



Keeping you on the sunny side of life

February 2006

## 2006 MARDI GRAS COSTUME IDEAS!

Get Ready! It's on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>!



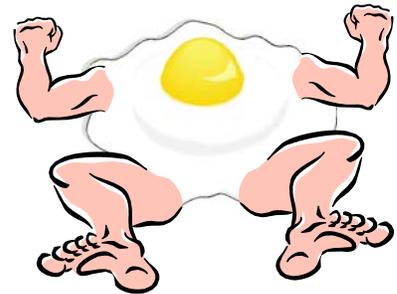
John James  
Autobahn



Hillyer-y Clinton



Dick Cheney



Marcel WholeYolk

In this Winterrific Issue:

- Help wanted: someone good at Photoshop, with free time
- Feature: What does your degree really mean?
- Coziness: Cold-weather reading with Erin
- Continuation: A couple of Part Twos
- Plea: Why can't I use clip art in my thesis?

**Editor's Corner:  
Pessimism harbored in Definitions**

While doing reconnaissance at one of my forest remnant study sites in the Tahoe basin in 2004, I happened upon a purple disc the size of a 10-cent piece, made of a thick foil, with two eyes and a big smile stamped out of it. Who knows where it came from. I named it my Purple happy Dime (or Ph.D.), and saw it as a good omen for the remainder of my time as a graduate student. I mean, how lucky was I to find a Ph.D. right there at one of my study sites! Later that summer, I wondered about the veracity of my good-luck charm when that study site was plowed and converted to townhouses. But I digress.

I was reminded of this incident by...well, by myself, actually, when I put out the call for alternate definitions of Ph.D. and M.S. The fact that the vast majority of submissions were cynical or pessimistic in nature is disturbing. It appears that most GGE students and affiliates do not consider their degree in any way related to good fortune. Unlike my little grape-colored smiley disc, which brought nearly a whole field season's worth of soft breezes, milkshakes, unicorns, fairies, and quality data to my graduate school experience, most doctoral and master's degrees are apparently seen solely as instigators of personal misery. In this issue, check out the horrific definitions some people came up with—apparently, M.S. and Ph.D. stand for every nasty characteristic ever possessed by a person.

Why the long face, GGE? Where's the "Magical Sunshine," "Magnificent Science," and "Pleasant hedonistic Dancing"? Why is it all about Dorks, Drinking, and Distractions? And male pattern baldness? (Admittedly, I'm guilty of writing all of these too.) Is it because the degree is such a long slog and you're never sure it's worth it? Does this negative attitude come from rainy days in the field, nonnormal data, authorship battles, jammed staplers, or crappy donuts in the mailroom? Did we get

this imbalance of submissions simply because cynicism is funnier than hope?

(Warning: lecture coming.) Whatever the reason, it's clearly time for all of us in the GGE to buck up like the little campers we know we all are. You're all probably working too hard. So lead a balanced life! Get out and enjoy nature, which is why most of us are here in the first place. I'm about to take my own advice. Read a good book, or catch a movie. Go to Mardi Gras! Attend the GGE retreat at the end of March (see page 8)! I've said this before, but I guarantee that a happy, well balanced brain is a more productive one, which will lead to a better school experience and a higher-quality finished product. Next time I do this survey, I want all the responses to be along the lines of "Massive Smiles" and "Puppies hugging Duckies." That kind of positive attitude would help ensure our degrees are purple, happy, and worth (at least) a dime.

- Matt





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The EGG provides an outlet for anything related to the UC Davis Graduate Group in Ecology or written by its members, as long as it serves no useful purpose. The newsletter is published biquarerratically, a.k.a. when the editors feel like blowing off work.

