



THE CAROL WOODS NEWS

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TEACHING CHINESE STUDENTS

As I discovered from teaching in China, there are major differences between Chinese and Western students. In the early 1980s, soon after China opened to the West, I taught at Jilin University in Manchuria. Then, some ten years later, I taught at Hong Kong University shortly before Hong Kong was returned to China by Great Britain. In both schools the students were hard working, respectful, and appreciative. After all, at that time only a small percentage of high school graduates went on to college.

The Jilin students were accustomed to the lecture method, so were most reluctant to engage in discussion. Also, they were fearful of losing face if they erred; and they were cognizant of the presence of a Communist Party member in the class. However, they readily came to our apartment as individuals to discuss topics raised in class, even though they knew that government officials took note of everyone who visited me.



Jessie with Chinese government officials

I taught Chinese history since that was my field, even though it was unusual to have a Westerner teach about China to Chinese. (Ray, my husband, gave a course on American history.) I decided to concentrate on a half dozen topics that were being reviewed and revised by Western historians. For

example, there was a recent discovery of early Chinese civilizations in Sichuan and along the Yangtze River. That altered the traditional picture of Chinese civilization as originating from the north along the Yellow River and gradually spreading south. The students who were used to the straight Marxist line found this confusing. Finally, one asked, "But what is the truth?"

In Hong Kong I was supposed to teach a graduate course on Sino-Western relations. To my surprise, I found the students knew almost no modern Chinese history. How could that be? It seems that under the British educational system, students had to take examinations in two of three fields: ancient, medieval, or modern Chinese history. They had all chosen the first two because, they said, these were less complicated and controversial. I had to adjust my lesson plans in a hurry! Even so, the students produced some excellent papers. One went on to obtain his PhD in modern Chinese history.

The Jilin students all enjoyed gabbing among themselves, and they were quite lively and talkative. Performing before a group, however, was something else. At the first meeting of the history club, each student was to stand, give his/her name, and say a word or two about their background. This was a real trial by fire for some, especially freshmen girls. One of them stood, tried and tried to state her name, finally dissolved into tears and fled the room. Happily, by the time they were seniors, they had gained greatly in self-confidence.

In my graduate course in freer Hong Kong, stirring up discussion was easy. Once in talking about nationalism I asked the students, "Do you see yourself as Chinese, as Hong Kongian, or as Hong Kong Chinese?" This stimulated their thinking about identity, and they had a great time discussing the topic. It proved to be a good introduction to the subject of nationalism and national identity.

Jessie Lutz

THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

The year was 1996, the month was June, and something wonderful was about to happen. A Computer Interest Group was being formed at Carol Woods. Just one year later, The Computer Room was born in the room behind the reception desk. Modestly equipped with three donated computers, web-savvy residents and their supporters provisioned the room with paper, printers, ink, and a single Internet connection. At first, the Computer Room was available only two hours a day, two days a week.



Maybe that was enough activity at first, but pressure grew for more computers, more hours, and for

instruction. The latter would bring out even the timid who wanted to get with it, but hadn't the foggiest idea how to begin. Our Carol Woods Board responded with funds for four brand new computers and four Internet connections.

Meeting the demand for instruction came next. **Lois Frost, Bea Dulberg, Lois Harris,** and staff Training Coordinator **Kitty Hancock** conducted a series of classes that helped take the confusion and nervousness out of operating a mystery machine you feared you might break at any moment. (P.S. You can't!). Introductory Learning, Formatting, File Management, and Internet Basics came first. Soon there were advanced skills listed on the curriculum: Spreadsheet Basics, Word Features, and Posters (using Print Shop). All in all, 132 learning opportunities were presented by a dedicated bunch of residents to more than 600 neighbors. As the program expanded, more computers were added: today six machines in all are busy Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 to 5:00. An average of 16 people a day tap, explore, and learn. And when the inevitable frustration comes, when the dratted thing argues with you, there's usually somebody there who can help you solve your problem.

One more example of how Carol Woods residents make things work.

*As written by Lois Frost,
who has just retired from the Computer Room*

Thin Places

Old Szigeti's trembling performance of Brahms'
Violin Concerto

the music burning through

Marche Funèbre from Chopin's B-flat minor
Piano Sonata

Rubinstein releasing its soul

Tosca at the Met to the last row
Carreras

whispering pianissimo in my ear

My heart has been broken

wide open

wide open

Ann Woodward

Haiku

The misty dawn glows
through barely budding branches
young squirrels scramble.

