

Diary 11 – 31 July 2011

Gossip, gossip, gossip

Hello everybody, here is Gossip guy with a completely new and fresh weekly gossip-letter, full of gossip. This letter is inspired by true events about the people living and working at Zackenberg Research Station.

I will start this week's letter with the story about the magnificent and glorious Team pollinator-X. I, Insect boy – the trusted member of Team pollinator-X, joined forces with the "respected by very few" Dr. Rasmussen two weeks ago. This team is often the punch line of a joke up here as it seems very few truly understand our valuable and hard work, which consist of spending a day watching flowers for 40 min per species. Last year, our work would include collecting the pollinators who visited the flowers, but this year we have so few pollinators that we just stand still for the most of the day. This of course is not for "woossies", as it takes tremendous mental strength to withstand that kind of pressure 24/7. Thus, sometimes it happens that our knees are weak and we have to sit down for a short while. Something that is not unnoticed around here. However, the two strong members of Team Pollinator-X know better, and we are certain that not even the boys in the green pants from Daneborg have the stamina to perform our demanding work.

Status quo is that we have only caught and collected less than half of what we had collected last year at the same time. Not even mosquitoes are around to give us a little bit of fun! A fact which is pleasing everybody else at the station – as the old saying goes: One man's death, another man's bread! Or something like that. To try to reverse the situation, Dr. Rasmussen put me in charge of the team at Monday morning. Monday afternoon he was told that given the bad catch-record of Dr. Rasmussen I had decided to send him home on the next plane. To illustrate why, I can mention that from Monday-Thursday (where the plane brought him away) we only caught 4 insects!

That was my short story about the great Team Pollinator-X. Let's move on to some of the more juicy gossip. Last year Lars Holst "The Deputy" Hansen lost his innocence on a memorable sleepover trip to the other side of the Zackenberg River together with Team Pollinator-X. Thus, this year a remake of the trip was arranged. We arrived on the Zackenberg trapping station at 19.00 and spend the first hours of eating our way through a three-dinner menu before we took off on a walk. Unfortunately we had very foggy weather, making Dr. Rasmussen very sad, as he had talked all day about the beautiful walk (later he saw me in a net-shirt, which made him happy again!). We decided to just take a short walk to the fox mating holes to see if they are occupied by foxes this year. However, because of the foggy weather and because the Deputy had laid his sense of direction back in the hut we walked for circles for quite some time until he, forced by Dr. Rasmussen, checked his GPS. What happened after the walk will stay between the three of us!

The arrival of Lars "The Deputy" also has had a positive effect on Jannik Hansen, as he is now frequently seen at the breakfast table before 9 o'clock. But I guess it is all right that Jannik sleeps a bit long, as Jeroen have left him un-hatched sanderling eggs at Palnatoke Mountain leaving Jannik working to 4 o'clock in the morning.

Our chef Lone Riis is also working hard this year, as I can witness on the stomachs of all the guys up here! Especially the cakes, which are more abundant this year, are much beloved. This trend Jannik, in particular, is very satisfied with, as I can remember from last year that he hates wearing a belt. Even though the summer-season is starting to reach the last month, BioBasis has recruited a new field assistant – the false Canadian from last year; Noémie Boulanger-Lapointe. This is indeed bad news for Jannik, as she will do all the vegetation analyses – a work that the plant-loving Jannik is sad not to do.

Even though Kirstine Skov (GeoBasis) is well famous and is recognized in Denmark because of all her “lort”-words she yelled last year in the laboratory, she has decided to not to continue down the path. This is perhaps because she now has the company of two assistants, Laura (who arrived on the plane on Thursday) and Lau Gede Pedersen who takes all the beating out in the field. Or perhaps it is because the equipment is running just a little bit smoother this year. It is hard to tell – I only bring the gossip, and it is up to the dedicated reader to decide. One thing is for sure, the GeoBasis team work hard, with many evenings spent on walking or in the laboratory. However, being more people on the team this year has meant that we have seen Kirstine relaxing some nights. This one evening of relaxing consisted of watching the fascinating movie “Bitch Slap”, that was brought to Zackenberg by Henrik “Philip” Philipsen. The movie was really great and has served as a topic at the dinner table many days after. Staying with the logistic team, it is now evident that they work very hard. Thus, Søren Kyed has now recovered 5 of the 7 coffee mugs Philip has hidden around the station, but also has found the time to paint a house and the runway-signs. These new signs at the air-strip and the new sign of “Zackenberg terminal” on house no. 5 have made this station very airport-ish. Thus, Philip has employed Lone Riis to marshal the planes into the runway. Something she will do in a bunny costume just to confuse the pilots.

Having a year with equipment that gave problems last year, this year Julie Marie Falk is harvesting the fruit of all her hard work, measuring the methane gas production in the wet areas. Also part of her work is the thrilling work of counting all the grasses in her plots, even when it is “fucking cold” outside as she puts it very nicely. Perhaps she is the only one who could also do Team Pollinator-X’s work, especially considering that she right from the beginning has shown real interest and excitement about our work (NOT!). But, indeed the weather has been bad this week. Cold temperatures, many clouds and lots of fog, have meant that we weren’t able to see the mountains or the sun for almost a week.

After Oriol climbed Dombjerget in ca. 8 hours, people have tried to beat the new standing record. So far, Tapani, Kirstine, Lau, Laura, Gernot and Gernot have tried, but all failed. They did reach the top though, and should be appraised accordingly. No, dear readers, I am afraid that the record is not broken before one of the Team Pollinator-X members decides to break it. Besides climbing Dombjerg, the two Austrians Gernot and Gernot are preparing to go to Clavering Ø, where they will work on the Freya glacier. Already now I’m looking forward to hear the radio-conversations: “Gernot, Gernot, Gernot?”. “Gernot, Gernot!”.

To end this very exciting weekly gossip-letter, I will end with the juiciest stories, which all include Kirstine Skov. Again, I will let the readers decide for themselves, but we may have a true threesome drama. Thus, when Oriol climbed Dom, he knew that Kirstine and Geo-basis should climb the mountain later to check the climate station, and he left her a small present on the top. Exciting and romantic at the same time! But apparently that is not enough for Kirstine, as we could hear one night on the radio. I apologize if I misunderstood, as my radio

had some static, so all I could hear was: "Philip", "Kirstine", "vulcanized tape", and "my bed"! Thus, it is up to the reader to decide what that meant. With these very disturbing, but also exiting news I'm looking forward to another exciting week at Zackenberg, and don't forget to read the next weekly gossip-letter as this is the only place where you can read the one and only truth about what is going on at Zackenberg Research Station.

Jesper "Mars bar" Mosbacher

Insect boy from Team Pollinator-X