Mysteries of the Middle East
Curtis Ryan explains the complexities of Middle Eastern culture and politics in today's troubled world
Comments from the Provost

Several important campus conversations have focused recently on how Appalachian strives to connect the local with the global. For example, making local to global connections is an explicit goal of our developing general education curriculum for undergraduates, and the strategic planning process we are undertaking this year addresses both our commitment to our region and our obligation to serve an increasingly interconnected world in research, teaching and service. Many areas of faculty research connect our immediate environment with global processes, but this issue of "Educational Notes" emphasizes the explicitly human dimension of this connection: the Appalachian faculty members featured here investigate how people interact with and learn about the various worlds in which they live, with the shared goal of creating knowledge that will improve our lives.

Kate Cahow’s interview with Curt Ryan, a professor in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice, invites us to join Dr. Ryan’s journey from an early fascination with the mythical otherness of the Arab world to research that explicitly deconstruct such myths, revealing the cultural complexity that is obscured by most media accounts. From psychologist Denise Martz’s research on women’s body image we learn how a healthy and realistic self-image can counter the myths perpetuated by “fat talk.” Appalachian researchers are interested not only in how the body is perceived but also in how it works: John C. Quindry of the Department of Health, Leisure and Exercise Science is making important discoveries about the effect of even short-term exercise on heart health. A local, innovative treatment plan for methamphetamine abuse has been developed by an interdisciplinary team of Appalachian researchers, and it has become an important component of a statewide plan to address meth addiction.

Both inside and outside the Reich College of Education, our faculty members are very interested in how we learn. Sandie Gravett, from the Department of Philosophy and Religion, is investigating how to succeed in the difficult task of teaching people what they think they already know: her work is helping us understand how to teach Christianity to students whose world view is often defined by deeply held Christian assumptions. Tracy Smith, from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, addresses one of the most important component of a statewide plan to address meth addiction.

As a psychologist myself, I know how difficult it is to draw valid inferences about variables that have a measurable positive effect on how we interact with both our immediate and distant environments. I applaud these faculty members for their willingness to take on important and complex questions, performing research that often takes them across traditional disciplinary boundaries in pursuit of new and highly usable knowledge about our physical, psychological and intercultural worlds.

Sincerely,

Stan R. Aeschleman
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

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What defines a ‘quality teacher’?
Everyone wants the best teacher for their children. An Appalachian-led study now reveals what attributes distinguish National Board Certified Teachers® from their peers.

Overcoming Meth
A team of Appalachian researchers is testing what treatment options, or combination of treatment options, are most effective in helping users and their families cope with meth addiction.

Shades of Green
A boyhood curiosity became a scholarly pursuit for this Middle East expert.

Research Notes

Appalachian Exploration is published by Appalachian State University’s Cratis D. Williams Graduate School. Correspondence and comments should be sent to Robert Johnson, Senior Associate Dean, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Cratis D. Williams Graduate School, John E. Thomas Building, Boone, NC 28608. Phone, (828) 262-2130. E-mail, johnsonrl@appstate.edu.

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Hal Keiner, Libraries
Cathy McKinney, Music

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Cover photos: Tourists visit ruins of the treasury in the Kingdom of Jordan’s ancient city of Petra, which recently was named one of the new Seven Wonders of the World by a global poll. Inset, a member of the Ottoman Military Band re-enacts the band’s imperial and martial music in Istanbul, Turkey. The Ottoman Military Band is considered the world’s original marching band. Photos courtesy of Curtis Ryan.

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Tracy Smith knows the value of a good teacher. She knows that a highly motivated and committed educator can change people’s lives. She knows this because such a teacher helped to change her life.

“When I was in high school, I decided I was going to get a PhD, even though I didn’t know what one was,” said Smith, an associate professor in the Reich College of Education whose research focuses on defining teacher quality.

“My senior English teacher made us believe we were smart, that we could do just about anything,” she said. “I decided then I wanted to be like her. And, because she had a PhD, I decided I would get one.”

Smith pursued and achieved that goal, receiving her PhD in curriculum and teaching from UNC Greensboro in 1999. Today in Appalachian’s Department of Curriculum and Instruction, her research reflects the motivation of that original goal.

“In my life, I’ve been so affected personally by not just one but several quality teachers that I’m really interested in understanding what defines a quality teacher,” she said. “Some define it by how teachers perform on a standardized test. Some measure it by how teachers’ students perform on standardized tests. In my research, I’ve attempted to go beyond that kind of thinking.”

