



Trailblazing in Brazil



"When I first heard an exotic dismal ballad from afar sung by a people we later knew as Pantaleiro, I burst into tears because the music was so full of loneliness and nostalgia - the song of a people lost in a strange land," Xiao Linjie said. *Brazil: Poem of Love*, a documentary film and photo exhibition, presents the experiences of Xiao and her husband Zhang Yanjun during their 12 years spent exploring Brazil. The collection is coming to China as part of a culture exchange.

Read more on Pages 12-13



Page 4

Downtown theater tests a new model

This clustered group hopes to create a one-stop location that can save organizers money in the ailing private theater market.



Page 11

Free lunch for kids

A microblog is donating rice to poor rural schools for each new follower. Its charity program has already sent more than 500 kilograms.



Transplant plans slowed by tradition

Page 3

Barbie the latest foreign brand to fail

Page 6

Fair trade shopping improves lives

Page 16

Where to grow and eat organic

Page 17

Local Japanese unite to help shaken families

By *Chu Meng*

Since Japan was devastated by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, Japanese celebrities, local international students and workers have been uniting to help each other reconnect with relatives back home.

Hidetoshi Nakata, the former Japanese National Football Team striker, opened a microblog at Sina Weibo on Wednesday to help Japanese students and employees in China reach out to their families during the telecommunications blackout.

"I am so happy to know that many Chinese people are worried about Japan. Even today there were many media interviews, not about soccer, but about the earthquake in Japan. I want to share this experience with more people around the world and get together to do something for Japan and the world," he wrote.

He said he intended to use his celebrity status to spread information on Japan's situation to people who might not have access to accurate information due to the telecommunications blackout affecting Miyagi and its surrounding prefectures.

Beijing Language and Culture University, which has 500 Japanese students on campus, held a vigil on Monday.

Wu Zhiyong, director of international student admissions, said the school has more Japanese students than any other in the capital. Department and university officers visited students in person in their dorms over the weekend.

"We wanted to find out what they needed to help reconnect them with their families and give them peace of mind. We told them it was not a good time to rush back to Japan, where there is still a threat of nuclear leakage and



Many Japanese students in China organized donation drives at their schools. They had received good wishes from Chinese classmates.

CFP Photo

food shortage. We told them it was best for them to stay here and continue their studies," Wu said.

The student union hung banners in the school cafeteria and dormitory with messages of support for the Japanese students. A charity activity organized by the Japanese students themselves drew students of many nationalities and university administrators to lend a hand.

Similar activities were organized at Peking University and Tsinghua University.

Sony (China) Corporation announced on its website that since last Friday it had received warm regards and good wishes

from many in China, but that six of its major parts suppliers had been shut down following the quake.

"When we will resume production remains unknown. It will be a long time before we can make a complete recovery. We regret that this may affect the sale of Sony products in China in the near future," it said Wednesday.

Two days after the Yingjing earthquake in Yunnan Province, Sony China sent a batch of digital camera and video equipment. It also sent a technical crew to help local TV stations and security bureaus to repair their machines on March 13.

ANA Group (China), one of the biggest carriers of China-Japan flights, has implemented a series of rescue efforts on Monday. It began transporting relief supplies at no charge on all China-Japan routes operated by the ANA Group. Technical and medical workers heading to Japan to assist in the relief effort can fly free of charge. The program will continue through April 15.

It also introduced a Mileage Donation for all ANA Mileage Club members in China. Members can donate miles in 1,000-mile increments as relief funds for the victims of the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake.

WHO flu center opens in China

By *Han Manman*

China will host the world's 5th World Health Organization (WHO) flu center, following similar initiatives in Australia, Japan, the UK and the US.

The Chinese National Influenza Center, a technical unit under the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, has been designated to cooperate with the WHO in monitoring, researching and responding to outbreaks of influenza.

"[China is] the first developing country to be recognized in this way," said Dr. Shin Young-soo, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific region, speaking at a ceremony in Beijing on Monday.

"This designation reflects the country's exceptional contributions to the global fight against influenza," he said.

The center is responsible for training to medical personnel from other countries and regions and for issuing timely information on flu outbreaks, said Shu Yuelong, director of the center.

"The work promises to be good not only for the world but China in particular. The country will benefit a lot from this designation," Shu said.

"Unlike before, we can now get firsthand information from other centers collaborating on global influenza surveillance and study, and this will help us shape our own responses to the disease," he said. "This will also help the domestic flu vaccine industry to enter the global market."

The centers issue recommendations twice a year about which vaccines should be used in which seasons. They also warn the public if an influenza strain with the potential to become a pandemic is detected.

The centers will cooperate with the Chinese State Food and Drug Administration to draft standards that will control which seed virus strains are provided to other countries planning to manufacture flu vaccines, Shu said.

In recent years, the government has been strengthening and investing heavily in the prevention and control of influenza. The country has 411 laboratories and 556 hospitals engaged in monitoring the flu virus.

City pledges not to force out migrant labor

By *Zhao Hongyi*

The municipal government has no plans to force migrant workers out of the capital, according to a statement issued by the deputy director of the Municipal Commission of Development and Reform.

Zhao Lei, the deputy director, made the statement in response to questions about the city's plans to improve its management of residents and available services.

Media reports have long speculated that the new Five-Year Plan includes a program that

would tighten population controls and force out the more than 5 million migrants living and working in the capital.

The move would have been in contrast to that of Chongqing municipality, which recently abolished its residency restrictions on city-rural migration.

"When we talk about management and services, this is purely about improving infrastructure for the existing population," Zhao said.

Rural-urban migration has grown with the economy, as migrants are drawn to the high-

paying jobs and better public services associated with urban life.

Beijing alone has received roughly half a million new migrants each year during the past decade, including many university graduates who simply refuse to return to their hometowns.

Migrant labor has played an important role in the city's development, as many rural migrants accept low-paying and difficult work. But their rapid arrival has strained an already bursting city, contributing to traffic jams, pollution and water shortages.

Zhao said the city is not pre-

pared to follow Chongqing in relaxing its migration restrictions.

He also denied the terms "low-end labor" and "low-end industries," saying the development of Beijing needs diversified labor and expertise.

Speaking about low-end labor, Zhao said the city would be abandoning its support for dying industries, "but that does not mean we will be driving migrating labor out of the Chinese capital."

The official goal is to redistribute Beijing's population to satellite towns by relocating industries and improving the

city's layout.

Capital Iron & Steel Corporation, for example, was relocated to Taofeidian, an island on the Bohai Sea downstream from Beijing and Tianjin. The vast, empty plant in the west of the city is now being redesigned as a culture park for creative industries.

The Five-Year Plan includes comprehensive development guidelines, 18 initiatives and 64 specific initiatives for many aspects of social life, Zhao said.

The government plans to make the full plan public before the end of April.

Organ donor pilot a failure after one year

By Han Mamman

Each year, more than 1.5 million people in the country require an organ transplant: 10,000 receive one.

Hoping to find a solution to the extreme shortage, the Red Cross rolled out a pilot education and enrollment program in 11 provinces and municipalities last year hoping to teach people how they could save lives after their own death.

It failed. In Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province, not one person has elected to be a donor. Experts warn that the need for organs is increasing while the supply has remained static. With the country set to fall short by 1.49 million organs again this year, many are asking why people are so unwilling to give.

Miserable results

"We received several calls from people curious about the program, but not one agreed to become a donor," said Liu Wenhua, a member of the Red Cross of Nanjing.

The capital city of Nanjing was one of 11 regions selected for the 2010 pilot program that began last March. The program, under the supervision of The Red Cross Society of China, was intended to create a network that would oversee donations, stamp out illegal organ trade and ensure that organs reached those patients most in need.

The Red Cross had hoped to collect data on which to base a future nationwide program with the aid of the central government.

During this trial period, the Red Cross encouraged people to become voluntary posthumous organ donors. This list would be used to connect patients with people who could provide livers, kidneys, hearts, skin and corneas.

Liu said he was one of 12 "donation counselors" sent by the city government to five hospitals. Their job was to educate people about the benefits of organ donation and to put donors in contact with patients' families.

"But I never managed to persuade even one person," Liu said, noting that only three people in Nanjing have donated organs in the past 20 years.

Success was equally absent in other regions. As of last Thursday, only 37 people nationwide had registered to donate their organs.

China performs the second most organ transplants in the world, trailing only the US – but demand far exceeds supply.

According to data from the Ministry of Health, one in every 150 patients in need receives a lifesaving organ transplant: in the US, that ratio is one in every five.

The huge shortage of donor organs has created a significant black market despite a national ban on organ trafficking.

Obstacles

Like so many other problems, the nation's shortage of donors is based on "traditional thinking." Few are willing to embrace what seems to be a new concept, Liu said.

"Many Chinese people believe that the body must be complete when it is cremated," Liu said.

Weak legislation makes the issue even thornier. Under the current regulations, family members of the deceased can override their commitment to organ dona-



Despite more than a million people being in need of an organ transplant, few in China are willing to donate after death.

CFP Photo

tion, he said.

Liu said one woman who had agreed to donate her organs after death had her body reclaimed by her parents and taken back to their hometown for cremation.

Furthermore, hospitals are given no right to use a dead person's organs even if he or she has no family. Liu said one migrant worker who died of a sudden cerebral hemorrhage in a local hospital had organs that could have been immediately transplanted, but because his family could not be located they had to give up the procedure.

Even when consent is given it is possible for the procedure to go awry. Donors who turn out to have a health condition such as hepatitis B become unqualified, Liu said.

And even when everything else works out, few hospitals are equipped to retrieve, store and transplant organs as key ones like the liver must be taken within 5

minutes of the heart stopping or they become useless.

"When a donor dies, a special medical team must work quickly to remove and preserve his organs before they are lost. Only five hospitals in Nanjing have this capability," Liu said.

He said organs like the heart, liver and kidneys should be collected after brain death, but lawmakers and the courts have yet to shape a legal definition of the concept. Doctors who harvest organs from dead patients who are being kept alive through artificial respiration could open themselves to civil or criminal legal action.

Paid organ donors

New laws under consideration could allow organ donors to receive financial aid for their medical bills and children's schooling, as well as preferential policies for health insurance and taxation, said Huang Jiefu, the vice-minister of health, at last week's political assembly.

It was the first time the government announced plans to compensate donors.

"It seems that many other countries support this kind of approach," Huang said. "The donation is voluntary, free and public."

Huang said the subsidies would be provided by a government-recognized third party, and that relevant facilities are being constructed.

The ministry is planning to extend the one-year national pilot for another six months. It could go nationwide in two years.

"When the system goes nationwide – given the rising spirit of volunteerism – more people will donate organs to help save those who would die without transplants," Huang said.

He said willing organ donors who die due to traffic accidents or strokes will be the best candidates.

Good examples

While no country in the world



The Red Cross of Xiamen arranges a memorial service for locals to remember organ donors who died during the last year. IC Photo

has enough donors, many have had great success in narrowing the gap between supply and demand.

Spain has the most organ donations each year with 34.4 donors per million citizens, thanks to donations from family members of elderly people who have died, according to the 2010 edition of the EU's newsletter *Transplant* published late September.

The Spanish government began developing its national network of transplant coordinators in 1989. All work in hospitals and monitor emergency wards for potential donors. When they learn of a death, they try to persuade relatives to allow the person's organs to be harvested. Only 15 percent of families refuse.

The country is also the best example of an "opt-out" organ donation system, known as "presumed consent."

Under such policies, citizens are considered organ donors upon their death unless they have explicitly stated otherwise. The purpose of the system is to expand the pool of organ donors, and to help change social norms about the appropriateness of organ donation.

The US has a donor rate of 26.3 donors per million citizens. The rate is 14.7 per million in the UK and 12.1 per million in Australia.

In the US, people are usually asked to donate when they apply for a driver's license – the assumption being that their organs may be donated if they are killed in a car accident. The system allows a doctor to remove the dead donor's organ without family consent.

In China, this question would be considered offensive.

Many countries are experimenting with other measures to increase willingness to donate organs. Israel became the first country in the world last year to give organ donors priority treatment if they require a transplant themselves. Officials hope the incentive will increase the supply of available organs.

Some countries have proposed legalizing the sale of some organs for money, as is the case in Iran. But such policies are controversial and not allowed in China for fear of "crowding out" altruistic motives.

"With such an immense population base, China should be capable of having a great source for transplants," said Gu Dening, a Jiangsu media commentator.

"Far more needs to be done to foster education, understanding and social acceptance of the practice," Gu said, calling for an end to "traditional concepts."

Theater village still struggling at first birthday

By Chu Meng

The capital has a total of 20 private theaters, but only Star Theater Village combines its performance space with an art library, gallery, rehearsal hall, restaurant and bar.

Its clustered arrangement — a kind of 798 Art Zone in miniature — is intended to create a one-stop location that would save organizers money in the country's ailing private theater market.

But after one year in operation, Star Theater is still struggling to survive in the financially battered private theater industry.

Star Theater Village is located in a traditional courtyard directly across from the landmark Xinhua News Agency office. From the outside it looks similar to any courtyard, with aging gray brick walls, red doors and lanterns.

But the interior is another story. The mini-venues follow cutting edge fashion, but blend it with traditional Beijing architectural elements like decorative tiles and red frames.

The site is a deliberate effort to attract more Beijingers to explore community theater.

Fighting for eyes

The theater began selling tickets last March, and since then it has expanded to five theater halls that can seat 80 to 200 viewers. Other wings of the building house a library, restaurant, gallery, rehearsal hall, restaurant and bar.

Fan Xing, 40, founder of Star Theater Village, intends to turn Star Theater into a theater of hosting many kinds of art, including drama, dance and drama-related photography and painting exhibitions.

"We are trying to build a village where actors, directors, producers, drama fans and academic professionals can share and interact," Fan said.

A sign of this openness, Fan's office is attached to the floor on top of an aged bungalow. His balcony offers a night view of the lights of Xidan's commercial area.

