

## Student explores culture of the Appalachian Trail

BY KAREN SCHUBERT

*"Yes, it is my birthday today. I have waited and planed [sic] for 5 years to be here today. Peace, Love, Joy and Harrmony [sic] to all."*

– Grandmother Bear, 7/7/03, Rocky Run Shelter, Virginia.

Andrea Thompson of Warren was on a five-day, 80-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail in Vermont a year ago when she first came across messages like this in logbooks along remote sections of the trail.

As a communications major at YSU, Thompson recognized the entries as part of a unique communication culture, so she launched a study of the logbooks as part of a research project funded by a \$500 research grant from YSU.

"Each register has its own personality," said Thompson, who receives a bachelor's degree in communications at YSU's spring commencement on May 21 in Beeghly Center.

"Literally hundreds of hikers write in the books – everything from a sentence or small sketch to pages and pages."

The Appalachian Trail is a 2,160-mile footpath from Maine to Georgia that passes through 14 states, eight national forests, two national parks and crosses 15 major rivers. The trail is dotted with 256 small shelters, where hikers unroll their sleeping bags for a night's rest. Each shelter contains a logbook, which vary in shape and size from small memo pads to larger notebooks.

The logbooks' primary purpose is safety: if someone needs help or is missing, the entries help park rangers trace a person's steps.

But Thompson said the books are much more: they record a culture and language of the trail travelers. People take on trail names such as Grandmother Bear, Spiderman and Truckin,' and tell stories in the logbooks.

"Hiking can be a very spiritual thing," Thompson said. "You really get a bond with the other hikers."

Thompson has collected and studied 16 logbooks, mostly from areas of Virginia and Pennsylvania. In addition to her trip last summer to Vermont, Thompson visited the trail in the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia over spring break this year.

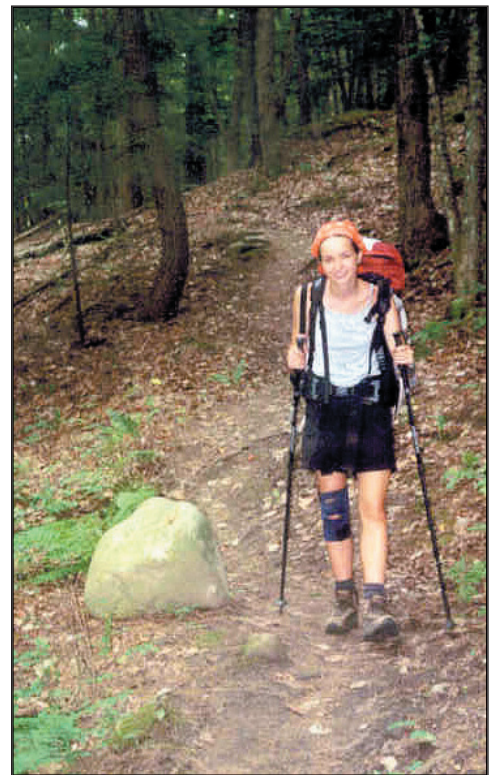
"I identified themes in the logs and tried to analyze the hikers' motivations for writing in the logs," she said. "Usually the narrative paradigm is only applied to a single narrator. Instead, I am interpreting themes consistent throughout the logs. This way, I can focus on how the context of the trail affects the communication."

The research is broad in scope, said Thompson's faculty advisor, Larry Hugenberg, YSU professor of communication and theater.

"This involves hundreds of people," he said, "and it will be an interesting prospect to find themes."

Thompson, whose goal is to pursue a doctoral degree in communications, said she has learned

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YSU senior Andrea Thompson hikes along a section of the Appalachian Trail in Vermont, about 10 miles from the New Hampshire border. "After walking 80 miles with rain-soaked socks, my feet were killing me, but it was absolutely worth the blisters," Thompson said.

