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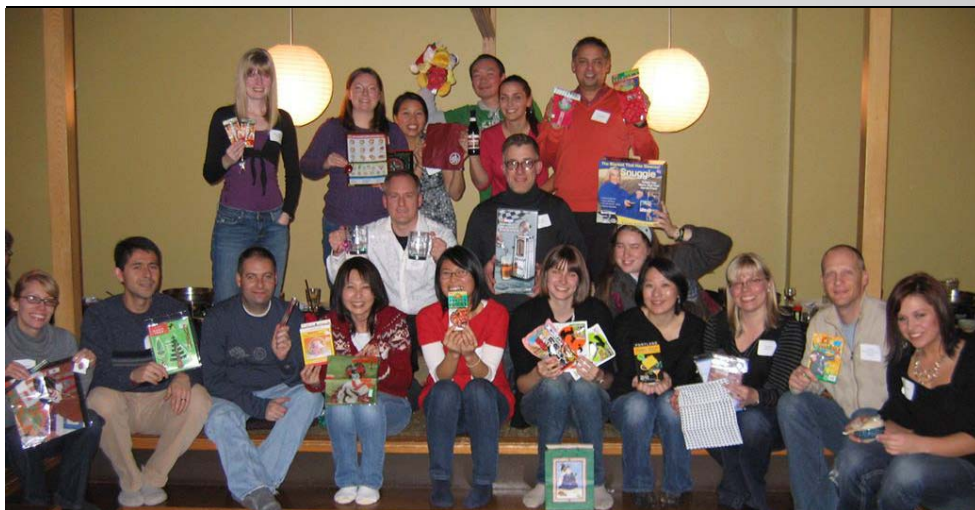
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Bounenkai 2009

By Scott Smith
Photos: Daniel Mick & Walt Barker

JET alumni and friends get their fill of food and gifts



Ah, the holidays. Once the candy wrappers and eggs are cleaned up from Halloween, an entire festive season of gorging ourselves kicks off. Of course there are biggies like Thanksgiving, Hanukah, and Christmas. Only slightly lesser well known is the annual Portland JETAA Bounenkai. It's a chance for many of the local Nipponphiles to get together and eat, drink, and enjoy general merriment.

2009 saw many changes, good and bad, and 56 of Portland's thriving JET community happily reminisced about the good and ate and drank away the bad. This year's fare in the tatami room at Bush Garden seemed to be better than ever. The sukiyaki was excellent, and the servers were very attentive, especially given the size of the unruly mob that had descended on them. The sheer amount of food provided was incredible. The average carnivore seated had approximately 2 pounds (or about a kilo) of beef, not to mention rice, miso shiru, and other accoutrements.

After dinner, but before many people could lapse into food comas, there was the white elephant gift exchange. If you've never taken part in one, please seek out the opportunity to do so sometime during the next holiday season. Preferably at the 2010 Portland JETAA Bounenkai! A white elephant gift exchange is your opportunity to take a very special gift... *Continued on Page 15*

Join us for the Annual

Hanamikai

Saturday, April 10th
Japanese War Memorial
Btwn Burnside & Steel bridges
Time TBD

Enjoy a potluck under the cherry trees along the river. Hope for perfect timing of bloom!



Kaichou's Letter Kimberly Miyake



It's been a busy few months with the Bounenkai, Shinnenkai, Regional Conference, Mochitsuki and "On Paper Wings" screening just to name a few events. Phew!

With so many big events it's been extremely helpful to have so many of our members volunteer. A huge thank you to everyone who helped – we couldn't have done this without you!

One of the things I love about being involved in JETAA is the number of people that get involved. There have been over 100 different JETAA Portland members that I've seen at our events over the past few months including some that helped start our chapter way back in the day up to those that just returned. Some of our most helpful volunteers were those that have been back from Japan for a long time, but haven't attended any events in a few years or ever. It's great to have so many people active in our chapter and trust me when I tell you that the other chapters who attended the Regional Conference as well as CLAIR were *VERY* impressed with JETAA Portland. Thank you for showing everyone what JETAA is all about!

We are coming up on the end of our JETAA year and have many officer and committee positions available. If you are interested in getting more involved in an official role or just want to help with any events, please let us know. Contact me at president@jetaaportland.com for more information.

