



## Waunakee Rotary Club

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An American can learn a lot about Chinese culture in just a month while he is teaching English there.

Ben Ballweg told the club of his experience as an English teacher at a private school for a month over the summer.

Ben said initially he was uneasy as just a few of the other teachers had a good grasp of English. He found that the students had been taught "a parrot" English, with formal phrases.

Ben created a poster with more informal greetings used in America.

So the students learned phrases like, "Hey!" and "'S'up."

Ben said China has seemed to focus its English language education on British English, but because the school hired him as an American, he chose that dialect.

While the United States does substantial trade with China, Hong Kong is a former British colony, and China also trades heavily with India, which speaks a British dialect.

Learning English is important to Chinese students, as it is on the college entry exam, Ben said. Ben had 40 students ranging in age from 4-16 in each class.

Part of Ben's task was to teach students pronunciation. He found the most difficult sounds for them and developed this sentence to master:

"They thought the decision through."

Students needed to practice pronouncing those "th" sounds, Ben said.

Ben also developed phrases other than the standard, "How are you," and "What's your name," to help students feel more comfortable

speaking. He created a set of questions such as, "How was your weekend?" to encourage them to expand their vocabularies and converse.

Ben learned all of the students' names, but he coined American names like "Becky" and "Rick" for them, as well. He also taught the students songs to increase their vocabulary.

Ben also had some time to travel, including 10 days after the language course and four days prior to it.

He remarked on the difference of the work schedules there. Many people work more than 80 hours a week. Shopkeepers might stay at their stores 24 hours a day, taking breaks to sleep at night.

Ben said the trip was a life-changing experience and he would do it again. He'd like to try teaching and traveling in some other countries, he said.

"Within the month I had there, I was amazed at how much of China I'd come to understand," he said.

#### Other news:

•Bill Erickson said the repairs on the holiday lights are coming along.

•Harriet Statz said the club is interviewing two students who have applied to travel abroad as part of the Rotary Exchange program. Also, the club still needs a home for Bird, the exchange student from Thailand, after Thanksgiving.

Guests: Becky Ohan, guest of Ellen Schaaf; Daren Steuart, guest of Phil Willems; Jim Ableidinger, guest of Mike Ableidinger; Roman Bukolt, guest of Susan Vergeront; Jim Ring, guest of Joyce Maly.

### OFFICERS

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#### Calendar of Events:

- Nov. 5, Euchre tournament at Rex's, 6 p.m.
- Nov. 26, Thanksgiving breakfast
- Dec. 17, Christmas party at Rex's

Visiting Rotarians: Jim Ring, Downtown Madison.

Birthdays: Oct. 29, Lori Derauf; Nov. 4, Jeremiah Gollon.

Anniversaries: Nov. 1, Neil and Lily King; Nov. 4, Susan and Jim Hedrick.

Prayers: Oct. 29, Pat Durden; Nov. 5, Susan Vergeront; Nov. 12, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Oct. 29, Travis Heiser and Sean Wayne classification talks; Nov. 5, Club Assembly.

Greeters: Oct. 29, Allan Dassow and Lori Derauf; Nov. 5, Pat Durden and Fritz Durst; Nov. 12, Rex Endres and Gary Epping.

#### Just for laughs

*After the two lawyers agreed on a matter and proceeded to shake hands, one said, "It's a deal, but just to be on the safe side, let's have our lawyers look at the handshake."*

### Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is [www.rotaryclubone.org](http://www.rotaryclubone.org). Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.