### Merchants of Venice

## Prof wins prestigious grants for research

BY RON COLE

Spend an hour talking with Eleanor Congdon, and the conversation darts in all kinds of directions: horticulture, art history, church architecture, figure skating, bad knees, weightlifting and the subtleties in making a church bell go "bing" and "bong."

But get her talking about 15<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian merchants, and, as she says, "I'm happy as a kid in a candy store."

Congdon, YSU assistant professor of history, is one of the few scholars around whose research focuses on deciphering and interpreting 500-year-old letters, ledgers and other writings of merchants who roamed the Aegean and Mediterranean seas in the Middle Ages.

"I could spend 24 hours a day working with these documents and never feel the passage of time," she said. "There's so much

wonderful stuff there."

Two prestigious funding agencies agree.

Congdon recently received a \$4,000 Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society. It is believed to be the first time a YSU faculty member has won a grant from APS, which was founded in 1745 by Benjamin Franklin.

She also received a fellowship valued at \$4,000 from the Dr. M. Aylwin Cotton Foundation in the Channel Islands, a foundation dedicated to furthering the study of archaeology, architecture, history, language and art in

*continued on back page*



Eleanor Congdon

## Nursing mentor program garners widespread acclaim

BY RON COLE

Robert Gudyk knows how stressful it can be for students entering a nursing program.

In addition to demanding courses in biology, chemistry and various other disciplines, nursing students work several hours a week with patients at local hospitals and other medical facilities, developing case studies, writing journals and reports.

"You think, 'Oh my gosh, how am I going

to get all of this done?'" said Gudyk, a senior in YSU's nursing program who graduates May 21.

"It can be very overwhelming. A lot of students don't make it."

That's why Gudyk, president of the YSU chapter of the National Student Nurses Association, and Laura Shannon, also a senior nursing student, decided to develop a peer mentoring program aimed

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YSU senior nursing student Robert Gudyk shows sophomore Amanda Ricci the proper technique for using a hypodermic syringe. Gudyk is Ricci's peer mentor in a new program that has gained national attention.

## Geology students experience 'creepy' trip under Lake Erie

BY RON COLE

Equipped with reflective safety vests, hard hats and steel-toed boots, Janice Castner and seven other YSU students crammed into a four-foot by eight-foot elevator box.

With a push of a button, the elevator began its descent – 2,000 feet below the earth's surface in less than five minutes.

"Creepy, gray and damp," Castner of Hubbard, a senior earth science education major at YSU, said about the elevator ride.

The students, led by Ray Beiersdorfer, YSU geology professor, recently visited the Morton Salt mine that sits on the shores of – and under – Lake Erie in Fairport Harbor, about 25 miles east of Cleveland.

"There are all sorts of educational reasons to do this, but I think it's also important that they experience what it's like to go down into one of these mines," said Beiersdorfer, who has been taking students to the mine for about seven years.

The mine annually produces more than 1 million tons of rock salt, which is shipped by truck, rail and boat to states throughout parts of the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, as well as Canada.

The facility is located over a large salt deposit known as the Salina Basin, which was created during a 40,000-year time span more than 400 million years ago, Beiersdorfer said. The massive salt bed covers about 100,000 square miles and extends north to Ontario, Canada, and south as far as West Virginia.

Once in the mine, the students loaded into a vehicle that took them through a tunnel stretching under Lake Erie for more than a mile.

"It's a scary thing to think that the whole

lake is above you," said Mandy Maenpa of Champion, a graduate student studying environmental studies.

"It's a unique experience," said Patrick DiNapoli of Boardman, a senior earth science education major.

Inside the mine, temperatures are a steady 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The many tunnels measure about 18-feet high and 25-feet wide, the students estimated. "Once we were down there, I was surprised how much room there was," Castner said. "It was huge."



