From the Editor

by Louise Olshan, CTE Teaching and Learning Program Faculty Coordinator

Welcome to issue two of the Spring 2009 Update, the Newsletter of the CCM Center for Teaching Excellence. This issue will highlight some of the activities of the CCM faculty.

Professor Maria Isaza shares how she came into the field of education and teaching. The role of mentors can be very powerful.

Once again, Dr. Roger McCoach shares information from a recent trip. Enjoy reading about his experiences in India and enjoy his photography.

Retired Professor Dr. William Huber shares his experiences last summer hiking through the mountains of Morocco.

Thank you to these professors for sharing with the CCM community. Without the work of the contributors, this publication would not be possible.

Don’t wait for the editor to email you requesting an article! Please feel free to contact her (lolshan@ccm.edu, x5315) and offer to be a part of the CTE Update.
The Importance of Mentors

by Dr. Maria Isaza, Department of Biology and Chemistry

September 29, 2008 is a date that will stay in my memory along with other cherished events in my life. On that day, I defended my dissertation. A day I had been long awaiting for almost 6 years of study and laboratory research. I completed the Philosophy Doctorate in Biomedical Sciences at UMDNJ under Dr. Scott Kachlany’s mentoring. It was a wonderful experience that allowed me to study and engage in microbial research. My experience as a graduate student was enhanced and completed by attending conferences, publishing papers and even obtaining my own NIH grant. I will always be very grateful for the mentoring and my entire experience at UMDNJ.

Two years before completing my Ph. D., I realized that I loved research but that my passion was teaching. Once I had that revelation I understood that I needed to take action and steer my career into a new direction. My first step was to contact one of my mentors here at CCM, Dr. Rita Alisauskas. With her help and direction, I was on my way to start teaching my first college Microbiology class. It was a dream come true, coming back to CCM, now as a professor. I knew it was going to be hard to juggle the summer II schedule with my laboratory work, but Dr. Kachlany understood my desire for teaching and he allowed me to accommodate my schedule during that time. By spring 08, my class load had increased to twelve credits which required me to adjust my schedule even further. For example, instead of traveling to Newark five days per week, I was only going to the university four days. Also at the personal level I had to make adjustments. As a wife and mother, I felt guilty many times for not spending as much time as I wanted with my family. To lessen my guilt, I would work very early in the morning on my classes and other assignments and spend the late afternoons taking care of my family.

In June of 2008, I was hired as a full time professor for the upcoming academic year. I was thrilled but at the same time I was scared. I had just finished all my experiments and I needed to start writing my thesis which was going to be a document of about two hundred pages. I spent the entire summer writing my thesis and preparing for the defense as well as for the fall semester. Once we started the semester, time went by very quickly and I felt overwhelmed by the stress and pressure, especially because of the anticipated defense.

The day after my defense, I was a new person. I felt that a heavy burden had been taken from my back and I felt relieved. I realized that I was done. I had completed all of the requirements and I was ecstatic. Looking back,
I can see that it was not easy but it was worth it. I am aware that I was able to accomplish it because of the support team that I had behind me including my mentors at UMDNJ and here at CCM, as well as my friends and family. Today, I am looking forward to the upcoming summer. I hope that I will be able to spend a lot more time with my family than the past two summers and also have some time to catch up on two of my favorite hobbies, reading mystery novels and playing Sudoku.

From the editor: Congratulations, Maria, on a job well done and earning your Ph.D

Incredible India
by Dr. Roger McCoach, Department of Mathematics

Over the years I have become increasingly interested in India, due to its fascinating history, people, and culture. Hearing and reading that visiting India “is an assault on one’s senses,” that “there is a photo opportunity every 90 seconds,” and the current ad campaign in the U. S. of “Incredible India” led me to book a 17 day tour of the northern part of the country with my brother over the 2008 – 2009 winter break.

The tour began in Delhi, a metropolitan area with a population of 16 million people. It is divided into individual municipalities, with Old Delhi and New Delhi being the principal ones. Old Delhi was inhabited as long as 3000 years ago and has been ruled by Hindu, Mughal, and British rulers over the centuries. New Delhi is quite different from Old Delhi, being a planned city built by the British in an elegant style in the first half of the 20th century.

