizations, employers and politicians call on for issues concerning refugees.

**DURING THE FIRST WEEK** of June this past year, I was awoken each morning by telephone calls from Israeli reserve soldiers who told me that they were on their way to drop off refugees in the streets of Beer-Sheva. These refugees, most of them Sudanese, were arriving in Israel after days of arduous travel from Cairo to the border. They would cross the low border fence and wait for the soldiers so they could turn themselves in as "asylum seekers" and request official recognition as refugees.

The reserve soldiers who served on the Israel-Egypt border were given orders to simply transfer the refugees to Beer-Sheva.

The refugees I met fled their villages when they were attacked by Arab militias called "Janjaweed" (Arabic for "devil on horseback"). These Sudanese government-sponsored militias attacked entire villages and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Africans in Darfur, in other areas of Sudan and in other countries.

I found that behind the title "refugee" stand young people, women who have been raped and tortured, and entire families who have managed to save themselves from these atrocities and make the long, difficult trek to Israel, while other



family members remained behind.

Sudanese refugees began arriving in Israel in 2004. They come to Israel from a way-station in Egypt, where they suffer degrading treatment. Often they are placed in Egyptian jails where they are beaten and forced to survive on starvation rations. Many of the Sudanese are arbitrarily deported back to Sudan. Since December 2005, when a number of violent incidents occurred in Egypt and scores of Sudanese were killed, the flow of refugees to Israel has increased substantially.

The State of Israel puts the

refugees in prison. The justification is a regulation stating that citizens of enemy nations [Israel and Sudan do not have diplomatic relations] cannot obtain official recognition as refugees. Thus Israel, on the one hand, refuses to recognize the Sudanese as refugees, but, on the other hand, understands that expelling them to Egypt or Sudan would mean imposing a death penalty upon them. Consequently it attempts to solve the dilemma by imprisoning the refugees.

In February 2007 the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University

offered a course focusing on helping Sudanese refugees in prisons or other sorts of confinement in Israel.

Other students and I began to meet on a regular basis with Sudanese refugees and were moved to help them as much as we could. Hearing their stories, I was shocked to know that hundreds of them remained in Israeli prisons. How, I wondered, was it possible for Israel—a state founded by refugees for refugees—to lock up refugees who had escaped from an ongoing genocide and had come in search of safe asylum?

We began to work to raise the awareness of people, informing them of the awful situation in which the Sudanese refugees found themselves. We recruited hundreds of volunteers, first from within the University and the town of Beer-Sheva, and later from throughout the entire country. We have helped more than 1,000 people so far, but many are still in jail.

We help them with basic humanitarian needs: food, clothes, shelter and medical treatment. In parallel we are trying to work in the public and political realms to make the

country aware of the problem. When we started working last year most people we talked to didn't know there were refugees in Israel or what was going on in Darfur. Now most of the public knows, so we've succeeded in getting much more help from the government.

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**You know the heart  
of the stranger, for you  
were strangers in the  
land of Egypt.**

— EXODUS 23:9

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Now we're trying to organize projects that help the refugees build leadership in their own communities so they can help themselves. We want them to be active and find their independence and build their lives. We would also like to effect a change in Israel's official government policy,

with the hope that Sudanese refugees arriving in Israel will be given safe haven.

I spend about three days a week entirely on these problems, but work with the whole network, through e-mails and calls, all the time. And, I travel around Israel a lot now, because while originally the refugees were all in Beer-Sheva, we found places for them in Tel Aviv, Eilat and elsewhere.

Fitting everything in can be difficult. I've learned how to be organized and how not to do everything alone. I've met a lot of amazing, very different people who've helped—including Bedouins and people from the Islamic Movement and Israeli religious groups.

I'll graduate in June and I hope I can find a way to continue working with the refugees. It can be very hard. But when I see people finding themselves, living in houses, going to school—it gives me hope and inspiration. I am frequently reminded by the call in the Torah: "You know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." ■

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## REMEMBERING DAN KOSHLAND

*Continued from Page 7*

Rockefeller University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he headed the department of biochemistry.

