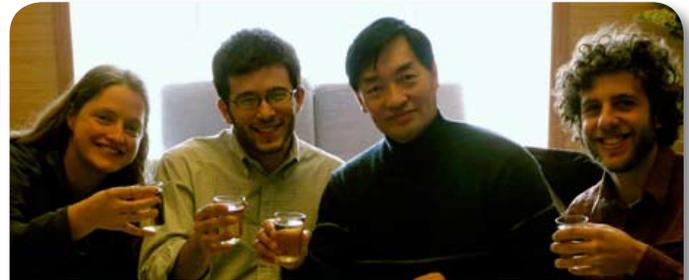


DISCOVERING THE DEAF WORLD IN CHINA

For the last three weeks, we have traveled to various cities in China, discovering deaf worlds. In this massive country of over 1.3 billion people, there are approximately 2,000 deaf schools. However, only two deaf principals and roughly 400 deaf teachers are employed in the nation. Interpreting services are rare (we have heard of only two interpreting programs), and career choices are limited to the arts. The general philosophy is, "because deaf people are visual, they should be involved in art as a profession to apply such skills." For example, at ChangChun University (CCU), the first higher education school for deaf students established in 1987 in China, only four majors are offered: painting, calligraphy, graphic design, and animation.

Although professions for deaf people are limited in China, those who attend universities *excel* in the arts. We have seen some amazing talent come off the paint brushes, sewing machines, and computer printers from local deaf artists. They do not complain about their professions; however, they do not accept



L-R: Christy Smith, Davin Searls, Wang Aiguo, and Dave Justice enjoy a lunch break.

this as a plateau of their abilities, either. We have met many deaf people emerging as strong leaders in their communities. They support each other by creating a close family, teach hearing people Chinese Sign Language (CSL), raise awareness, and most importantly they fight for an expansion of their rights: the right to more diverse education opportunities, the right to drive in a country that forbids deaf people to have a license, and the right to prove that deaf people can!

CHINA, continued on page 5

WHAT IS DDW?

Dave Justice and Christy Smith are traveling the world to learn and share stories of empowerment, inspiration, and connection between international Deaf communities.

Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) is an opportunity to give deaf people worldwide a voice. For more information, photos, video logs, and newsletter stories, visit www.discoveringdeafworlds.com.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Breathing the air in Beijing is like smoking 70 cigarettes in one day. The government is currently cleaning the air for the upcoming Olympics.
- 10% of all websites are blocked (including Wikipedia, BBC News, and blogs) to censor conflicting opinions.
- China was the first country to invent the flushing toilet, though most toilets involve squatting over a hole in the ground.
- When saying cheers during a meal, show your respect by toasting your glass lower than those older than you.
- There are over 56,000 written Chinese characters!

THE (NOT-SO-GOOD) PERKS OF TRAVELING

Bouncing around by planes, trains, taxis, and buses from one youth hostel to the next can have its toll on our equipment. And after five months and four countries, we hit a few unexpected 'twists.' On our first day in Beijing, our MacBook power cord gave out, which meant the entire day was spent roaming around an eight-floor building, negotiating a reasonable price with sketchy electronics resellers all trying to make a quick buck from the visiting foreigners.

On day two in China, while still adjusting to the massive culture shock after coming from Japan, our precious handy dandy video camera died. After 50 hours of filming and 200 hours of downloading, our dear Canon HV10 threw in the towel and said "No more!" We tried to get it fixed, but we are never in the same city long enough to wait for its return. Besides, since the formats between China and the United States are different, buying a new camera is not an easy option. Fortunately, our broken camera has a sense of humor and will occasionally let us record when it feels like it, so we have been able to partially document the deaf community in China.

On top of that, many websites (including our blog!) are blocked by censorship laws in China, and the mail system is not 100% reliable, especially if addresses are not written in Chinese. Even so, we are happy to say we are back in action! A computer cord was found, we learned a way around the website censorship, and we will be receiving a new video camera when we arrive in Thailand in a couple weeks.

Keep us in your thoughts and hope for us that the worst of our technical problems are resolved!