Kim

Letter from the Editor Daniel Mick

It has been a wonderful year editing the JETAA Portland newsletter for you. I've thrown myself into the role of editor with gusto and have enjoyed every moment! I'm proud of how every issue has turned out, but most importantly I hope that YOU have benefited from and enjoyed these five issues that I produced. The newsletter is here to serve you in a variety of ways: raise awareness of upcoming events, provide coverage of past events, unify the body of members, help connect you with the larger Japanese community, raise awareness of JET and JETAA within the larger community, and entertain (and reminisce) with Japan related topics.

This year saw a large expansion of the length and scope of the newsletter. There have been large features (Bamboo Sushi sustainability interview Aug '09; Flags Forward WWII reconnection story Mar '10; Consul General Takamichi Okabe interview Nov '09; Oregon Buddhist Temple's Reverend Gregory Gibbs interview Aug '09). We hope to include more, such as local Japanese food producer interviews in the next issue.

New columns and regulars have been added such as Tabemashou! restaurant reviews, What the Bunka?! cultural articles, Mogo Mogo Onomatoeia, Life After the B.O.E. comic, and the continuation of Dear Abiko.

We also hope to stay intimately connected with alumni through Where Are They Now?, and future alumni with Notes From the Field in every issue.

We need your help though! Producing content for the newsletter is too much for any one, or several people. We want to crowd source you, the members', thoughts opinions and stories. Volunteers for event coverage or feature and column writing would be great. But even a few paragraphs of thoughts and stories are great. It's an easy way to contribute, and for you to share your thoughts and memories with other members.

Be on the lookout! Expect mini-surveys or requests for short blurbs for topical content at JETAA events. Expect a specific writing or photo submission every issue. We want to hear from you! And any other idea, content, or request is welcome!

Regardless of how, I encourage you to get more involved with JETAA whether it be by contributing to the newsletter, or by submitting ideas, sitting in on a monthly meeting, or volunteering for an event.

I plan to continue as newsletter editor next year. Thanks for a great year this time around!



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The JETAA Portland Newsletter is published by the Portland Chapter of the JET Alumni Association. Information presented and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the JET Programme, the government of Japan, or any of its entities. For comments and questions please contact the JETAA Portland President. Please direct newsletter comments and submissions to the JETAA Portland Newsletter Editor. Keep up on all current JETAA Portland activities and events by visiting the official website at www.jetaaportland.com

News from the Consulate

Portland JET interviews completed; Japanese speech contest

The Consulate General of Japan in Portland held selection interviews for the 2010 JET Program Thursday and Friday, February 11th and 12th, at the World Trade Center in downtown Portland. With the help of local university professors and volunteers from JETAA Portland, over 90 interviews were completed in two days. Everyone was very impressed by the quality of candidates evaluated and we look forward to sending a strong group from Portland this August. Please contact your JETAA officers if you are interested in helping with the June JETAA Orientation and Q&A, or any other of this Summer's upcoming events to help prepare the new JETs for departure.

The Consulate-General of Japan in Portland is pleased to announce the Twenty-second Annual Japanese Speech Contest, which will be held at the World Trade Center Two on Saturday, April 24, 2010. The Contest is open to middle and high school students who are studying Japanese language.

There are three divisions:

Division 1 is for middle school students.

Division 2 is for high school students.

Division 3 is for immersion program students of middle and high school level or who are from homes where Japanese is spoken.

Speech topics are:

Division 1 わたしのすきな○○ (WATASHI NO SUKINA ○○ - "Things I like")

Division 2 わたしの将来(しょうらい) (WATASHI NO SHŌRAI - "My future")

Division 3 わたしの意見(いけん)・考え(かんがえ) (WATASHI NO IKEN / KANGAE)

The application deadline is on **April 1st at 1 p.m.** We will close the application process when we fill a set number. The Guidelines and Entry Forms is available on the Consulate website at:

http://www.portland.us.emb-japan.go.jp/tips/2010_Guideline_&_Entry_Form.pdf

Japan Now

The official newsletter of the Consulate-General of Japan in Portland, Oregon



The latest issue of *Japan Now* (February 8, 2010), features coverage of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the **Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security of Japan and the USA**; the **foreign policy speech** by the minister for foreign affairs; the **policy speech** of prime minister Yukio Hatoyama; and Japan's decision to **dispatch self-defense force units** to assist with the UN in Haiti.