India is about 1/3 the size of the United States, but has a population that is more than three times that of the U.S. It is estimated that in about 2020, India will surpass China as the most populated country on the planet. The current one billion Indian people reside in 31 different states in the country. India is the world’s largest democracy and has 24 different political parties at the national level.
A rickshaw ride through the walled city of Old Delhi introduced the tour group to the chaotic and exhilarating life in the streets that would be a common theme throughout the trip. The onslaught of mechanized and human traffic was quite an experience, not to mention wild monkeys and cows in the streets, and the most bizarre, haphazard electrical wiring running from pole to pole to anything that I have ever encountered. In Old Delhi we visited Raj Ghat, which is a simple black marble platform marking the spot where Mahatma Ghandi was cremated. We also traveled on the main street of Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk, which has a fascinating bazaar that stretches for half a mile. We learned that people selling shoes there will sometimes only have one shoe out for sale to discourage thievery. In Old Delhi where the majority of people are Muslim, we visited the largest mosque in India, Jama Masjid. It was built from 1656–1662 by 5,000 laborers and its open courtyard can accommodate 25,000 worshipers.

The neat, wide, tree-lined boulevards in New Delhi are in stark contrast to the cluttered labyrinth of narrow lanes and alleyways of Old Delhi. New Delhi is the center of government for the country and is where India’s President resides. In New Delhi the tour group saw India Gate which is a memorial to Indian soldiers who fought for the British in WWI and in the 1971 Indo–Pakistan war. On a foggy morning (a very common experience) we visited the 234 foot tall tower, Qutb Minar. This sandstone Victory Tower was built in the 12th century when the last Hindu kingdom was defeated. A visit was also made to a Sikh (actually pronounced “sick”) temple. Besides having to take off our shoes, our heads were covered and we had a bindi (a red dot) placed between the eyebrows. A community kitchen at the Sikh temple feeds 2000–4000 people a day, regardless of their religion, caste, color, or gender.

The next city we visited was Jaipur, known as the “Pink City” because of the rosy hue of its sandstone buildings. The ornate Palace of the Winds is a facade of 956 tiny, honeycombed windows where the ladies of the palace would look out to the street below without being seen. The well preserved Amber Fort just outside of Jaipur is constructed of white and red sandstone. Built in the 16th century, this imposing fort has a rather rough exterior appearance, yet a magnificent, tasteful interior.
There are paintings, murals, frescos, and carvings on walls depicting scenes from daily life at that time. One of the interior rooms, Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors), is a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its stunning mirror work. In that room a girl would perform a dance of love for the Maharaja, holding candles whose light would reflect off literally thousands of tiny mirrors on the ceiling, thus portraying a star-filled sky.

In Jaipur, everyone on the trip enjoyed the visit to Jantar Mantar (Calculation Instrument), an observatory built in 1728 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, the founder of Jaipur (one of five observatories that he built). He was a learned man who had 14 architectural astronomical instruments built at the site which measure time, track orbits of celestial bodies, and predict eclipses. The Samat Jantar (Supreme Instrument) is a sundial 90 feet tall and can tell time to an accuracy of about two seconds. It is believed to be the world’s largest sundial, its shadow moving at 1 mm/sec. G.E. Kidder Smith wrote that “An excursion through Jai Singh’s Jantar is the singular one of walking through solid geometry and encountering a collective weapons system designed to probe the heavens.” (1)

In the ancient village of Abhaneri near Jaipur, the group saw one of the oldest and deepest step-wells in India. Step-wells are unique to India and this particular well contains hundreds of steep, criss-crossing stone steps that create rows of upside down “V” patterns, as the steps descend to the bottom of the well. Besides being used as a water source, step-wells were used as baths for the royalty and a haven from the suffocating summer heat. The step-well also served as a general town center where the villagers could relax and socialize.
The next stop on the tour was to Ranthambore National Park, to see the elusive Bengal tiger. This park has been the hunting reserve for the Maharajas of Jaipur and other royalty over the years. The park consists of forests, grasslands, temples, monuments, lotus-filled lakes, jagged cliffs, a variety of wildlife, and the 1000 year old Ranthambore Fort. At the fort there are metal spikes protruding from the imposing and heavy wooden gates, designed to deter the enemy. In attempts to break into the fort, the enemy would get elephants drunk and have them charge into the gates.