YSU students Janice Castner and Adam Miller examine grooves cut into 400 million year old salt at the Morton Salt Fairport Mine, which is 2,000 feet below the surface of Lake Erie. (Photo by Ray Beiersdorfer)

In what DiNapoli described as a "Jeep with the roof cut off," the group traveled around the dark mine tunnels, guided only by the headlamps of the vehicle and lights on their helmets.

"At one point, we turned out all of the lights," Maenpa said. "It was so pitch black. I've never been in anything like that. It was eerie."

"It's just amazing to think that all of it was laid out more than 400 million years ago," Castner said.

Beiersdorfer said he looks forward to return trips. "It's a once in a lifetime experience for these students," he said. ■

# Byline

## After 43 years, a retiree reminisces



By Warren Young  
Chair and Professor  
Physics and Astronomy

It has been exciting to be a part of the growth of this university. In my 43 years here, I have taught 37,000 students and worked with every president, provost and dean of arts and sciences in YSU's history.

When I came to Youngstown University in 1962, it was a very different place than the Youngstown State University I am retiring from.

To put it in perspective, in 1962, classes were taught in the basement of President Jones' (YSU's first president) home and in neighboring churches.

It was a small, unaccredited school until 1945, when it gained accreditation from North Central Association and received a large influx of students as veterans returned from the Second World War. The school was a young, growing institution that had potential but lacked resources.

During the early years, I taught astronomy on the enclosed porch of the former Henry C. Wick mansion, East Hall, now the site of Maag Library. The porch was L-shaped, extending along the south and part of the west side of the house. Students sitting on the west side had difficulty seeing the black board, and the heating system could only be turned on or off, so that in winter it was either unbearably hot or extremely cold.

The only four buildings here in 1962 that remain today are the Main Building (now Jones Hall), the library (now Tod Hall), the Science Building (now the northern part of Ward Beecher) and the Rayen School Building (now the Youngstown Board of Education). Old houses, a former horse stable and relocated army barracks provided additional classrooms, a student union and a cafeteria.

But in 1966, the south wing with a "state of the art" planetarium was added to the Science Building, thanks to major contributor, Ward Beecher, who the building and planetarium were named for. So in four years, I went from teaching in one of the worst classrooms in the country to the best room for teaching astronomy in the world. But that was just a hint of the growth that was to come.

In 1967, when the university became part of the state system, the campus experienced an expansion in faculty – before 1967, less than half the faculty had Ph.D.s – and facilities for teaching and research. This growth had a positive impact on our students, too. Before 1967, it was rare for a science student to have the opportunity to become involved in basic research; now science majors have the opportunity to work with faculty engaged in world-class research. In physics, for example, six of our students work as research assistants in James Carroll's laboratory here on campus and several have accompanied him to work in research labs in Japan, Germany and Canada. Carroll is one of the leading researchers in the world in the field of enhanced gamma radiation.

I have enjoyed almost every minute of my time at YSU. It has been so much fun that I look forward to teaching part-time for the next several years and staying connected to the place that has been part of my life since I graduated from college. ■

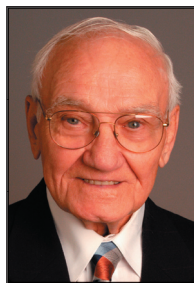
# Campus News Roundup

## Rosselli, Lariccia, Beeghly honored at commencement

A statue honoring legendary YSU coach Dominic Rosselli will be unveiled 6 p.m. Friday, May 20 on the patio on the south side of Beeghly Center.

The 12-foot tall, 1,500-pound statue, designed by award-winning sculptor Edward E. Hlavka of Utah, was commissioned by YSU graduate Tony Lariccia.

The unveiling kicks off a festive campus weekend that continues with spring commencement on Saturday, May 21. Due to the growing number of graduates, commencement will be split into two ceremonies: 9:30 a.m. in Beeghly Center for undergraduate students, and 2 p.m. in Stambaugh Auditorium for graduate students.