# Many Students Pick humor over Dissertations

Compiled by

**Matt Schlesinger (Pretty hugely Distracted)**

Major Swearing: Prepare humans who are Delicate



## M.S. stands for...

Machismo Shit-talker	Adrianna Muir	Mischievous Student	Silvia Hillyer
Major Suck-up	Matt Schlesinger	Mistaken for a Scientologist	Adrianna Muir
Makin' up Stuff	Matt Schlesinger	More of the Same (following BS)	Ben Orlove
Many Semesters	Matt Schlesinger	More Studenthood	Erin Espeland
Masochist Slave	Jim Thorne	More Studying	Robin Meyers
Master Succubus	Tawny Mata	More Stuff (following BS)	Steve Wathen
Masterfully Sedated	Fraser Shilling	Mostly Shit	Erin Espeland
Masticating Slowly	Kara Moore	Mostly Smashed	Matt Schlesinger
Maximum inSecurity	Erin Espeland	Motivational Squeaker	Matt Schlesinger
May Suck	Erin Espeland	Much Sex	Jim Thorne
Mediocre Scientist	Adrianna Muir	Mucha Sangria	Matt Schlesinger
Mega Slacker	Adrianna Muir	Multiple Splutters	Erin Espeland
Messy Statistics	Erin Espeland; Matt Schlesinger	Must (have been) Stoned	Jim Thorne
Met Sasquatch! (Maybe Shitfaced...)	Matt Schlesinger	Muy Suave	Pete Epanchin
Mighty Sycophant	Matt Schlesinger	My Slavehood	Matt Schlesinger
Milking my Scholarship	Matt Schlesinger	Mysterious Statistics	Matt Schlesinger
Minimalistic Sesquipedalianism	Pete Epanchin	Mystical Statistics	Fraser Shilling

## Ph.D. stands for...

Painful head Damage	Pete Epanchin	Pernicious, haughty Degree	Jim Thorne
Papa has Dough	Dierdre Doherty	Perpetual hard Drinking	Matt Schlesinger
Pardon how (I) Dress	Elizabeth Bella	Perpetually having Doubts	Matt Schlesinger
Pardon how (I) Drool	Elizabeth Bella	Perpetually honored Dork	Silvia Hillyer
Part-time hair Dresser	Pete Epanchin	Perseverance, hard work and Determination	Robin Meyers
Past help...Doom.	Pete Epanchin	Person having Delusions	Fraser Shilling
Pasty hackneyed Dramatist	Elizabeth Bella	Personal history Denied	Jim Thorne
Patently homer-esque Dork	Elizabeth Bella	Petty ho-hum Degree	Pete Epanchin
Patience has Deserted	Erin Espeland	Petty, hubristic Dilettante	Josh Viers
Perched here on my Duff	Matt Schlesinger	Petulant hubristic Destiny	Pete Epanchin
Perennially hard to Define (in reference to my career plans)	Kara Moore	Ph.Duh	Pete Epanchin
Perfectly hopeless Drudgery	Elizabeth Bella	Phaked my Data	Matt Schlesinger
Peripatetic homo Declaration	Erin Espeland	Phat Detention	Kara Moore
Permanent hair Damage	Tasila Banda	Philosophical Discourse	Steve Wathen
Permanently holding Doubts	Elizabeth Bella	Phony Degree	Matt Schlesinger
Permitting hellacious Damages	Elizabeth Bella	Phrickin' Dope	Kara Moore

