



Oct / Nov / Dec 2008 No.20

# Solar Serve News

## Dear friends,

Thanks for all of your encouragement. Many of you expressed excitement after the opening of the center. Yes, it was great. A day never to forget. Now it is good to hear the noise of hammers, welding, music and all kinds of other activities. Bich's family and some other workers moved in and lots of people have been visiting the center already. Some workers left and others came. Till now we have seven deaf workers in our center. So, we invite you to come and have a look for yourself. It is near the beach and the famous marble mountains, and also 30 minutes away from the ancient town of Hoi An. Cheap hotels and guesthouses are walking distance and open tour buses to Hanoi, Hue or Saigon stop daily almost in front of our center.

## How do we work?

There is nothing new under the Sun. When you watched the Olympic Games you could see that in the ancient times a parabolic shaped bowl was used to light the Olympic torch. We are using the same principles in catching the fire. First we did it with our basket cooker, but changed it into a wooden one and now we make the cooker from aluminum. Also our parabolic cooker made progress and now we are able to make it in four parts. At the moment we are building a new community cooker. Our staff made an amazing clock from bicycle parts and now an impressive framework stands in front of the center. Yes, there is nothing new under the Sun, but it feels great when you are able to create something (like) new.



## Cigarette gas lighter

Someone who was dressed like a monk stopped in front of our information room. He was pushing a trolley with heavy blocks through the streets. He came in for a drink. He took his time and wanted to stay. After he left, he stayed for awhile in front of the parabolic cooker. But when we gave him some literature, we found to our amazement a gas cigarette lighter on top of the cooking pot in the parabolic cooker. It was ready to explode. It could have harmed visitors or children. The man was smiling at a distance when we took it away. We had the impression that the man was not really a monk. Although this story is not funny, we could add it to the other story of the burning helmet in our last letter.

## Forty families

We received a telephone call from the University asking if we could help the people in Quang Tri, a province almost 300 km north of Danang. Our staff explored the area and they noticed that there were many trees in the countryside which could prevent people in using the solar cookers. But most of the families had an open area in front of their houses. During the dry season it is very hot in this province, so it is a good place for solar cooking. We decided to help more then 40 families with 30 box cookers and 10 parabolic cookers and next year we will help others near the border of Laos. We had to transport all the cookers by truck and after some education the families received their first cookers. They were very happy!





## Problems

We received a telephone call from a person in Danang who wanted to buy a parabolic cooker. We asked one of the workers to deliver the four part cooker. It was no problem because it fits in a box and can be transported on the back of a motorbike. Our worker did his job well and helped the man to fix the four part cooker together. He received not only cash for the cooker but also a gracious tip. Well, temptation was waiting around the corner, and instead of turning back to the center he decided to use the money to solve his own problems. He also forced other workers to help him financially with his problems. For awhile he disappeared, but when he showed up again in town, he threatened our workers when they asked for their money back. It was a bad experience for them. We also learned a lot and nowadays peace is back in the center.

## Recognition

Not only for us but also for our workers in the center it is good to experience that their work is appreciated. Two months ago a local TV station decided to make a documentary of our work. They filmed in our center while the workers were making the cookers. After that they showed it twice on television. It did a lot of good to the self-esteem of the workers. At the moment some of them are working so well that they are able to make the cookers by themselves.

With more visitors and tour groups coming to our center we are going to make and sell mini-cookers, decorative hangers and bookmarks of our work in order to help more disadvantaged people with a job. It will also help them with a sense of worth. The mini-cookers will be a great tool for children in understanding the use of solar energy and the decorative things will be a daily reminder of our work in Vietnam



## Future plans

What is our next step? You already read about our plans in this letter. We will also attend a short course in October which will help us to run our project better. Another challenge is our enterprise. We do not want to use it only for business but also for people in need. We found a course which will help us to apply this. It will be taught in Thailand and starts in January. Bich will attend it for six weeks. This will be a real test for him. Although we increase in workers we really need a Vietnamese assistant for Bich. It needs to be a person with the same desire, vision and dreams. This summer we found some people but at the end they withdrew. Please stand with us, because if we want to expand our work we need more people who have a heart for the people in need. It is really rewarding!

## In brief

- During the Mid-Autumn festival we organized a small party for our workers. We had lots of fun with an exchange game. People were able to take away small gifts from each other. After the game we ate the traditional sweet moon cakes.
- The university asked us if it was possible to organize a Solar Energy Conference in our center, but we felt that we should postpone it to next year during the dry season.
- We exported some cookers to Canada and Holland. Some of them were used during a conference in an open field under bright sunshine. They had an amazing time and lots of people were interested.



- In other letters we mentioned about Fred who is disabled but has sponsored our project and other ones for almost twenty years by walking 160 km in four days each year. Great isn't it? Congratulations, Fred!
- The University of Danang donated two solar heaters. They were fixed on our roof. We hope they will provide our center with warm water in our kitchen and bathrooms.

Well, this is all the news we have for now. Thanks for your friendship

Warm solar greetings from Danang,

Solar Serve Team

## Called to Serve

**For more Solar Serve News:**  
**Or write to:**

<http://www.vietnamsolarserve.org/solarservenews.html>  
[solarserve@yahoo.com](mailto:solarserve@yahoo.com)