Dominic Rosselli



Tony Lariccia



Bruce Beeghly

Rosselli and Lariccia will receive honorary degrees at the morning ceremony, and Lariccia will give the commencement address. Bruce Beeghly, a member of the Ohio Board of Regents and a former member of the YSU Board of Trustees, receives an honorary degree and speaks at the afternoon ceremony.

The student speaker at the undergraduate commencement will be Jeremy Hamilton of Canfield, who is receiving bachelor's degrees in mathematics and education. Rachel Hoffman of Poland, who is receiving a master's degree in education in child and adolescent counseling, is the student speaker at the graduate commencement. ■



## Young at heart

Andrew Young, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, visits a classroom in the Williamson College of Business Administration on April 21. Young, who also has served in the U.S. House of Representatives and as mayor of Atlanta, was on campus as part of the Paul J. and Marguerite K. Thomas Colloquium on Free Enterprise. The visit included a lecture on April 20 in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center.

## Budge, Kane receive Heritage Award at dinner

Former YSU employees Mary Alice Budge and Thomas Kane received the Heritage Award at YSU's Annual Awards Dinner May 6 in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center.

Budge joined the faculty of YSU in 1968 and was promoted to full professor in 1984. Budge, who retired in 1996, was a leader in the early efforts to create a Women's Center and the Women's Studies Program and single-handedly developed a program in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Kane began his career at YSU in 1969 as administrative specialist in the Bursar's Office and later became payroll supervisor, director of payroll and fringe benefits and, in 1993, director of staff relations. He retired in 1996.

The Heritage Award is one of the university's most prestigious honors, recognizing former faculty and administrative staff whose contributions to the university have made a major impact.

Also at the banquet, the following YSU employees received Distinguished Service Awards: Catherine Cala, associate director of internal operations in University Development; John Doneyko, associate athletic trainer; Jean Engle, assistant director of Marketing and Communications; Mary Ganofsky, Social Work internship coordinator; Gregory Gulas, assistant director of Student Activities; Elaine Jacobs, associate athletic director; Mary Munroe, academic advisor in Health Professions; James Petuch, manager of YSU Recycling; Sharon Shanks, lecturer at Ward Beecher Planetarium; and James Stanger, associate director of technology and support services in Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Also recognized at the dinner were faculty and staff retiring with ten or more years of service and employees who have achieved 10, 20, 30, 35 or more years of service. A complete list of those employees is available at <http://www.cc.ysu.edu/hr/Award%20Honorees.htm>. ■

## Phi Kappa Phi, Goldwater recognize YSU students

Two YSU students have won prestigious scholarships from national organizations.

Lori MacDonald of Harmony, Pa., a junior biology major, won a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for the 2005-06 academic year. The award, given to 320 college sophomores and juniors nationwide, covers the cost of tuition, fees, books, room and board up to a maximum of \$7,500 a year.

MacDonald, a University Scholar at YSU, plans to pursue a doctorate in microbiology, conduct research and teach at a small college. She has been involved in extensive research activities on and off campus.



Lori MacDonald



Jennifer Davidson

Jennifer Davidson of Poland, a senior mechanical engineering major, has been named the winner of a national Phi Kappa Phi Award of Excellence.

Davidson, a 2001 graduate of Poland Seminary High School, was selected for the \$2,000 scholarship by the National Board of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. She is among only 40 students nationwide to receive the honor.

A University Scholar at YSU, Davidson has been an active member of student organizations at YSU. She will graduate in May and then plans to attend graduate school at Ohio State University with the goal of earning a doctorate degree in biomedical engineering. ■

## Youngstown STATE UNIVERSITY

The YSUupdate is published every other week during the academic year and once a month in the summer by the Office of Marketing and Communications.

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# Faculty/Staff

## Grants

**Patrick Durrell**, assistant professor, Physics and Astronomy, received a \$500 University Research Council Grant to support some travel expenses for the project "Searching for Planetary Nebulae in Ursa Major." The purpose of the project is to take optical images of a nearby group of galaxies, the Ursa Major Group, in order to search for planetary nebulae outside the galaxies.