In September, three months after Prof. Koshland's death, his long-time collaborator and friend, Prof. Raymond A. Dwek—a member of BGU's Board of Governors and director of the Glycobiology Institute at the University of Oxford — delivered a speech during a memorial ceremony at UC Berkeley. In addition to remarking on Koshland's extraordinary accomplishments, wit and wisdom, Prof. Dwek talked about what

Koshland wanted to achieve at BGU:

"Dan's interest was to create desert sustainability and viability for the future of the Negev. He felt that BGU must focus on concrete developments which would lead to applied and commercial applications in the area of desert research—in particular, water resources and desert agriculture... Dan's legacy is to promote science as the key feature of developing the Negev, which he believed to be the future of the State of Israel."

Like the University's namesake, David Ben-Gurion, Prof. Dan Koshland, Jr. had a vision for BGU as a model for the world in making the desert bloom. We will always be grateful for his faith and support and, while he will be sorely missed, his

vision for the Negev will live on at BGU. AABGU extends our condolences to Dan's wife Yvonne, his family and friends, and all who mourn his loss. ■

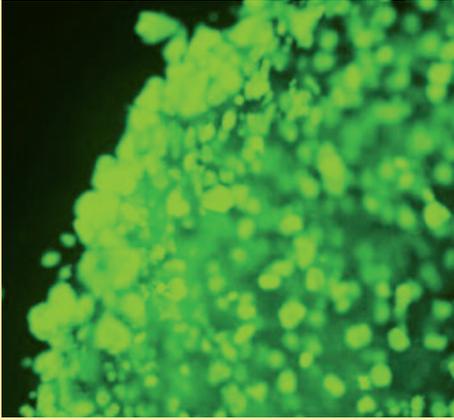
## SAVING LIVES WITH SEAWEED

*Continued from Page 9*

it was discovered that blood vessels quickly permeate the structure.

The University has licensed BL-1040 to the Israeli biotech company BioLineRx, which has already completed pre-clinical trials. Clinical trials will begin soon in Israel and Europe, and BioLineRx is looking for fast track approval from the U. S. Federal Drug Administration. Market

projections are very substantial: more than a million people in the U.S. alone suffer from heart attacks each year and approximately 40 percent develop left ventricle dilatation, the



Live rat hepatocytes in Alginate Matrix.

damage that BL-1040 is designed to prevent. The device will be the first treatment for these severe cases.

“It will save many lives,” Prof. Cohen anticipates happily. ■

## PLAYING WITH PANDEMICS

*Continued from Page 13*

virtual reality and the real world, Balicer observes, but when those are taken into consideration, “we’ll still have new insights into how epidemics spread and what can be done about it. It could be the next evolutionary step in modeling disease dissemination.”

Dr. Balicer has already charted the roadmap for such a project—how it should work and how to collaborate with game administrators—but so far has not acted on the idea. However, coverage in the magazine *Science* attracted wide interest, and an article recently published in *Lancet Infectious Diseases* and discussions that followed show that other researchers are moving forward with the ideas, and are now actively joining forces with game administrators.

“I’m committed to other projects now,” Balicer says. “But yes, the virtual world could be a future part of my work.” ■



# CELEBRATE

## AABGU'S 36<sup>TH</sup> AND ISRAEL'S 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARIES AT BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

Join us at BGU's 38th Annual Board  
of Governors Meeting

**SUNDAY, MAY 25  
THROUGH WEDNESDAY,  
MAY 28, 2008**

MARCUS FAMILY CAMPUS,  
BEER-SHEVA AND SEDE BOQER  
CAMPUS

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Attend a festive dinner saluting the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel
- Witness BGU's role in overcoming environmental challenges
- Tour the Jacob Blaustein Institutes and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism overlooking the beautiful Zin Canyon
- Explore Israeli culture and literature
- Celebrate BGU's commitment to community service
- Meet and dine with BGU's world-class researchers and visit labs
- Behold the moving ceremony for this year's honorary doctorate recipients: AABGU President Carol Saal; World-renowned author Prof. Amos Oz; and Member of Knesset Prof. Avishay Braverman



המושב ה-38 של חבר הנאמנים  
THE 38th ANNUAL BOARD  
OF GOVERNORS MEETING

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