You're already a subscriber *Japan Now*, right? No...? Head over to the Consulate-General of Japan in Portland website and sign up for their monthly e-newsletter through the link in the lower right-hand corner. It's an easy way to stay up to date on Japanese news! <http://www.portland.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>

Returner's Conference Speaker: Bob Schnyder

JETAA Portland webmaster asked to speak at JET conference in Yokohama

JETAA Portland's webmaster, Bob Schnyder, was asked to speak at this year's JET Returner's Conference in Yokohama, March 1-3, 2010. The purpose of this conference is for CLAIR to provide second to fifth year JET Programme participants who are completing their tenure with information and strategies for coping with reverse culture shock, making life path decisions, and securing future employment. Presentations and workshops will be conducted by representatives from various embassies and chambers of commerce, business professionals, and JET alumni from around the world.

The focus of Bob's presentation is on

marketing. Below is the title and brief overview of his presentation:

Marketing 2.0 – Secrets to Obtaining Your Next Job

This presentation will approach looking for a job and evaluating your career from a marketing perspective. If you want to impress, then learn these tips and tricks to improve your ability to find a job in marketing. How do you plan to separate yourself from everyone else looking for a job today? Did you know that you have some amazing assets already with the JET Program as one of your best kept secret weapons? Join us for an interactive conversation to help you set a course for a career in Marketing.

Bob is the only American and one of a select few JET Alumni members from across the globe speaking at the conference. "This is truly an honor to be selected to speak", said Bob, "I am hoping that through my presentation, I can help to drive home the importance of getting involved with local JETAA chapters and how they serve as a great resource for finding employment and networking with like-minded people with interests in Japan."

This is great exposure for JETAA Portland and it continues to build further on the momentum we have enjoyed from hosting the Technology Regional Conference.

JETAA Portland at Mochitsuki 2010

By Stephanie Smith

Parents and students are lured-in to learn about JET while kids 'fish' for candy

Mochitsuki 2010 was a year for change, in both senses of the word. Facility change from the years of the event being held at Portland Community College's Sylvania campus, to this year's debut of the event at the Scottish Rite Center in downtown Portland. Walking into an event and seeing crowds may cause some to feel that they have just arrived at the party, others may be intimidated by crowds and turn away. Hopefully the former was more often the case, as the event was crowded for almost the entire four hour block.



Several rooms were set up to separate stage areas from informational booths, where the JET Alumni Association table was decorated, organized and stocked with brochures, pamphlets and fliers on upcoming events in the community related to Japan. Seven members of the Portland JETAA chapter volunteered to work at the "Fish Game" and JETAA table to either serve the young children or speak with interested parties about the JET program.

There were a steady stream of students, adults and even grandparents that were looking into programs that would take themselves or a loved one to the land of the rising sun. Recently unemployed parents flooded the booth with questions about teaching in Japan when at the JETAA booth, encouraging alumni that we may be

an asset to Portlanders looking for work abroad.

Most of all, children love the JETAA presence at Mochitsuki every year. We have parents that see us and say, "I'm SO glad you are here again this year, you are the only reason my son wanted to come!" This year we even had three children volunteer to work with us, putting together the candy bags behind the curtain!

Throwing some change at the booth, grabbing a wooden fishing pole, casting it into the "sea" and reeling in a plastic bag of various candy seems to be the highlight of many children's day at Portland's biggest annual Japanese cultural event. They just keep coming back, whipping that fishing pole and it's wooden clip at the volunteers behind the curtain...



JETAA Elections! *By Todd Van Horne* Have fun getting involved volunteering

Volunteering as a JETAA officer or committee chairperson is an easy and fun way to get more involved in Portland's Japanese community!

We hold monthly meetings over dinner, which is provided by JETAA, and is often at a popular area Japanese restaurant. All officers and chairs are invited to events at the Consul-General's house, where it's easy to meet leaders from the Japanese community. And we have the opportunity to be involved with lots of other local organizations, building ties and making each others' events even better.

There are **four officer positions**: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There are **eight committee chair positions**: Social, Newsletter, Webmaster, Career Development, Cultural, Community Service, Sports, and J-Kaiwa.

Officer platform statements are due by March 15th. Chair positions are appointed by next year's president.

For details on the positions, please see our bylaws at <http://www.jetaaportland.com/about>.