Phuck-a-Demia	Matt Schlesinger	Preferring humorous Distractions	Elizabeth Bella
Phucking Destitute	Adrianna Muir	Presumptuous hypothesis Purveyor (hey Bella, getting your Ph.P.?)	Elizabeth Bella
Piled high and Deep	Kendi Davies; Ben Orlove; Steve Wathen	Pretending holistic Demeanor	Elizabeth Bella
Pints help Data	Pete Epanchin	Pretentious hallowed Dickhead	Elizabeth Bella
Pity his decision	Jim Thorne	Pretty half-assed Data	Matt Schlesinger
Pizza hut Deliverer	Peter Allen	Pretty heavy Doodie	Fraser Shilling
Plagued by hair Deficiency	Matt Schlesinger	Pretty huge Dick (Kanye West)	Adrianna Muir
Plated half-assed Dirt	Erin Espeland	Pretty humdrum Dull stuff	Steve Wathen
Please have (a) Drink	Elizabeth Bella	Preventing health & Decency	Elizabeth Bella
Please help (me) Dress	Elizabeth Bella	Prissy high-handed Debutante	Elizabeth Bella
Please hurry, Data.	Pete Epanchin	Probably had Desperation	Jim Thorne
Plowed how, Dammit?	Erin Espeland	Probably high on Dope	Jim Thorne
Poking holes (in my) Dissertation	Elizabeth Bella	Probably hybrid Progeny	Elizabeth Bella
Poor hair Distribution	Alex Fremier	Productive, happy Disaster	Pete Epanchin
Poor hard Drinker	Matt Schlesinger	Professional hero-worshipper of Darwin	Adrianna Muir
Poor hopeless Degenerate	Jim Thorne	Professionally highly Delusional	Fraser Shilling
Porky helpless Dork	Elizabeth Bella	Professors have doctorates	Matt Schlesinger
Positively Diverse hominids			
Possibly helping Do Proactive heuristic Discovery	Elizabeth Bella	Prohibitively hampered (by) Debt	Elizabeth Bella
Possessing hard Drugs	Matt Schlesinger	Promised hope Dulled	Elizabeth Bella
Post hole Digger	Sean Smukler; Jim Thorne	Propagating harmless Diatribes	Elizabeth Bella
Postponement of homeless Delinquency	Pete Epanchin	Protesting hunger Desperately	Elizabeth Bella
Potentially highly Dubious	Fraser Shilling	Proud hedonistic Desperation	Elizabeth Bella
Pouncing hoops Deftly	Kara Moore	Provincial hack (at) Dating	Elizabeth Bella
Practically haggard and Deprived	Adrianna Muir	Published, however Dumb	Kimberly Owens
Pray...help! Done.	Heidi Weiskel	Punishing humans Directly	Elizabeth Bella
Praying hard (for) Deliverance	Elizabeth Bella	Purgatory has Descended	Erin Espeland
Predatory ho (for) Data	Elizabeth Bella	Purple-headed Demon	Matt Schlesinger
Predicting harrowing Doomsday	Matt Schlesinger	Purportedly having Discoveries	Matt Schlesinger
Preferred heritability Dreams	Elizabeth Bella	Puttering, hallucinating Delinquent	Pete Epanchin

And thanks to Adrianna for pointing out <http://newton.kias.re.kr/~choims/Fun/PhD.html>, which yielded these:

Patiently hoping for a Degree Professorship? hah! Dream on!	Pheromone Deprived
Please hire. Desperate.	Permanent head Damage
Physiologically Deficient	Pretty homely Dork
Pour him (or her) a Drink	Potential heavy Drinker
Philosophically Disturbed	Professional hamburger Dispenser....."Would you like fries with that?"
Probably headed for Divorce	Pretty heavily Depressed
Pathetically hopeless Dweeb	Prozac handouts Desired
Probably heavily in Debt	Pretty heavy Diploma
Parents have Doubts	Pathetic homeless Dreamer
Professors had Doubts	Proudly half Dead
	Phinally done!



# The Inner View on Interviews 2: Electric Boogaloo

## More advice and stories from the GGE

- 1) Groom yourself and dress for the occasion (it is OK if you overdressed, e.g. you wear a tie and the interviewer does not), it shows that this interview is important to you.
- 2) Do not pretend to already know all there is to know about the job you are interviewing for. The interviewer is likely to be more interested in someone open minded and able to learn on the job than in a "know it all".
- 2) Be yourself, do not try to convey another persona. The interviewer will try to assess not only your qualifications and experience, but also whether you are the kind of person able to work within a team, interact well with clients, etc.
- 3) Show interest for the position you are interviewing for. Ask questions about the work involved, the people you would have to work with, the current challenges faced by the unit you would work for...

That's my 4 cents in your kettle,

Marc Vayssières

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Ok, here's a true story that happened to me a few years ago. I applied for a technician job at the University of Colorado Boulder and I didn't get it. So I called the professor who headed the lab and asked him if he could let me know why I didn't get the job, so that I could improve my approach. He said, "We were looking for someone with a fresh perspective." This was a technician's job collecting water samples in the field! Well, anyone who knows me knows that I can

be very fresh, with ideas and otherwise. I was in my thirties at the time and approaching 40 so I took this to be a veiled reference to my age, which I still believe it was. Anyway, the gal who got the job quit right away so, since I had just called, I ended up getting the job, working there for two years and doing a fine job. Age discrimination is alive and kicking in academia, as shameful as that is. Anyway, if anyone asks, I'm 29!

