DGE Newsletter, December 2006

Holiday Party

Dec. 8: Light rain failed to dampen the combined DGE/DPB party held in the foyer of DGE, but only made for more togetherness. Ismael had set up and decorated the tree with traditional ornaments, leaving space for those made by the contestants. The latter had to be made from recycled materials. Nakako's was the winner with origami sown into a ball (halfway down on the right). Click on photo for a close-up.

Ken summed up the event as follows: "Hi, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Eben and Seth and everybody else who helped (Santa, the elves, whoever found that great band, the Indian food (Devaki), whoever brought potluck, whoever made an ornament, whoever helped set up and/or clean up, etc, etc) to make yesterday's Holiday Party a great success. (Mary & Paul also). Perhaps it is excessive extrapolation, but that kind of willingness of people to put in effort for the benefit of the greater good gives me a little more hope that we might someday learn to live sustainably on this planet."

Carnegie Trustees Meet at Stanford Departments

The Carnegie Trustees met on the campus of DGE & DPB (Plant Biology) December 6-8. The meeting started with a director's dinner in the DGE lobby the evening of the 6th, and ended with lunch on the 8th. Most of the meetings were in the DGE conference room.

Everyone in both departments was invited to lunch on the 7th and had the opportunity to mingle with the Trustees.

Seminars

Dec. 6: Dr. Erle Ellis presented a talk on Long-term Ecological Changes across Rural China. This was an update of work-in-progress since his presentation to us last February (See Archives). The areas he is studying are densely populated and showed big increases in sealed (paved) surface areas and woody vegetation between 1945 and 2002.

Dec. 13: Dr. Sergey Zimov, Russian Academy of Science, Northeast Science Station, Cherskii, Republic of Yakutia spoke on Pleistocene Park and Vulnerable Carbon in Permafrost Soils. Grazing by large prehistoric animals may have sustained the northern grasslands.

Asner Lab

Dec. 11: Maoyi Huang and Choy Huang practiced their oral and poster presentations, respectively, to be given at the Geophysical Society's Meeting on the 13th. Maoyi's is about the measurement of effects of selective logging in the Amazon, and Choy's models effects of native vs introduced grasses on wildfires in desert regions of the southwestern USA.

Field & Berry Labs

Dec. 11: Ben Houlton and Jen are pleased to introduce Sydney Asel Houlton. She is 8 months old; Asel was her given Kazakh name, meaning "treasure."

Dec. 13: The Seminar Speaker, Dr. Sergey Zimov answered questions about his scientific life in the Soviet Union. At one point during the breakup of the Union, his work was supported by the Soros Foundation. Now he is able to tap other sources of support based on the value of his scientific contributions. There was much discussion about sources and amounts of methane in lakes and reservoirs.

The Tasting provided by Mark Gessner compared five different brands of chocolate candy from Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, and two from France (organic & not organic?). The French organic truffles were outstanding.

Outreach

Dec. 20: Ken Caldeira and Gregory Benford were featured on a 30 min program on GeoEngineering on BBC Radio 4. To listen to the show using BBC Radio Player, click on this link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/noscript.shtml?/radio/aod/radio4_aod.shtml?radio4/frontiers>

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Editor Jan Brown, e-mail: jbrown1@stanford.edu

Dec. 3: From Dave Kroodsma: Hello from Bolivia! Welcome to the 5th travel summary of Ride for Climate: The Americas. In the past two and a half months, I have crossed some of the most impressive terrain of this journey (see <http://www.rideforclimate.com> map of Peru). I traveled two weeks on a boat up the Amazon, crossed the Peruvian Andes (including a section where I had to put my bike on the back of the horse), and followed many dirt roads, camping next to houses where people live off only what they can grow on the mountainsides. I visited 10 schools (sometimes talking to the entire school) and appeared in the national media of both Peru and Bolivia. I celebrated my one year anniversary of travel overlooking the ruins of Machu Pichu, and I am now in La Paz, Bolivia.