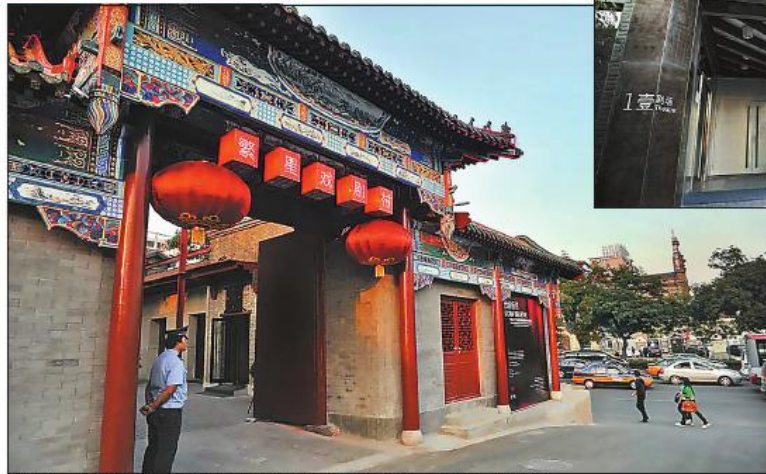
But Star Theater is not the first group to attempt this — not even in Xidan. Star Theater sits atop what was Beijing's cultural center only two decades ago; a moment in history wiped out by modernization.

Unlike the numerous private theaters that dot the far-flung micro-villages of the city's east side, Fan wants to create something that is convenient to access and located in a high-traffic area.

That idea sounds good, but running a private theater is tougher work than he ever imagined, Fan said. When he first invested, he expected to break even after one year and earn a profit after two. "That seems impossible now. One year is up, but we haven't broken even," he said.

Despite the rough start, Fan said he remains optimistic about the market.

Less than 1 percent of the capital's 20 million residents regularly attend theater performances. Fan



Star Theater Village, the first clustered theater, is located South of Xidan.



Star Theater Gallery
Photos provided by Mi La



The theater's restaurant has a drama theme.



Sculptures decorate the traditional courtyard.



The theater helps produce many shows. In 2010, it staged more than 700 shows in total.

hopes to siphon viewers away from the booming film market. "People who go to the cinema instead of watching a DVD at home might be convinced to come and see a theater performance," he said.

Besides hoping to provide more choice for the city's theater lovers, Star Theater Village has another role: try to provide Chinese young

drama producers, directors and actors a free environment to conduct their artistic dreams.

It acts as a talent scout and promoter of promising directors. It assists directors in creating low-budget, experimental plays and finding a venue for their performance. It also helps bring experimental plays to Beijing.

Fan calls such independent theaters "an experiment," helping to find private and small sized theaters a way to get out of operation difficulties.

That idea prompted Star Theater Village to create what they call a "theater and production combined" business mode. Unlike State-owned theaters, small theaters in Beijing do not have their own production teams — they only provide a venue.

However, Star Theater Village has 16 signed actors and a production team including young directors and script writers. Last year it staged more than 700 shows, most of which were produced by the theater itself.

Life-changing decision

In the late 1990s, Fan abandoned his international delivery business in Shandong Province to invest in Beijing television dramas with his friends.

Fan said drama made better use of his educational background in Chinese literature — as well as his family's passion for the arts. "If it was not for family interference, my father would have ended up as a drama student at the Chinese Central Academy of Drama," he said.

During that decade, he and his friends invested in eight television dramas, one of which was a hit on China Central Television.

But Fan said his most significant achievement was taking over an art school in 1998. It was managing that school that encouraged him to make his theater village dream a reality.

Since 2009, private theaters have been making great strides. Tickets for plays by famous directors like Meng Jinghui sell out on Valentine's Day and Christmas.

Honeycomb Theater, run by Meng himself, reports 70 percent of its seats are filled on average. However, the industry is still dominated by state-owned theaters with more resources, better actors and less financial pressure.

"Most private theaters hardly can break even. They are unable to spend much money in production

and promotion, and that's why we create plays for smaller venues," Fan said.

Freedom for creative minds

In Beijing, only 20 percent of art school graduates can continue their studies at an art college. Of these, fewer than 20 percent will land a career in acting.

Beijing has a limited number of theaters, and many people end up drifting among different troupes playing very small roles.

"My first aim is to provide these young actors and directors with more opportunities, even if that doesn't translate into more success," he said.

Fan elects to back scripts that use innovative subject matter, audience interaction and a significant message.

"But I refuse anything too sexy, violent or depressing. I like to see enlightening moments come in a warm way, especially from young minds," he said.

His approach seems to be paying off. At the beginning, Star Theater rarely filled more than 10 percent of its seats; today it peaks at 70 percent capacity.

But 70 percent means operating at a loss, and Fan is looking for more viewers. He is considering cooperating with other directors.

"In this industry, we all have to work together to improve," he said.

The fundamental solution is to attract more people to enjoy theater and other artistic performances, especially private ones.

"People used to think those who went to watch plays were young, educated and artistic. However, it is my hope that people of all ages and social backgrounds will come to see our performances," he said.

It is possible to stage three plays on one stage in a month. For example, *Rashomon*, a serious Chinese adoption of Akira Kurosawa's 1950 film about the weakness of human nature, *Tar Factory*, an acidic comedy about the film industry, and *Once Upon A Time*, a warm portrayal of childhood in the 1980s.

Fan hopes middle-aged couples, those from the urban elite, business people, the elderly and children, can find plays to suit their tastes at his theater.

"We have not chosen a very avant-garde style like some other small theaters in town," Fan said.

Housewives reemerge

Chinese women opting out of the workforce

For many years, staying at home without a formal job was viewed as shameful for women in China; but now a shift in outlook is seeing many urban women publicly expressing a desire to quit the workforce.



More Chinese women are ditching work schedules for aprons and play dates.

Chen Xiaogeng/IC Photo

Women might hold up half of China's sky, but more and more are ditching work schedules for aprons and play dates. A recent survey by Tencent and Changjiang Daily found that more than 40 percent out of 20,000 female respondents said they wanted to be housewives, while 38 percent indicated that they wanted to be professionals.

Although there are currently few academic studies on this latest social phenomenon, related research by CNN in Shanghai offers a small lens into the trend.

"I feel increasing pressure to balance work and family since being promoted last year," says Vivian Zhang, a 37-year-old woman with a Shanghai-based securities firm. "Many of my friends share the same feeling."

"Every single time we hear of someone becoming a housewife and escaping from the stressful but meaningless working environment in Shanghai, we're envious.

We all think she is very lucky."

"Generally, women's ambitions for their careers are reduced by marriage; for men, it's exactly the opposite," explains labor and human resources Professor Pan Jintang from Renmin University.

All about kids

"But well-educated women stopping their careers after marriage is a new phenomenon," Pan says, adding it's for their children's benefit that they quit the workforce.

"Many professionals, like me, feel that it's not worth sacrificing their careers for their husbands, but for kids it is more than worth it," says Shanghai-based young professional Carrie Yang, who has a Master's degree from a Swiss university and is now a stay-at-home mom.

In recent years, more Chinese mothers have chosen to stay at home for a year or more to look after their newborns. Their decision to do so is supported

by Chinese maternity laws, but many end up never returning to the office.

This is in stark contrast to previous generations when young mothers simply let grandparents step in to look after their kids as they quickly headed back to work.

A recent survey by online portal ifeng.com, which included 8,000 women from across China, revealed that 43 percent of respondents were willing to quit their jobs to look after their kids themselves.

"When I was born, my parents sent me to my grandparents' home until I was 6 years old, and being away from my parents during that time in my life, I feel, had a negative impact on my personality. I don't want my daughter to have the same experience," Yang says.

Better education

Sanny Luo, who quit her job when her child entered primary school, says her choice to stay

at home was made to ensure a better education for her child.

"Chinese schools put at least 40 students in one class, making it difficult for the teacher to give a child the necessary attention he or she needs to succeed and develop. So, I need to spend more time with my son to explore his own strengths after his school hours," says Luo of her decision to quit mid-career.

Although young mothers leave the workforce for a variety of reasons, there is usually a common thread: outside influence.

"Young parents in large Chinese cities are more or less influenced by Western child-education books, and thus many of them care for both a kid's mental health and academic performance," says Zhao Yuanhong, a children's education counselor.

"They think that they need more time with their kid, which causes some new parents to quit their jobs, especially women."

(Agencies)

Farmers go online to sell produce

For years, Wang Yulan and her husband drove their three-wheeled vehicle to an outdoor market near Beijing to sell broccoli, peppers, eggplants and tomatoes grown on their small plot of land.

Now, thanks to the Web, they don't even have to leave their living room.

Two years ago the couple bought a computer and joined a growing number of Chinese farmers selling their produce online, giving them access to customers around the country and boosting their meager income.

"A broad market is opened once you get on the computer," Wang, 55, told AFP as she logged on to agricultural trading website aptc.cn with the help of her niece.

"The Internet is convenient. The customers first place an order, we prepare the items, and they then send a van to pick them up."

Since Wang and her husband Liu Shujin, 66, started trading their vegetables online, the couple's income has more than doubled to between 20,000 and 30,000 yuan a year and life has become easier.

"We've stopped going out to sell vegetables and just stay at home," said Wang, who has suffered from a debilitating knee problem for 30 years.

The plight of China's millions of farmers, whose incomes are well below those of urban residents, has been high on the agenda of the country's annual session of parliament, which ended Monday.

Average rural incomes reached 5,919 yuan a year in 2010 compared with urban incomes of nearly 20,000 yuan, according to official statistics.

"We will focus on increasing the basic incomes of low-income people in both urban and rural areas," Premier Wen Jiabao said on March 5 in his speech to open the parliamentary session.

In 2006, China Mobile launched Nongxintong, or Farmers' Information Service, which provides timely market prices, weather forecasts and government policy via mobile text messages, a phone hotline and the Web.

The service also allows farmers, like Yang He in the eastern province of Anhui, to advertise their products online.

"It is cheap - it only costs a few yuan a month," Yang, who grows flowers, told AFP.

As farmers struggle to make ends meet, Internet and mobile phone technology can help them reach markets where their goods are in high demand, analysts say.

(Agencies)

The third eye

Housewives or career women?

By Huang Daohen

Housewives or career women - which pattern will become the norm? Yang Lijun, researcher with Beijing Normal University, said career women have a better future, though currently more are willing to quit their jobs.

But no matter the outcome, the status of women in China has greatly improved, said Yang, who teaches a course on marriage and family and has carried out research on the country's housewives and career women.

Compared to in the past, Yang

said women now not only control family finances and make family decisions, but also have equal status at the workplace.

Before the 1990s, the workplace looked much different, as men dominated.

At that time, most college students were male. Women were expected to dedicate themselves to their families.

That doesn't mean they didn't work, however. Fortunately, the work was not onerous. Yang, 37, said he still remembers that when he was a kid, his mother never

worked overtime and had much spare time during office hours to dote on him.

"I don't think she needed to quit to take care of me at that time," he said.

Women were both housewives and career women during that period, Yang said.

However, the market economy in 1990s changed everything, giving young women more opportunities to pursue career advancement.

It also led to fierce competition, Yang said. He quoted a recent survey that said 70 percent of young

women prefer a less demanding job at a lower salary.

Yang said that is because more young and educated women are becoming aware of the dilemma between family and career. "They are starting to balance the obligations," he said.

That also explains why more women are choosing to become stay-at-home moms.

But Yang believes the future is still for career women as the country's demographics shift in the coming years, and women workers become more in demand.

Failing in China

From Barbie to Best Buy, foreign retailers fold

By Huang Daohen

No one would doubt that China is the future, the place to make a fortune. The economy boom here is real: the country has seen a double-digit annual growth for the past decade and better-off Chinese people are more willing to buy under the government's priority efforts to boost domestic consumption.

But consumers' passion, somehow, didn't translate to sales for multinationals. The past two months have seen continuous closures of foreign firms in China: from US retailing giants Home Depot and Best Buy to France-based building material distributor La Maison to US doll maker Barbie. What lessons can those who follow Barbie's footsteps learn?



La Maison is the latest business casualty since the sudden demise of both Best Buy and Barbie.

Liao Yifan/IC Photo

Barbie says bye bye

Contrary to the claims of Richard Dickson, general manager of Barbie Worldwide, Barbie may be facing a mid-life crisis.

"Barbie is popular everywhere, and mothers here [in Shanghai] are so passionate about her," he said two years ago at the unveiling of the brand's flagship store in Shanghai.

The store's grand opening was designed to coincide with the doll's 50th birthday; today it stands shuttered.

The six-story store, located on downtown Shanghai's bustling Huaihai Road, had the world's biggest collection of Barbie products and doll clothes. It also had a spa, cafe and beauty salon where children could be made up like the doll.

The sudden closure on March 7 taught Barbie's parent company Mattel a hard lesson: life doesn't begin at 50 in China — especially when you're an exotic import.

A statement from Mattel put a positive spin on the news, saying that the store had accomplished its mission to promote and build Barbie's brand in China. "The company will take the experience in Shanghai to develop the brand across the country," it said.

Linda Du, Barbie Shanghai's media officer, said the closure does not mean Barbie is leaving the

"Chinese people like things big. Bigger, to some extent, equals better. People won't buy from a brand if it only has a tiny store."

China market. Though the flagship store closed, other Barbie retail outlets remained open, she said.

Du said the company has a new development strategy in China and will expand its business to more inner-land cities. She refused to say how this expansion would take place.

As of press time, Barbie Shanghai's website, barbieshanghai.com, is closed for maintenance. It only lists the locations of 34 other sales outlets in Shanghai.

The sudden closure worried many customers. Sindy Chen, a local Barbie fan, said she had visited the store the day before it closed and everything seemed normal. "I still wanted to buy more clothes for my doll," she said.

Butterfly effect

The American doll maker's troubles follow the closures of several other foreign chains.

Last month, electronics

retailer Best Buy closed all of its nine stores in China after struggling to attract local customers.

One month earlier, home decoration chain Home Depot closed its last store in Beijing.