Findings of a two-year, $450,000 National Education Foundation (NEF) grant led by Smith show that teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) are more likely to design instruction that achieves higher levels of student understanding. A research team of more than 50 teachers collected and analyzed the work of 641 students taught by 64 teachers. Thirty-five of the teachers were National Board Certified Teachers®, and 29 had attempted certification but had not achieved it.

“In this and other research projects, I approached the question of teacher quality in terms of depth of student learning, and how teachers foster that kind of learning,” she said. “I want to look beyond teaching defined by the test, and instead look at how teachers help students understand information in a more conceptual and sophisticated way.”

Unlike previous studies on National Board Certified Teachers®, Smith’s team examined more than student performance on standardized tests. They scrutinized teachers’ lesson plans, instructional design and assignments to students, as well as students’ responses to those assignments. A standardized writing assessment designed by a writing center in the Southeast specifically for Smith’s study provided the data her team wanted to better assess students’ ability to articulate their knowledge.

“We found in our study that National Board Certified Teachers® were more likely to design their instruction to foster deeper learning outcomes. They asked questions that probed more deeply. They gave assignments that asked students to apply knowledge rather than merely reproduce it,” Smith said.

She said she hopes the study’s findings will prompt all teachers and educators to be more interested in getting students to learn concepts more deeply, as “that is the most significant contribution of this study to the educational community at large,” she said.

Smith recognizes the No Child Left Behind Act for helping bring the issue of teacher quality into the nation’s conversation about education and academic success. And, although the NEF study clearly showed a positive relationship between National Board Certified Teachers® and greater depth in student learning, she warns against the temptation to oversimplify the significance of “quality teaching” within the discussion.

“In the field of education, there’s a tendency to expedite the process of fixing whatever is wrong with the system. I think we lose something when we try to make the problem simplistic. It’s not simplistic,” she said.

“The question ‘What is a quality teacher?’ is such a difficult concept to define. It’s public. It’s personal. Most of us can identify a favorite teacher. But, ask why that person was a favorite teacher, and that’s a much harder question to answer. We all have a stake in this issue. And, though I’m pleased that teacher quality is now included in the discussion, the discussion determining the direction of education in this country needs to continue. There is no single model or measure for what a quality teacher is. Quality teachers come in all shapes and sizes. That’s the complexity of the issue.”

Tracy Smith can be reached at smithtw@appstate.edu
In 2003, three Watauga County sisters were among the youngest North Carolinians to fall victim to the wave of clandestine methamphetamine operations spreading across the country. A raid on the children’s home by the Watauga County Sheriff’s Office revealed the girls’ mother and her boyfriend were making methamphetamine, or meth, in the attic, near where the sisters slept.

“The girls were suffering from toxic fumes emitted by the cooking. They were removed immediately from the house and taken away from their mother,” said Chad Slagle ’98, a social worker with the Watauga County Department of Social Services’ Child Protective Services unit, and a graduate of Appalachian State University’s social work program. “Today, the mother is in prison, and the children are under guardianship of various family members.”

In the wake of devastation to users and their families caused by meth, there has been debate among mental health and substance abuse professionals about how treatable methamphetamine addiction is, and what type of treatment is most effective.

“Treatment for meth abusers is different than for other drugs because it is highly addictive,” said Lauren Renkert, an assistant professor in Appalachian’s Department of Sociology and Social Work. “It takes a lot to overcome the physiological cravings that accompany meth addiction. The cognitive impairment and brain dysfunction abusers experience can last for several years. This makes the treatment and recovery process even more difficult.”

Not long after the sisters were removed from their home, an interdisciplinary team of Appalachian researchers led by Renkert began collaborating with local, regional and state mental healthcare and substance abuse agencies to develop and evaluate an innovative methamphetamine treatment program. The project, titled North Carolina Methamphetamine Initiative/Appalachian State University Partnership for Methamphetamine Treatment Program Development and Evaluation, is funded by the N.C. Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services, through a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Since 2004, the research team has worked closely with mental health and substance abuse personnel, and local departments of social services in eight counties to deliver a newly developed treatment model to clients coming in for meth treatment, and to collect data on and evaluate the effectiveness of this model—both by itself and in combination with a variety of additional treatment interventions.