- Steve Wathen

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You asked for it: real life job interview gaffes!

One woman brought her advisor with her on the interview, and he fielded all those potentially stressful questions for her. Codependents for hire...

In a role reversal of the above, I later witnessed a very senior scientist absolutely stumped during Q&A, because all the work he presented had been done by his students. Plagiarist for hire...

One candidate presented a talk that was over 70% Far Side cartoons. Gary Larson for hire...

- Sharon Lawler

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One piece of advice only: ask QUESTIONS of the faculty in the departments where you interview. Examples: "I read your paper on XXX. Are you still working on that? What would happen if you expanded your study to include Y? How did you learn to do ZZZ analysis? What are the practical problems of doing research at your study site? etc. You can't imagine, when a string of job candidates come through our offices in January and February, how clearly stands out a candidate with curiosity, awareness, and broader interests that span beyond their

own jobless state. (And from the faculty members' point of view, a new turn in the conversation often reveals unexpected aspects to the candidate's knowledge or ability to think laterally).

- Monique Borgerhoff Mulder

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Show that you care enough about the job to know about the interviewers (most of the Dept) and their research.

Seems obvious? It seemingly isn't to 90% of applicants!

- Sandy Harcourt

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It's been 15 years since I interviewed for jobs, but it seems like only yesterday, probably because it was so stressful. I moved to an overseas postdoc just after sending out my applications, and ended up flying back and doing 5 interviews on one trip. My first and only real piece of advice is "Don't do 5 interviews on one trip." Other things that stand out...

SCARIEST EXPERIENCE: I was at University of Chicago, talking to all these big-name faculty, and I naively thought that "Lunch with graduate students" would be the time I could finally relax and enjoy a nice chat. There were 10 or 15 students sitting around a table with a couple of pizzas. They all turned and glared at me and started asking questions like "What would you do to make things better for grad students at University of Chicago?" The interrogation lasted an entire hour and I never even got any pizza.

LOSING IT EXPERIENCE: I was at Arizona State, my fourth interview, trying to recover from the flu I caught in Chicago. Having made it through the whole day, given my talk, and smiled and nodded through all my appointments, I finally wound up at a reception. The conversation among the guests was heading smoothly away from me, leaving me free to concentrate on the difficult

tasks of standing up and keeping an interested look on my face, when someone came up and said "There are a few things I wanted to ask you about your research", with an expression that indicated that I would of course be thrilled by this news. I broke into hysterical laughter and ran out of the room.

#### SPONTANEOUS BRILLIANCE

EXPERIENCE: There was a theoretical evolutionist who was well known for being not only highly abstract and mathematical, but highly eccentric and as silent as they come. I had 45 minutes with him. We sat there and the only words he said after "Hello" were directed toward his dog. There was a loudly ticking clock in the room. Of course I asked him about his research, and virtually the only words I understood in his brief answer were "directed mutation." With a sudden flash of inspiration I said "I recently heard a talk on that subject by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of other scientist)." It worked even better than I hoped. Dr. Silent then spent the next half hour telling me what an idiot the other guy was, and you couldn't even hear the clock tick!

#### USEFUL THINGS I LEARNED:

Somewhere along the way, I think it was between #2 and #3, I had the following revelation: give a seminar like you would tell a story. Until then, I'd been kind of going in chronological order: I did this, and then this, and then that. What worked much better was to introduce the central questions like you would introduce the characters in a novel; then develop them the way you would develop a plot; then resolve them at the end, while giving a tantalizing epilogue about the unanswered questions yet to come. The talk started going much better. The other thing I learned was to psych myself into thinking "I'm here to decide if I want this job, just as much as for them to decide if they want me." This made it easier to pretend to be confident and relaxed.