Ann Woodward

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• Gisela Nayar wrote "Growing Up in Germany
• during World War II" on the front page of the
• February *Carol Woods News*. We regret that
• Gisela was not named as the author.
•

THE HANDY MAN

Introducing a wonderful member of the Carol Woods staff: **Todd Herrington**, who makes anything and everything work in his role as maintenance expert of Building One. He is a relentless smiler. He's neat and quiet as he overcomes hundreds of everyday glitches in the lives of 67 to 70 of us who inhabit first, second and third floors. It might be a lock that was installed backwards, a refrigerator that isn't cold any more, plumbing that isn't plumbing, or something so simple as a burned out light bulb—Todd will appear at your door, prompt and smiling, work order in hand.

In his other life, Todd makes his home in Durham. Kate is his wife. He is father to a blossoming 12-year-old, stepfather to a 22-year-old college graduate. As a hobby, he's somewhat addicted to seeking out Victorian antiques and has an attic-full. Kate's job is to keep his collection mania within bounds.

At 49 (and looking about 29), Todd says he learned most of his mechanical skills from his grandfather and, later, from a stint in the '80s working for a local jack-of-all-trades. Here at Carol Woods, the call he most enjoys answering concerns knotty electrical problems.

Todd admits with a smile that he never gets annoyed with us, no matter what challenges we give him. He seems to be as pleased with us as we are with him.

There is rumored to be a money prize for the Building One resident who catches Todd Herrington with a scowl, or a problem he cannot solve.

Jane Berryman

CROSS-COUNTRY BOCCE

Anyone who has traveled to the Health Center via the covered open walkway on a recent morning may have been greeted with howls of delight or groans of despair. You have heard those sounds from the bocce court before, but the court is empty. And then you spot folks out on the lawn: an intrepid group unwilling to give up the sport because winter has rendered the bocce court unplayable.



Eugen Merzbacher, Wayne Benson, and Barry Freeman on the "green."

Undaunted, the group has moved onto the grassy area around the court. One might call it lawn bowling, an English version of the Italian bocce, but that is played on a manicured lawn. This game of bocce is played on the undulating surface of the grass around the walkway, Building 5 and Building 1.

Bocce is often a game of unintended consequences and that aspect of it is doubled with the hazards of pinecones, valleys and ridges, tufts of grass, areas of mulch and



Bill Griswold, Eugen Merzbacher, Ann Merzbacher, and Barry Freeman.

even the covered walkway. The goal of teams seeking to get their bocce balls closest to the *pallino* (a smaller white ball) remains the same, or perhaps we should say, remains as elusive as in the original game. These determined Carol Woods players call their adaptation of the game "cross-country" bocce!

Wayne Benson

COMING EVENTS

Concerts – Wednesday Evenings – 7:30 p.m.

- Mar. 16 – Alan Toda-Ambaras, cello; Misako Toda, piano
- Mar. 23 – Katharina Uhde, violin
- Mar. 30 – Allan Parrent, tenor, Kate Lewis, pianist
- Apr. 6 – Karen Allred, piano
- Apr. 13 – Vincent van Gelder, piano
- Apr. 20 – Nancy Green, cello; Larry Todd, piano

Lectures – Thursday Evenings – 7:30 p.m.

- Mar. 10 – Rebecca Scott, University of Michigan, on Cuba
- Mar. 17 – David Dodson, “Effects of Demographic Changes on US & NC Workplaces”
- Mar. 24 – Barry Popkin, UNC, “The World is Fat”
- Mar. 31 – Larry Wheeler, Director, NC Museum of Art
- Apr. 7 – No program (NC Symphony)
- Apr. 14– Pam Silberman, NC Institute of Medicine, on health care reform
- Apr. 21 – Suzy Barile, “Undaunted Heart: the True Story of a Southern Belle & a Yankee General”

Special Programs – The Assembly Hall

- Tues. Apr. 5 – 4:30 p.m., Act One Act Now student drama
- Mon. Apr. 25 – 7:30 p.m., VocalMotion variety show, SAS singers.
- Sun. May 1 – 1:00 p.m., piano students of Misako Toda

COFFEE!

In the morning nothing hits the spot so well when you are ready to take a break and meet with friendly folks. Six days a week at 10 a.m., dining services staff wheel the beverage cart into the Social Lounge. By 11:45 residents have had the opportunity to consume the contents of two thermal urns (each holds 36 cups) of regular coffee and one of decaf—aaah.



Janet F. Campbell

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