The number of tigers in India has fluctuated wildly over the years due to hunting and poaching – from 40,000 in 1900 to 1,000 in 1970. There are currently about 2,500 tigers in the country, 43 of them being in Ranthambore Park. It is estimated that 75% – 95% of all Bengal tiger photographs in the wild have been taken at Ranthambore Park. The last tiger killed in the park was shot by Queen Elizabeth of England in the 1960’s. Hunting has been banned in the park since 1972. On our one day safari in the park, the tiger, unfortunately, did remain elusive. We did see, however, wild peacocks, large parakeets, spotted deer, a crocodile, snakes, sambar deer, beautiful birds such as the kingfisher, lots of black-faced langur monkeys, and a mongoose.

A visit was made to an isolated, poor, village in the countryside. We visited one of the approximately 150 families there who served us traditional Indian tea ... half tea, half milk, and very sweet. One of my lasting memories of the visit was seeing an elderly woman in the village outside her home in the cool morning, warming her bare feet by a small fire while smoking a cigarette. Many of the homes had straw on the roofs to keep the house warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We stopped by the one school in
the village. Many of the classrooms were rooms with three walls with the fourth side open to the outside. There are no seats or desks in the classrooms, and no bathroom at the school, as well. Every morning the students touch the principal’s feet as a sign of respect. Tradition has it that the national anthem is sung each morning in under 52 seconds. The students were extremely happy and excited to see us, wanting to have their picture taken, and eager to show us that in English they could recite the alphabet and count numbers.

It appears that Indians can have a rather superstitious streak. Garlic and limes hung from the front of our bus for a safe trip. Numerous trucks and cars were seen with black towels and black rags tied to the rear bumpers and side view mirrors to keep the evil spirit away. Several babies carried by their mothers were seen with their eyes completely encircled with black eyeliner to keep the evil eye away. A young widow or a divorced woman will have a difficult time getting remarried as it is considered that they bring bad fortune. One of the purposes of the red bindi dot is too protect the person from demons and bad luck. It is believed to be good fortune to have the top of one’s pinky finger extending higher than the top crease line on the adjacent ring finger. One local guide’s pinky fingers were not long enough, so he grew his pinky fingernails long to have his pinkies rising higher than that mark on the ring finger!

The city of Agra was home to generations of Mughal rulers in the medieval world and is best known for the spectacular Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal was built by 20,000 workers between 1631 and 1653. It was constructed by Shah Jahan (King of the World) as a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Queen Mumtaz Mahal (Jewel of the Palace), who died while bearing their 14th child. The remains of both the Shah and the Queen are located in the inner tomb.

The pure white marble structure is a study in symmetry, with its minarets, facades, and spires in perfect balance and harmony. The exquisite detailing in the architecture can be seen in the intricate carvings on the interior and exterior walls – floral bouquets with thousands of inlaid stones such as jasper, malachite, and turquoise, and
different shades of sandstone, slate, and marble. It is believed that at one time Shah Jahan had the idea of building another Taj Mahal, duplicating the present one, except with black marble.

Near Agra is Fatehpur Sikri, a “ghost city” founded by the Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great in the 1500’s (the city was abandoned after just 14 years due to a water shortage). We visited the palace there where the game of Pachisi (Parcheesi to us) was played in an open courtyard. This national game of India involved Emperor Akbar sitting on a dais in the center of the “board,” which consisted of inlaid red and white marble squares. He would use members of his harem as pieces in the game, commanding their moves based upon his throws of cowry shells. It is believed that Akbar learned much about the personalities of his enemies and court members by watching how they played, and how they acted when they won or lost.

I would be remiss to not comment on the street life that I saw and experienced while in the country. Besides the usual cars, trucks (with people sometimes hanging off the back of them) and pedestrians in the streets, one can also find “3 wheelers” (auto-rickshaws), bicycles, wagons, motorcycles, carts, tractors, dogs, pigs, goats, sheep, the sacred cows, water buffalo, horses, camels, and even elephants. Throw in a few snake charmers, monkey acts, the hawkers, and the unfortunate people who are begging, and one experiences an electric atmosphere that a guide accurately described as “congestion, color, and chaos.”

