

J. L. Bowler mascot scampers up Great Wall of China

Blaze, the bighorn mascot for J. L. Bowler Elementary School, is with a group of Bowler teachers touring China. Here is his latest report.

J. L. Bowler Elementary School

How hard can it be to climb up a wall? Unless you're a bighorn sheep and if it's the Great Wall of China, VERY HARD!

Blaze, J.L. Bowler mascot on assignment in China, was in his glory prancing up the steep portions of China's Great Wall as it followed the breathtaking views of verdant pastures.

His companions — Nancy Burton, Jamie Jones, Lana Hess, Amanda Laturner, and Mary Ellen Keeton — found themselves humbled by the terrain, by the waves of people climbing and descending, by setting their feet in stone steps chiseled by thousands of years of footprints.

They were also very hot ... but very, very happy! There is a sense of awe about China that captures one's spirit.

The Chinese people are caught up in the exhilaration of prosperity and change. Even vendors on the Great Wall greet travelers with cheerful smiles. The sadness and oppression of the Cultural Revolution have passed.

This is a country of hope and expectation. The traveler becomes giddy and caught up in the excitement! The hearts of the common people open wide to foreigners.

They are preparing for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and have already laid out the welcome mat.



The Great Wall of China winds across the landscape behind Blaze, with his handler, Lana Hess. Below: Happy wave from a bus is an indication of the friendliness encountered by the J. L. Bowler group touring China. Photo submitted

Chinese people are anxious to share their culture and learn about others'. From the giggling children who wave and call "hello" to the senior citizens who bow and glance through their smiles, the Chinese make foreigners feel like welcome guests in a country where it is safe for people, and bighorn sheep, to wander and explore.

Blaze and his traveling companions learned that China's Great Wall was originally built to keep foreigners out.

Today it is a big factor in bringing people to China.

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GREAT WALL

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Construction of the wall began in about 475 B.C. It now covers 50,000 miles, which is larger than the 35,000 mile diameter of the earth. Various emperors added to the Wall during their dynasties.

The Wall was recently selected as one of the New Wonders of the Old World. Walking on the Wall is

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almost a mystical experience; every other step seems to transcend time and connect with eternity.

Blaze's next stop will be Xi'an where he is looking forward to seeing the fearsome terra cotta warriors. To get there he will be flying on a domestic Chinese airline which, he hopes, will allow for large carry-ons full of Beijing souvenirs.

between 221 and 206 B.C. Evidence suggests that it took about 700,000 people 38 years to complete the 22 square miles of military figures and horses. Each figure has a unique face and expression.

One thousand warriors have been restored and are displayed at the site.

The emperor also started building the first part of China's Great Wall. They say he was "good for the country but not to the people." This led to war and the demise of his dynasty.

What remains are the silent warriors who still faithfully guard his tomb as they have for the last 2,000 years.

Xi'an today is a fairly small city for China as it has "only" seven million residents. Blaze and his traveling companions, J.L. Bowler staff members, have learned that Xi'an's location between mountains and eight rivers has proven to be beneficial. The city is bustling and construction is booming.

The local people are warm and have been especially



Some of the 2,000-year-old terra cotta soldiers discovered in the 1970s. Each figure has a unique face and expression.

friendly to Blaze. He is sporting a new Chinese suit and his horns are adorned with

good luck charms. It has been his good luck to take this trip to China.

The next part of his adventure will involve jade and panda bears. He hopes the

Little Bighorns will be anxious to read and learn about their new Chinese friends!

China Part II

Terra cotta figures form ghostly army in emperor's tomb

J. L. Bowler Elementary School

The eighth wonder of the ancient world was buried for centuries in Xi'an, China. Blaze, the J.L. Bowler bighorn mascot, who is on the adventure of his life with China Plus Tours, spent a recent morning with the Terra Cotta Warriors.

This incredible marvel was unearthed by a simple

farmer in 1974. While working on his well he pulled up pieces of sculptures which turned out to be the funeral army of the tomb of the first emperor of China.

Subsequent excavation has discovered 8,000 warriors which were located about 15 feet below ground. It is believed they were crafted

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