

Dan and Olivia - May/June 2008

The spring semester is ending, final exams are approaching and the finish line is in view. The end of another school year brings memories and blessings as we anticipate our summer trip home from July 17-August 22.

We are looking forward to spending five weeks home for summer break. Our families are excited and we have plenty of stories to share. Most importantly, we are going to attend Olivia's mother's 90th birthday and a family Reunion. Happy birthday Mom Z! We love you! The family reunion is at Pine Lodge in Blue Lakes, CA. Ah yes, family, sunshine, swimming, food, food, food, cards and drink. In addition, we will attend English-speaking services at our church in Milpitas and meet up with long time friends at the beach. It doesn't get any better

We celebrated our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary at Taian's Ramada Inn. A 5 Star Hotel. The waiter seated us away from the crowd in a quiet area. Another young man working that night attended to our every need. He brought a CD selection of Kenny G music and asked Olivia to make some choices. It set the mood and we had a wonderful time. It was very special and will be remembered for years to come

We also celebrated the marriage of Olivia's former student, David, on June 9. Robert Moore, an ERRC teacher, teaching in Tianjin, accompanied us. David is also one of Robert's former students. The wedding was held in a hotel dining room and was a mix of traditional Chinese and western ceremony. Therefore, the wedding ceremony is unique to every couple. There was an MC, who is usually a friend, boss or relative. The bride wears a white bridal gown but changes into a red traditional dress after the ceremony. The groom usually wears a suit but David opted for a shirt, tie, slacks and dress shoes. The couple makes their way to a stage and bows to both sets of parents sitting on either side of the stage. There is an exchange of rings and at times a kiss. David's attempt to kiss his new bride was foiled as she shied away from him, twice. He had to accept a hug from her that was given without compassion. David claims she is a very traditional Chinese woman. A feast and many toasts followed the wedding ceremony. Adding to the commotion of the activities was a spotlight on the couple, loud music, and an ever flow of bubbles from a front stage bubble machine during the ceremony. As we said, each couple has a unique ceremony.

After a 5 hour tour of Li Temple, which is 35 miles west of Taian, Dan and three of his students went to lunch at a nearby café. The inside of the café had four small tables with four stools at each table. The small stools were familiar looking. The seat is made of fiber and the legs of wood. The stool easily folds up and we see Chinese carry them around for portable seats and use them for playing cards or chess with friends. The inside of the café was full so Dan and his students seated themselves outside. It was a countryside setting with the main course, strutting around the grounds. One simply pointed to what chicken looked tasty and within 25 minutes, roasted chicken was served with your choice of two vegetables, rice, noodles or mantou (steamed bread). The garlic spinach, sweet eggplant and rice complimented the main course.

As for cultural experiences...You have heard of pretty in pink, pink Cadillacs and Pink Floyd. On my way to class one day, I looked inside a cardboard box outside the little shop where I buy bottled water and found a pink tie-dye chicken. That's right, in the springtime, vendors dye the little chicks pink, green, purple or blue and this lucky one lived through the dye job to reach pre-teen age. Now he or she is mostly white with a splattering of bright pink. Hope this one was a girl for pride Dan and I have noticed there is no reporting of crime in China on Channel 9, the only English Channel where foreigners can catch-up on news and special programs. Last week our topic was "Crime" and I mentioned that we have never seen or heard it mentioned on TV. Does China have crime? Is it ever on TV, the newspapers or the radio I asked? Oh, yes, they all chimed in. However, it is shown on Channel 12 and 1, all in Chinese, of course.

Here's the final update on the 1-2 inch hole in my back caused by a nasty cyst. The in/out operation was successful with the help of prayers and pain pills. No stitches were required and with daily visits to the army hospital for bandage changes and Chinese traditional medicine, the hole is healing fine. Tomorrow should be my last visit to the hospital. However, while I am there I'll let my doctor check out my left eye that looks bloody. It's a burst blood vessel. Hey, good thing I look good in red.

We will teach at different schools this coming Fall. Dan will teach Freshman Oral English at Taishan Medical University and Olivia will teach Nursing students between the ages of 16 and 19 years, Oral English at Taian Public Health School. We will not be able to move into our new location before leaving for our summer furlough. The Medical University will provide storage for our items. Our new contact information will be emailed as soon as we settle into our new abode.

Prayer requests

1. Olivia's preparation and facilitating her class finals
2. Chinese earthquake relief – Continued prayer is needed
3. Visa renewals – Smooth process
4. Move to our new location – Smooth transition
5. Safe trip home for our furlough and safe trip back to China
6. Class preparations for the fall semester

Your faithful prayers have enabled us to finish another school year. We pray you have a save a blessed summer.

Love,

Dan and Olivia Jaime