## Presentations

**Silvio J. dos Santos**, assistant professor, Dana School of Music, presented "Androgyny and Redemption in Alban Berg's Lulu" at the Allegheny Chapter of the American Musicological Society at Geneva College in April.

## Publications

**Salvatore Attardo** and **Steve Brown**, both professors of English, published "Understanding Language Structure, Interaction and Variation: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics for Nonspecialists." The book introduces the study of language and applied linguistics for students who have had a minimum of exposure to the discipline of linguistics.

**Rebecca Barnhouse**, professor, English, published "The Middle Ages in Literature for Youth." This book focuses on Western Europe from 500 to 1500 and summarizes and evaluates material about the medieval period written for children and teenagers.

**Ted Bosela**, associate dean and professor, Engineering and Technology, published "Electrical Systems Design." The text leads students through a basic overview of systems, then progresses to more advanced topics, emphasizing practical, real-world applications in all areas.

**Jim Conser**, professor and acting chair, Criminal Justice, served as the lead author/coordinator of the recently published "Law Enforcement in the United States, Second Edition" by Jones & Bartlett Publishing Inc. His co-authors are Gregory Russell of Arkansas State University, Rebecca Paynich of Curry College, and Terry Gingerich of Western Oregon University.

**William Greenway**, professor, English, had the poem "Ophelia Writes Home" published in *In a Fine Frenzy: Poets Respond to Shakespeare*. Another poem, "Dreambox," has been published in *Center: A Journal of the Arts*.

**Samuel Adu-Poku**, assistant professor, Art, published "African Centered Art Education: An Alternative to Curriculum and Pedagogy," in the American Education Researchers Association conference proceedings. The article, which he also presented at the conference last year, won an Arts and Learning Special Interest Group Award.

**Douglas A. Fowler**, instructor, Physics and Astronomy, has had a collection of poems, *Condensed Matter and Other States of Mind*, published by Finishing Line Press. ■

## Bursar's office restructured

YSU has restructured the bursar's office in an effort to improve services for students.

The office has been renamed Student Accounts and University Receivables. Jim Herschel, interim bursar since December 2003, has been named director of the office.

"When I used to tell people that I'm the bursar, they would look at me in a funny way and say, 'What's a bursar?'" Herschel said. "Renaming the office will eliminate that confusion, and restructuring the office provides us the opportunity to improve our customer services."

Among the responsibilities of the office are student billing, deposit collections, delinquent account collection, monitoring the collection of the federal Perkins Loan Program and answering students' questions about bills and other concerns. The office has 15 employees, Herschel said.

The office restructuring also includes eliminating the associate bursar's position and a professional administrative position, and creating two new positions: manager of cus-

tomers service and operations, and manager of financial analysis and collections. Both of the positions are vacant.

The customer service manager will help implement a new customer service plan developed by Herschel. The six-page plan calls for improving services to students, parents and visitors, including effectively responding to requests and complaints.

"We're taking a more proactive approach to serving the needs of our customers - our students - rather than being reactive," he said.

Herschel, who lives in Canfield, came to YSU in July 2002 as associate bursar. He previously was assistant controller at Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa., and a certified public accountant at several public accounting firms. ■



James Herschel

## The end of an era...

The academic year 2004-05 marks the end of an era for YSU: 23 full-time faculty members, with a combined 717 years of service, will retire. Of those, 17 have 30 years or more of service. YSUupdate is featuring some of the retirees.



### Professor and chair, Sociology and Anthropology John R. White

**Year Hired:** 1971

**Degrees earned:** City College of San Francisco, AA 1961; San Francisco State, BA, 1963; University of Oregon, MA, 1969 and Ph.D., 1973.

**Significant accomplishments:** I hope I've helped to make my department a visible entity in the community. From a personal standpoint, I've attained all of the academic goals I set for myself. Turning out students who appreciate the value of education and are first-rate critical thinkers has been of singular importance. To a teacher, they are your legacy.

