



# e-news

## Bar-Ilan University Marketing and Media Briefs

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### **Rackman Center Drafts New Bill Regarding Child Visitation Arrangements**

A new bill regarding the enforcement of child visitation arrangements, drafted by the Ruth and Emanuel Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women, has been submitted to the Knesset on the occasion of the celebration of Family Day in Israel.

The bill seeks to legally validate the separated parents' responsibility to uphold the visiting and custody arrangements of their children, and allows the court to enforce those arrangements by obligating the violating parent to compensate the other parent. In cases of consistent and offensive violation of such custody and visiting arrangements, the court will be authorized to charge the breaching parent with punitive award that will be set aside for the minor child, to be available to him/her at the age of 18.

“The bill will help to efficiently enforce the visitation arrangements while putting the child at the center of concern. It will help parents internalize their joint obligation to raise their children even after the break-up and help protect the weaker sides, who are vulnerable to extortion and injury because of violations of visitation arrangements which have not been enforced until now,” Rackman Center Director Prof. Ruth Halperin Kaddari told The Jerusalem Post.

The bill was initiated by MKs Uri Orbach (Habayit Hayehudi) and Orit Zuaretz (Kadima).

The drafting of the new bill is part of a major legislative advocacy initiative of the Rackman Center, which has already played a major role in securing a landmark Knesset decision to amend the Spousal Property Relations Law, allowing for the division of property prior to divorce.

### **Plight of Israel's Poor Highlighted in New Bar-Ilan Study**

The Louis and Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work hosted a conference entitled 'Social Policy in the Face of the Challenges of Poverty', under the auspices of the European Network for Social Policy Analysis (ESPAnet) and the Forum for Research on Social Policy in Israel.

At the conference the findings of a wide-ranging study on poverty were revealed. According to the research, Israel's poor live in a much deeper state of poverty than their counterparts in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Menachem Monnickendam, senior lecturer in the Weisfeld School, and Prof. David Gordon, Director of the Townsend Center for International Poverty Research at Bristol University, worked together with funding from the British Academy to compare official statistics from both countries. "When all the data came out, I felt very, very uneasy. I was sure that the depths of poverty in Israel would not be as bad as in England. I was sure that Israel, a good welfare state, would come out looking much better than the capitalistic British state. But the results were very different to what I expected," Monnickendam told The Jerusalem Post, which published an article on page one highlighting the results of the study.

Minister of Welfare and Social Services Yitzhak Herzog MK, who addressed the conference, said that Israel, which will be joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in three months, must lower its poverty rate from 20%, which is intolerably high, in order to affect national strength, lower crime, lower violence against women and children, and improve the country's achievements in all areas.

Minister Herzog presented a plan based on the results of the Bar-Ilan/Bristol study that will help youth at risk. "We are investing one billion shekels for five years for the detection and diagnosis of youth at risk, each of whom will receive personal care," said Herzog, who emphasized the need to strengthen the social safety net, and add resources to improve the situation.

### **Krill Prize for Excellence in Scientific Research Awarded to Bar-Ilan Scientist**

Dr. Dan Major, of the Department of Chemistry, was one of six Israelis to win this year's prestigious Krill Prize for Excellence in Scientific Research, awarded by The Wolf Foundation. Dr. Major and his team focus their research on developing and applying computer simulation methods to problems in chemistry, biochemistry, and nano-materials. In particular they study the function of enzymes, a detailed understanding of which is crucial in drug and synthetic catalyst development.

Dr. Major was born in Norway in 1973 and made Aliyah nearly 20 years ago as part of a B'nei Akiva program. He completed his undergraduate studies (magna cum laude) at Bar-Ilan and his Ph.D. at the University under Prof. Bilha Fischer. From 2003-2006 he conducted post-doctoral study at the University of Minnesota. He is married and the father of five children.

