

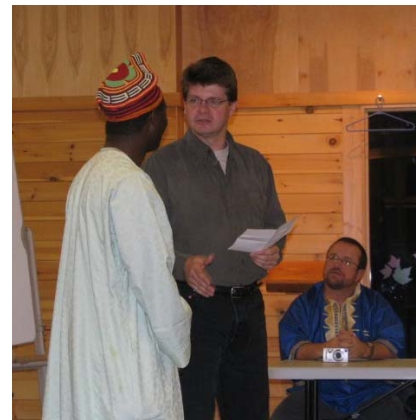


## CIF International Night at the Canadian Ecology Centre *By Nancy Young*

During the fifty-first International Night hosted by the Algonquin section of the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006, thirty members and interested locals had the opportunity to learn about Cameroon, Africa, and its forestry sector. Some notable attendees, Kit (Christopher) and Norma Yateman, were present for the very first edition of this annual event 51 years ago! Also of note were the six new student members from Nipissing University who are currently studying under and conducting field work at the red oak research site with Jeff Dech and Peter Nosko. These students were presented with copies of the Forestry Chronicle signed by the Executive Director himself!

A genuine Cameroonian meal was prepared for the group by Rachelle Draper. The menu included such dishes as vegetarian curry, jollof rice, zom, and fried yams (click [here](#) for recipes) with banana bread and fruit for dessert. Did you know that the word ‘yam’ comes from the Cameroon word ‘nyami’ which means ‘eat’?

After this ethnic dining experience, Jean-Marie Sobze PhD, from the Ontario Forest Research Institute in Sault Ste. Marie, gave a very enlightening presentation on the forestry customs in his home country of Cameroon. This country is located on the mid-western coast of Africa, bordered by Nigeria, Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and the Atlantic Ocean. Contained within the country is a diverse array of ecozones ranging from arid land to savannah to woodlands; each of which support different forest types and management opportunities.



There are a number of forestry elements that are surprisingly similar in the two countries: monitoring is done by the government (when funds are available), a proportion of land is preserved as parks, and many of the forest products are exported in raw form. In Cameroon, however, the local people actively participate in forest (and wildlife) monitoring and maintenance to take up the slack of the government and to protect that which sustains the community. “It was very surprising to hear how similar the forestry issues there are to those in Canada,” said John Pineau, Executive Director of the CIF, “their community forests are very progressive - somewhat like the Canadian Model Forests”.

Unlike in Canada, the harvesting and tending are done manually using the selective system in which the biggest and best of the 10 or so commercial species are cut and processed at sawmills. The very fast growth rates in Cameroon appear to lessen the consequences of high grading in comparison to Canada: an average harvesting rotation there is 25 years versus 60 to 80 years here. A great deal of the forest regeneration in

Cameroon is natural; however most of the plantations are exotic species such as eucalyptus for their incredibly fast rotation of 15 years.

Dr. Sobze did a great job of describing his country and of candidly fielding the many questions that were asked at the end. Everyone seemed to get a lot out of the evening with much interest in returning next year. “There was a great turnout at this year’s event,” said Don Willis, President of the Algonquin section,



“lots of new CIF members came out, and we even had John Pineau and Fred Pinto representing both the national executive and the local section. We will definitely look forward to continuing this tradition in the coming years.”