**Significant projects:** My most significant project has been teaching thousands of students, and enjoying every minute of it. My major projects have to do with archaeological research. I've worked on more than 30 digs, but my two major projects of international importance were the discovery and excavation of the Sun Serpent, a prehistoric astronomical marker in Southern Ohio, and discovering the Eaton (Hopewell) Furnace in Struthers, the earliest blast furnace west of the Alleghenies and the first furnace of its kind to be archaeologically reported on.

**Thoughts about YSU students?** I have thoroughly enjoyed YSU students for 35 years. To me, they are the best. Smarty and sassy. I love the rust belt attitude of "show me." I look forward to continuing my relationship with them after retirement as I explore new archaeological sites locally.

**Retirement plans:** I plan to catch up on my reading, as well as continue teaching part time for five more years at YSU under extended teaching. In addition, I will take up the position created for me as Mill Creek Metroparks Archaeologist. I will also continue conducting archaeological research and publishing the results. I suspect this will keep me as busy as I am now. The idea is to keep moving mentally and physically. No golf or gardening for this guy. ■



### Professor, Management James H. Daly

**Year hired:** 1972

**Degrees earned:** Youngstown State University, BSBA, 1970, University of Akron, MBA, 1972, and Ohio State University, MLHR, 1988. Professional Certification: Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).

**Significant accomplishments:** Over the years I have had the opportunity to work with and advise students, student and professional organizations and to be involved in the teaching and development of the human resources program within the Department of Management. This has included building a rapport between the local chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management and the Williamson College of Business Administration.

**Thoughts about YSU students?** I have enjoyed my 32 1/2 years of teaching YSU students.

**Retirement Plans:** I plan to visit my children and travel. I am looking forward to continuing to teach at YSU under the extended teaching service program. ■

**Editor's Note:** Saul Friedman, featured in a previous edition of YSUupdate, has chosen not to retire this year.

## Eye-Balled

Junior wide receiver Tyler Morton eyes a pass during spring football practice at Stambaugh Stadium. The spring drills concluded April 29 with the playing of the 33rd Annual Youngstown State Red-White Spring Game. The Penguins kick off the 2005 season 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 1 at home against Slippery Rock University.

## Career Consultant Network links YSU students, alumni

BY CATHLEEN RICHESSON

**Question:** What's an easy way for YSU students to find out first-hand about careers that interest them?

**Answer:** Meet with a career consultant.

The Career Consultant Network, started last fall, consists of 100 YSU alumni willing to meet students with similar career goals.

Christina Hardy, career planning coordinator in the Office of Career and Counseling Services, works with the rest of the staff to link students interested in learning more about their career options to alumni who are professionals in the field.

"This is one piece [of career planning] that can be so helpful," she said.

During an interview with the consultant, students can learn about a typical day in the consultant's position and find out what type of education and experience is needed. The meetings can help students learn about themselves as well, Hardy said.

"Consultants can see if the student has instincts, natural skills, or passion for the field," she said.

In the interview, which may take place in person or over the phone, students ask the questions. "They are in control," said Hardy. "The comfort level is easier [than at a job interview]." Because it is an opportunity for students to be direct, they may be more comfortable asking about salaries that can be expected for professionals in their field, for instance.

John Hamley, chief of the science division at NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, acts as a career consultant for YSU. He recently met with an undecided engineering student who had always dreamed of working for NASA.

"The student was debating going into engineering or going into science," Hamley said. "It was good to talk and find out what he wanted to do."



John Hamley

A member of YSU's Engineering Advisory Council, Hamley said he visits YSU at least once a year to present a lecture for a project management course. "It's valuable to stay in touch with students and learn their frame of mind," he said.

Hamley, who earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from YSU in 1985 and has been with NASA for 20 years, says the Career Consultant Network doesn't just benefit students.