"It is very clear that every field has a small number of people who truly excel. This happens in science and in culture, and I have no doubt that if we do not invest in those few outstanding people, our country will have no future," said University President Prof. Moshe Kaveh at the award ceremony, which took place at Bar-Ilan.

The Wolf Foundation was established in 1975 by Ricardo Wolf (1887-1981), a German Jew who served as Cuba's ambassador to Israel.

### **Israeli Education and Science Ministers Visit Bar-Ilan**

Two Israeli government ministers visited Bar-Ilan and were briefed on a number of research activities underway on campus and off.

Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar viewed the various findings which have been uncovered at Tell es-Safi, the site being excavated by Prof. Aren Maeir, of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology. In the Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center, Minister Sa'ar was shown the Magneto Encephalograph (MEG) for brain mapping and briefed on the research into Alzheimer's Disease currently being conducted at the Center. Minister

Sa'ar also toured the Gonda Nanotechnology Triplex and met with BIU President Prof. Moshe Kaveh, and a number of returning scientists.

During his visit to Bar-Ilan, Minister of Science and Technology Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz noted that the University is in the midst of a growth spurt which has no equal in the State of Israel. Addressing Prof. Kaveh, he said "the way in which you have developed this campus is truly amazing. At Bar-Ilan, when you visit a center of quality academic excellence, you can understand the important role that religious Zionism plays in science. In today's world of 'instant gratification', it is important to understand that an investment in science is a long-term investment," he said. During his visit, the Minister toured and met with representatives of the Gonda Nanotechnology Triplex, Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center, and the School of Engineering.

### **Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's Appearance at BIU Business Forum Garners International Publicity for Bar-Ilan**

Israeli Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman's comments at the Business Forum hosted by the Israel Friends of the University made headlines around the world. Minister Lieberman used the stage to warn Syrian President Bashar Assad that he and his family would lose their reign in the event of war with Israel. He was referring to a comment made a day earlier by Assad in which he said that Israel is not serious about its intentions to make peace with Damascus as evidenced by "its conduct which is leading the region to war." The comments made by Minister Lieberman at Bar-Ilan were covered by, among others: The New York Times, International Herald Tribune, Baltimore Jewish Times, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, The Miami Herald, Boston Herald, The Palm Beach Post, CTV Canada, and more.

## **Conferences and Events**

### **February 14, 2010**

Dr. Alexander Murinson, of the University of London, delivered a lecture at the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies entitled "Turkey and the Caucasus". Dr. Murinson is the author of a new book Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan State Identity and Security in the Middle East and Caucasus (Routledge), which offers an analysis of the evolution of the trilateral relationship between Turkey, Israel, and Azerbaijan.

### **February 15, 2010**

Fern Reiss, a US publishing and book publicity expert, will speak on "The Future of Books: The New Publishing Climate and How Authors Can Thrive" at an event to be hosted by the Shaindy Rudoff Graduate Program in Creative Writing. Ms. Reiss will discuss the future of publishing, explain how the industry has changed, and advise aspiring writers how to land their work in front of a literary agent/publisher in a recessionary climate and how to position themselves as authors. The event will be held at the Jerome Stern House in Jerusalem.

### **February 16, 2010**

The Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences will host The Third Conference on Medicine and Jewish Law on the topic "Quality of Life vs. Lengthening Life."

Speakers will include representatives of the Association for the Rights of the Individual, the Hospice of the Northern Galilee, Shaare Zedek Hospital, Ben Gurion University Medical School, Prof. Jacob Shoham of the Goodman Faculty, and Rabbi Shabtai Rappaport, Director of the Ludwig

and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, who will present a talk entitled *A Halachic Perspective on Pain Relieving and Life-Threatening Drugs*.

Additional presentations will include: *Giving Minors a Role in Medical Procedures*, *Spiritual Accompaniment for Patients at the End of their Lives*, *Who Decides -- the Doctor, the Patient, or the Rabbi?* and *Cost vs. Life Expectancy*.

MK Zevulun Orlev will also address the conference.