La Maison, a France-based building material distributor, was the latest casualty. The company announced last week the closure of its nine stores in Shanghai and said it is leaving the mainland market.

In a statement, the company said it suffered serious losses since it entered China in 2005 and can no longer continue its operations here.

The rapid exits have stunned local customers. A recent survey by a local polling center found that Chinese consumers' confidence in foreign brands is failing.

More than half of those polled said their confidence in foreign brands has decreased during the past year. As many as 85 percent

said the services and quality of the brands were far out of step with their reputations.

Catering to local market

The closures have not been a surprise to those following and studying foreign firms' China ventures. Erin Su, an analyst with the local consulting firm iResearch, said the failures are due to stores not adjusting to the local market.

"None of the firms — including Home Depot, Best Buy and Barbie — learned to adapt their business models to local consumers' shopping habits," Su said.

Su blamed Barbie's collapse on Mattel's failure to offer the right clothing. While Chinese women tend to like cute designs like Hello Kitty, clothes sold at the Shanghai store seemed designed to make Barbie look like a sexpot.

Best Buy and Home Depot ignored the price factor in a price-sensitive market, she said.

But Su said the recent closures wouldn't stop more foreign companies from entering. Late last month, Media Markt, the German electronics retailer, announced plans to expand into China.

The company opened another flagship store recently and said more will come next year.

Analyst

Why do foreign businesses fail in China?

Foreign economic observers say the worsening business environment is to blame for the increasing failure of foreign firms in China. Many complain that government policies require overseas companies to transfer advanced technology to their Chinese partners.

But Zhao Xiao, economics professor from University of Science and Technology Beijing, disagreed. It is not China's fault when foreign companies fail, he said, citing successful brands like Apple, Nike and BMW.

But Zhao said that aside from taking locals' taste into account, there are more lessons to be learned in these failures.

First, it is important to localize advertising. Zhao said many companies failed to adjust their advertising strategies while abroad, and introduced plans unfamiliar to local consumers.

Some clothing companies that entered China used foreign-looking models in their ad campaigns. While attractive, the models were alien to domestic shoppers, Zhao said. "Chinese consumers won't buy a brand if it only looks nice on foreign models."

Different sizes weren't the only concerns, Zhao said: lifestyle also matters. "Sailing and spending weekends in Hawaii aren't the dreams of most Chinese people," he said.

Zhao said another lesson was that foreign brands did not make things bigger in China. "Chinese people like things big. Bigger, to some extent, equals better. People won't buy from a brand if it only has a tiny store that doesn't stock the latest season's products," he said.

Luxury jewelry retailer Tiffany learned this early on. The company failed to win the attention of Chinese consumers at its small outlets. Louis Vuitton and Prada succeeded with their spacious, multi-level flagship stores and extensive advertising.

"You have to take into account the local culture and preferences while doing business here. Unfortunately, many brands are still too dumb to realize this," Zhao said.

Contracted charity hands out tough love



Cao Dewang
Yi Cheng/IC Photo

By Zhang Dongya

At a celebration for a huge donation last Wednesday, representative farmers from five western provinces expressed appreciation to Chinese entrepreneur and philanthropist Cao Dewang, who recently donated 200 million yuan to nearly 100,000 farmers.

The donation attracted widespread attention because Cao set a series of strict conditions to ensure his money is sent to the right places.

Last year, Cao, the president of Fuyao Group, a Fuzhou-based

company engaged in the production and marketing of glass, donated 200 million yuan to the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA). It was the largest single private donation in history.

Cao's conditions: The CFPA had to distribute the money to nearly 100,000 farmers in five provinces within six months, the error probability should not exceed 1 percent and the administrative fee for CFPA would be limited to 3 percent of the total donation amount.

The CFPA said it was difficult

to meet his requirements. According to the Measures for Management of Foundation, the highest administration fee for such donations could reach 10 percent of the donated amount.

Cao insisted, though.

The two sides finally reached an agreement, and the CFPA carried out the donations according to Cao's demands.

With only 6 million yuan in administrative funds, the CFPA recruited 500 college volunteers to cut down the cost.

According to an assessment report, a total of 92,150 farm-

ers have received 2,000 yuan donations from Cao so far. The error probability – a calculation of the number of handouts that have gone awry – is currently 0.85 percent.

In recent years, more entrepreneurs have been giving to charity. Chen Guangbiao has been dubbed the "philanthropist laureate" because of his grand donations: more than 1.1 billion yuan in the past decade, benefitting more than 500,000 people.

He conducts 70 percent of the donations himself, the rest is done through charitable organizations.

Comment

There's a reason for Cao's demands

Charities are still underdeveloped in the country. Some traditional charitable organizations have thick official backgrounds: their leaders are retired officials and their operation is more or less controlled by governmental departments.

Donations to them are inefficient and often end up lining someone's pockets. It has badly eroded public trust, making many potential donors hesitant.

All the above are important reasons why Cao Dewang insists on setting conditions for his donations. The reason why I applaud for Cao's demands is because he doesn't care about offending these organizations: he just wants the money to go to the right place.

– Shimian Kanchai, media commentator

Administrative fees need to be cut down

The foundation said a 3 percent administrative fee was too low, yet it made it work in the end. I am puzzled because the Poverty Alleviation Foundation is affiliated with the Office of Poverty Alleviation. The latter has spent so many years conducting poverty alleviation that the local government should know very clearly who needs aid. In consideration of this point, there is space to cut down the administrative fee.

– Shu Qian, commentator at Xi'an Evening Post

Charity should be transparent

People have the right to know where their money is going. The accountability of the system needs to be strengthened.

– Alex, netizen

Are you dating someone?

By Huang Daohen

Are you seeing someone now?

More saliently: is it anyone else's business?

Students at Fuzhou University in Fujian Province might say no – but that's because officials are proactively prying into their social lives.

A school campaign, which students call "real-name relationship registration," has resulted in questionnaires that students much fill out with such questions as: Who is your partner? Which class is he or she from? Do the two of you quarrel?

Students see the move as ridiculous and an invasion of their privacy. They posted the questionnaire on the school's online forum, from which it spread to many other Web forums.

The school denied the ques-

tionnaire was mandatory. It was created by the student union to learn more about campus relationships, it claimed.

The questionnaire is the result of a March 3 incident in which a sophomore hanged herself in her dorm after breaking up with her boyfriend.

"We were shocked by how a young life was lost and how vulnerable college students can be," Ge Haixia, the school's spokesman, was quoted by local media as saying.

Ge said the questionnaire was a way for officials to learn more about campus relationships.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that more than 20 percent of college students, mostly girls, suffer psychological problems – sometimes the result of relationship troubles and a failure to communicate.



An invasive Fuzhou University questionnaire posted on an online forum. Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Comment

Think of other methods

The school should have chosen other methods to conduct the investigation, such as listing several specific problems that college students may encounter in daily life and then providing possible solutions. This wouldn't have intruded on privacy and would have led to a better response.

– Tom Lee, IT engineer

Make treatment available

There is currently little to no psychological support for students, who can't find any qualified professionals to seek for help. They have to know they have options in the form of medical professionals. Schools aside, the government also should not pass the buck here.

– Rocky Anderson, US, commercial consultant

Adapt to pressure

Because one student committed suicide doesn't mean all college students have mental problems. We live in a fast-paced society where everyone has to adapt. It's normal that we'll sometimes feel lonely and need someone to talk with, but we have to adapt to this, too. Only the fittest will survive.

– Sun Huijun, school teacher

Easily learning Chinese through its origins



Richard Sears

By He Jianwei

Richard Sears is not a linguist, but his website is a linguist's treasure trove: he traces different forms of Chinese characters and the evolution of their meanings.

After local newspapers profiled him in January, his website began receiving tens of thousands of hits every day, and he has received more than 1,000 emails in less than two months, Sears said.

Many Chinese readers thought it was a shame that it took an American non-linguist to create such a site about Chinese etymology, but they admired Sears for sharing his research for free.

Sears' interest in Chinese characters began when he studied at the Taiwan Science and Technology Institution in 1972 when he was 22. He hoped to become fluent and literate in Chinese, but he found it difficult to remember the written form of each Chinese character. He found it exceedingly hard to memorize about 5,000 characters and 60,000 character combinations.

"The characters were complex, with many strokes and almost no apparent logic," he said.

In the evolution of the Chinese language, many characters have lost their original forms. Sears used the example of shi - stone. The original character, as carved on animal and oracle bones, had a triangle inside the character, symbolizing people who lived in jungles and used stones as sharpening tools.

"On rare occasions when I found the stroke-by-stroke evolution of a character, suddenly it became apparent how the strokes

The screenshot shows the evolution of the character '石' (stone) through four stages: Seal script (S00814), LST Seal (L33536-L33537), Bronze (B01145-B01151), and Oracle (J01546-J01566). Each stage shows the character's form and its corresponding code.

Richard Sears and his Chinese Etymology website Photos provided by Richard Sears

came to be the way they are," Sears said. In his research, Sears scoured source materials in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland.

"I didn't find any book in English that adequately explained this etymology, and no single book in Chinese explained it all, either," he said. Although Xu Shen wrote *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters), the first book analyzing the structure of the characters in East Han

Dynasty (25-220), "it only dealt with the seal characters starting from Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) and did not include the forms in the Zhou (1046-256 BC) and Shang (1600-1046 BC) dynasties - the inscriptions on bronze and characters carved on oracles," Sears said. "The ancient Chinese forms can explain the modern ones."

In the 1990s, Sears began making a website about Chinese etymology. He compiled a database of archaic Chinese characters, using sources such as oracle bones, bronze work, seals and sources from *Shuowen Jiezi*, and analyzed the 6,552 most common modern Chinese characters.

As the Internet became more widely used, many netizens began sending him messages.

"About half of them were non-Chinese people who used it to learn Chinese. The rest were Chinese people who said they understood their own characters better through my website," Sears said.

Sears believes an etymology database is more beneficial than a written book, and he has no intention of publishing his database in hardcopy.

"You can do all kinds of analyses on computers that you can't due to the linear nature of books," he said. "And this is an ongoing research project. We do not know all the answers when it comes to character etymology. If errors or discrepancies are discovered on a computer system, they can be corrected. They cannot be corrected in a book that has already been published."

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Leadership a major challenge for multinational employers

By He Jianwei

About 60 percent of companies see leadership and management effectiveness as a major challenge to their work in China, according to a recent study conducted by the German Chamber of Commerce in China (AHK) in collaboration with Watson Wyatt.

The report's findings were announced Tuesday at the German Chamber Leadership Conference.

When the impact of the global economic downturn takes hold, the report says, foreign employers in China will wonder how they can adjust their human

resource programs to ensure that they stay on-course and move their business and their people forward.

"The situation we face in the next several years is similar with what we experienced in Germany 30 or 40 years ago," said Katrin Braun, managing director of Machwirth Team International (MTI), an agency that helps clients improve their skills and processes as well as build effective teams.

"After World War II, Germany's economy developed fast, but in the 1960s and 1970s the growth slowed down and employ-

ees gained more power. We've seen China developing fast in the past 30 years, but it's slowing down now."

The leadership challenge has been understood by all business units, including HR, logistics, research, marketing, sales and accounting departments. Spurred by recent salary level jumps, the increasing importance of China operations and relative youth of local management personnel, companies feel an urgent need to develop the global standard in its China leaders.

As the economic situation still hangs in the balance, human

resources remains by far the most serious challenge for doing business in China, according to the study's findings.

Multinational companies in China believe that the current development is not going to reverse the long-term imbalance between the supply and demand for talented individuals in the Chinese growth market.

"Rising labor cost requires quickly increasing productivity and more independent thinking and acting of the local organizations," Braun said. "Several key points can be identified as bottlenecks for being successful,

such as empowering employees in a responsible way and respecting individual personalities and needs and combining into a successful team."

The economic situation and currency and financial risks are the second and third most serious business concerns faced by the surveyed multinational companies.

More than 60 percent of employers expect the economic situation to become more challenging, and 46 percent believe the currency and financial risks will remain difficult in the future.

Chinese students studying in France set to grow



The French government has set up various scholarships to attract more Chinese students. CFP Photo

By Han Manman

France is becoming one of the most popular destinations for Chinese to study abroad, with the number of Chinese students in France reaching a record high of 30,000, said a diplomat from French embassy.

"Chinese students' interest in France is growing dramatically," said Anthony Chaumuzeau, cultural counselor of the French embassy in China during the China Education Expo 2011 last weekend. "They go there to study not only history and language, but also for an understanding of what's happening economically and politically."

Chaumuzeau said the number of Chinese students in France could exceed 50,000 by 2015.

To attract more Chinese students, the French government has set up various scholarships such as a two-year scholarship for those who enroll in post-graduate programs in France in subjects such as science and technology, social science and business administration.

The embassy also launched

chinese.campusfrance.org to help students plan for academic projects.

Chaumuzeau said before the recent increase that Chinese students had preferred studying in English-speaking countries. But more French universities are now providing English language programs for international students, which are very popular.

"With more Chinese companies doing business in Europe, Chinese talents that are familiar with both the European and Chinese markets are urgently needed in Europe," said Michel Kalika, dean of EM Strasbourg Business School, one of the best business schools in France.

Kalika's school opened its doors to Chinese students for the first time this year. The school offers a variety of business, finance, marketing and management classes taught in both French and English.

Kalika said he knew of Chinese companies that merged with French ones in Strasbourg that are in urgent need of Chinese mid-level administrators that can speak English and French. They also

need administrators who are familiar with European culture and know the European market.

"The students that graduate from a school like ours will be a very good fit for that kind of position," he said. "With more and more European companies setting up businesses in China, those students are also very welcomed by European companies."

Kalika said EM Strasbourg Business School is committed to providing its students with the specialist and cross-functional knowledge and expertise needed to develop businesses throughout the world.

He said the school has 175 exchange agreements in 52 countries, meaning students can take a semester to study abroad.

