

neighborhood notebook

Great Wall serves as prop for visiting ventriloquist

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Climbing the Great Wall of China isn't so hard. Even a dummy can do it.

Norfolk's Bob Walsh and his dummy, Matthew, were in China putting on shows in schools and churches when Walsh decided to take some time out and embark on the adventure.

"There's more than one place to climb the wall," said Walsh, a Bayview area ventriloquist. "We climbed the most challenging side."

Walsh, 58, didn't climb alone, and neither did Matthew. Walsh's friend and host, Lee Wing Hon, a teacher, brought along his own dummy named Bobby.

Two men lugging heavy bags up the Great Wall of China attracted the attention of local law enforcement.

"Much of the way up, one of the security guards followed us," Walsh said. "He kept watching until we reached the top, took out our dummies and



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At the Great Wall of China, Bob Walsh's friend and host, Lee Wing Hon, a teacher, brought along his own dummy named Bobby.

started taking pictures. Then he laughed and walked away."

During the trip, Walsh and Matthew taught students from kindergarten through sixth grade proper manners, how to resolve conflict without violence and how to take initiative.

"Most of the kids had never seen a ventriloquist before,"

said Walsh, who works in law enforcement and used to perform in Norfolk schools as "Deputy Bob."

Chinese students weren't the only ones to learn.

"I learned how to eat with chopsticks," Walsh said. "And I ate pigeon. I didn't care for it, but I ate it."

Walsh and Matthew already have a tentative invitation to go back to China and hope to return to the country in a few years.