"[Meeting with the students] is a valuable experience for me, too," he said. "It's good to understand what students think and where college grads are coming from."

Hardy said 20 to 30 students have expressed interest in the program this year, and seven have already been matched with career consultants.

Next fall, Hardy will be teaching a new course on career planning, specifically geared toward undecided majors. The course will include a personality assessment and matching students with career consultants.

"The class holds 25 students and I hope to see them matched with 25 consultants," Hardy said.

For more information, call 330-941-3515 or visit [www.ysu.edu/career-services](http://www.ysu.edu/career-services). ■

## YSU, FirstEnergy power plant program graduates first class

BY WENDY WOLFGANG

Nathan Miller won't graduate from YSU until commencement on May 21, yet he's already had two job interviews and is confident that an offer will soon come his way to work at one of FirstEnergy's power plants.

Miller of Austintown is one of 11 students in the first graduating class of YSU's associate degree program in power plant technology, launched in 2003 through a partnership between the Rayen College of Engineering and Technology and FirstEnergy.

"I have always been into rebuilding motors," said Miller, 28, who already has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from YSU. "After I went through a tour at the power plant, I knew it was the right field for me."

Miller, who currently works in construction, said he anticipates earning at least \$20 an hour his first year on the job.

"I expect 100 percent job placement," said Ted Bosela, associate dean of the engineering college, who helped design the program. "And I expect this trend to continue for at least a decade."

The two-year, 66-hour associate of technical study degree was developed in anticipation of the retirements of a large number of power plant operators at FirstEnergy.

Students get hands-on experience working at YSU's central utility plant and the college's steam turbine and internal combustion engine labs, as well as at a FirstEnergy power plant for a 15-week internship. Students also work at a plant one day every other week each semester.

In addition, graduates will have 800 out of the 900 hours needed to take the third-class stationary engineer's license exam, which is needed to operate a

boiler in Ohio. After about a month on the job, the equivalent to 100 hours, the test is administered.

Those who don't go through the associate degree program need 1,800 hours before they can take the licensure exam.

"Going through this program was a great learning experience," said Roger Humberson, 28, of Austintown. Humberson, who has also gone through the interview process with FirstEnergy, recently gave up his job of seven years at Victory White Waterworks in anticipation of a new job with the utility company. "All the teachers know what they are talking about," he said.

"I am trying to teach them what I did for 20 years," said Rick Testa, who worked on power plant systems in ships as a merchant marine before coming to YSU. Testa, who teaches in the power plant technology program full time, was an engineer in YSU's facilities department for four and a half years.

"Power plant technology is going to be a great field to get into for at least the next 10 years," he said. "Everyone needs electricity." ■



YSU instructor Rick Testa, left, and student Nathan Miller examine readings on the boiler control console in YSU's power plant, where power plant technology students gain hands on experience.

## Prestigious grants (Continued from page 1)

the Mediterranean area.

Congdon, the daughter of a college professor father and a mother with a Ph.D. in art history, earned a bachelor of arts degree from Williams College in Massachusetts in 1988. A year later, she enrolled in the history graduate program at the University of Minnesota, where she first came across medieval merchant letters.

She was immediately hooked by the complexity of the handwritten letters.

"It's almost an international language," combining parts of Spanish, French, Portuguese, Latin, Greek and Arabic, she said. "There is no dictionary. There is no grammar book. Venetian is a dialect that is long gone."

The research, which Congdon continued while earning a doctorate at Cambridge University in England, involves interpreting and translating the letters and discovering what they reveal about the history of the times. "It's like playing Sherlock Holmes," she said.

After four years as the director of the Medieval Studies Program at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, Congdon came to YSU three years ago and has focused her research on the writings of two specific Venetian merchants: Marco Bembo

and Ambrogio Malipero.