"With closer business cooperation between France and China, I believe more Chinese will choose to study in France," Kalika said, adding that his school has put more focus on enrolling Chinese and Indian students in the coming years since the two countries are the future of the world's development.

New Irish education brand launched

By Wang Yu

Last Saturday, to coincide with the China International Education Exhibition Tour (CIEET) and Spring Tour 2011 taking place on the same day, Enterprise-Ireland launched its new Education in Ireland brand at the Irish embassy in Beijing.

Education in Ireland will serve as a platform for attracting and recruiting more international students, particularly from China.

"Ireland strives to provide the highest quality higher education experience to overseas students and will adopt a long-term and sustainable strategy for attracting international students," said Declan Kelleher, ambassador of Ireland to China. "The new brand was redesigned by Enterprise-Ireland and dedicated to the development and promotion of Ireland as an international education center of excellence."

Ireland's government recently announced the country's new International Education Strategy, which mainly focuses on improving the quality of education provided to international students. Kelleher said Ireland's visa, immigration and labor market access policies will be strong and competitive. A new scholarship scheme is also being developed to attract Chinese students.

The Chinese and Irish education departments have been cooperating with each other for a long time

and made a series of agreements on diplomas and scholarship.

Orla Battersby, head of education in Ireland, said visa applications for undergraduate studies will be processed faster, and the work scheme after graduation will be extended to allow all students who achieve a NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications) level of 8 and above to remain in Ireland for up to one year to seek employment.

Battersby said Ireland is one of the best choices for overseas students for higher education, and that Chinese students account for the second largest overseas student group from outside the European Union.

"Ireland is a beautiful island, combining contemporary modern cities with an unspoiled countryside, cityscapes steeped in history and a rich natural habitat," Battersby said.

There are seven universities in Ireland, among which two ranked in the world's top 100. Schools help their graduates find jobs both in Ireland and in China. There are more than 120 branch offices of Irish companies in China, and the number is increasing every year.

"The quality of education in Ireland makes our country attract investments from the US and European Union. Ireland is also the second largest export country in Europe and the second largest IT export country in the world," Kelleher said.



Declan Kelleher, ambassador of Ireland to China

Photo provided by Irish Embassy

Contemporary art over cocktails and canapés



In white: *La cellule*, a well-known contemporary French artistic duo

Photos by Wang Hui

By Liang Meilan

On Wednesday and Thursday night, the Beijing Wanda Sofitel Hotel assembled sommeliers, waiters and guests to co-produce a creative and playful performance called "Do Disturb!" to the backdrop of a cocktail party led by *La cellule*, a well-known contemporary French artistic duo.

The party happened in Sofitel's swank watering hole, M Bar.

Inspired by the two female artists of *La cellule*, Emmanuelle Becquemin and Stephanie Sagot, the party integrated innovative and unprecedented elements into the dining experience.

"Haute Cuisine, fine wine knowledge and exceptional service are part of the experience," Becquemin said at a press conference before the event.

Guests were welcomed by a doorman wearing a wreath. A sommelier carried a long, flowing piece of fabric while serving champagne. The menu was written on a



Hotel staff got in the mix.

headband worn by waiters. Canapés came on glove-like plates made of waterproof cloth. Fruits were served on a tray balanced on a man's head.

A woman who ordered food was surprised to find the silver dome of her dish being lifted to reveal a miniature grand piano. Guessing it was a music box, she put her ear closely to listen.

"I was wondering before coming whether I should sit motionless to be part of the art work or not. It turns out that I could both sit and walk around as the experience was very interactive," said Peng Bo, one of the participants.

"I was worried I wouldn't understand French humor, but that turned out to not be the case," Peng said. "The diners really enjoyed being part of the performance."

"As a French luxury hospitality company, we are not only serving quality food but also staging events related to fashion, history, music and theater," said Stephen Laguette, vice president of sales marketing and distribution of Sofitel Asian Pacific. "Do Disturb! is an exceptional performance that reflects the French interpretation of culture and elegance which lies at the core of the hotel's commitment to the French 'art de vivre.'"

Do Disturb! will also be presented on select dates in mid-March and early April in Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Event

Capoeira workshop

Capoeira is a traditional Brazilian dance combining elements of art, sports, acrobatics and music. Though it is popular around the world, people in China seldom hear about it. Capoeira Beijing, the only organization devoted to introducing it in town, is offering a workshop led by Capoeira master Contra Mestre Cipo. Dance skills and history will be taught for students of all levels.

Where: Martial Arts Studio, 3F, Workers Stadium, 1 Gongrentiyuchang Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 18, 7-8:30 pm; March 19 and 20, 11 am - 4 pm

Tel: 18611705854

Cost: 250 yuan for all sessions

Documentary screening: A Vanishing Beijing

Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP) is starting its 2011 event series by screening a 30-minute three-part film documenting major affairs concerning the capital's cultural heritage preservation and demolition, as well as the impact of urbanization. The filmmaker, Jonah Kesse, will team up with Kit Gillet, a former *South China Morning Post* features writer, and CHP founder He Shuzhong for a panel discussion with attendees.

Where: Studio-X, A103, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Andingmen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: March 19, 2-5 pm

Tel: 6403 6532

Cost: Free for CHP members, 20 yuan for non-members

Charity concerts for victims in Japan

To support earthquake and tsunami victims in Japan, the Beijing International Chamber Orchestra is calling together musicians from 15 countries to stage two charitable concerts under the lead of Russian conductor Maria Nauen. Classical masterpieces such as Beethoven's *Overture Egmont* and Bach's *Suite in H-Minor* will be performed. All proceeds will go to the Japan relief fund.

Where: Canadian International School of Beijing, 38 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 19 and 20, 5-6:30 pm

Tel: 6465 7788

Cost: 60 yuan, 20 yuan for children and students

(By Liang Meilan)

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Philanthropy and microblogs



The free lunch program aims to provide nutrition to children who live in remote areas who would otherwise miss lunch because their school lacks a cafeteria. Luo Guojia/CFP Photo

By Li Zhixin

A public welfare project called Hongshan School Love Lunch Program is helping buy lunch for students in remote mountainous areas.

Last Thursday CCTV reported on a group of students in Hongshan Primary School in Qianxi County, Guizhou Province who were unable to eat lunch because it takes them two hours to get to school every day. There were reportedly about 120 students – two-thirds of the school – who never ate lunch.

The charity Weijihua (Micro-plan) immediately launched an initiative on its blog called "Dangshengwanwu Charity Shop: Hongshan School Love Lunch Program" to buy lunches for these students. "Spend 5 yuan for a meal, you can help more children have a warm lunch," read its slogan.

An hour after the post, nearly 800 meals were purchased through loveegg.taobao.com. In a week, the site collected 25,000 meals.

The charity plans to keep everyone updated on the situation through its site.

Microblogs have become a platform for many charities



Online free lunch campaign for countryside children



Cha-gang.com promises to donate rice to remote areas according to its number of visitors and blog posts.

recently. Cha-gang.com, a microblog founded last year, began a "Love Rice Project" on its site to donate rice to those in need.

For each new member it

attracts and each new post that member writes, it will donate 10 grains of rice.

"We keep up-to-the-minute numbers of the amount of rice

we've donated," said Yang Ming, the website's founder.

The website has more than 14,000 registered members and has donated more than 500 kilograms of rice for poor children in Shanghai and in Jiangsu Province.

Liang Shuxin, a young man who works in new media marketing, is another person who has used the microblog to do good.

Last year, he wrote on his site, "I have received three used pencils from students at Fodingcun Primary School in Guangxi Province (his alma mater). I will trade them for something of greater value, and continue trading until I obtain something worth 150,000 yuan, which I will auction off for the benefit of the school."

Less than a month later, Liang got what he needed, and Fodingcun got the funds it needed.

How to get involved in meal donations

1. Purchase lunch for students at Hongshan Primary School through loveegg.taobao.com.

2. Register at Cha-gang.com and write a blog post. The more you write, the more the website will donate.

Free art library hoping to expand

By Zhao Hongyi

In the northeast corner of Third Ring Road stands the 24-story China Glory Tower, a six-year-old business and residential building. On the second floor of the tower is a free private art library that opened two years ago.

Jincai Arts Library occupies 800 square meters and is stocked with valuable books, magazines and periodicals from the art world. In the first year after opening, the library received 50,000 books from donation. Their collection now stands at 300,000.

"We have the rare series of modern Chinese masters' paintings, art books and magazines from Lithuania and Latvia and an encyclopedia in German donated by the Goethe Institute in Beijing," said library owner Ma Keqiang.



Ma Keqiang at his Jincai Arts Library

Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Retired elders, students and children living nearby are regular visitors.

Ma is an artist with many connections that enabled him to

open and maintain the library. He has employed a dozen staffers to keep the library running.

But the library – like many around the country – is facing

difficulties. Its upkeep requires nearly 1 million yuan each year, funds that Ma works to accumulate through exhibitions and exchanges. The library also holds calligraphy and painting sessions and courses.

The library is looking for larger venues for its classes, exhibition and other events. Ma is interested in opening a chain of libraries in residential communities, neighboring campuses and in the other Chinese cities.

"We'll continue to hold events and insist on keeping our libraries free," Ma said.

Beijing Jincai Arts Library

Where: 2nd floor, China Glory Tower, northeast corner of Madian, A29 Bei Sanhuan Zhong Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 8225 3096, 8225 3039, 6236 0094

Open: 9 am – 8 pm

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyng@ynet.com

Where can I find basketball courts in Chaoyang District?

The east gate of Chaoyang Park has five or six outdoor courts. There's an indoor court at the Kerry Center, where lots of expat players gather, though the cost is higher. I think the one in Dongdan, next to Oriental Plaza Shopping Mall, is your best bet: 15 yuan for a day of outdoor hoops.

A friend of mine bought a Chinese MP3 Player by Meizu, which turned out to be quite good. He bought it last year and I'm wondering about new products. Do you have any recommendations?

Meizu products are pretty solid, and they even had a virtual clone of the iPod being shown at a few trade shows. As for other brands, fiddle around with them and decide if you think the buttons will last more than a few months and check how solid the case is. Most of them do not vary much in quality, so it ultimately comes down to features and construction. Aigo is a good brand, too.

A guide to buying low-budget MP3 players: choose a few that seem durable and pay close attention to such things as the buttons and interface. Listen to them and choose the one with the best sound quality.

I'm heading home to Europe soon and want to buy tea as a gift for family and friends. But how do I choose?

If you are shopping for tea as a present, you cannot go wrong at Ma Lian Dao, Beijing's biggest and most famous tea street. But if you only want to buy one or two small boxes, just find a local tea shop in your neighborhood, like Zhang Yi Yuan.

Famous Chinese teas include Long Jing, Tao Jian and Mao Qiu. Because of high demand, a lot of places sell fakes, so be careful. A Chinese friend who likes tea will be able to help you buy high quality tea that will not burn a hole through your pocket.

Maliandao Tea City
Where: 14 Maliandao, Dongcheng District

Where can I get those gels or padded strips you use with women's shoes to prevent blisters around the ankles?

Dr. Scholl's can be found in many supermarkets inside malls like Pacific Century Place, Oriental Plaza and Shin Kong Plaza. You can also find cheaper versions at Watson's stores around town.

(By Liang Meilan)

By Liang Meilan

With the 2014 World Cup bound for Rio de Janeiro and the Olympics in 2016, many Chinese people are looking to Brazil for business and travel. But the tropical, multicultural country has more to offer than coffee, soccer and dancing.

A Chinese couple that has lived in Brazil for 12 years has seen more than most of their countrymen can ever imagine. They have seen almost every city and hiked the dangerous wetlands deep into the Amazon.

Their thousands of photos and home movies are being compiled into a documentary set to be released to domestic audiences next month. Their in-depth cultural exploration might be the country's first glimpse of the real face of Brazil.



Zhang Yanjun (left) and his family

Zhang Yanjun, 48, is a former transport aircraft commander, military photographer, photojournalist and e-commerce entrepreneur. He and his wife, Xiao Linjie, live in Brazil, where they run a bilingual magazine dedicated to cultural exchange.

Their first trip to Brazil came when Xiao was appointed by the Ministry of Culture to go negotiate the introduction of samba dance to China in 1999.

"As a photographer, I was exceptionally excited to have the opportunity to go to Brazil where I could shoot the breathtaking landscapes of the Amazon," Zhang said.

Gradually, as they integrated into local life, the couple became curious about Brazil's multiculturalism.

Before realizing their dream to travel deep into the Amazon rainforest, Zhang and his wife began planning some visual productions based on their experiences in cities and towns as cultural outsiders.

In 2000, they created Charm of Culture, a visual project that grew to become a cultural exchange project between the two countries.

The first part is a documentary film and photo collection called *Brazil: Poem of Love* that explores regional differences in Brazilian culture. The collection will be displayed in China in April.

Modern Brazilian culture is composed of many elements brought by immigrants from around the world. These cultural aspects conflict and fuse through social development to define the nation.

"In the complex process of cultural development, what we concerned about is the nostalgia emotion for immigrant culture we find in all the migrant subcultures in Brazil," Zhang said.

The couple's visual collection records the annual beer festival in the city of Blumenau in southern Brazil, which was registered as a city in 1850 by 18 German soldiers.

"We were shocked by the grand scale of the festival held in such a small city. It was no smaller than the world-famous Munich Beer Festival. It seems the municipal government helps organize the festival for 15 days no matter the cost," Zhang said.

"Later on, when we observed more of the city and did further research, we found the city is devoted to not only commemorating the original traditions of Germany but also keeping German lifestyles by force. The city insisted on using German as the only language in schools before a Portuguese class opened just a few years ago," Zhang said.

"In my point of view, the core of Brazil's migrant cultures is the memories of its original culture. Though many people cannot figure out the original meanings of these

traditions brought by their ancestors, they strive to keep and fight for what they consider their distinct features," Zhang said.

Almost all of Zhang's productions in Brazil reflect migrant memory and the blurring of cultural identities, including a stunning recording of the couple's three-year journey across the Pantanal wetlands.