And to express interest, or with any questions, please email the president and webmaster at president@jetaaportland.com, webmaster@jetaaportland.com



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Shinnenkai 2009

Recent JET Returnees, Career Experts, and Business Leaders Gather

By Daniel Mick
Photos: Walt Barker

It was a joyous evening of food, fun, and friends high above Portland for the 2009 Shinnenkai party. The event doubled as the reception for the successful regional conference on technology. JETAA Portland showed off a bit for our guests as the party was held at Portland City Grill. The city lights twinkled along the river below while 80+ revelers dined on an exquisite buffet and drank sake and other spirits.

The crowd was more diverse than usual because of the conference: representatives from 11 other JETAA chapters across the US and Canada joined JETAA Portlanders for the festivities making it an international gathering. Our guests were able to shine as each chapter brought gifts representing their region to exchange with the other chapters, including cowboy hats, maple syrup, and teddy bears. Shinnenkais mark new beginnings and looking forward, a fitting celebration for the gathering of so many chapters working towards the future success of JETAA chapters everywhere.

Portland alumni were not left out from the reception of gifts though. Our amazing sponsors (see them all on pages 8 & 9) donated numerous gift certificates, vouchers, and prizes. Most Portland alumni walked away grinning with gifts in hand. A HUGE thanks to our sponsors for helping make the conference and shinnenkai a success! Be sure to show them your support and business.

The shinnenkai is always one of the biggest events of the year. Be sure to check JETAA Portland emails and website regularly; we love to see everyone enjoying a variety of events throughout the year. See you soon!



On Paper Wings Screening

The International School & Yuuyake Shimbun partner with event

By Daniel Mick
Photographer: Jim Hill

A diverse group of people came out to The International School on a February evening to watch a screening of *On Paper Wings*. There were representatives from local Japanese associations, students in Japanese immersion programs, those who had learned of the event from fliers and Mochitsuki, and of course JETAA Portland members. As a cultural event to partner with and engage the wider Japanese community it was a success.

On Paper Wings is a documentary by

local filmmaker Ilana Sol. It is about a Japanese balloon bomb in 1945 in Bly, Oregon that claimed the lives of the only people killed on the continental U.S. as a result of enemy action during WWII, and how forty years later, the decision to fold a thousand paper cranes unite the Japanese and American civilians who were involved and affected by this incident.

Guest of honor for the event was Reverend Gregory Gibbs from the Oregon Buddhist Temple (see the Aug '09 newsletter for his interview). In the spirit of the film's message of peace and connection, Rev. Gibbs performed a short Buddhist blessing before the film with regalia.

After the film there was a question and answer time with Ilana, the filmmaker. Guests asked her why she decided to make the film, about her time in Japan, technical details

about making and editing the film, and what projects she hopes to pursue next.

Guests also enjoyed Japanese refreshments and had the opportunity to fold paper cranes of their own in solidarity with the message of peace of the film. There were many capable origami experts on hand to teach how to fold paper cranes.

More information about the film, and DVDs for purchase, can be found at: www.onpaperwingsthemovie.com



“Mogo Mogo” モゴモゴ *By Daniel Mick* Japanese Onomatopoeia/Phenomime/Psychomime

The Japanese language has a unique feature of symbolic words that represent more than just sounds, as English onomatopoeia does, like, whizz, bang, pop, etc. Wikipedia classifies these as:

***Phenomime** or onomatopoeia (擬声語 *giseigo* or 擬音語 *giongo*); words that mimic actual sounds.

***Phenomime** (擬態語 *gitaigo*); words that mimic non-auditory senses

***Psychomime** (擬態語 *gitaigo* or 擬情語 *gijōgo*); words that represent psychological states or bodily feelings. While onomatopoeic words abound in every language, phenomimes and psychomimes are much rarer.

<http://www.nihongoresources.com/dictionaries/onomatopoeia.html>

ほうほう / ハウハウ - gobbling sound

めりめり / メリメリ - to snap, split, crack / creaking sound

のこのこ / ノコノコ - to enter a situation nonchalantly

みすみす / ミスミス - missing what's right in front of the eyes

くしゅん / くシュン - sneeze sound

しとすと / シトシト - dampness / to drizzle

らんらん / ランラン - intense fiery eyes

ととと / トトト - walking sound

The Japanese know how to celebrate!

Join us at Sake One for the annual
Spring Kura Sake Blessing, Sat Mar 27

Ceremony begins at **11AM**, followed by Takohachi Taiko, and Obukan kendo. *There is also a complimentary tour.*

Email Amanda, cultural@jetaaportland.com by **Fri Mar 19** if you are interested in joining the tour.



Got amazing content
to contribute?

