

COLUMN



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In China, look before you eat

Chicken feet. Eel. Pigeon. It's barely been three days since I landed in China, and I've already had the pleasure of tasting these delicacies.

They're not new to me — I've had them before. Eel usually comes in a dark brown sauce with scallions sprinkled on top. But yesterday, the eel I had for lunch was served with bacon and lima beans.

Each time I make my annual summer trip, China seems to have more surprises for me. My welcome dinner was presented atop a lazy susan at a countryside restaurant in Taicang, located in the Jiangsu province, just north of Shanghai. Many restaurants in China use fancy lazy susans, or tables with round glass trays in the middle. Diners take turns rotating the tray in order to reach the dishes.

As I sat at the lazy susan table, one of my hosts gestured over at the neighboring tureen, filled with small, circular shellfish marinated in some sort of blood-red sauce. My host smiled and told me to have one; "a must-try," he said. I picked up a spoon, but after looking closer, I saw that it wasn't shellfish. It was snails.

In China, to refuse — even politely — would be considered rude. I scooped a single snail and plopped it into my bowl. I'd never had snails before; aren't they supposed to be a French delicacy? It took me a full five minutes of observing other snail experts around the table and sucking on my own snail to get the meat out. Chewy, but not bad. Not bad at all.

China is known for being an international player, and it certainly reflects in the food. The morning after my hotel stay in Taicang, I went to the breakfast bar on the lobby floor, where they served "Chinese western food," which consisted of breakfast sausage, Italian fried noodle, corkscrew pasta in a bed of tomato sauce and onions, and German potato, which looked like pieces of regular hunks of boiled potato. I had to laugh. Surprisingly, all three dishes were pretty tasty — though whether they truly represented their respective countries is another matter.

You never know what to expect when it comes to Chinese food, but perhaps that's what makes dish sampling such an adventure. I've got three weeks left here, and at least two other provinces to explore. There's no telling what savory dish will be next.

There is something about Chinese food that always manages to play a crucial role in culture shock, especially for those who are first timers. Heck, I've been visiting China for years, and I still get that cultural foodie shock.

In every major province or city of China, the cuisine is different and the locals are proud of their distinct flavors. Shanghai is known for its underplayed, sweetened tones. Yunnan province is all about the spices, and Beijing is the city of salt. In every major area, there is a different way to cook eel, prepare kale and serve bacon.

Food serves as an outlet of expression and a symbol of friendship. It lets people bond over that which is universally enjoyed and shared by all while taking pride in something totally unique to their province. Here in China, food is culture.



EDITORIAL

Building collaboration

Local events during the year would benefit students and town.

This summer, the town of Chapel Hill, in collaboration with the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, is presenting the fifth annual Locally Grown Music and Movie Series — an event that should happen during the school year too.

The Carolina Union Activities Board has brought big-name bands such as The New Pornographers and Passion Pit to UNC in the last few years. Those events were excellent.

But CUAB should consider working with the town to sponsor events featuring local bands or events at local venues.

Tom Low, president of CUAB, says it's not out of the question, but doing so would depend on potential of student interest — especially if student fees were involved. If a summer series were continued into the fall semester, perhaps it could garner enough student support to warrant future CUAB sponsorship, inviting an

even wider audience.

The Locally Grown series presents either a movie or a local band concert every Thursday night. This year, the bands performing include Birds and Arrows, Lizzy Ross Band and Morning Brigade, which is made up of UNC students. It all takes place on top of the Wallace Parking Deck on Rosemary Street. And it's free.

The event is a must attend for students who choose to stick around Chapel Hill for the summer. Beyond being a great, free way to pass the warm evenings, the series gives students an opportunity they don't often get during the school year: a chance to interact with the community of local artists and Chapel Hill residents.

UNC students are lucky to live in a town that celebrates its local musicians and artists, but events that feature local talent often go unnoticed by students. It's a shame that a series such as Locally Grown, quite popular with those students still in town during the summer, only takes place during a season when many UNC students are absent.

It's important not to discount the importance of music venues, such as Local 506, or events like the annual Carrboro Music Festival, all of which offer students various chances to mix and interact with local musicians.

But a closer-to-campus event, such as Locally Grown, could draw in a larger crowd of students.

What's more, it's cheap and would offer types of music and entertainment that may appeal to all types of students — even those who typically would not explore the local music scene.

This is about more than providing students with new cultural experiences. If the town of Chapel Hill and CUAB worked to collaborate more on producing student-friendly events during the school year, perhaps it would see an increase of student interest in Chapel Hill's local economy: local bands, local foods, local businesses. It's a win-win scenario for both the students and the town.

If many more students felt connected to residents beyond campus, it follows that Chapel Hill could become an even closer, even more inclusive town.

COLUMN SERIES: LESSONS FROM MY PART-TIME JOB

Kids do the darndest things

Working in a toy store can teach a person about life and humanity.

I have never applied for a part-time job expecting to learn any meaningful life lessons. In fact, I don't know anyone who has.