Innovative methamphetamine treatment program offers hope to users and their families

By Kate Cahow

Photo illustration by Troy Tuttle
The massive collaboration, initiated by the state to meet the mounting need for effective meth treatment across North Carolina, has the potential to not only improve methamphetamine treatment delivery to N.C. residents, according to Renkert, but to contribute to the larger body of knowledge on substance abuse treatment.

**A different kind of drug**

Methamphetamine is an artificial stimulant that releases high levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine into the brain, producing euphoria and increased energy. For users, abuse of the drug leads to paranoia, delusions, memory loss, dysfunctions in cognitive ability, weight loss, physical decay, and the inability to function in the real world.

When meth is illicitly produced, or “cooked,” it is made using a combination of household products, including over-the-counter cold medications that contain ephedrine or pseudoephedrine. Synthesis is relatively simple, but it entails risks associated with flammable and corrosive chemicals. This is why illicit production is often discovered due to fires and explosions caused by improper handling of these chemicals.

For children of users or cooks, the dangers of meth are also a result of women, or primary caregivers, comprising a large percentage of meth abusers. The drug appeals strongly to women, mental health professionals suggest, because of the extra energy and weight loss associated with it. According to Renkert, with most addictive substances, 25 to 30 percent of abusers are women. For meth, the numbers climb to between 40 and 50 percent.

“It’s bad enough that children are exposed to toxic chemicals when a family member is cooking meth,” she said. “But, that in combination with parents who are using the drug result in children being neglected, malnourished, not getting homework done, not attending school, not sleeping well, or not having a place to sleep at all. In general, everything is more dangerous for children and the whole family when a major caregiver is unavailable.”

Since its appearance in the early 1960s among motorcycle gangs, methamphetamine production and use have reached every state in the United States. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 12.3 million Americans have tried methamphetamine, and 1.5 million are regular users. Meth production was first reported in North Carolina in 1999 with the discovery of nine labs. By 2003, the number had increased to 322 labs across the state, according to the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office.

“In Watauga County alone, 41 illegal meth labs were seized between 2003 and 2004,” Slagle said. “In related incidents, 17 children were placed in foster homes or by other relatives.”

Aggressive efforts of local and state law enforcement agencies from 2004 to 2007, and new state legislation limiting the sale of targeted over-the-counter cold medicines, have diminished the presence of meth labs in the state dramatically. In Watauga County, for example, there was only one lab bust this year, according to Capt. Kelly Redmon of the Watauga County Sheriff’s Office. But, traffickers continue to bring meth into the state, the need for effective treatment remains.

**Real-world treatment**

In the past three years, the N.C. Methamphetamine Initiative/Appalachian State University Partnership for Methamphetamine Treatment Program Development and Evaluation has engaged meth users and their families in a treatment process they hope will change their fates.

Data to evaluate the project have been collected from case records for 212 individuals in Watauga, Ashe, Caldwell, McDowell, Buncombe, Rutherford, Haywood and Macon counties. The records contain information on demographics, employment, drug being used – how much and how often, family members, and the well-being of children. The results will provide the research team with a comprehensive picture of what’s happening in each individual’s life.

“This is not research in its purest form, where you have an experimental group, a control group, apply an intervention and see what happens,” she said. “We’re working at a time when the state is undergoing a real-world treatment model, how programs are more effective in encouraging abstinence, reducing relapse, improving the well being and functioning of children, and keeping families together.

“Aggressive efforts of local and state law enforcement agencies from 2004 to 2007, and new state legislation limiting the sale of targeted over-the-counter cold medicines, have diminished the presence of meth labs in the state dramatically. In Watauga County, for example, there was only one lab bust this year, according to Capt. Kelly Redmon of the Watauga County Sheriff’s Office. But, traffickers continue to bring meth into the state, the need for effective treatment remains.”

“Real-world treatment” is the human side to the project: individuals and families suffering, working hard to redefine themselves, to go beyond being a meth family to being a healthy family,” Renkert said. “And, in the delivery of these treatment models there is a legion of very devoted, hopeful and committed clinicians working to facilitate that journey.”