Send stories, art, essays, pictures, ideas, comments, opinions, etc.

to Daniel at
newsletter@jetaaportland.com

えと。。。あの。。。ええ。。。 Japanese Getting Rusty...?

Join us at the next **J-Kaiwa!**

First Fri every month @Hawthorne Lucky Lab 7-9PM

Apr 2 / May 7 / Jun 4

Come eat, drink, and brush up on that 'ol Nihongo you used to be so good at. Bring a friend!

JETAA Regional Conference in Portland

Technology problems tackled for JETAA chapters everywhere

By Beth & Bob Schnyder;
Photographer: Walt Barker

The JETAA Technology Regional Conference was held on January 29-31 in Portland. A total of 11 chapters were represented including 8 from the U.S. and 3 from Canada. Representatives from CLAIR New York as well as JETAA USA also attended. During this year's JETAA USA National Conference in Chicago JETAA Portland's own Bob Schnyder gave a presentation on "Using New Technology" in which the focus was how to incorporate social media into your chapter. His presentation quickly turned from social media to the recognition that many chapters don't have functioning websites, a way to email their members and other basic technology. From this realization, a JETAA Technology Committee was formed and the goal was to make technology accessible to all chapters regardless of their members' technical knowledge. The Technology Regional Conference was aimed at tackling some of these issues to get all chapters up to the same basic level.

Friday evening all of the delegates arrived and were taken to Consul General Okabe's residence for a welcome reception. Consul General Okabe generously opened his home to many guests including the conference attendees, JETAA Portland volunteers and others in the Japanese community. Consul General Okabe's wife showed off her talents by cooking much of the evening's menu including a delicious tiramisu. Following the meal at the residence the conference attendees moved on to a nijikai at Henry's 12th Street Tavern for some local beer and fun.

The conference sessions were conducted on Saturday and Sunday and started off with a review of a technology survey that was sent to chapters around the world. **Some of surprising results:**

--1 in 5 chapters internationally does not have a live website

--Results show that US chapters are generally better equipped

--Member data management is a major issue, so that CLAIR can also connect with our members

--Most chapters claim a rather low level of technical competency

--Emails are the most common way to communicate with members, but Facebook is a close second for dissemination of information

--Centralization and consolidating information is another critical issue



The focus of the conference was:

--Make this a working conference - create something everyone can use

--Develop a website blueprint/template to offer other chapters

--Collaboration to improve all of our sites

--Look for centralized location for resources

--Pair high tech people with low tech people to share/help each other

--Member data management

--Find ways to pass along the resources and have everyone utilize

The conference sessions covered the following topics:

--Website Blueprints: WordPress & Joomla

--Email/Database management: use 3rd party solutions such as eROI & MailChimp

--Improve Membership Communication: managing data, increasing/

retaining participation

--Utilizing Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, HootSuite

The action timeline for accomplishing the goals were:

--Rough draft of templates, solutions, how-to's due on March 8th

--Posted to JETAAUSA website by March 15th

--Communication plan to all chapters by March 22nd

--Goal to be able to release a framework/guideline for the JETAA USA Conference in August 2010

Collaboration for all JETAA North America & JETAA International - Long term vision:

--2 years from now all JETAA chapters have a website

--Create a tech network with a web of people/chapters to use as resources

--Improve ongoing communication

--Tech resource depository, easily accessible and usable



A lot was accomplished in a short amount of time and the work will continue to strengthen all JETAA chapters. CLAIR is excited about all of the things discussed at the conference since it is a project they have been working on for many years and in one weekend we have made huge progress.

Thank you to all of the JETAA Portland volunteers who helped during the weekend. Otsukaresama deshita!

JETAA Portland



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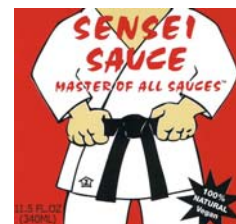


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Flags Forward

By Aaron Sponseller

Across time and continents, JET reunites WWII soldier's flag with family



Aaron Sponseller, a Salem native and Trailblazers "FANatic", was a JET in Hiroshima-ken from 2006-09. He now lives and works in San Francisco with his wife Tomoko.

As I exited Nagaoka Station, I had no idea what would happen over the course of the next several hours. After taking an all-night bus trip from Hiroshima to Tokyo and then hopping on a train for another couple hours to reach this city in Niigata Prefecture, my wife, Tomoko, and I were tired yet enthusiastic to see how this day I had long-awaited would turn out.