Also in Agra is the Agra Fort, originally built in the 16th century. Calling it a fort is somewhat of a misnomer as it is more of a complex containing mosques, assembly halls, royal apartments, and even a dungeon. The architecture of the structure combines a military presence as well as an extravagant beauty. The height of the gates was determined so that a king sitting on an elephant could safely pass through them. Shah Jahan was held captive in the fort for 8 years by his son, who took power when Shah Jahan was ill. He was kept in a tower with a marble balcony that looked out to the Taj Mahal.
A specific part of the street life that deserves comment is the motor vehicle driving in India that I both saw and experienced. It appears that driving within marked lanes on highways is optional, and in many instances, frowned upon. With multiple lanes, straddling a marked line allows a driver to better survey two lanes so one can zip into the faster of the two when an opening appears. I saw people driving cars on the side of the road (I never saw a shoulder in the country), on the sidewalks, and my “favorite”... driving in the wrong direction on a divided highway. Crazily weaving in and around trucks and cars coming towards us at midnight at the end of a 10 hour drive was a once in a lifetime experience that (hopefully) won’t be repeated soon!

A subset of the motor vehicle driving is the horn-blowing that exists in the country. By law, one must blow the horn when passing someone on the road or another motor vehicle. Indian drivers, however, do not need much of an excuse to blow their car’s horn – a light turning green, any car in front of you, or “here I come, get out of my way” can lead to a blast. Yet, amazingly enough, there is no road rage of any kind in the country.

The city of Khajuraho is known for its ornate temples built by the Chandela dynasty between 900 and 1100 A.D., and discovered by a British adventurer in 1838. These people believed in Tantrism, which held that one of the four aims of life was the pursuit of pleasure. The satisfaction of desires was an important step in reaching moksha (deliverance, the final aim in life). The Chandela rulers built 85 stone temples famous for their erotic carvings. These vivid sculptured carvings are on the outside of the temples and quite explicitly evoke images of the Kama Sutra, with couples joyously engaging in erotic acts. Also, according to ancient Indian architectural literature, the portrayal of loving animals and human couples was believed to bring good luck to both the builder and worshiper.
A surprising number of marriages are still arranged in India. Virtually 100% of the marriages in the country and 70%-95% of the marriages in the cities are arranged. In the country, the bride and groom may not see each other until the wedding day, while in the cities there may initially be a half hour meeting between the couple. It is also common for an astrologer to give a 36 item questionnaire to the man and woman to see how compatible they may be as a married couple. A “score” of 18 or more items in common points towards a successful marriage ... however, it is also believed that too many items answered alike may lead to a boring marriage!

If I could only return to one city in India, it would be to Varanasi, the last stop on the tour. It is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city on the planet, with the earliest accounts of it going back 8,000 years. Mark Twain described the city as "older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice old as all of them put together." (2) Varanasi is to Hindus what Mecca is to Muslims, the spiritual center of their religion. It has over 10,000 temples, not including temples that many people have in their own houses, and more than one million Hindus make pilgrimages to the city each year. In fact, Twain described Varanasi as “a religious Vesuvius.” (3)

The sacred Ganges River flows through the city. The Hindus believe that the Ganges is “amrita,” a cleanser of sin and a purifier of souls. We saw dozens of the faithful performing the religious ritual of puja in the river at sunrise. This spectacle has been occurring daily for thousands of years, and consists of the devotees bathing in the river, pouring water over their heads, reciting prayers, and performing ancient rituals in the water.

At night from the waters of the Ganges we viewed the cremations of bodies at one of Varanasi’s burning ghats on the edge of the river. Just getting to the river was an adventure – we had a cyclo-rickshaw ride through the narrow, crowded streets, viewing just about every conceivable mode of transportation as we wove through the traffic. As long as a century ago, Mark Twain wrote that “the city is as busy as an ant–hill.”(3) There are three million people living in Varanasi, and if there is a traffic light in the city, I certainly never saw it, which made passing through busy intersections quite an interesting experience. On the ride we saw people heading towards the river carrying corpses on litters, throngs of pilgrims headed in the same direction, and all of our heads turned when we saw a cow lying down in a store that was open to the street. Upon arrival at the river we saw dozens of miserable, poor souls lined up in a single file on the stone steps leading down to the river (the ghats), hoping for a pittance from someone.