Lauren Renkert can be contacted at renkertle@appstate.edu. The Appalachian team addressing meth addiction comprises, in front, social work professor Lauren Renkert and project manager Heather Thorpe, and, in back, Jon Winik of the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling (HPC), Katie Read-Ashcraft of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, and Lisa Curtin of the Department of Psychology and the Institute for Health and Human Services. Geri Miller of HPC, not pictured, also works on the project.
As a child, Curtis Ryan was intrigued with the Middle East and Arabic culture. Everything he encountered in Western media about the region fed his fascination: stories and movies about Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin’s Lamp. “Things that I now think of as horribly stereotypical of the region are, oddly enough, probably the reason I got involved in this research area,” said Ryan, an associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice whose research focuses on Middle Eastern culture and politics.

Ryan pursued his passion by studying Arabic culture and language in college. He also enrolled in a language program in the Kingdom of Jordan. “Within 24 hours of being in the country I was hooked,” he said of the experience. “Since then, I go back as often as I can, and I continue to work on my language skills and my research.”

Ryan’s efforts have resulted in numerous articles on topics associated with Arabic culture, and two books: “Jordan in Transition: From...
Shades of Green

Hussein to Abdullah” (2002) and “Shifting Arab Alliances,” which should be published within a year. This summer he presented research at a global NATO conference in Istanbul, Turkey. In the following interview excerpts, Ryan dispels some of the myths surrounding this ancient culture and sheds light on a region — and a people — at the center of so much turmoil and strife in today’s world.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish with this work, and how do you plan to do it?

From all accounts in the media, the public is getting a skewed and inaccurate version of the Middle East and Arab culture. There’s a great deal of misinformation out there. For example, I was watching the news the other day and they were discussing an author who has written a book purporting that Islam is an inherently violent religion. This is nonsense. Clearly there are extreme Muslims who are very violent. They are, essentially, aberrations of the religion, just as Rev. Jim Jones (see editor’s note on page 13) was an aberration of the Christian religion. But, we never talk about Jones being representative of Christianity. He wasn’t. And, neither is Osama bin Laden representative of Islam. Because of the 9/11 bombings and the war in Iraq, a fifth of the world’s population is being systematically misrepresented and misunderstood. We never talk about the fact that most of the victims of terrorism are Muslims. We talk about the radical fundamentalists, the militants.

My personal experience has been that Arabs and Islamic culture is the most hospitable culture on earth. The people are uncommonly kind, and they are being depicted overall as violent extremists. There are acts of disinformation, and they need to be countered.

Because my expertise is focused in this region and on this culture, I have an opportunity to provide clarification in this area. I came to Appalachian just as the Iraq war was beginning, and was immediately asked to be on panels and to do public talks. I have taken these occasions to do some myth busting on the topic of the Middle East and Arab culture. I think this is probably the single most important service I provide to my students and the local community.

Q: What myths can you dispel for us here?

Contrary to what most people think, and what militant groups perpetuate, Islam does not justify terrorism. Murder and coercion are not permitted in matters of religion, and neither is suicide. So, if you hijack a plane, kill people and commit suicide in the name of Islam, you have committed multiple sins.

Militant jihadiists have a dim understanding of their own religion. This is true worldwide of ultra-nationalist and violent religious groups, whether they’re Jewish, Hindu, Christian or Muslim. A militant version of any religion tends to be very narrow.

Also, most westerners don’t realize how similar Islam is to Christianity and Judaism, that each of those religions has their roots in Abrahamic tradition and recognize Abraham as a major prophet. Islam accepts the entire Judeo-Christian line of prophets, but sees Muhammad as the final prophet. Muslims also revere Jesus as a great prophet, but as a great Muslim prophet.

Another misconception about Arab countries is that they are more alike than not. They do have a common heritage and a common religion, but beyond that each country has evolved differently, with different political systems.

Q: Would you give a brief overview of Muslim culture and the Arab state?

The earliest civilizations we know of were born in the Middle East, as were all the major monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam. The Arab world was divided up by Europeans through colonization in the 19th century, and independence left behind a conglomerate of independent nations.

Today’s Arab world consists of about 20 different countries. Almost all of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Yemen — and then the countries of the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Iraq. The Arab world constitutes about 350 million people, and the Muslim population is over one billion, making Islam the second-largest religion in the world, after Christianity.

As difficult as it is to understand Middle Eastern politics right now, this one paradox is critical to understanding the region as a whole: In addition to being home to the world’s great religions and oldest civilizations, it is also home to some of the world’s newest countries, countries that got their borders during and after World War I, and became independent after World War II, typically in the 1960s. If we acknowledge the Middle East as being composed of newly independent nations, it shouldn’t surprise us that they don’t get along. It would be surprising if they did. It makes sense that nobody likes borders imposed on them, that they struggle over control of resources, especially when oil is involved.