We had come to Nagaoka to finish something that was long overdue. My grandfather served in the United States Army for the entire duration of World War II. In the spring of 1945, in the Philippines, he came into possession of a Japanese war flag.

When enemy soldiers were captured, they were stripped of all their gear and military issued clothing. It was not unusual for their captors to take these objects and keep them as souvenirs. Allied soldiers would take Nazi paraphernalia back to their home countries in the European Theatre; they did the same thing with Japanese paraphernalia in the Pacific. Japanese swords, *katana*, were prized as souvenirs. However, getting a sword back to the U.S. may have proven difficult, so many soldiers looked for smaller or more easily smuggled items. Less conspicuous items. One of the most common items to smuggle home was a Japanese flag.

Before heading to war, most Japanese soldiers took part in a ceremony of some kind that marked their departure. These ceremonies were typically held at Shinto

shrines around Japan, with each ceremony marking the departure of several soldiers. During the ceremony, most soldiers were presented with a medium-sized Japanese flag (just the traditional white flag with a red "sun" in the middle). The flags were usually written on, however. The top of the flag read 「武運長久」(pronounced bu-un cho-kyu). This translates to something along the lines of "continued luck in battle." The flag would also have the name of the soldier on it in large characters, as well as the name of the person at the ceremony who presented that flag to the soldier. The presenter was typically someone important to the soldier such as a boss or a good friend. Around the red sun were the hand-written names of the soldier's friends or family or otherwise important people. The soldiers carried these flags with them throughout the war as reminders of who they were fighting for.

So, in the spring of 1945, in the Philippines, my grandfather found himself in possession of one such flag. Another soldier had quite a few flags and just gave one to my grandfather. Before I moved to Japan, my grandfather told me "I've wanted, for some time, to try to return the flag to the family to which it belongs. But I have no idea how you go about doing anything like that."

So, after moving to Japan I asked my father to try to find the flag. It was somewhere in my grandfather's house, but his house is in San Francisco and the rest of my family lives in Oregon. Compounding the task of finding the flag was the fact that my grandfather just has a lot of... Stuff.

About a year after moving to Japan, however, my father and grandfather found the flag, in great condition, in a closet. When I returned to America for a wedding the next summer, they gave me the flag and told me to take it back to Japan and try to find the family to which it belonged.

I was very excited. It was as if I had been invited to take part in history, in a way. Since childhood I have always loved history and especially American

and Japanese history. One of my majors at university was history with an emphasis on U.S. history and the history of war. I had studied Japanese for almost four years, too. The opportunity to return the flag was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see both the American and Japanese side of things regarding WWII.

Upon my return to Japan, my fellow English teachers at Kokutaiji High School helped me translate the writing on the flag. Within minutes we knew the name of the soldier who had at one time carried the flag into battle: Bunichiro Kaizu.

I "Googled" his name in English and Japanese. I even searched using other names that were on the flag, but nothing worthwhile ever came back. There also seems to be no government branch in Japan that keeps a record of all the names of soldiers who fought for Japan in WWII. The search for Mr. Kaizu seemed to be hitting a dead-end.

Increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress, and not willing to give up the quest my grandfather had charged me with completing, I went back to the flag itself in search of another clue of some kind. Laying the flag out on my desk at work, I stared at it for quite awhile. Many strategies were employed. I looked at it from afar, from up close, from the side, upside down, I looked at the back of the flag, even. There was seemingly nothing left for the flag to tell me. My final Hail Mary strategy was to go over every square inch of the flag with a magnifying glass. And that is when I saw it.

It was not very big. It was not easy to see. It was unclear at first what it was or if it was anything at all. It was a very, very faint red... smudge.



Networking & Tabemashou! 食べましょう! Jan '10

Our first professional networking event joins Tabemashou! for a taste of *Bush Garden*

By Daniel Mick & Todd Van Horne

Results this month were averaged from all submitted surveys of those attending. For HH special only (drink purchase required):

Menu Selection (4.2 avg)

Variety of predictable fried/grilled fare. 14 apps total. Cali Roll the only sushi.



Food Quality (3.9 avg)

Dishes are well done. None impressed, but none disappointed.



Service (4.0 avg)

Friendly, Japanese, courteous. Imagine them easily overwhelmed if busy.



Ambience (4.3 avg)

Unique in Portland. Could be updated, but age of lounge adds to appeal.