We climbed into our small, maneuverable boat and rowed down to one of the cremation sites. It is believed that if a person dies in Varanasi and is cremated there, salvation of the soul...
occurs immediately. It was surreal to watch the cremations taking place at night with the flames reaching up to the dark sky, only about 150 feet from us. The wrapped corpses are brought down the steep sandstone staircases on litters. The color in which the body is wrapped can indicate the gender and if the person died young or old. The body is dipped into the Ganges five times and then placed on wooden piles just off the river, and then covered with more logs. The bodies are touched only by “The Untouchables,” people at the bottom of the lowest caste. Hindus consider the handling of a corpse to be an impure act. The body is covered with a flammable paste, and a light coating of incense powder hides the smell of the burning flesh. The principal mourner, usually the oldest son, dresses in an all white cloth robe and lights the fire. No females are at the site.

Later that evening, we witnessed the “aarti” ceremony from our boat on the Ganges, a bit down the river from the cremation site. This sacred light ritual is performed every day after sunset on the banks of the river. Five priests performed aarti with complicated fire rituals, waving different lit lamps before the deities in a spirit of gratitude and humility.

It takes about 3–4 hours for the fire to cremate the body, and some ashes are thrown into the Ganges River at the finish. At the end of our visit there, we saw over 30 different funeral pyres blazing at the same time, a sight that none of us will forget. These cremations take place 24/7. People will strap corpses on top of motor vehicles and drive hundreds of miles to have the bodies cremated at these sites. Many Indians cannot afford to pay for the wood for the fires, leading to an estimated 45,000 uncremated bodies dumped into the Ganges each year.

There were many other interesting learning experiences on the trip, as well. The legal drinking age in India is 25 years of age. Every city, town, and village in India has a street named “Ghandi.” The peacock is the national bird of India, the tiger is the national animal, and the lotus is the national flower of the country. Rum is a popular drink in India. In fact, soldiers in the volunteer Indian army are given two rations of rum, three times a week. A haircut on the street will cost about 15–20 rupees (30–40 cents), and at a barbershop it will cost 20–25 rupees (40–50 cents). We saw the Jal Mahal (Water Palace) which is indeed, a palace sitting right in the middle of a lake. Built in 1799 as a resort and pleasure venue for the Maharajah, only one of the five floors is completely above water. I saw a man cutting his toe nails with a razor blade (no handle – just the razor blade) held in his hands! One cow dung (used as heating fuel)
sells for 1 rupee (2 cents). On the trip the fog was so bad in the mornings that school was cancelled for four days. In the cities, public schools typically have class sizes in the 40–45 range, and students are required to wear uniforms. A five year old trained camel will cost $250–$300. In March, 2009, the savings rate in India was an astounding 37%.

In 2002 it was estimated that 25% of the Indian population lived below the poverty line. On the other hand, the Indian government guarantees every citizen at least 100 days of work a year. The vast numbers of cars in India are made in India. Cars that enter from outside the country are heavily taxed. The zodiac sign of an Indian depends on the time of day that he/she is born. In the countryside it was common to see jeeps and trucks with colorful decorations on the front of the vehicles. We had a camel ride to a campsite in the country. The local people were very happy to just see us, waving to us for most of the trip ... some children ran several hundred yards to see us. In India, one can mail a letter to anywhere in the world for 12 rupees (25 cents). At a house in the countryside we saw the century’s old way of drawing water from a well – cows pulling up buckets of water as they walked around the well in a circle. The Indian government has instituted a number of laws that are designed to improve the social and economic status of women, yet centuries of tradition are difficult to change. An Indian girl is 50% more likely to die between the ages of 1–5 than a boy, largely because a girl is less likely to have vaccinations than a boy.

There are virtually no supermarkets in India, so how do people in the cities obtain milk? In the very early morning, people from the country bring in their milk to Mother Dairy vending booths. Mother Dairy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Board of India. The non-pasteurized milk (Indians do not like pasteurized milk) could be from cows, water buffalos, or goats – it is likely that the three will be mixed together. Money is exchanged for coins at one end of the booth and then the coins are put in vending machines at the other side of the booth where one fills up a container that the individual provides (1 liter for about 50 cents). We learned about cashmere wool and why it is feather-light and yet so warm. The wool comes from Kashmir goats which live at frigid high elevations ... 16,000 feet in India and Kashmir, for example. There is actually air inside of the densely packed wool fibers which accounts for the lightness of the wool as well its ability to insulate. The group saw The Bharat Temple in Varanasi which is the only temple dedicated to Mother India. Instead of having gods and goddesses in the temple, it contains a relief map of the entire country carved out of marble in three dimensions. It is in scale both vertically and horizontally and contains mountains, rivers and lakes, and plains.