One day in 2003, they got lost while filming and drove deep into the wetlands. Their GPS failed because the area had never been charted. At night they had to keep driving to avoid being attacked by wild animals. When they ran out of gas, they had to start finding ways to use plants as fuel.

They brought their 2-year-old son with them during the trip, and their second daughter Vivian Zhang was born in the car.

On the adventure, they met the descendants of old gold prospectors who got lost in the wetlands and became a new ethnic group, the Pantaleiro.

"When I first heard an exotic dismal ballad from afar sung by a people we later knew as Pantaleiro, I burst into tears because the music was so full of loneliness and nostalgia – the song of a people lost in a strange land," Xiao said.

Brazil: Poem of Love, the documentary film and photos to be shown in China, also demonstrate another experience of the adventurous couple as they made their long-postponed trip into the Amazon rainforest.

Though well-planned and equipped with helicopters and high performance Jeeps, they still faced many unforeseen dangers.

A 60-year-old Chinese immigrant and priest of an indigenous tribe living deep in the forest helped the couple cross half the Amazon, going further than the exploration team led by President Teddy Roosevelt in 1913 – previously the deepest expedition.

Determined to finish the first-ever trek across the Amazon, the couple is currently busy preparing for a second expedition.

The old guide they last hired has refused to come again, since he does not know a safe route that can lead them any deeper. This time, they will have to blindly chart a new course.

"But since we decided to do it, we are sure we can succeed and won't give up no matter what happens," Zhang and Xiao said.

To make the cultural program a mutual exchange, the couple is organizing a project to invite Brazilian filmmakers, photographers and explorers to go on an adventure into Lop Nor later this year. The team's visual productions will be shown in Brazil as a Chinese cultural presentation.



San Paulo, 2009

Charting

A Chinese couple's



Pantanal, 2008



Blumenau, 2008

ng the uncharted

experiences in Brazilian culture

Center stage



Photos provided by Zhang Yanjun



“

The core of Brazil's migrant cultures is the memories of its original culture. Though many people cannot figure out the original meanings of these traditions brought by their ancestors, they strive to keep and fight for what they consider as their distinct features.

”



San Paulo, 2008

Editor: He Jianwei Designer: Yuan Guoming

BEIJING TODAY

Norwegian philosopher thinks on modernity

By **Chu Meng**

While most philosophy books turn out to be simple rehashings of old ideas, Lars Svendsen's trilogy of boredom, fashion and fear provides new thoughts for a new world.

Last Thursday marked the launch of the Chinese editions of *A Philosophy of Boredom*, *Fashion: A Philosophy of Boredom*, *Fashion: A Philosophy of Fear* – his trilogy – and Svendsen was present to meet fans at the Norwegian embassy in Beijing.

"I was seen as alien by my orthodox colleagues in the philosophy department," said the 30-year-old Svendsen, a philosophy professor at the University of Bergen, Norway, who sported a bold hairstyle and navy suit.

The outgoing professor said he grew up surrounded by the modern, like punk and rock, and this background inspired him to question why philosophers were ignoring the problems belonging exclusively to modern people.

Aiming to bring philosophy to the masses, Svendsen embraced straightforward wording that has translated well to more than 23 languages.

That success may be due to the resonance of his message, which extends beyond cultural and economic differences. The boredom of wealth, endless pursuit of fashion and growing public fear are essential to the modern experience he says.

A self-professed fashion maniac, Svendsen said the magical connection between fashion and philosophy – outside the title of his book – is that it enables people to find a superficial self-identity while still being lost in society.

His analysis runs from Beau Brummell and Oscar Wilde to H&M and Martin Margiela, from the *Devil Wears Prada* to *Vogue* and *Marie Claire*. He writes in huge, almost



Fashion: A Philosophy of Boredom
188pp, Reaktion Books, \$18.20

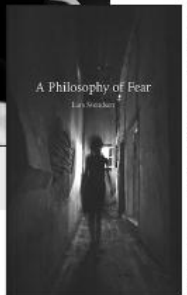


A Philosophy of Boredom
192pp, Reaktion Books, \$23.70



Photo by Guo Yingguang

A Philosophy of Fear
192pp, Reaktion Books, \$22.60



awareness, an illness of luxury."
Another illness of luxury is fear.

In *A Philosophy of Fear*, he says that surveillance cameras, airport security lines and barred store windows were actually manifestations of daily societal fears. And mass media reports on terrorism, household and campus massacres, as well as global warming, financial meltdown, super germs, carcinogenic food additives and child-molesting teachers all feed in.

"But ironically, we are safer and healthier now than at any time in our history. These modern security approaches actually make us more afraid," he said.

"Fear is a powerful emotion. It can save lives. But it also robs us of our freedom and undermines that essential social glue of trust," he said.

And boredom is another problem related exclusively to modernity. Centuries back, when people were less wealthy, they spent their days making things or harvesting and had little idle time to be bothered with.

"Very few people have any well-thought-out concept of boredom," Svendsen writes. "Boredom cannot simply be understood as a personal idiosyncrasy. Boredom is not just an inner state of mind: it is also a characteristic of the world, for we participate in practices that are saturated with boredom."

And that in turn leads back into fashion because boredom is a reflection of subconscious fears, he said.

Red Mansions gets a controversial new ending

By **Zhang Dongya**

When Cao Xueqin died, the complete edition of his *A Dream of Red Mansions* was lost. Records show that at its completion in 1784 the novel had 108 chapters: today it has 80.

The 300 years since have seen many writers speculate on its ending. Currently, the most popular version is a 120-chapter edition completed by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) scholar Gao E.

Last week, contemporary writer Liu Xinwu published his own version of its ending.

Liu, 69, offers an end of the original masterpiece with 28 new chapters. He said he tried to restore the missing 28 chapters based on Cao's original idea, and the fate of the book's characters departs dramatically from Gao E's edition.

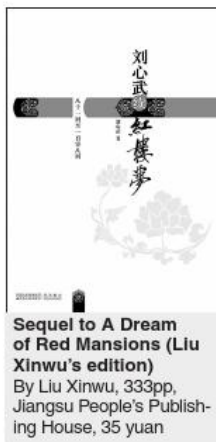
Lin Daiyu, the leading

heroine, dies when Jia Baoyu and Xue Baochai hold their wedding ceremony in Gao's edition. Despite this ending being considered an "ingenious stroke," Liu holds Lin Daiyu should have died in water based on foreshadowing in Cao's original work. In his book, Lin kills herself in a lake.

"Cao Xueqin's work is like the Venus de Milo with broken arms, and authors are waiting in line to perform arm transplants. Gao E 'joined' on his version of the ending, and this is my version. Gao wrote based on his own interpretations, but I am trying to return to the original text," Liu said.

He said he tried to tie up all the hints and loose ends from Cao's 80 chapters.

But his ending has been poorly received by scholars, who declared Liu's effort



Sequel to A Dream of Red Mansions (Liu Xinwu's edition)
By Liu Xinwu, 333pp, Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 35 yuan

"unnecessary."
Most scholars of *A Dream of Red Mansions* regard the 120-chapter edition as a clas-

ic and make no room for a new ending.

The new ending is not Liu's first published work related to *A Dream of Red Mansions*. With 20 years of experience studying the book, he published *Liu Xinwu Uncovers the Secrets of A Dream of Red Mansions* in 2005, exploring the Qing prototypes for the characters' roles.

"I hoped my version of the ending will inspire more people to read Cao's original work," Liu said.

"The writer Duanmu Hongliang once told me he [wanted to rewrite the book's ending], but he died in 1996 and never had the chance. As for me, I waited so long because my wife died two years ago and it was a big shock. I wrote the book for myself to avoid drowning in sorrow," he said.

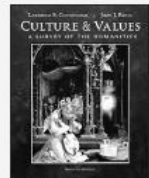
CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these art books to *Beijing Today* readers.



Engaging the Moving Image
By Noel Carroll, 448pp, Yale University Press, 128 yuan

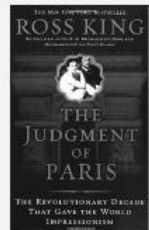
Carroll, a philosopher of film, gathers in this book 18 of his recent essays on cinema and television, discussing topics such as film attention, the emotional address of the moving image, film and racism, the nature and epistemology of documentary film, the moral status of television, the concept of film style, the foundations of film evaluation, the film theory of Siegfried Kracauer and films by Sergei Eisenstein and Yvonne Rainer. Carroll also assesses the state of contemporary film theory and speculates on its prospects.



Culture and Values: A Survey of the Humanities, Comprehensive Edition

By Lawrence S. Cunningham and John J. Reich, 696pp, Wadsworth Publishing, 880 yuan

This book gives readers a solid introduction to art, music, philosophy and literature traditions of the world. The authors cover traditions in the humanities, including an entire chapter on Islamic art.



The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade that Gave the World Impressionism

By Ross King, 464pp, Walker & Company, 190 yuan

While the Civil War raged in America, another revolution took shape across the Atlantic in the studios of Paris. Artists who would make impressionism the most popular art form in history were showing their first paintings amidst scorn and derision from the French artistic establishment. Indeed, no artistic movement has ever been quite so controversial. The drama of its birth, played out on canvas and against the backdrop of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, would at times resemble a battlefield on which they reordered history and culture.

(By He Jianwei)

Ways for geeks to 'get with it'

By Wang Yu

People like to pick on those who stay at home fiddling with the latest technologies, but tech love can be about more than circuits and chips or radio casings made out of wood.

Even the shiest nerds usually dream of standing out among their peers. But to achieve that, it might take some upgrades to their personal software. This week, *Beijing Today* has some advice based on tricks and trends we've covered during the last year.

1. Toys

What they like?

Collecting light-sabers and blasters might be fun for Star Wars fans and other Sci-Fi lovers. The same goes for the Gundam models that leave many hobbyists wishing they lived in an era of giant mecha and space suits.



"I like collecting Gundam models because I'm a huge fan of the series. But the top collectors do stuff like create their own designs by adding LED lights or other electric parts on the original models. That's where collecting gets creative," says Liu Yu, a comic fan in Beijing.

How to upgrade?

Plastic weapons may look cool, but women see them as toys. Try building a real pulse laser gun if you want to look cool – just don't let your local Public Security Bureau find out about it.



Patrick Priebe, the geek from the Iron Man Repulsor Light Laser Glove Project, made his own pulse laser pistol after 70 hours of work in a small studio. The gun is 320 millimeters long and weighs about 1 kilogram. It holds a small pulse laser head, capable of generating a blast of coherent infrared light.

One shot can punch holes through razor-blades, plastics and 5-millimeter Styrofoam. Four lithium batteries hold a charge capable of firing 500 pulse waves.

Priebe's goal was to make the handheld device as compact as possible. It seems he succeeded by using Plexiglas as a center-plate with brass or aluminum casing.

2. Hobbies

What they like?

Learning to play guitar is boring and requires a lot of hard work before you start sounding impressive. A lot of geeks turn to *Guitar Hero* as a shortcut to becoming a rock star. But games are all about illusions – in the end, everyone else will still think you look stupid.

How to upgrade?

Ditch the controller and build a real guitar. Though a high-quality musical instrument requires experience and technique, a functional guitar is pretty easy to make.

Though guitars are made in different shapes, they all have the same structure: a head, a neck, a body, a bridge and an electric pickup. The most difficult part is making the body and the neck. Hire a craftsman to copy the shape from a friend's guitar or do it yourself after a half-year's practice. The electric part is easier – from components to pickups, it's all available online. Most brands even have blueprints on their websites.



3. Work station

What they like?

A La-Z-Boy sofa might suit gamers, but there is no shaking its association with the fat, lazy shut-in. Most computer chassis for hardcore hardware hackers are sold bare and without covers, which, while professional and cool, tends to scare away women.

How to upgrade?

Studying woodworking can save your image and show you care about more than overclocking your CPU. Huang Wei, an IT worker, made a wooden computer chassis that functioned as drawer in his desk. He also designed his own bookshelf, a double bed and a baby bed for his new daughter.

Zhang Hubin, a marketing director, recently opened a huge wood shop in Tiantongyuan with professional woodworking machines and friendly teachers. Admission costs 50 yuan for a whole day's access.



5. TV dramas

What they like?

The most popular American TV series in China today is *The Big Bang Theory*. The show centers on a couple of nerds who live next door to a beautiful woman. Fansubbing groups have helped spread the show to Chinese audiences, and shirts worn by the main characters are top sellers on Taobao.

How to upgrade?

Try a British series. UK script writers tend to use more dry humor that might make you learn some new words. *The IT Crowd* is popular and easy to get into. It tells the story of an IT department with a female head who knows nothing about computers and two nerds who are tired of dealing with idiots.



4. Music

What they like?

Digital music is ubiquitous and tends to go well with the crazy high-fidelity speaker setups that many geeks prefer. Some serious audiophiles have even built backpacks that allow them to lug and conceal amplifiers when they have to go out on the street.

How to update?

Vintage goods show taste, and vinyl is vintage. The media tends to have a warmer sound than the digital precision of CDs. New record players may be hard to come by, but flea markets often sell old hardware for less than 300 yuan. There are a few online record stores that also deal in vinyl.



6. Tricks

What they like?

Most ladies do not like playing video games with you or watching your latest inventions. They like jewelry, dresses and nice food. If you cannot provide these, you might have to learn some other ways to make them happy.

How to upgrade?

Contact juggling worked for Jiuji, one of China's best at sphere manipulation. He has been practicing contact juggling for four years and learning how to make it look like his crystal ball hovers in mid-air. It might look easy, but top jugglers say each trick can take weeks to master.



7. Style

What they like?

Nerds just cannot get fashion or style. Simple T-shirts are all you'll find in their closet. Unfortunately, that's boring – especially for women, who tend to expect far more variety in one's wardrobe.

How to upgrade?

T-shirts can be fashionable if you take the time to think about what's on them.

