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Solar Serve News

Dear friends,

Welcome to the solar family. In the coming dry and hot season we are expecting to increase our 'solar' growth. For us it is important that we keep our focus on 'simple' and 'affordable' devices for helping the poor and needy. Of course we have received a lot of good advise, but we want to make it clear that we are making 'simple' and 'local made' cookers, without any import of foreign material. Therefore we will keep our focus this year again on box cookers, parabolic cookers and solar stills. So, any advise on these three devices will be more than welcome.



Factory in Tam Ky

In our last newsletter we told you about a new workplace for making parabolic cookers. Our staff searched the city and found a piece of land (5 x 50 meter) with a house for sale. The owner wanted us to buy the land, but for us there was no financial breakthrough. We still had the impression that we should use this house for our new parabolic factory. The owner called us in February and told us that the gold price went up, so that the value of the property became too high for anyone to buy it. She was so eager to move to HCM city that she asked us to rent the place. She liked our project (after seeing the TV program) so much that we had the first choice of renting this place. Last year we received a generous gift from Vietnamese students and a donation of a solar friend in Holland, which was enough to pay our first rent for 1 year. Isn't it great!

Invitation of Solar Cookers Conference

One billion people suffer shortage of cooking fuel, and half of them live in sun-rich areas where they could solar cook. Solar cooking has grown rapidly during the last decades. Day after day there are more projects and many organizations working hard to expand solar cooking all over the world, most of them in developing countries. It is time to come together to encourage this process of progress. Therefore on behalf of the Solar Cookers International (SCI), the Organizing Committee coordinated by Terra Foundation invites everyone who is interested, to participate in the 2006 International Solar Cookers Conference and Food Processing which will be held in Granada, Spain, Europe, 12th to 16th of July. The Conference's goal is to bring researchers and practitioners together to exchange knowledge and decide future actions and collaborations to spread access to solar cooking, water purification and related solar food processing applications. The purpose is to reduce the health and environmental hazards related to traditional open fire cooking and growing fuel shortages affecting one-sixth of humanity. The Conference will also evaluate the requirements, technology, costs and benefits of solar cooking technologies. For more information: <http://solarconference.net/>



Picture on the wall

Many poor and handicapped people but also street children in Danang are selling lottery tickets. This has been organized by the local authorities to help them with a job. A few weeks ago one of the street children came to our information room. He was 18 years old but had a small body. As a child he was operated three times on his head and died almost. So he was a special street kid. When he looked at the solar cooker pictures on the wall, he suddenly saw a person who looked like his mother. We had more pictures in our computer and after a closer look it was for sure his mother. He told us that his father died of a sickness. His mother was still alive but was very poor. Two years ago we opened a solar cooker workshop in her village. She was so poor that we had chosen her to attend our workshop. After one week she received a solar cooker and that is why she is on one of the pictures of our wall. You could see that her son was poor too (if you are poor in Vietnam you earn less than 12 dollar a month). He had not sold any tickets that day, so we helped him a little bit financially. He wrote his address down and left our room with all his lottery tickets for a long and hot day!

A good alternative

At this moment it is difficult to get special wood for our box solar cookers. We are considering to make a new design and this will take time. But we think that this year the parabolic cooker will be a very good alternative and suitable for the cooking and living standards of the Vietnamese people. Our workers have been discussing the results of the last three years in using the box solar cookers. Some people who received a box cooker did not always use it. For example, after a rainy day and especially after the rainy season it was difficult for them to pick it up again. They also had not looked after the cooker properly and pieces were missing. We know that a project like this needs a lot of encouragements. This year we will work again in Phan Rang, but this time for a longer period. The people are very poor. For the first time we would like to help them with our new parabolic cookers.



Website

We found a person in HCM city who helped us in making a Website. You will find several pages with information in English and Vietnamese about our team, purpose, workshops, demonstrations, research, factory, info room, products, history, links, etc. and there are still pages being built. We are planning to have a photo gallery available, but the person who is making the Website, is not available for a while. So, be patient with our site. Till now we had almost 950 visitors and we hope that it will be useful for many others. Please have a look and write us your comments. Vietnam Solar Serve Website:

www.vietnamsolarserve.org



A blind man

A few weeks ago a blind man passed our information room. He sold brooms, which are made by blind people. He almost walked against one of our parabolic cookers, which are displayed outside the room. He started to touch one of them, but could not understand what it was. Linh, the new student worker and a neighbor explained to him the use of the cooker. It was very interesting for the blind man, so he kept on asking questions and did not want to leave. They gave him some tea and kept on talking with him. After a while he knew enough and walked on. For Linh as a young student but also for the neighbor it was a special experience. People feel a little bit uncomfortable when they meet handicapped people in the street. There is really a need for more interaction with them. Please remember this!

New part-time staff

We have asked Linh, a student from the University of Technology to come and help us part-time in the information room. He is from the northern part of Vietnam but lives with his uncle near our place. He is very eager to learn new things but he is also a skillful worker. We had two not working well parabolic cookers in our information room and asked him to change one of them. He has been very busy with re-focusing and rebuilding the cooker. Now he made everything focused on one point, which is necessary to cook. He also would like to do an experiment, which allow the parabol cooker to work as a solar still. In theory it would distill more liters of dirty water into clean water than a normal solar still. This will give a new dimension to our project and also more possibilities in building different kinds of cookers and stills.



More new staff

We have asked Ngiep and Y (a couple from Quang Ngay) to work with us in our new parabolic factory in Tam Ky. They told us that their lives were not easy. We will not share in details their past, but we know that a few years ago they found each other and started a new beginning as a couple. They have a 3-year-old son named Phung. Trang (19) is the son of our handicapped worker. He got in some problems, when he lived and worked far from his home. We told his father that leaving his son like this, he will lose a precious son. We gave him the option that Trang could work with Solar Serve. It was a great relieve

for him. Trang is now the youngest worker in our solar family.

We love it!

We will close this letter with some gateway (web) news. It will give you a picture of Danang city, but also information of the local activities this year. The Danang people are working so hard to get this city upgraded. The infrastructure is a major task. But for us, as Solar Serve, our major task will be to help and serve the people. We all love it (really!) and we hope that you love it too! Your encouragements have helped us a lot and kept us going. It is wonderful to have that link with you. Therefore keep in touch with us, and let us know when you are in the region or in...Spain.

Greetings,
Solar Serve Team

Called To Serve

For more Solar Serve News:

<http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/solarservenews.html>

Or write to:

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