

# Local professor talks about native country of Jordan

By **MATTHEW W. QUINN**

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Walid Alali spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Griffin about his native country of Jordan at their meeting Wednesday afternoon.

Alali, an assistant professor at the Center for Food Safety at the UGA Griffin Campus, was introduced by C.J. Chang. He presented a program entitled "Jordan: A Hidden Jewel of the Middle East."

"We are surrounded by a lot of important events going on," he said.

To Jordan's east lies Iraq, while Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories lie to the west. Syria lies to the north.

He then described how the Jordan River valley was first inhabited by the Amorites in 2000 B.C. Later invaders and settlers in the area included the Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Circassians.

After describing the modern history of Jordan, he described the demographics. There are six million people living in Jordan, in a land area about 60 percent the size of Georgia. Arabs comprise 98 percent of the population; Circassians



MATTHEW W. QUINN/DAILY NEWS

**C.J. Chang (left) and Walid Alali (right), who works at the Center for Food Safety at the UGA Griffin Campus, eat lunch prior to Alali's presentation on his native country of Jordan at Wednesday's Kiwanis meeting.**

## JORDAN:

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and Armenians represent 1 percent each. Muslims comprise 90 percent of the population; 9 percent is Christian and 1 percent practice other religions. The country's chief products are phosphates, potash and natural gas. There are not significant oil reserves.

He listed significant sites in Jordan, including Mount Nebo, where

Moses is believed to have died and site of a Christian church and Amman, the capital city.

The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, is in Jordan. Its waters are so full of minerals and salts that nothing can live in the water and its mud is known for its skin-rejuvenating properties.

One of Jordan's most well-known sites is the city of Petra, a city built inside a mountain for defense in 2000 B.C. It is accessible by a tun-

nel 10-feet wide and two miles long and is one of the seven wonders of the world.

After the meeting was over, Alali took questions from the audience.

Johnie McDaniel asked if petroleum is more expensive in Jordan due to its lack of oil reserves.

Alali said it was, especially after the fall of Saddam Hussein meant the end of free oil from Iraq. Gas prices are as

high in Jordan as they are in the United States, which, since Jordan is a poorer country, means there are fewer, smaller cars.

Chang asked if men in Jordan could have multiple wives. Alali said the overwhelming majority of men have only one wife — when it does happen, it is usually a means of supporting a widow.

"It's not as portrayed in the media," he said.