"Avoid loose-fitting T-shirts, because they look out of style. A slim T-shirt goes well with a pair of slim-fit jeans. Consider shirts with cover shots of classic rock albums, abstract lines or shirts with authorized comic figures such as the EVA series by Uniqlo," says Twiggy Song, web editor of *Cosmopolitan's* Chinese edition.



Purchases that make a difference

Local fair trade goods

Dianlan (indigo) is a local fair trade organization featuring handcrafted cloth goods made using a technique known as Erjia Town blue calico, pioneered by a group of women living in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province, who are still struggling to recover what was lost in the Wenchuan Earthquake three years ago. The cooperative society, Fire Phoenix, is a long-time handicraft producer for fair trade organizations.

The Erjia Town blue calico technique was in danger of disappearing before it was recorded as an intangible cultural heritage in 2007. It is a traditional cloth dyeing method from Nantong, Jiangsu Province. The blue-grass dye gives the cloth a pure blue color, making it mold-proof and mothproof.

The cloth supplier of Dianlan products is a family workshop led by Wang Jianfeng, one of the few people in Erjia Town still in the cloth business.

Sun Tong, a designer from Shenzhen, connected Fire Phoenix with Wang's workshop. Guided by the philosophy of producing things that make people happy, Sun shifted her focus from business to charity.

Dianlan offers an array of lovely cloth goods, including pillowcases, bags, gloves, aprons and slippers, all with simple yet practical designs.

Items are available on ifaiguide.org.

By Liang Meilan

Responsible shopping is a trend these days as many are seeking to buy eco-friendly foods or low-carbon appliances. Searching for fair trade products has become popular as well.

Fair trade goods are produced by disadvantaged groups such as low-income villagers, the disabled, migrant workers and rural artisans and sold to urban buyers at slightly marked up prices. When savvy organizations, companies or NGOs sponsor fair trade products, production methods are improved and sustainability is ensured.

Although still uncommon in China, fair trade products are gradually gaining a foothold. *Beijing Today* found some fair trade goods available in town.

Those who want to learn more about fair trade in China can learn more at Oxfam.org.cn, an organization that promotes fair trade.



Slippers, starting from 50 yuan



Chopsticks wrapper, starting from 30 yuan



Shopping bag set, with an outer handbag and an inner foldable bag, 128 yuan



Large shopping bag, 128 yuan
Photos by Sun Tong

Equal Exchange

Another popular fair trade import is Equal Exchange. The 25-year-old co-op based in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts is famous for producing fair trade foods provided by partner farms in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the US. Its products are now available on savesafe.com.tw.

We recommend its organic ceylon green pyramid tea (62 yuan, 16 pyramids per box).

This large-leaf green tea from Sri Lanka has a smooth flavor with pleasant sweetness and mild astringency. Green teas contain antioxidants that are known to promote good health.

Organic Dried Sweetened Cranberries (72 yuan, 142 grams) are large, juicy organic berries from North America. They are sliced, infused with organic sugar, then slowly kiln-dried to preserve every last bit of flavor. Dried cranberries are a great alternative to raisins in cookies and many other recipes, or added to a salad.

Organic sister's blend coffee (165 yuan, 142 gram) comes from Mexico, Columbia and Peru and produced by women in co-ops coordinated by Honoring Women, a fair trade NGO. The pre-roast blend coffee is well-known for its richness.



Organic ceylon green pyramid tea, 62 yuan

Photo provided by Equal Exchange

Divine chocolates

There are few fair trade food producers in China, but imported foods are available in some places.

An online shop run by West Well Cafe in Shanghai offers chocolates from Divine, a fair trade food brand based in the UK and US and certified by Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO).

Its chocolates are made with the finest cocoa, free from genetic modification, planted by farmers in Ghana who co-own the company. All chocolates are free from artificial flavoring, coloring and preservatives.

Chocolates include dark, mint dark, white, milk, orange, strawberry, fruit and nut, ginger and orange, raspberry, and butter scotch. All are sold at 33 yuan for a 100-gram bar and 165 yuan for a 500-gram bar on shop64033366.taobao.com. People in Shanghai can pick up their orders at West Well at 56 Xijing Jie Zhuajiajiao Ancient Town. Call 021-5924 2675 for more information.



Divine chocolate, starting from 33 yuan for a 100-gram bar
Photo provided by West Well Cafe

Eat local and seasonal - organic farmers and restaurants

By Annie Wei

With more and more people concerned about food safety and environmental issues, the Country Fair held at Fangjia Hutong 46 last Saturday was packed within an hour, attracting restaurant owners and fans of organic food from as far away as Tianjin.

However, the fair lasted only two hours. Any public event with more than 50 attendees requires permission from local authorities, which the fair's organizers failed to obtain.

While lots of people who missed the fair wound up disappointed, *Beijing Today* is here to fill in some gaps by recommending some farms and restaurants with organic-themed menus.

New spring menu for French dining

As one of the leading French fine dining spots, the restaurant uses organic vegetables and updates its menu frequently. Its new spring cuisines will come out in April.

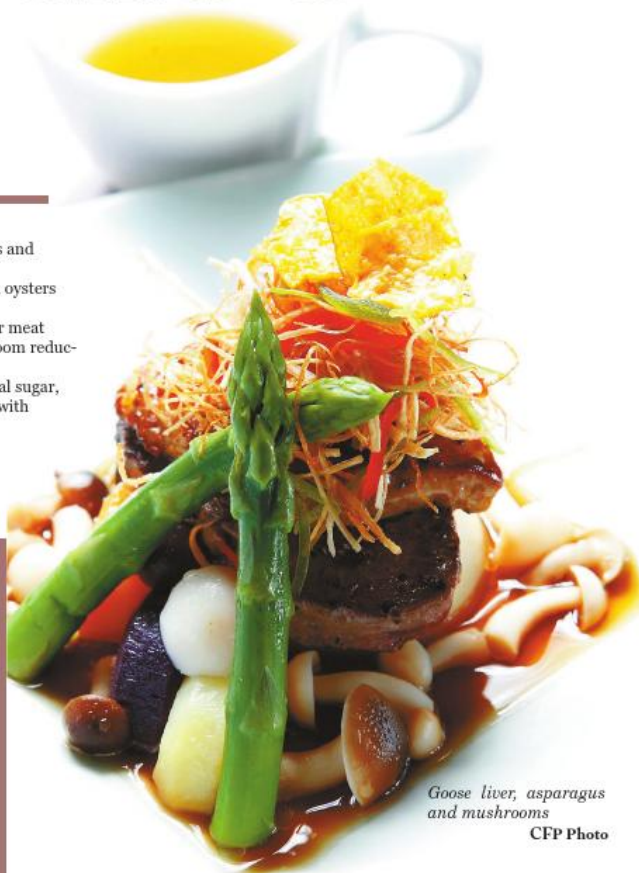
Among its new dishes, we recommend oysters served on bed of ice (338 yuan). Fresh oysters from France or Australia are fat and slightly salty.

Asparagus soup (110 yuan) is cooked with mimosa egg and gratined poached egg. For meat choices, we like wagyu beef (388 yuan) paired with crispy polenta, stewed morel mushroom reduction or canard-duck breast (188 yuan) with honey and herbs and French-fry cones.

Our favorite desserts include special berries (118 yuan) served in a cup made of crystal sugar, with green tea emulsion, berry sherbet and meringue; and rose and hibiscus (118 yuan) with strawberry zephyr accompanied by lemon yogurt cream.

Le Pre Lenotre

Where: 93 Jianguo Lu, Tower C, Wangda Plaza, Chaoyang District
Open: 11:30 am - 2 pm; 6-10 pm
Tel: 8599 6666



Goose liver, asparagus and mushrooms
CFP Photo

Deliveries from CSA farms



Shi Yan, founder of Little Donkey Farm
Photos by Shi Yan/CFP

Little Donkey Farm

Almost all farms in the Country Fair were community-supported agriculture (CSA), and among them, Little Donkey Farm, founded by Shi Yan, a 28-year-old doctoral student at Renmin University of China, is the best known in the community.

The farm's new season of planting and delivery is about to begin. Anyone interested in being a farmer can apply for a 30-square-meter plot of land to tend on weekends for 1,500 yuan. Those who have no time to maintain it can pay an extra 1,500 yuan for someone to watch over the plot.

The farm will host the next Country Fair in April. Those interested can get updates via the farm's Weibo account: Shiyanyan.

Apart from vegetables, the farm also provides free-ranged pork, chicken and eggs.

Where: West of Houshayu Village, Sujiatuo County, Haidian District
Open: 8-11 am, 3-7 pm, RSVP required

Tel: 6246 0405 (farm), 6262 8373 (office)

Website: littledonkeyfarm.com

Fangjiayuan

Established in 2003, this CSA farm not only provides organic vegetables but also grains, beans, sunflower seeds, ducks and geese. The farm makes its own organic pickles and soy sauce.

Where: Xi Nongchang, Baofangcun Village, Zhaoquanying County, Shunyi District

Open: RSVP
Tel: 13341110221 for Mr Duan, 13391868892 for Ms Liu

Sunlinfarm

This farm was built six years ago and specializes in poultry and eggs. Organic vegetables are used to feed the chicken. They are also fed homemade organic herbal medicine to keep healthy.

The farm will start its planting program for individual and families this year.

Where: 100 Lüzhang Lu, Lübutun, Zhangzhen County, Shunyi District

Open: RSVP
Tel: 6148 8091, 15810934622

Blog: blog.sina.com.cn/sunlinfarm

Ground Green Union

This is a cooperative led by agriculture professors such as Wen Tiejun that aims to improve farmers' income through eco-farming. The collaboration has helped farmers find many reliable clients and vendors nationwide.

The farm specializes in all kinds of beans, dry vegetables, mushrooms and nuts.

Where: Room 901, Mingde Building, Renmin University of China, Zhong-guancun Lu, Haidian District

Open: 9 am - 5 pm
Tel: 6248 4038/8250 9106

Website: 3nong.org



Champagne risotto
Photo provided by Renaissance Capital Hotel



Inside Paper restaurant
Photo by Wei Ying

Organic Sunday brunch

As the city's first and only organic-themed Sunday brunch since October, many health-conscious diners have applauded this restaurant.

We highly recommend its organic salad, which is made from fresh herbs and spinach picked from the organic farm on Saturday morning. It is infused with organic dried cranberries for sweetness and texture, fresh avocados for smoothness and dressed with lemon and organic olive oil.

Champagne risotto is a must-try. Chefs cut the imported Parmesan cheese wheel in half, hollow it out and pour hot champagne risotto inside. The result is a creamy delight.

Renaissance Capital Hotel

Where: 61 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Every Sunday, noon - 3 pm
Tel: 5863 8661

Cost: 268 yuan, 368 yuan with free-flowing champagne

Delicate seasonal meals

This black-facade restaurant has kept a low profile in Beijing's booming dining scene. The owner and designer is Malaysian Chinese Cho Chonggee, who prefers a minimalist interior. The all-white interior makes for a chic and comfortable ambience.

There is no fixed menu at Paper. The cooks buy their ingredients in the morning and prepare the menu on the same day, Cho said.

As a healthy dining advocate, Cho uses organic soy sauce and vegetables and as little oil or salt as possible.

A Paper classic is its mojito (50 yuan), which comes with a decent serving of fresh lemon and mint.

Paper

Where: 138 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 3 pm - midnight
Tel: 8401 5080

Cost: Average 200 yuan per person

Photos galore at Caochangdi

By Li Zhixin

Caochangdi, a Beijing hub for cutting-edge contemporary art, will host its 2nd annual photography festival between April 23 and May 31.

During the opening week of Caochangdi PhotoSpring - Arles in Beijing from April 23 to May 1, partner galleries will host a series of activities such as exhibition openings, lectures, concerts, documentary film screenings and slideshows dedicated to photography.

The opening will also feature the announcement of the 2011 Three Shadows Photography Award winner, the presentation of the 2010 Discovery Award of "Les Rencontres d'Arles" Laureate and a three-part symposium on collecting photographs for museums.

Activities will also include artist open studios in which young photographers get the chance to interact with a panel of professional domestic and international photographers and have their portfolios examined.

The event aims to bring photographers, artists, collectors, amateurs and the public together to discover new talents and mutually celebrate the art of photography. All events are open to the public.

A full list of PhotoSpring spaces

and partners, as well as exhibition information, can be found at ccdphotospring.com.

Caochangdi PhotoSpring is part of the 2011 Croisements Festival, presented in partnership with the French embassy in China and jointly curated by Thinking Hands and Three Shadows Photography Art Center.

The event is organized in collaboration with Les Rencontres d'Arles and

with the support of the galleries of Caochangdi and 798 Art Zone.

2011 Caochangdi PhotoSpring

Where: Three Shadows Photography Art Center, 155 A, Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: April 23 - May 31, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 64322663, 64319063, 64319693



5 Friday, March 18

Nightlife Katie Targtt-Adams and Ciorras

Targtt-Adams is a Scottish folk singer and harpist. Ciorras is an Irish band that plays traditional Irish music with modern instruments.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Exhibition



What's Wrong? - Xu Feng Solo Exhibition

This exhibition reveals the questions of life and society and shows the artist's inspiration gained through survival.

Where: Thread Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 31, daily

except Monday, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9667

Movie



Secret Sunshine (2007)

This South Korean film is about a single mother who moves to her husband's hometown after the husband's death. As she is losing the courage to live, faith and a man help her start a new life.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 8601 6860

6 Saturday, March 19

Movie Hometown Boy (2010)

This documentary is about acclaimed contemporary artist Liu Xiaodong's trip back to his hometown, a small town in Liaoning Province built around a paper mill.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife

The Besnard Lakes

This Canadian indie rock duo released its latest album, *The Besnard Lakes are the Roaring Night*, last year, which was nominated for the 2010 Polaris Music Prize.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

Exhibition

Talk to Her - Works of Sun Ying

A rabbit and a girl are the main characters in Sun's paintings, creating a fairy tale world.