On March 26, Dave and Christy are off to Bangkok, Thailand! They will travel throughout Southeastern Asia for the next two months.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIDBITS

PHOTO WITH YOU PLEASE?

A word of caution: Many locals are excited to see foreigners in their country and will often approach travelers and ask to take a picture with them. While some of them have good intentions, others are just looking for a way to reach into foreigners' pockets when they throw an arm around you. Be sure your valuables are zipped up when you say "Cheeeese."

HEY, THAT'S NOT WHAT THE METER SAYS!

Sometimes taxi drivers will take the 'scenic' route to your destination, or jack up the price from what the meter says. But when you are assertive and call them on it, they often laugh and concede. If you find a taxi driver you trust, grab his business card and call and request that driver the next time you need a ride. It may cost an extra dollar or two, but worth the peace of mind.

*Help this project
stay alive
to the end!*

*Donate to DDW at:
[www.discovering
deafworlds.com](http://www.discoveringdeafworlds.com)*

HOSPITALITY TO FOREIGNERS

Isn't it funny how when you are traveling abroad, everyone says, "Better tell people you're from Canada instead of America!"? Yet we have found our around-the-world experience to be overflowing with generous hospitality, regardless of where we are from. The basic precedent is, "You are a visitor to our country, our home...that means we will put aside our busy schedules to guide you anywhere you want to go, take you to the best restaurants and always serve you first, welcome you in our homes, never let you pay for a meal or a cab fare, and send you off at the train station with precious gifts from our culture!" This has been our experience the last five months, and most definitely in China. The bad rap we sometimes hear about China is not reflective of the kind-hearted wonderful people who live here.

So ask yourselves, do we offer this kind of hospitality when foreigners visit our country? How can we make their stay as comfortable as possible? In America especially, how can we help change the bad rep our country has overseas?



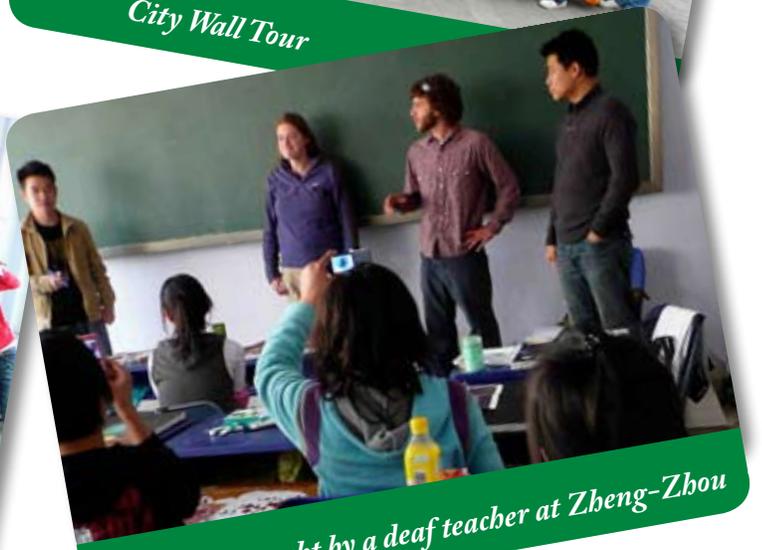
Changchun Crew Fest



City Wall Tour



Visual Image students at Zheng-Zhou University



Art class taught by a deaf teacher at Zheng-Zhou

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SHOUT-OUTS!

Davin "Booya" Searls...Kudos for the Chinese Deaf Culture and CSL crash course. You kicked off our time in China and made the experience so much more beneficial by helping us communicate!

To the Deaf Communities of Beijing, Changchun, Xi'an, Zheng Zhou, and Wuhan...we are in awe of your hospitality and kindness, and hope to return the favor some day if you visit America.

Christine Kretchmer of Up Your Image and Trudy Suggs of T.S. Writing Services...thank you for always keeping on top of things. Sharing our experience with DDW could not be possible without your help!