- Contributed anonymously

Temporal Dynamics and the Written Word:  
The House of Seven Gables by Nathaniel  
Hawthorne and The Wind in the Willows by  
Kenneth Grahame.

by Erin Espeland

Every time I write a book review for the EGG, folks are amazed that I have the time to read fiction (or at least are amazed that I'm willing to admit that I have the time to read fiction). My book reviews have thinned out over the past year, because keeping up with my New Yorker subscription has kept me pretty busy. (Too poor to go to the movies? Don't own a TV? Nauseated by the newspaper? Don't drive a lot so don't listen to the radio? Feeling totally out of it when it comes to news and popular culture, so the only thing you can talk about with "normal" people is, um, your dissertation? Subscribe to the New Yorker! Keeps you up on popular culture, throws in a few vocabulary words every issue, and it is written at YOUR reading level! ... not to diss the EGG or anything: the New Yorker comes out a little more frequently... I may have sent props to the NYer before in this space, can't help it, I'm a huge fan.)



This winter, though, I have been in the throes of some **serious** lethargy. We're talking 10 hours of sleep a night lethargy. While I survived on minimal-effort cookery (quesadillas and tea anyone?), I read the cloudy days away. After reading The Wizard of Earthsea trilogy (again), curling the massive A Deepness in the Sky for a few days, and then exhausting my supply of Louis L'Amour books (even buying myself a few more when I didn't feel like I had any energy for any stories other than those where the bad guys always wear black hats), I turned to the classy hardbound books on my shelf that I hadn't read in a while. After Beloved sent me into a

bizarre and gloomy dream state, I decided more innocent fare was needed.

Lest you confuse, as I sometimes do, The House of Seven Gables with The House of Usher, let me assure you that they are very different books. Even though the house is gloomy in both. And possibly under a curse in both. But the house doesn't fall down at the end of The House of Seven Gables. (oops - spoiler!)

This book review isn't really about The House of Seven Gables or the Wind in the Willows, except for the sense of time exhibited in each.



Read current novels, and they read like movies or music videos. Time flips, swift cuts are made, people are always **doing** things (instead of sitting around enjoying the view of the garden, for example). Action, action, action - even in current "literary" works. (I can't think of any examples right now, sue me.) In The House of Seven Gables, wordage is generously donated to the subtle feel of each room and hallway, each nuance of the characters' brows, and the specific way that each flower grows towards the light in the garden. Maybe it takes some serious lethargy to enjoy this slow-paced writing. All I know is that the spacious deliciousness of descriptions of toast and jam and of taking naps in the Wind and the Willows were enough to get me out of my chair and make my own toast and jam which was extremely yummy. And a nice break from quesadillas. The book also allowed me to savor my naps instead of feeling guilty about them. When I need positive reinforcement for states of **being**, rather than **doing**, I'm going to turn to these older books on my shelf for some refreshment from my overambitious world. Because really, as the water rat says, what **is** there in life that is finer than messing around, simply messing around, in boats?