Where: Line Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 5, daily except Monday, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9916



7 Sunday, March 20

Movie A Disappearing Village (2010)

This film is about the "empty" villages in China, where only children and elderly live because everyone else has gone to work in cities. The film shows how traditional village culture is being threatened by rapid urbanization.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern

Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife ROAN

This Poland punk rock band has released four albums and often plays at European music festivals, such as Poland's Sopot and Germany's Open Air in Wacken.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu,

Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711

Exhibition

Project of Site/Sight

This exhibition shows artistic collective Trinh & Buscher's Urban Topography Collection, which is a series of two-dimensional stainless steel maps depicting aerial views of the world's largest metropolitan

areas, and Shinichi Kaneko's geometrical abstract paintings.

Where: Tokyo Gallery + BTAP, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 8, daily except Monday, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8457 3245



Upcoming

Nightlife

The Black Atlantic

This Netherlands-based acoustic pop band's debut album, *Reverence for Fallen Trees*, has been downloaded more than 100,000 times.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in April

Concert

Westminster Boys' Choir

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyuan Lu, Xicheng District

When: April 5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-580 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Hilary Hahn and The English Chamber Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-800 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Traditional Irish Music by the Blackwater Band

Where: National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-380 yuan

Tel: 8854 5531

Li Yundi and China National Center for the Performing Arts Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-1,200 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Songs of the Wanderers by Cloud Gate Theater

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 1-2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Burnt by the Sun

Where: Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 4-17, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan, 40 yuan for students

Tel: 6524 6789

Opera

Bizet's Opera: Carmen

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 9-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 160-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Diet key to beating cramps

By Li Zhixin

Leg cramps — sudden and painful contractions of the leg muscles — can bring your exercise or good night's sleep to a screaming halt.

Though leg cramps are common, experts don't know the exact cause. The best treatment is usually prevention.

Nagging health problem

With the weather warming up, Jiang Huairan, a 29-year-old office worker, has decided to start jogging in the mornings to lose weight. On most days her efforts are hampered by painful leg cramps.

"I really don't know what's wrong with my legs. My mom thought it was arthritis, but I was sure it wasn't," she said. "I have had two- to three-minute waves of cramps for almost two weeks. The weather and exercise don't seem to be responsible."

The leg cramps began while she was in college and tend to occur in the morning. "In the past I could find relief by wrapping my knee well and wearing layers of thermal socks, but that's not working anymore," she said.

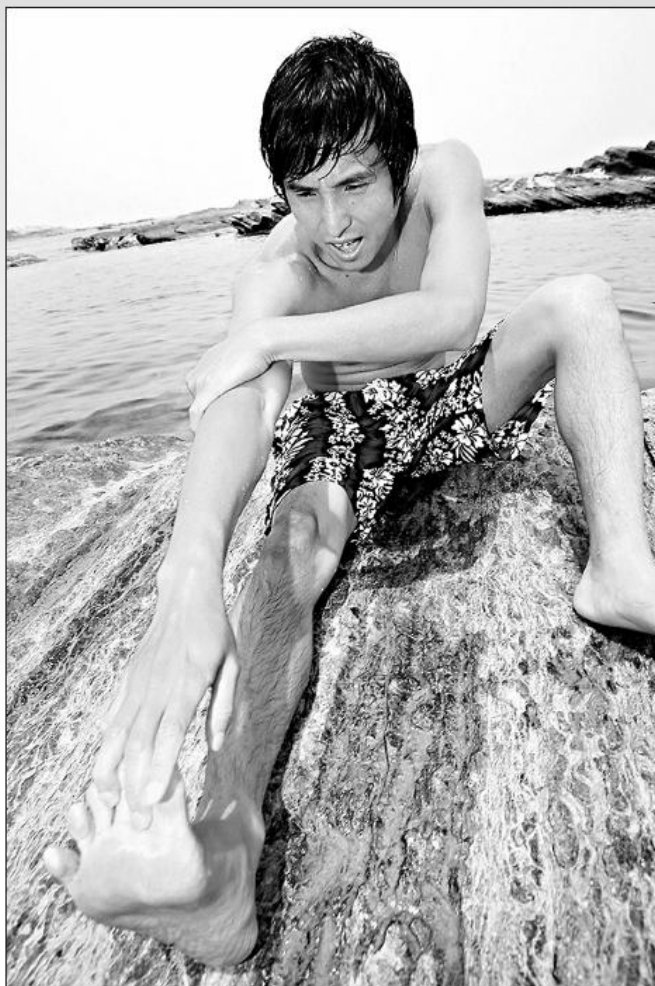
Du Xiaodong, a 27-year-old translator, tends to get cramps at night.

On several occasions, he felt like his knee dislocated and woke up because of the acute pain. He usually stands up and waits for it to subside.

"I found that moving my legs can help to relieve the pain faster. When I stop moving, it is much more painful. Keeping my legs still makes the pain pass faster, but it hurts like hell," he said.

He experienced his worst episode of cramping yet last Friday night. "I went to stand up and felt like my leg was going to snap in half. I couldn't move whatsoever. It was the worst pain I've ever experienced," he said.

After screaming and not being able to move for about nearly half an hour, he called one of his friends who lived near him to come and get him to the hospital. "Fortunately, after five minutes of my friend being there, I managed to straighten my knee out and started to stretch and massage my leg. But since then, I really can't get a good night's sleep — I always remember the pain," he said.



What causes leg cramps?

Leg cramps are sudden spasms or tightening of the calf muscles. They can sometimes happen in the thigh or foot, and tend to occur when falling asleep or waking up. The painful cramps can last a few seconds to a few minutes.

Most of the time, cramps are unrelated to illness. Some causes may include:

1. Getting too much exercise or overusing the muscles.

Home remedies

Here are a few ways methods you can minimize pain when suffering from a leg cramp at home:

1. **Walk around on the cramped leg.** This will help to work out the actual pain.
2. **Give the contracted muscle a gentle massage.** Rub the tightened knots in your cramped muscles slowly and gently in the natural direction of the muscles. This helps to loosen and relax the contracted muscles by improving circulation in the affected area.

2. Standing on concrete for a long time, sitting for a long time or putting your legs in awkward positions while you sleep.

3. Being dehydrated. Nocturnal leg cramps are usually caused by drinking too little water. Without water, the body cannot absorb essential vitamins, minerals and other substances. Caffeinated beverages or alcohol contribute to dehydration. Athletes who do not replenish the water

3. **Stretch you leg slowly.** For calf cramps, stretch your leg with your toes pointing upwards and towards the head. Hold this position for 30 seconds. This also eases cramps in the back of the thighs. For cramps in the front thighs, pull your foot on the affected side towards your buttocks and hold it for 30 seconds. Plan a good stretching regimen and follow it regularly.

4. **Apply ice to the cramped muscle.** Rub an ice pack over the cramped area for

lost through perspiration can end up with severe cramps.

4. Mineral deficiencies in your blood. Low levels of calcium, potassium and magnesium are cited as causal factors of leg cramps.

5. Certain medicines, such as antipsychotics, birth control pills, diuretics, statins and steroids can cause cramping.

6. Having flat feet.

10 minutes or until it turns red, an indication that blood cells are heating the muscles. You can also use a heating pad to relax and stimulate blood circulation.

5. **Take a hot shower or a warm bath.** Let the hot water flow longer over the cramped areas. Make sure the water temperature is as hot as you can bear, as this helps to relax the muscles.

6. **Drink plenty of water throughout the day to continuously replenish lost fluids.**

Diet therapy

One of the major causes of leg cramps is the lack of essential nutrients, which can be battled by making a few dietary adjustments. Try supplementing your diet with some of the following:

1. Calcium

While calcium is important for bones, it is also important for the development of healthy muscles. Calcium helps muscles move where we want them to go. Calcium-rich foods like low-fat dairy products, beans, almonds, oranges, figs, broccoli, quinoa, salmon, sardines and seaweed can help prevent cramps.

2. Potassium

Lack of potassium is one of the most common causes of nocturnal cramps. Potassium works with sodium in the body to regulate fluid balance, but an imbalance can prevent this function. Bananas are a popular source of potassium, as are spinach, tomatoes, mushrooms, potatoes, avocados, strawberries, oranges, cantaloupes and eggplants.

3. Magnesium

Magnesium is essential to all living cells and can affect muscles directly through the cell membrane. When your body does not have enough magnesium, it causes muscles to contract and spasm. Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale and broccoli are rich sources of magnesium. Seeds, whole grains, oysters, scallops, halibut, rockfish, molasses and nuts, especially almonds and cashews, provide more magnesium than most foods.

4. Vitamin E

Vitamin E increases blood flow in the muscles, aids in muscle respiration and helps deliver nourishment to the cells. A lack of it forces muscles to work harder when active and can result in leg cramps. Asparagus, milk, seeds, leafy green vegetables, avocados, nuts, milk, eggs and whole grain foods as well as vegetable oils like canola, corn, sunflower, red palm, soybean and olive oil are rich in vitamin E.

5. Glycine

Chamomile tea contains glycine, an amino acid that relaxes the muscles. Drink five cups daily for two weeks to relieve cramps. Honey can prevent recurring foot and leg cramps during the night. Eat two teaspoons of it with meals.

National Art Museum free to the public



The National Art Museum became free to the public earlier this month. CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

The National Art Museum of China in Beijing and the Shanghai Art Museum have been free to the public since early this month. The two museums are pioneers in a program to promote national art museums, public libraries and cultural centers around the country – all of which will be free to the public by the end of this year.

According to the Ministry of Culture, as of 2009 there were more than 70 art museums, 3,000 public libraries above county and more than 3,000 cultural centers above county level around the country, and 38,000 cultural stations in towns and villages in addition.



Taiwanese artist Lu Xianming's work features a touch of nostalgia.



Sculptures can be seen in the museum's yard



Sculptures and installations on display

Photos by Mockingbird

The National Art Museum, located in Wusi Dajie, or the May 4th Boulevard, was constructed in 1961. The main building, with Mao Zedong's inscription on the signboard, features ancient Chinese roofs with yellow-glazed eaves.

In the yard are big old trees dotted among a rotating batch of sculptures.

Since the art museum became free to the public on March 2, it has seen a steady influx of visitors. The museum limits the number of visitors to 6,000 per day; on weekends, the 6,000 almost always get gobbled up.

The museum allows for 2,000 online ticket reservations and gives the rest away at the door.

With 17 exhibition halls over five floors, the museum houses more than 100,000 pieces.

Most collections are modern and contemporary works, including masterpieces by renowned contemporary Chinese artists, award-winning works from major art exhibitions and various folk works. Some

collections are masterpieces from the late Ming (1368-1644) the Qing (1644-1911) dynasties and the early Republic of China Period (1912-1948).

Exhibition across the strait

Presently, the main attraction at the museum is an exhibition called "Flourishing and Flowing," held by the National Museum of Art and the Taiwan Museum of Fine Art. It occupies the top three floors and will continue until April 5; in June it will be moved to the Taiwan Museum of Fine Art in Taichung.

The exhibition features more than 60 pieces of art by 24 artists from the Chinese mainland and Taiwan about life and change during the past decades.

Shen Zhaoliang, 53, born in Tainan, displays "Stage," a series of large photographs of large trucks converted into moving stages for Taiwan's art and theater troupes. Most of these were built in the early 1990s and reflect the energy around Taiwan's unique entertainment industry.

Continued on page 21...



Visitors have been going to the museum in droves since it became free to the public.



The art museum sees a large number of visitors on weekends.

CPF Photo



A comic art show documenting the social development of the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.



Taiwanese artist Chen Wenqi's work at the museum



Sculptures in the yard are replaced every so often.

...continued from page 20

Another Taiwanese artist, Lu Xianming, 52, depicts Taipei's changes in his paintings, including the appearance of more viaducts and heavy machinery in recent years. Lu also depicts the "nobodies" of the metropolis: transients and forgotten citizens. His works contain a touch of nostalgia, and he treats his subjects with warmth.

Young Taiwanese artists are also on display.

Luo Zhanpeng, born in 1983 in Chiayi, depicts the "Strawberry Generation" with his works.

The term, coined by a Taiwanese writer, refers to the '60s generation of office workers who grew up in a sheltered environment and were easily hurt when exposed to the greater world - just like strawberries. Now it is a term used to describe those born in the '80s and '90s who cannot handle high-pressure environments.

Luo's paintings convey the younger generation's fears through contrived gestures and ghostly images. His work has attracted attention in Singapore and Japan.

Sculptures and installations are also part of the show.

Comic art show

On the first floor, the late Chinese comic artist Liao Bingxiong's exhibition is on display until tomorrow, showing Liao's immense contributions to comic art in the 20th century.

The exhibition shows selected works in chronology starting from 1932, when Liao began publishing comic books. His early work focuses on themes of war, particularly the war of resistance against Japan from 1937 to 1945.

In 1947, Liao moved to Hong Kong and began creating comics reflecting the ugly side of Hong Kong society. He returned to Guangzhou in 1950 and created political works that praised China's developments.

From his work, visitors get vivid images of the social development in the past decades on the Chinese mainland and in Hong Kong.

To help more people get to know the artist, the Liaobingxiong Foundation, which was founded in the early 1990s to support public welfare and children in poverty-stricken areas, printed some of Liao's classic comics in flysheets. Visitors can get them for free at the entrance of the exhibition.

After the exhibition, Liao's children will donate 65 pieces created between 1938 and 1990 to the National Art Museum.



A comic art show by Chinese artist Liao Bingxiong on display at the museum.

Photos by Mockingbird

National Art Museum of China

Where: 1 Wusi Dajie, Doncheng District
 Getting there: Take bus 101, 109, 112, 420, 609, 619 or 685 to Meishuguan Dong. Or take Subway Line 5 to Dongsì Station and take exit D.
 Open: 9 am - 5 pm (no entry after 4 pm)
 Tel: 6400 6326
 Admission: Free
 Note: The museum sees a large number of visitors on weekends, so online reservations at namoc.org are recommended. Each day, 2,000 tickets are available through online booking. For groups of 20 people or more, phone reservations three workdays in advance are required.
 Other service:
 A cafe on the first floor offers a variety of coffee, tea and cakes. Coffees range from 20 yuan to 32 yuan. Teas include herbal and fruit tea, Pu'er and black tea (35 yuan to 45 yuan per cup and 108 yuan to 208 yuan per pot). Desserts include ice cream and cakes.