There is one time zone in India, 10.5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the United States. We visited Sarnath, where Siddhartha Gautama (now known as Buddha) delivered his first sermon after his enlightenment in the 6th century B.C. Sometimes on the trip, when I was feeling a bit tired, I would look at Don, another tourist on the trip, who is 90 years young ... and then not feel so tired! Although India has made strides in going green with windmills and gas heat, pollution is still a major issue with sixty percent of India’s energy coming from coal. In fact, in a recent painting contest in the public schools in Delhi, 80% of the paintings had skies that were painted brown. Indians are fanatical about their cricket. The sport is perpetually on television and games are always taking place in
vacant lots. The Indian Railroad Company is the largest employer in the world with 1.7 million employees. Western fast food is creeping into the country with Subways, Pizza Huts, and McDonald’s (anyone for a Chicken Maharaja Mac?) in evidence. Wonderful Indian food was in front of us each day at all meals. The freshly made breads such as naan, roti, and chapati were always a treat. India is a very colorful country with many of the women wearing bold, pastel-colored saris and scarves.

It will be interesting to see how India grows in this century as its middle class emerges into a powerful force. Already there are suburbs of cities with malls and cars are everywhere. Not too long ago 90% of the population lived in the countryside and 10% in the cities. Now it is 70% in the countryside and 30% in the cities, and it is estimated that by 2023 it will be 50–50. Six UNESCO World Heritage sites were seen in one of the most fascinating and educational trips that I have taken. The eclectic and fun group of fellow tourists and the superb guide, Prabhu, added much enjoyment during the 17 day tour provided by Overseas Adventure Travel, 1–800–873–5628. An internal flight cancellation, a five hour train delay, an at times harrowing 10 hour car ride featuring the most “creative” driving that I have ever seen, lots of fog which curtailed sight-seeing, the depressing sight of the omnipresent beggars, and a case of Delhi-belly did not keep this from being a most rewarding experience. I agree with all of the quotations stated in the first paragraph of this article, and would add that India is “a feast for the eyes!”

Bibliography


2 – Twain, Mark, Following the Equator: A journey around the world, American Publishing Company, Hartford, Connecticut, 1898, Chapter 50

3 – – Twain, Mark, Following the Equator: A journey around the world, American Publishing Company, Hartford, Connecticut, 1898, Chapter 51
Trekking through the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco

by Dr. William Huber, Department of Health, Exercise Science and Dance, retired

Retired Professor William Huber, Department of Health, Exercise Science and Dance, spent 18 days last summer trekking with a guide and mule in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, Africa. With his permission we have provided a link to his trip diary. Thinking about walking around northern Africa yourself? Read Bill’s diary.

One day last spring when I got home from skiing there was a message on my voice mail inviting me on an 18 day trip to Morocco, Africa. Apparently, the person planning to go with my host suffered a last minute change of heart and withdrew. My wife joking said that since Marriott points were not offered she had no interest in going, but if I was willing to sleep in a tent and walk around the mountains of north Africa I had her blessings.

I had been to Africa before with retired professor Alan Levin. Then, we went on an animal photographic safari to Kenya. This trip was different. This time we would be walking through the High Atlas mountains of rural Morocco with a guide and two mules. The highest point on our trip was to be M’Goun, the second highest peak in Morocco at 4,071 meters (13,346 feet). Each day we would hike 8 to 12 miles and we would sleep at a gîte d’etape or in a tent.

Our trip was in four segments. The first segment was lead by Ali, a local guide hired to lead us up to and back from M’Goun. Ali was 27 years old. He was a graduate of the Mountain Guide school in Tabant. He spoke four languages: Berber, Arabic, French, and English. Ali took care of us. He hired and supervised the two muleteers, he looked after our two mules, he guided us, he cooked our meals, and he was generally a jack of all trades.

Under Ali we ate well. As we passed through rural villages he would buy eggs for breakfast or chickens and/or goat meat for dinner. He gave local women flour and yeast with instructions to bake us bread for breakfast. All in all he was superb. He has completed 3 years of college and would like to study or work in the States, but with current restrictions on H2B visas that does not seem possible. Our second segment was a day hike to Taghia to check out some technical rock climbing venues. Our third segment was a day climb up La Cathedral. Our fourth and last segment was a hike of several days with mules up to the Yagour Plateau. Nourredhine was our guide for this segment.