# GGE SPRING RETREAT!

When: Noon March 31 – Noon April 1

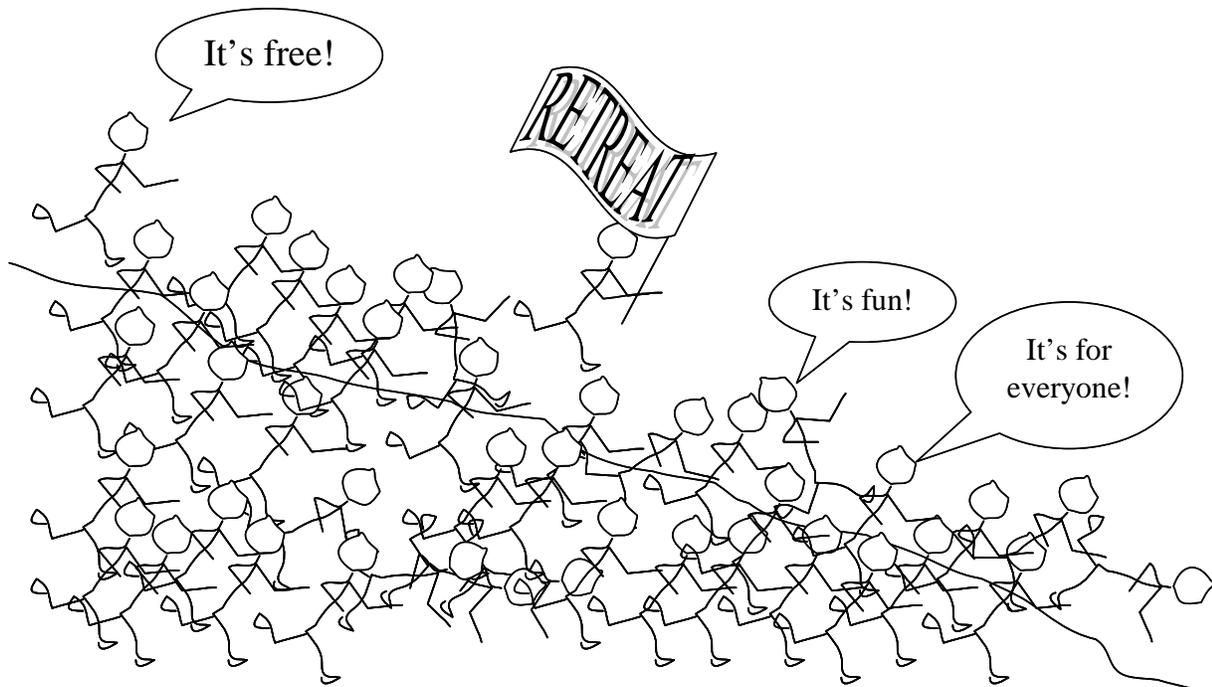
Who: All GGE members and their families

What: Student-Faculty Good Times

Cost: Nothing

Where: McLaughlin Reserve

Note: Watch your e-mail for more information! There will be a carpool sign-up outside of Silvia's office.



# **Publishing Outside the Box: Alternative Journals for Ecologists**

Egg Foreign Correspondents Aaron  
"Cornbread" Richardson, Nolan C. Kane, and  
Brianna L. Gross, Indiana University

Additional reporting/facilitation by  
Sarah Elmendorf and Kara Moore

*Nature and Science* (a strong choice for  
multiple submissions, as it allows you to say  
things like "several of my papers were  
published in *Nature and Science*")

*Esoterica*

*Problematic Study Design*

*Tautology*

*Journal of the American Naturalist* (the  
European counterpart to *American Naturalist*)

*Journal of the Southwestern Naturalist* (not as  
good as JAN)

*Journal of PNAS*

*Natura* (silent "a" at the end)

*Knature* (*Natura*'s main competition)

*Effluvia*

*Datum*

*Obscura*

*Manus Ventilare* (hand waving, we think)

*Undergraduate Research*

*Heuristic Biology*

*Journal of Thought Experiments*

Excerpts from emails home from Tanzania  
Part 2

by Ramona Butz

10/22/05  
Rainy Arusha

It's raining here in Arusha and pouring in  
Nairobi, but according to one of the other  
guests here at the hotel, there's a gap in  
the rain from Longido to Oldonyo Sambu  
(ie. my research site!). As much as I  
don't like working in the rain, I really  
hope it rains there soon.

Once I've finished up my laundry and done  
a little data entry here in town, I'm on  
my way back out to the village for the  
week. Because it's so humid and there's  
no sunshine, I'm having trouble getting my  
clothes to dry. And arriving at the  
village wearing damp clothes means I'll be  
an instant dust-covered mess!