Q: Have your work included addressing the situation in Iraq and the war against terrorism?

Originally I was not interested in getting into issues of terrorism, but given what’s happened since 2001, that has changed. I’ve become very concerned about how things are going both in Iraq and the Middle East in general. Those of us who specialize in this field accurately predicted war with Iraq would radically increase terrorism not just in the region, but worldwide. As horrible as Saddam Hussein was, he was a militant secularist. He opposed all religious forms of political activism, and most importantly was an arch-enemy of Islamic fundamentalists. They could never operate in Iraq under his regime, since he persecuted them. But, they certainly operate there now. The presence of a foreign occupying force enabled the jihadis to enter the country. We’ve created a haven for terrorism when we were trying to do the opposite.

From the beginning of this conflict, many of the problems encountered have been due to a lack of understanding of Arab and Islamic culture. The Middle Eastern region is complex, both with regard to politics and ethnic alliances. Once I complete my second book, “Shifting Arab Alliances,” I hope to begin a book that addresses these complexities in a way that is accessible to general audiences. I’m thinking of calling it, “Shades of Green.” Green is the traditional color of Islam, and there are many shades included in the spectrum. I think a book that addresses Islamic politics and how Islam works worldwide could be a great benefit at this time. There truly are so many different shades of green. #

Editor’s Note: Rev. Jim Jones was founder of the Peoples Temple, a religious organization that became synonymous with group suicide after 911 members of the cult drowned themselves in Guyana in 1978.

Curtis Ryan can be reached at jryan@dkp.net

Finally, I want to thank my wife who, like many students who came to Appalachian to study this region, has dedicated her life to alleviating the suffering of the issues. I also want to thank the students who have been so dedicated in the task of this work. I also want to thank the editors here at Appalachian Explorations for their patience and support in the writing of this project.

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Women's body image, and specifically “fat talk” – a phenomenon that occurs when women get together and complain about their body image – has been studied by psychologists at Appalachian, and they are gaining national attention for their work.

Psychology professor Denise Martz appeared on NBC’s “Today” show in June and has been interviewed about women and body image for Shape, Weight Watchers, Fitness, and Health magazines.

Much of the attention stems from Martz’s work in “fat talk,” a term coined by anthropologist Min Nich- ter of the University of Arizona who looked at the behavior in middle school and high school girls. Martz, along with Appalachian colleagues Lisa Curtin and Doris Bazzini and a team of Appalachian students, have looked at the “fat talk” behavior among college-age women.

“Our research showed that college students – males and females – know that when women are in a group of other women who are fat talking, that they are supposed to join in to say negative things about their bodies. And, there is pressure to do so,” Martz said, who holds a PhD in clinical health psychology from Virginia Tech. They also found the women in the group would be more inclined to like a woman who participates in “fat talk” than a woman who doesn’t join the discussion.

“My interpretation of the students’ response is that they think ‘fat talk’ is a normal thing,” Martz said. “But, it’s an unfortunate thing that women do.”

Martz, who is a health psychologist, says this research is important to the understanding of the cultural pressures on women to participate in “fat talk” and the role the media play in women’s perceptions of their bodies.

“In general, we find that women in the United States, particularly Caucasian women, feel poorly about their bodies,” Martz said. “Women also believe there is pressure to fat talk, and that other women do it because they feel poorly about their bodies. We never break out of that cycle. If there are women who have a positive body image, they never step up and vocalize that, so the norm never changes.”

She hopes this and future research about fat talk will help women become more aware of the practice as well as the pressures from media imag- es to strive for a particular body type.

Their research, along with master’s degree stu- dent Lauren Britton and honors stu- dent Ani LeaShomb’s work, was pub- lished in the online journal ScienceDirect.com, and appeared in the Sep- tember 2006 issue of Body Image: An International Journal of Research.

On the “Today” show, Martz was interviewed about women’s body image in an appearance with model Rachel Hunter, who is the spokesperson for SlimFast’s Find Your Slim Campaign to help women find their ideal weight. SlimFast asked Martz to design their body- image survey of 4,000 American men and women for the campaign.