We tend to think of part-time jobs as a means of scraping by and paying our dues until our real careers take off.

If we're lucky, our coworkers will be friendly, the hours will mesh with our class schedules and the pay will be enough to buy groceries.

In October, I was very fortunate to be hired at a local toy store. My coworkers are some of the coolest people I have ever met. My boss understands that I am a student and thus cannot — no matter what — work during class time. I'm able to buy groceries because I play with toys and wrap gifts.

But the best thing about this job is the foggy window pane of humanity made a little clearer by the children who come in.

Before I took this job, I seriously doubted that I would ever want to reproduce. Now, however, I am in touch with my inner Mama Bear. She doesn't need to come out of hibernation for several more years, but I know that she's in there.

It turns out that everything you need to know about people can be learned by observing kids



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in a toy store. The most obvious — and most entertaining — lesson is of the differences between men and women.

There are plenty of sweet, funny little girls who come into the store, but they are already somehow less childlike than the boys.

It's like they just know. They are born knowing. If they see something they want, they're going to try their hardest to get it. They don't need any help, and they aren't above manipulating.

I watch them negotiate with their parents and friends. I watch them lead their little brothers around with pudgy hands — the seeds of motherhood already planted and beginning to sprout — identifying things, teaching them the rules. They are smart. They are tough. I respect these girls.

The boys are different. Their innocence is shockingly raw. They are so genuinely excited about their new toys, and they are eager to share this excitement with you. Boy tantrums tend to involve more tears than shrieking, more begging than bargaining and a sense of lingering defeat rather than determination to outsmart the parents.

I often feel an overwhelming need to protect them because, unlike their sisters, they don't know yet. But they will.

I now have some understanding of why animals eat their young — how can something so sweet ever survive? And if they do survive, how can you, the parent, ever make it through caring for this fragile creature with your heart fully intact?

My employment at this magical place, of course, isn't permanent. After graduation, I will go off in search of the start of my "real career," which I'm sure will prove to be much more grueling than the Christmas rush of frenzied mom-shoppers could ever be.

I wish there was a concrete way to sum up what I've learned working here on my resume: "Skills: Microsoft Office, 85 wpm typing speed, cash register training and a slightly better understanding of humanity."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Judging from things said in newspapers, he's (Frampton) been feeling quite abandoned by UNC. I think he's shown a lot of courage in prison."

Mark Williams, on efforts to raise public support for Paul Frampton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Words from Paul Frampton in Argentina

TO THE EDITOR:

Five months in Devoto prison are not the best for either mental or physical health. I have had about ten colds in this time, probably because the air contains cigarette smoke and various viruses. I am a little better.

My mental health is better because I can now read new physics archive papers from CDs. One of my students, Kevin Ludwick, downloads selected papers on to a web page and they are burned on a CD by my friend from Oxford, Richard Czerniawski in Buenos Aires, and brought into the prison.

This is the best we can do without use of the Internet — forbidden in the prison — and is keeping me updated. I already published five refereed journal articles in 2012.

Another scam victim was released last week after only three months. The main difference seems to have been a different judge, but it should help my case. The judicial system is old, and perhaps not all of the judges even use the internet, which is how my scam was done. My release was denied in April, to the surprise of my lawyer and the universities who had offered me visiting professorships. An appeal was denied on May 31.

I have now entered the trial period with a new attorney at defensoriadope@mpd.gov.ar — to whom new character references should be sent — to add to the about 150 already here from physicists and friends around the world.

There is also a unified attempt to achieve government intervention, involving the Ministers of Science and of Justice, as well as the president of Argentina. It does seem unfair that an innocent scam victim is treated as a professional drug smuggler and left to languish already five months in Devoto. I believe that five physics Nobel Prize winners and two university presidents, including Holden Thorp, have already written the minister of science. I hope to get out next week, but nothing in this justice system is ever certain, including liberty.

Thank you, Mark and Hugon, and all the other colleagues and students and former students for collecting the defense fund in physics, astronomy and mathematics, via my ex-wife.

Paul Frampton
Former UNC professor

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES

• Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.

• Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.

• Students: Include your year, major and phone number.

• Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.

• Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

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The Daily Tar Heel

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Weekly QuickHits

Anderson Cooper

Cooper publicly came out of the closet this week. We all knew, Anderson, but what you said was quite poetic. All the women are jealous of the man who gets to be with your silver-headed self.

N.C. General Assembly

Apparently, we're going back to the dark ages. Not only do we not believe in science, but Planned Parenthood's been defunded. This sends the wrong message: to both women and progress.

Euro Cup Final

While a 4-0 final equals no excitement, Italian Pizzeria 3 sure knows how to celebrate, win or lose. Kudos to no standing space on Sunday. If it had gone your way, the floor might have collapsed.

NBA Draft

To our boys: we've finally forgiven you for breaking our hearts. Congrats on being four of the top picks in the NBA. What's that, dook? Only got two? Guess you know now who's on top.