Today is Maasai market day in Oldonyo  
Sambu. Most of the adults from the  
village go there each week. I'm still  
debating over whether or not I'll stop on  
my way out to Engikareti. It's an  
overwhelming scene with hundreds upon  
hundreds of Maasai, all dressed in red  
with their elaborate beadwork jewelry  
milling about. There is a large livestock  
area where you can buy or sell cattle,  
goats, and sheep, as well as eat nyama  
choma (grilled meat). Just up the hill  
from the livestock areas are little shacks  
selling all sorts of random items  
including sugar, corn flour, vegetable  
fat, batteries (only C or D), razor  
blades, little packets of laundry soap,  
warm sodas in glass bottles, and an odd  
assortment of used tools. Covering every  
usable piece of ground between and around  
the ramshackle huts are women selling  
tomatoes, onions, 40 kg bags of charcoal,  
beadwork, livestock skins, and other

oddities. Non-Maasai men from Arusha or other larger neighboring towns are there selling shukas (the brightly-colored clothes that the Maasai wear), vegetable oil, kerosene, strings of beads, and shoes made of used car or airplane tires. Only very rarely is there ever another white person there beside myself, so I always attract more attention than I like to have.

Time for a cup of instant coffee (the only kind you can get here despite the adjacent hills of coffee production) and a look at the news of the world. I hear that there is a new hurricane currently sitting over the Yucatan Peninsula that may be the worst in recorded history. Coverage by CNN and the BBC make it seem as though between natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and bird flu, the world is somehow coming to an end. There's something naively comforting about being in a village where people live from day to day and news of outside events is virtually impossible to receive. I live in ignorant bliss until a trip to town jars me back to western reality.

The national elections in Tanzania happen a week from tomorrow (Sunday the 30th). More on that next Friday. It should be a really interesting process to observe.

10/28/05

It rained in the land of thorns!

It's Friday once again in Tanzania, and I'm back in the land of intermittent electricity and showers. Last Friday while I was in town it rained just a little bit in the village and then rained again while I was back on Saturday night. I'm elated, despite the fact that most of my belongings became soaked in my not-quite-finished poo house! Even after just a little bit of rain, everything is started to green up again and there's water in most of the dams for people and animals to drink. The dust has subsided dramatically (although since last Saturday there's been no rain and the dust and wind are picking up again). In any case, it's an infinitely more pleasant situation to be living and working in and all of the people of the village have a new outlook on life. A little rain in an otherwise very arid land does wonders for people's moods!

I also found out this week that Engikareti, the name of the village, roughly means "Land of Thorns" in Maasai.

After my first complete week back in the village, I can confirm that this is definitely true! I've drawn blood on thorns more than 100 times this week. They get lodged in my shoes, snag my clothes, catch my hair, poke through the bottom of my tent, and any number of other places.

My week went very well despite a number of rough spots. Over the past few days I've been pee'd on and pooped on by both kids and goats. My stove has died a terrible and completely unknown death (no hot food for three days this week...I'm probably going to have to switch to open campfire in my poo house and spend at least an hour each day collecting firewood). My favorite kitten died in my arms while I was at the boma alone with all the kids. I got kicked by a donkey while rescuing one of the little ones

from being nailed in the head by a donkey foot because he was throwing cow dung at the donkey (sometimes I think I should have just let the donkey



kick him!). My sunglasses are broken in two places and even duct tape isn't doing the trick. A baby goat died last night and I found it first thing this morning when I got out of my tent. I'm sure there's more, but my mind is blocking all of it out now that I've had a shower and a nap...

On the good side, however, my research is coming along very well and now that plants are greening up, I should be able to take some preliminary fire data. Grasses are insanely hard to identify while both dead and grazed into obliteration! Lots of good charcoal data too. Everyone seems so comfortable with me being there right now that I feel much more at home than I did during the last trip. The kids can't get enough of playing with the weird white girl, and to tell you the truth, I can't get enough of playing with them either. I've been jotting down little notes in my journal or notebooks for story material later, but I never remember to bring it to the computer while I type. There's more than enough material for several books at this point!!



The roosters are both gone. One apparently died this summer and the other was sold at the market. I can't claim that I'm sad. No more early morning wake-up calls through

my tent window. One of the little kids wears a small cow-bell around his ankle so that we can find him when he wanders off or gets into mischief, both of which he does frequently. I spend a little time everyday hiding things (and then packing them out to town to throw out) that are dangerous for kids like corroding batteries, which they stick in their mouth, and pieces of broken glass bottles. My westernized maternal instincts are always in overdrive while I'm around the kids. They run with machetes, play with rusty, jagged metal pieces, and stick plastic bags over their heads. They're constantly stepping on thorns because they don't have shoes. It's not that their mothers love them any less or are less careful with them, it's just that they have to learn what's good and what's not for themselves in a place where virtually everything can be a danger. After all, what's a little piece of glass when there are elephants just outside the village fence at night?!