“What we found was that 78 per- cent of women desire a small- er size than they actually were,” Martz said. “The majority of women in our survey wanted to be a size 8 or smaller.” The average for women in the survey was a size 12.

“A realistic expectation is what we want,” Martz said. “It’s a weight a woman can be at where she feels her best, where she feels comfortable and can find a stable weight without having to get compulsive with her behav- ior. That’s the ideal. And, finding a realistic goal is different from what most women are looking for. They’re looking to be like a magazine cover model.”

For a healthy body image, Martz recommended the following:

• Body image is in your mind, not your body
• Set realistic, personalized goals
• Don’t use fashion icons to determine your ideal size
• Focus on behavioral goals and write them down.

Professor explores best practices for teaching Christianity at universities

Christianity is such an important part of Southern culture that it’s not un- common for students to come to the classroom thinking they already have mastered the topic.

Professor Sand- ie Gravett has exper- ienced this at Appala- chian, and so have her peers at other institu- tions. Moved by this phenomenon, they are putting together ways to improve teaching about Christianity in large southern public institutions.

“In my generation, it was more tradi- tional for you to eschew everything your parents taught you and rebel from it. That’s not this generation at all,” said Gravett, who teaches in the Department of Philosophy and Reli- gion.

“Christianity shapes their world view and determines how they see ev- ry religion we study. In our work, we want to find better ways to help our students be open to academic ap- proaches as well as to understand more accurately what they bring to the classroom.”

Along with colleagues at the Univer- sity of Georgia and University of Ten- nessee, Gravett is developing specif- ic teaching strategies to meet their classroom needs. Their work is fund- ed by a $15,000 grant from the Wa- bush Center for Teaching and Learn- ing in Theology and Religion.

“One of the things we keep talking about is how Christianity and partic- ularly evangelical Christianity is such a powerful force in our classrooms, whether or not we are teaching Chris- tianity,” said Gravett, who holds a doctorate in religion from Duke Uni- versity and a master of divinity de- gree in languages from Southeaster Baptist Theological Seminary.

Faculty members are finding that many students believe they already know the subject through Sunday School and resist an academic approach. “We hope to make this a critically reflective exercise in how to deal with some of the things that all of us as instructors know exist, but struggle to deal with effectively,” she said.

NIH-funded professor studies exercise’s protection against heart attack

John C. Quindry in Appalachian’s Department of Health, Leisure and Ex- ercise Science is studying the role of short-term exercise plays in protect- ing the heart muscle during a severe heart attack.

“In the United States, where we have become very sedentary and our diets have become inappropri- ate, heart disease is the No. 1 killer,” Quindry said. “My ultimate goal is find- ing ways to protect against heart at- tack.”

Quindry is expanding research he and others conducted during his post- doctoral work at the University of Flor- ida. That research showed that just three consecutive days of moderate exercise protects against the damag- ing effects of a heart attack for up to two weeks when compared to non-ex- ercised hearts.

He now hopes to learn more pre- cisely how exercise triggers a change in the heart muscle that protects it should a heart attack occur. “Heart cells don’t die as frequently in an ex- ercised heart during a heart attack as a sedentary heart,” Quindry expla- inned.

“The heart muscle cells, just like cells throughout the body, have a lim- it to what they can do,” he said. Dur- ing a heart attack, those cell resour- ces are put to the test. The component I want to test is specific to the mito- chondria, the power-energy generat- ing component of the cell.”

Quindry, who is being assisted by undergraduate stu- dents, said results of his research could translate rather quickly to a clin- ical application.

“Exercise is certainly not the only way to turn on this component of the protected heart. If a physician has a patient who is likely to suffer a heart attack and is unable to exercise, the patient could be given a drug to turn on this component of the heart and preserve the heart muscle against EKG abnormalities or cell death should a heart attack occur,” he said.

Quindry’s research is supported by an $180,000 Academic Research En- hancement Award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
NASA-funded researcher Professor Richard Gray, lower left, and graduate student Courtney McGahee research a class of stars called Rho Puppis through the 32-inch telescope at Appalachian’s Dark Sky Observatory, located off the Blue Ridge Parkway. The university is constructing the J. Donald Cline Visitors Center at the observatory so community members and school groups can view the night sky, too. A fundraising campaign is under way to complete the project. To contribute, visit www.give.appstate.edu or call the College of Arts and Sciences’ development staff at (828) 262-4013.