Dining



East Meets West Champagne Dinner with Carol Duval-Leroy

Come for the gourmet dinner no oenophile should miss! Dragon Palace is presenting select prestigious vintages from Duval-Leroy, one of the world's top champagne houses. Five champagnes will be paired with five Chinese and Western dishes, including South China Sea scallops, wagyu beef and symphony of imperial duck, catered by Executive Chef Thomas Laberer and Executive Chinese Chef Allan Tse.

For this evening, the hotel invites is inviting Carol Duval-Leroy to make the culinary adventure even better.

Where: Dragon Palace, Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 19, 6:30 pm (normal hours)
11:30 am - 2:30 pm, 5:30 - 10 pm)

Cost: 988 yuan
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4217
Email: restaurant.beijing@kempinski.com



Spring Taste at Shang Palace

Dine at Shang Palace before April 30 and get the best of both worlds in this lavish yet healthy spring fiesta. The Chinese a la carte menu includes light and healthy dishes featuring fresh baby vegetables and delicious main courses like sautéed beef filet with matsutake and narrow and sautéed diced mandarin oranges in fish with corn.

Where: Shang Palace, Shangri-La, Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: Until April 30
Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 6732

Executive Pastry Chef Jean-Luc did it again!

Kempi Deli has unique new ingredients in its P125 Coeur de Guanaja chocolate, one of the most intense cocoa treats ever created! Chocoholics will adore the lighter than air P125 "marshmallow" or sinfully rich P125 Jivara Praline.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: March, 7 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4227
Email: restaurant.beijing@kempinski.com



Purely vitaminized!

Water isn't the only thing that's pure. Pure foods exist all over the globe. We're preparing the biggest menu of pure items ever, with everything from crab to lamb and bloody Marys to parfaits at Aria Restaurant.

Choose between the 458- and 658-yuan sets featuring Matthew McCool's culinary creations made from organic ingredients that are rich with antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Call for more details about the menu and its related wellness program.

Where: Aria Restaurant, China World Hotel Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
When: April 1-30
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 36



Lobby Lounge: green tea flavor made to savor

Nothing beats green tea. No drink can match its texture and flavor, so come visit the Lobby Lounge to try its four new amazing green teas.

Where: Lobby Lounge, China World Hotel Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
When: April 1-30
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 37

Taste Malaysia: a trip truly Asia

Start a journey with a magical tour of Malay food, local arts, music and entertainment at The Westin Beijing Chaoyang. Two experienced Malaysian chefs from Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur and their culinary teams will showcase a series of Malaysian buffet spread including the most well known dishes guaranteed to surprise.

Where: Seasonal Taste, 2F, The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 7 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: April 8-23, 5:30-10:30 pm
Cost: 328 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity)
Tel: 5922 8888
The First P125 in Beijing

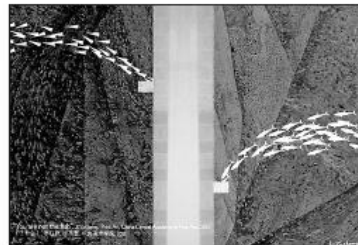
Hotel



Go dark at Earth Hour 2011 for a brighter future

Eleven participants will be selected as event ambassadors to help light up the future at this event and be rewarded with precious gifts. The raffle is open to all, so pick up your phone now and join in now! We are hope you will join us in taking action to make our world a better place.

Where: The Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B, Financial Street, Xicheng District
When: March 26
Tel: 6606 8866



The Opposite House commissions CAFA postcards

Continuing its practice of collaborating with independent musicians and contemporary art galleries, The Opposite House provides a platform to showcase the creativity of up-and-coming young artists. This year's initiative is a commissioned postcard project for art students of various disciplines at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.

"The end result from each artist is impressive. Their unique perspectives in this postcard collection offer us another way to look at the stunning design of Kengo Kuma and are a lovely memento for our in-house guests," says General Manager Anthony Ross.

"You Are Not the Fish," by Ji Yucheng, a student in the Print Art Department's class of 2012, was inspired by the 22-meter stainless steel swimming pool and the experiential feel of the hotel.

Kick off your weekend at Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing

Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing invites guests to indulge in the luxury of a weekend retreat with the hotel's Weekend Experience room package starting from 1,288 yuan for a Superior Room. The package is valid until December 31.

The Weekend Experience room package includes complimentary daily breakfast, complimentary broadband wired and wireless Internet access and unlimited use of the facilities at Kerry Sports (excluding court access and massage services).

Valid only for Friday and Saturday arrivals, package bookings require a minimum stay of two nights. The rate is subject to availability.

Where: Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until December 31
Cost: starting from 1,288 yuan (15 percent gratuity)
Tel: 8529 6388
Email: reservations.hbkc@shangri-la.com
(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

Shake a leg, man – though not literally

By Liang Meilan

Li Han, 14, is a junior high student who recently transferred to an international school because his parents want him to quickly improve his English in order to do well in his high school entrance exams.

The young man, determined to live up to his parents' expectations, worked diligently on listening, writing and reading skills and saw some improvement. Two months after Li entered the school, he could write a 150-word article in English within 40 minutes with few grammatical mistakes.

Yet a problem remains: his oral English has failed to improve because he hasn't been able to find a language partner.

A shy boy, especially in new environments, Li couldn't even mount the courage to speak a sentence to Liu Qiao, the girl who sat next to him in class.

One day, in chemistry, Liu glared at Li and said in a matter-of-fact tone, "Stop shaking your legs. Don't you know all the people in this room are sick of you trembling all the time like a coward?"

Li was surprised to find his legs shaking unconsciously under the table. Embarrassed, he said sorry to Liu.

Apparently his legs had been doing this for a while. The way he did it during class and at lunch became an annoyance to his classmates.

After school, Kit Sampson, the class



monitor sitting beside Li, approached Li and patted him on the shoulder.

"Don't worry," she told him. "Shaking legs is nothing serious. I used to have it three years ago. I was told by the doctor that people do it when they're under too much pressure. Try to calm down and it will disappear."

"Really? Maybe I'm too nervous because of my poor spoken English," Li said.

"Just relax," Sampson said. "Our basketball team was planning to add you, actually. We need a tall guy on the team. You interested?"

Li immediately agreed. "How can I return this favor?" he asked.

"Well, how about you scratch my back today by ..."

Before she could finish, Li interrupted. "Don't insult me. I won't scratch your back!" he blurted.

"Take it easy, man. I'm not telling you to scratch anyone's back. It is just an English idiom meaning to return one's favor," Sampson said.

"Oh. Sorry." "Shake a leg, man," Sampson said. "They're waiting for us at the gym."

"And don't take offense: I'm not teasing you about your leg-shaking syndrome. The expression means 'hurry up.'"

"I see. Thanks," Li said.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Going to the Hospital

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

It is a myth that Chinese is an indirect language filled with flowery and obscure four-word idioms.

Chinese is direct in ways that the English is not. "How old are you?" and "How much do you make?" are perfectly acceptable questions when getting to know someone. "Dongda Hospital for Anus and Intestine Disease Beijing" is just another example of directness. Hospitals in China tend to be more specific – no "General Hospital" here – and there is no doubt what doctors here specialize in.

The two characters, *dong* (east) and *da* (big) is simply the name of the



hospital. Then comes *gang* (anus) and *chang* (intestine) – here I've learned more Chinese than I ever thought I would. Although having a *changwei* (intestine/bowel/stomach) problem is

pretty common in China and a pharmacist can easily help you out there.

The last two characters are *yiyuan* (hospital). *Yi* refers to medical, like *yisheng* (doctor), and *yuan* refers to a place, such as a hospital, school or courtyard.

The funny part is how direct it is. I'm sitting outside the hospital right now – it happens to be right across from the bus stop – watching people coming and going and thinking, "Man, how embarrassing!" And, Hey, there's my coworker, Howie!

Ah ... um ... that's not awkward, is it?

1. Walk lakeside

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): To walk can be a transitive verb. We have: He walks the dock. It means he walks to and fro on the dock. We also have: He walks a tightrope. He walks a road. He was walking up and down the station platform. But, in the sample case, I think it must be: Walk by the lakeside.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): I agree it sounds awkward, but we'd have to examine the context before judging whether this is correct. If you were giving someone directions, you'd say, "Walk lakeside until you see a McDonald's" or something.

2. Their attempts will win with target audience.

ZS: First of all, I don't think there is such a phrase as "win with." To win is a transitive verb. You just say: to win the target audience. For another matter, I don't think the sentence structure is well balanced. We either say: They attempt to win the target audience by designing a new cell phone model – a collocation of "attempts" as the subject with "win" as the predicate is fairly awkward – or: Their attempts at designing a new cell phone model are all in order to win over the target audience.

TBZ: The problem is that "attempts" doesn't guarantee a win, so "win" has to be qualified.

3. Occupational disease safety

ZS: What is "occupational disease safety"? It is a very strange idea. There is no such thing as occupational disease safety. There is occupational hazard, occupational psychology, occupational medicine, but no occupational disease safety. I think the writer wishes to say: occupational safety. This shows that when we are writing a piece, we have to be aware of the concepts we wish to express.

TBZ: This is very funny! The way it reads now is like a safety manual on how to keep the particular disease associated with your work. So, for example, how to protect your teacher's tendonitis from harm.

4. Backwards regulations

ZS: "Backwards" is an adverb. For instance, He leans backwards. He looks backwards over his shoulder. He drives backwards up a driveway. Sometimes "backward" can also be used as an adjective. "Backwards" and "backward" are interchangeable as adverbs. For instance, it is perfectly all right to say: He walks backward and forward in an uneasy state of mind, or He walks backwards and forwards in an uneasy state of mind. However, when it comes to "backward" as an adjective, it cannot be replaced by "backwards." So, the sentence should say "backward regulations."

TBZ: I suspect adding the "s" is a colloquialism in spoken English, perhaps a British-influenced habit. I don't disagree with the professor, but it makes me wonder how many times I've done it incorrectly!

5. He insisted in not joining the new wave.

ZS: I think the English phrase should be: "insist on something." There is no such thing as "insist in doing something." For instance, He insisted on the accuracy of his account. He insists on driving her home. So, the sample sentence should be: He insisted on not joining the new wave. However, there is a similar phrase in English: "persist in." With this phrase, you will have to use "in" instead of "on." For instance, He persists in serving his neighbors. She persists in reading the newspaper at the dinner table. The sweet melody that persists in the mind.

TBZ: I think that "persist in" would be better used here, meaning to continue going on.

BURKE & HARE

(2010)



Scene 1

(An executioner introduces the background story.)

Executioner: Welcome to **bonnie** (1) Scotland. It is the year of Our Lord 1828. And this is where I work, the market square in Edinburgh, our capital city. They're calling this the Scottish Enlightenment. Enlightenment? You could have fooled me. I mean, look at the state of them.

The only people round here looking to be enlightened are the medical students. They come to study at the feet of our famous doctors. Edinburgh is the medical capital of the world.

On one side of the city, you have Barclay's School of Anatomy, and that's run by the **esteemed** (2) surgeon Doctor Robert Knox. Now some say that he's the finest surgeon in all of Scotland. All I can say about Doctor Knox is that he dresses well. Quite the **dandy** (3).

And on the other side of the city you've got Scotland's Royal College of Surgeons. And that's run by Professor Alexander Monro. He's ... how do you put it? Old-school.

Anyway, you'll have to excuse me for a wee moment, ladies and gentlemen. It's ... showtime.



Vocabulary

- 1. bonnie:** here it means beautiful
- 2. esteemed:** respectable
- 3. dandy:** a British slang that refers to a man who places particular importance upon physical appearance, refined language and leisurely hobbies
- 4. scratch out a living:** make a living

(By Wang Yu)

Movie of the week

Like many British movies that make fun of encounters with zombies, serial killers or murderers out for profit, *Burke and Hare* leaves the audience thinking about the absurdity of reality after they finish laughing at its ridiculous characters.

The film stars Simon Pegg, famous for *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*, and Andy Serkis, who some might know for his barely recognizable role as Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*. Together they add funny and warm elements to a story that would otherwise be a tragedy.

Synopsis

Burke and Hare based on the true story of the famous murderous duo in 19th century Edinburgh. After an accident, Burke and Hare end up involved in the highly profitable business of providing cadavers to medical fraternities in Edinburgh, then England's premiere center of medical learning. When they run short on bodies, they decide to start producing a few of their own.



Scene 2

(Burke uses the money he earns from murder to sponsor the young actress Ginny's play. He falls in love with her.)

Ginny (G): I can't work out what makes this character commit murder.

Burke (B): Why, Ginny ... he does it for love. And power. Macbeth isn't wholly evil. There are traces of ... of goodness and regret within him. That's what makes him such a great tragic hero.

The whole play is about his ... his inner struggle between good and evil. Right and wrong.

G: You have hidden depths, William. Women like that in a man.

B: May I see you tonight?

G: Uh, um ... I don't think that's a good idea. I've got costume fittings tomorrow.



Scene 3

(Burke and Hare get caught.)

B: We did terrible things, William.

Hare (H): A man has a right to **scratch out a living** (4). Nobody's gonna blame us for that.

B: Ginny can.

H: Ah!

B: She's gonna find out, isn't she? She'll know everything.

H: I won't lie to you, Willy, it is a possibility.

(People outside are calling for the death penalty.)

B: I can't live with this on my conscience. All right? I've got to confess.

H: The minute we're outta here, we'll find you a priest.

B: There's no way I will ever be redeemed in the eyes of the Lord Almighty. I've gotta confess to the proper authorities here on earth.

H: That's not such a, a good idea, Willy. 'Cause you'd be putting a noose around your own neck.

B: It's no more than I deserve.

H: And me? And Ginny's? Let me handle this.