11/04/05  
Cattle truck to town

It's Friday once again and I've arrived in Arusha after another week with the Maasai. And while I didn't get kicked by any donkeys, it was definitely an adventurous and highly gratifying week. It didn't come off without any hitches, but this is the first time I remember not reaching town in a completely exhausted and slightly overwhelmed state!

All things being equal (as they never really are), it was simply another week in the field. There weren't any particular moments that made it a great week, but perhaps just a conglomeration of many, many little things. I saw some of the best sunsets I've ever seen anywhere this week. Rain in the mountains surrounding the village would clear up by evening to produce spectacular views of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Meru, Oldonyo Lengai, Oldonyo Longido, and that fifth mountain whose name I always forget. And after having drunk several cups of chai in the evenings, first with the women and then with the warriors, I wake up each night in the middle of the night for a bathroom break to find the most amazing array of stars that I've seen anywhere in the world.

Speaking of bathrooms, one of the crazier experiences of my lifetime happened on Wednesday morning. I awoke with the pre-

dawn light just before sunrise to a full bladder and stumbled out of my tent, pried my way out of the thorn "gate" of the boma, and wandered off into the bush to find a suitable, at least semi-private site. When I rounded the corner of shrub tall enough and with enough budding leaves to sort of conceal me, I almost stepped on an equally confused ostrich! It was a male...the female was sleeping next to another bush just a few feet away. AN OSTRICH in my favorite bathroom spot!!!



Before I run out of time today, I should explain the subject of my email...yet another experience atypical in Davis, CA. There were almost no cars passing on the main Arusha-Nairobi road this morning that were heading in the direction I wanted to travel, so I flagged down a trucker. His cab was full, but there was room along with a few other young Tanzanian men and several cattle in the back of the open truck. So I hopped on in. In every little village through which we passed, people sitting around near the road witnessed a white women, 3 African men, and 9 cows standing in the back of a truck on it's way to town. I'm still laughing over the expressions on most of their faces!

11/05/05  
Off to brave the market

It's early Saturday morning in rainy Arusha. There's an absolutely obnoxious, large group of French tourists here that should have left already, but can't seem to get it together. The hotel that I stay at in Arusha is fantastic and the staff are like pseudo-family to me now, but the groups of tourists that come through here are really hit and miss. Sometimes I find really neat people to talk to while I'm in town, but these last two weekends have been rather miserable on the people front. Last weekend was a large group of Dutch tourists (equally obnoxious). And they say Americans abroad are the worst...I definitely beg to disagree after months of meeting Americans versus Europeans here!

Since I'm not really a tourist and I'm a regular at the lodge, I've come to know most of the other regulars. They are, for the most part, hunters from Zimbabwe, South Africa, or Germany. They're a really good lot of mainly older men and

everyone gets a laugh out of the ecologist hanging out with the hunters.

Africa is addictive. Even on the worst days I've had here, I can't imagine never coming back. Maybe there's something in the dust. The things I love about Tanzania and the things that I hate about Tanzania all seem to meld together and slide under my skin. It starts with the smell from the moment I walk off the plane...a smell I can't even really place. The smell joins the colors, sights, and sounds of a vibrant, rapidly changing nation. If I were ever brave enough to bring my camera to the Maasai market, I might be able to capture some of the mayhem on film, but it would never compare to the real thing.

And on that note, I'm off to analyze a little more data, pack up my belongs, and head to the Maasai market closest to my bush home to bargain for a few food items for the week.



Space filler by Matt.  
The photo, that is.  
The giraffe takes up space too.  
I didn't make the giraffe, to clarify.  
Just the photo.

## 2006 Award-winning Mardi Gras Costume Ideas



Best Cleavage



Best Costume

(go as "Louie Yang at Mardi Gras 2005")



Most Inappropriate

(I mean, it's not Halloween!  
How inappropriate!)