She currently is studying copies of more than 300 letters written between 1476 and 1486 by Bembo, an international merchant who operated in the Aegean Sea during a time of war between Christian Venetians and Muslim Turks. The letters were sent to Bembo's agents and are contained in a ledger called a "copy-letter," Congdon said.

The research grants will allow Congdon to travel to Venice this summer and again next academic year to read official government records about what Venetians and Turks were doing during these years that might have affected Bembo's activities. She noted that the grants, while quite large for someone working in medieval history, will not cover all of the costs of the trips.

"This is the very start of this project," she said. "It will take several years to complete."

In the meantime, Congdon said she hopes to finish a book on Venetian merchants in the Western Mediterranean, and she has plans to possibly edit a book on plants in the Middle Ages.

"For me, I just cannot be narrow-focused," she said. "I have to have the diversity. That's who I am. It feeds me." ■



## Beetle-mania

YSU junior Julia Rodabaugh paints a beetle on the face of senior Steve Gregg during Earth Day activities April 20 outside Kilcawley Center.

## Nursing program (Continued from page 1)

at helping new students survive the rigors of the nursing curriculum.

The program, implemented this year, will be featured this fall in *Imprint* magazine, NSNA's official national publication.

The program also garnered much interest at NSNA's annual conference in Salt Lake City this spring, and Gudyk said he has since received inquiries from several nursing schools wanting information about YSU's efforts. About 3,300 nursing students and faculty, including a contingent of 10 YSU students, attended the conference.

"I'm pleased to see that our ideas can help nursing students everywhere become good role models for other nursing students," said Gudyk of New Castle, Pa.

Shannon of Canfield, coordinator of the nursing mentor program, developed a system that matches about 120 first- and second-year nursing students with about 60 seniors. Mentors keep in touch by telephone and through in-person meetings, helping their younger colleagues with issues ranging from time man-

agement to family demands, she said.

"Several of the senior students have taken a proactive role in their mentoring duties," Shannon said.

"Nursing education is not for the weak," said Patricia Hoyson, associate professor and chair of nursing at YSU. "It is a rigorous course of study. It can be daunting."

"Having a friend who can guide you is so important, especially in that first year," Gudyk said.

Hoyson and Gudyk said faculty advisors can help struggling students, but there's nothing like having the shoulder of a fellow student to lean on.

"There are certain complaints or maybe other issues that you may take to a student that you might not take to a faculty member," Hoyson said.

Gudyk, who hopes to seek a master's degree in anesthesiology after graduating from YSU, said it's important that underclassmen carry on the mentoring program. ■

## Appalachian Trail (Continued from page 1)

a lot about the trail experience from the logbooks.

For instance, at Pine Grove Furnace in Pennsylvania—the symbolic halfway point of the trail—hikers feast on a half gallon of ice cream at the Pine Grove Furnace General Store. An entry from the Pine Grove Furnace logbook reads, "6/19 I ate a pint; they said I could keep my plastic spoon. Does anyone know where I can get a plastic spoon engraved?...—Doc"

When hiking near Killington, Vt., Thompson came across a stream with unopened cans of soda pop floating in it. Near the stream was a small "mail box" nailed to a tree that contained a logbook. People left messages about how grateful they were for a cold drink after climbing the hills.



The Appalachian Trail is a 2,160-mile footpath from Georgia to Maine.

One of Thompson's favorite entries is in a logbook in Little Gap in Pennsylvania: "Sierra, Luke and Daddy. 3 1/2, 6 1/2, & 38 years old. Never too young to experience life and nature."

Thompson hikes the trail with her fiancé, Mike Veri, also a YSU student who graduates in the fall. The two will return to Shenandoah National Park on Sept. 25 to be married at the top of a mountain.

She said that being out in remote wilderness is new for her. "I'd never even camped out in my backyard," she said.

But now, she's hooked. "The reward for getting to the top of the mountain is

so amazing," she said. "You forget how much your feet hurt, and that you've been eating granola bars for three days." ■