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Dr. James DeCaro, Christy and Dave

CHINA, continued from front page

This empowerment within and by the deaf community is rubbing off on the powers that be. For instance, Mr. Wang Aiguo, the dean of the special education program at CCU, told us his vision in the next 10 years. He is working to expand the opportunities for deaf students by adding more majors such as video production, fashion, glass blowing, and others. The university has also reached out to organizations such as PEN-International for resources to help them achieve their goals.

Established in 2001 with funding from the Nippon Foundation of Japan, PEN-International works to empower other countries to reach their full poten-

tial. We were fortunate to have lunch with Dr. James DeCaro, the executive director of PEN-International, in Beijing. DeCaro informed us that PEN does not aim to control, or “Americanize” these universities. Rather, they follow the lead of such universities seeking to improve the quality of education for deaf and hard of hearing people. When an affiliate university of PEN reaches out for assistance to learn about interpreter education, documenting their nation’s sign language, or expanding opportunities with various teaching methods, PEN provides such resources.

Mr. Wang recently called on PEN to provide a professional to teach English and American Sign Language at CCU. Although there were no current deaf teachers at this university, the best qualified person for the job was a deaf man, Davin Searls, from Rochester, NY. After we spent a week in ChangChun with Searls, students, and other faculty of CCU, it was quickly evident that Searls has been well received by all. Searls not only fulfills his position as a teacher, but also as a role model, one showing that deaf people can excel beyond professions in the arts.

We have been blessed to meet many leaders throughout China where the communities have hope for the future. They are on their way to continue moving forward.

For more information on ChangChun University, visit www.ccu-edu.cn; PEN-International is at www.ntid.rit.edu.

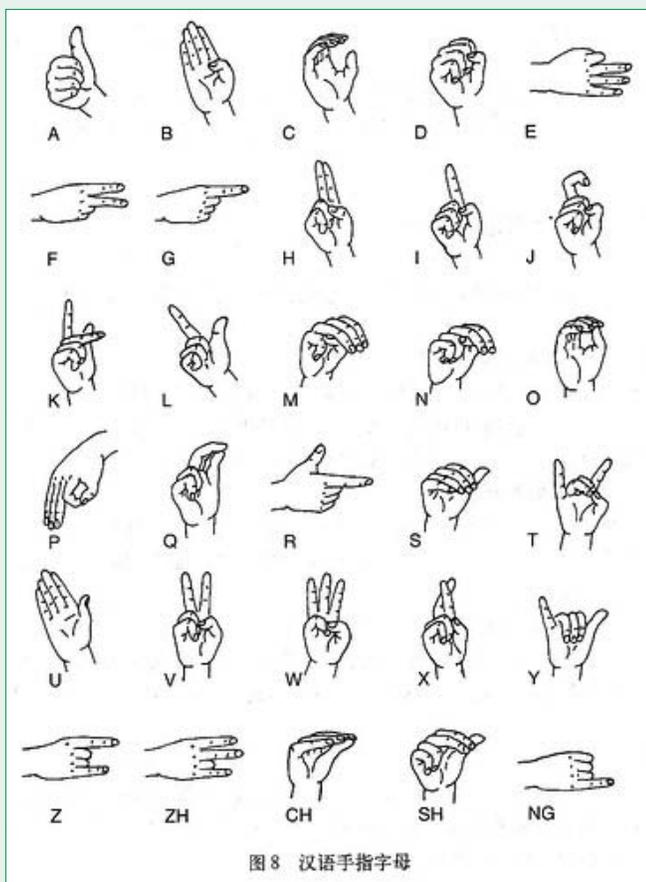
WONDERS OF THE WORLD



Army of Terracotta: 8,000 warrior statues were discovered by local farmers in 1974.



The Great Wall of China is over 2,000 years old and took 100 years to build!



CHINESE SIGN LANGUAGE

In each issue, DDW will print the fingerspelled alphabet of a visited country.

The chart at left shows the fingerspelled alphabet of Chinese Sign Language. Although there are many similarities to the American fingerspelled alphabet, there are also many differences. To learn more about the Chinese Deaf culture and Chinese Sign Language, check <http://shouyu.tejiao.net>. Note that the website is in Chinese, not English.

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