

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Joe Wood



**Hometown:** Corpus Christi, Texas

**Position:** Director of Corporate Programs, The Hutong

**Member since:** September 2014

**What is your most significant accomplishment in the past year:**

Companies often have a multicultural staff but are not sensitive to different cultural needs. At The Hutong, however, we've established a half-Chinese, half-foreign staff, and we incorporate both Chinese and Western styles of management. We strive on a daily basis to achieve the truly multicultural work environment that we promote to other companies. That's why a lot of people keep working here, even when they have the opportunity to take more prestigious positions elsewhere.

**How do you get around:** It's company culture to roll like a China-geek biker gang. If you don't ride a bike when you get here, you'll start cycling pretty soon.

**Favorite destination:** Malaysia is one of the most underrated places in the greater-Asia neighborhood. I went there for a triathlon

race in Panang and discovered an amazing melting pot of Asian culture — you see it in the language, the people, and the food. It's so intriguing and amazing, but people often forgo it for Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and other places in Southeast Asia.

**People would be surprised to know:** I've got a pretty ugly scar on my left knee from my first biking race. It's useful as a reminder not to go overboard, and the rehabilitation process introduced me to my favorite hobby, triathlon.

**Three things you can't live without:** My morning coffee, my connection to a very core group of friends (being out here makes that especially important), and the constant search for better and more amazing things. I come from a family of nine kids, and I'm the only one who lives overseas. In fact, a lot of people in Texas wonder why they should ever leave. They say it's the best place in the world because everything you need is right there. And although I have my Texas pride, I tell students and others at home to try leaving Texas for some perspective.

**What blogs do you follow:** China Law Blog, Beijing Cream, Jottings from the Granite Studio — not only because the author is our executive director, but also because he used to be my history and philosophy teacher.

**What music are you currently listening to:** I go through waves and moods, so it's different all the time. This morning I was listening to Aretha Franklin, a bunch of golden moments music. I'm big on blues. I then transition to some form of country, Americana music, because towards the end of the day, I want to go back to something familiar.

**Most memorable meal:** For Chunjie 2009, I was in Hunan province visiting my Chinese roommate. His relatives owned every KTV in town, so it was an endless round of food, *baijiu*, and KTV. That was my first time having a huge feast where the main dish was tripe. There were three, four different kinds of tripe. At that point I was just trying to experience everything I possibly could, and it was surprisingly good. I remember thinking, this is another opportunity to just let go. Dinner was followed by the most spectacular light show I ever saw in my life — not fancy, but eccentric. It came with that feeling of hometown China, evoking visceral emotions. I felt really integrated, just like one of the guys.