News from New Zealand

Well, I thought I would share a couple of additional photos of New Zealand. (I should also give credit to Sue Ann for taking the pictures.) To the left is Mt. Cook (or Aoraki as it is known in the native Maori language). Although it is a tribute to Captain Cook for his exploration and mapping of the islands to name the highest mountain in New Zealand after him, the native Maori name means “cloud piercer” and that seems to say a lot more. The climb is a technical climb and climbers are often rescued. Sadly, some do not survive their accidents. Sir Edmund Hillary practiced on this mountain before he was able to summit Mt. Everest. To the right are some of the vineyards in Marlborough valley, one of the more popular wine regions in New Zealand. The lingering Indian Summer ended this week. We have been drenched in heavy rains and much colder temperatures. The high today will be about 45 degrees with rain. Sue Ann is looking forward to returning to the Alabama with the warmer temperatures. She is flying back on Friday (28 May). I will stay for two more weeks to deliver a few more lectures.

Department News

David Steffy returns from Wuhan

A successful trip to Wuhan University was made from May 2 - 18, 2010. After a brief stopover in Shanghai, I arrived in Wuhan on May 5th. In the afternoon, I met with the Dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environmental Science Dr. Zhou Pei-Jiang,
Associate Dean Xiao Lin, and Associate Dean Chen Lar Zhou. The college was my host during the stay. I was provided with a comfortable room at a guest house and free meals (lunch and dinner) at the campus canteen.

I toured the College Environmental Science labs and GIS labs. The Environmental Science labs were focused on hydrobiology research dealing with the desertification problem in Inner Mongolia. The GIS labs were dealing with a wide variety of issues including urban development and planning, data base management, water resource management, and three-dimensional visualization of geographic data.

I gave my first presentation titled "The Redistribution of Mercury Contamination in a Freshwater Ecosystem." A second presentation titled "The Use of Humic Acid to Promote the Remediation of a Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid in Porous Medium."

A farewell luncheon for me and Dr. Adrian Aveni was given by Gui Ling, Deputy Director, American, Oceania & African Affairs Office, and Associate Professor Li Hui, Deputy Director, International Office.

Prior to my arrival I spent 2 days in Shanghai, the financial center of China. After leaving Wuhan I spent 3 days in Beijing, the capital of China, touring the Great Wall, Ming's Tomb, and the Forbidden City.
Grades Due
May 4-week grades are due today, Friday, April 28th

Gilbert and Sullivan’s H.M.S. Pinafore
The Jacksonville Opera Theatre will present Gilbert and Sullivan’s H.M.S. Pinafore May 21-29 at the Ernest Stone Center for Performing Arts at Jacksonville State University. Performances are scheduled for Friday and Saturday, May 21-22 and Thursday and Friday, May 27-28 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 23 and Saturday, May 29 at 2:30 p.m.. The Saturday, May 22 evening performance will also offer an option for patrons to have dinner with the director at Classic on Noble in Anniston before attending the performance at JSU.

Advance tickets for the performances are:
Adults- $15 side seating; $25 center seating;
Students- $10 side seating;
Dinner and Opera- $35 dinner plus center seating
At the door, all tickets will be $15 or $25.
Tickets may be purchased online at [www.jacksonvilleopera.org](http://www.jacksonvilleopera.org) or by phone, (256) 782-5876.

Degenerate States

A Cowboy Sees the Light
A cowboy walked into a bar in Texas, ordered three mugs of beer then sat in the back room drinking a sip out of each mug in turn. When he had finished, he went back to the bar and ordered three more. The bartender said to him, “You know, a mug goes flat after I draw it so it would taste better if you bought just one at a time.” The cowboy replied, “Well, you see, I have two brothers, one is now in Australia and the other in Dublin. When we all left Wyoming, we promised that we’d drink this way to remember
the days when we were together. So I drink one for each of my brothers and one for myself." The bartender admitted that this was a nice custom and left it there.

The cowboy became a regular at the bar, always drinking the same way. Then one day he came in and ordered only two mugs. All the regulars fell silent. When he came back to the bar for the second round, the bartender said, "I don’t want to intrude on your grief, but I want to offer my condolences on the loss of your brother." The cowboy looked puzzled for a moment, then a light dawned and he laughed. "Oh no. Everybody’s just fine," he explained. "It’s just that I have joined the church and quit drinking. It hasn’t affected my brothers though."

Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.