I talk of our trek as a walk back in time. Most of the villages we visited had no running water or electricity. Before leaving on the trip I had read The Red Tent. On the trip I visited some of the scenes painted by the author of that book. In village after village, I saw women gathered at a central well filling buckets with water.
Men and boys were threshing wheat and barley with mules and donkeys. In fact, over the recent holiday in an old movie with Charlton Heston, *The Ten Commandments*, there was a scene showing oxen threshing wheat. That movie scene suggestive of biblical times was identical to what I filmed in a remote Moroccan village. At no time did I feel threatened. Once or twice children in villages threw some stones, but I wrote that off as kids behaving badly. If I lifted my camera, people, especially young girls and women, turned away, but that I believe was just cultural. For the most part people were kind or disinterested. A U.S. citizen is not required to have a visa to visit Morocco. On my flight to Morocco the passenger sitting next to me was flying over for a long weekend. The daughter of my cousin vacationed in Morocco last January and had a great time. The son of a friend visited Morocco last summer and was delighted. However, our state department has recently posted a warning about visiting Morocco, so if you are considering a trip you should carefully evaluate your plans.

Morocco is an Arab country. Islam is the principle religion. It is a constitutional monarchy, and Mohammad VI is the current ruler. He seems to enjoy wide spread support. I was told that the people like him. We saw evidence of rural improvements. Roads were being pushed through to mountain villages. Electric transmission lines were under construction. Cell towers were everywhere. Nevertheless, I believe the government is walking a thin line between conservative and liberal elements. At one point as we were driving into Marrakech in early July I observed a woman dressed all in black including gloves and maybe 30 meters behind her was another woman walking down the same sidewalk wearing a short skirt and revealing blouse.

Morocco is located in northwest Africa. It is somewhat larger than the state of California, and at the same latitude as Florida. It was the 1st nation to recognize the United States in 1777 and the Moroccan–American Treaty of Friendship signed in 1786 is our oldest non–broken friendship treaty. It is bordered by the Mediterranean on the north, the Atlantic Ocean on the west and the Sahara on the South. Fish and phosphates are principle exports. Morocco is the third most populous Arab country. 34 million people live in the kingdom. Arabic is the official language although in the mountains where I was Berber is the common language. French is also spoken.

My trip was in the east, in the High Atlas Mountains. I spent one night in Marrakech and one night in Casablanca. I saw very little of either city and nothing of the coastal resorts. I am told that the Atlantic Ocean beaches are lovely and the golf courses challenging, but I saw none of that. My trip was in the mountains among the Berber people. You can read about my trip by clicking here – [http://wgh_morocco.home.att.net](http://wgh_morocco.home.att.net). This link will take you to a web site that hosts my abbreviated trip diary. I put up the web site so my wife, family and friends could get an idea of what the trip was like. You are welcome to read on and enjoy Morocco as they did. Also, if anybody understands Berber, I would welcome help in translating some conversations.

The web site is best viewed using Microsoft Internet Explorer. For some reason the links do not work in other browsers.
Teaching Tips

I recently "attended" a webinar entitled So, What Do Learning Styles Have to Do with Actual Learning? The presenter discussed four basic steps in the learning process - gathering information, analyzing and making the material meaningful, creating new ideas from the information and finally acting on the ideas. It is the senses that are used to gather the information. We think of our students as auditory, visual or kinesthetic learners. As students move into making the material meaningful, the processing switches to brain hemisphere dominance. If the student has left-brain dominance, he/she tends to be very analytical. Those with right brain dominance are more holistic and want to see the big picture and look for patterns. For the final two steps of the learning process, multiple intelligences affect the process. As professors, it is our responsibility to present our materials in ways that will help students be successful no matter what the learning styles. Quite a challenge.

Louise Olshan

Next fall CTE plans to reintroduce “Brown Bag Lunches and Suppers”. One session will be a discussion based on this webinar.

I order to continue the Teaching Tips feature, we need input from faculty. Send along an idea, no matter how simple or complex, for inclusion in the next issue. Wonderful things are happening in CCM classrooms, let’s share with each other.