Value (4.4 avg)

\$2.50 for any HH appetizer is hard to beat! Highest average rated category.



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



JETAA's first quarterly professional networking event was held on February 8th, in conjunction with Tabemashou! at Bush Garden.

Part of JETAA's mission is to provide a professional network for JET alumni; there is an annual career panel in the fall scheduled to coincide with recent returnees' job searches, and in response to JETAA member feedback after that event, the new quarterly networking events will offer follow-up opportunities as well as a chance for any JETAA members to expand their professional network.

Unlike the career panel, which focuses on job search fundamentals, the networking meetings are mostly unstructured, creating an open forum for people to share experiences or gain knowledge about various fields.

The first meeting was attended by about half JET alums and half non-JETs, in industries such as translation, education, wine sales, marketing, and web design.

"David and I just moved to Portland

from San Francisco. This event was nice opportunity for us to get to know people who have something to do with Japanese language and culture," said recent transplant Noriko Nakashima.

Paul Haulbrook, insurance agent with Farmers Insurance, stressed the importance of sharing common experiences. "One of the benefits of attending social and professional functions through JETAA is the great opportunity to meet people with a common experience. One of the most difficult things about transitioning back into life after teaching in Japan is the feeling that no one else empathizes or understands that transition. For me, the support and encouragement I've received from my friends at the JETAA has been invaluable."

Future networking events may be held in conjunction with other regular events, or may be standalone events. If JETAA members have suggestions for good venues or input on the best times to hold these events, please email career@jetaaportland.com. See you in a few months!



DISCOUNTED TICKETS TO PORTLAND TAIKO'S SPRING CONCERT!

The Way Back Home

Dolores Winningstad Theatre (1111 SW Broadway, Portland)

Saturday, March 27 at 2pm and 8pm

Adults \$18 | Youth, Students, and Seniors \$16

Portland Taiko is offering JETAA members and friends discounted tickets to their upcoming spring concert, *The Way Back Home*. Come see the local debut of Portland Taiko's touring program, *The Way Home*, for almost \$8 less per ticket than what you'll pay on Ticketmaster.

To reserve your tickets, send cash or

check to the Portland Taiko office at 3230 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland, OR 97211. Please include a note with your contact information, the number of tickets you would like, and which performance you'd like to attend. Or, you can go to JETAA Portland's community events page (www.jetaaportland.com/category/community-events/) and buy tickets through PayPal (with a small credit card fee added). If you have any questions, please contact Portland Taiko's ticket coordinator, Amy, at amy.spofford@portlandtaiko.org, or call the office at 503-28-TAIKO (503-288-2456). **But hurry—the deadline for this offer is Thursday, March 11!**



Restaurant review group treks to Syun Izakaya, and eats guilt free at Bamboo Sushi

Now that the newsletter is on a quarterly publication there will be three Tabemashou! events between issues. We've received kudos for the reviews so we want to at least include the akachouchin (red lantern) ratings for each. We'll see what the format evolves into from here.

Syun Izakaya

Although there is no rating for accessibility, it must be noted that Syun is WAAY out there for the typical Portlander. It was a 40 minute drive and almost 90 minute Max/Bus trip to Hillsboro. However, it must be noted that we think it is worth the trip, if to try out Syun at least once!

Menu Selection

Syun

Filled with izakaya staples, nouveau interpretations, no-where-else dishes, and extensive sake list.



Food Quality

We were nitpicky, but it's great considering selection and izakayaness.



Service

Genki and attentive. There was some waiting, but they were also busy the duration of our visit.



Ambience

Where did all these gaijin come from?! As close to a cozy izakaya in Japan as you can find in the area.



Value

Reasonable. Some skimpy portions and foamy pours. (Don't forget gas money.)



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



Nestled under an old library in a tight but scattered floor plan, walls lined with sake bottles and barrels, and lightly grease-hazed paraphernalia hanging from the ceilings, Syun scores big on atmosphere.

The menu is extensive and supplemented by a true "Daily Specials" chalkboard the waitresses carry to each table. Why anyone, who hasn't been to Japan, would eat sushi here with all the other gems available on the menu is beyond me...

We nitpicked that some things were too sweet or not salty enough, and everything had too much oil. But many shined: the takoyaki sauce was just right; the grilled saba was broiled to perfection; the seaweed salad mix was the best any had had outside Japan.

Many of the dishes were a bit on the small side.

The wait staff was obviously struggling with what is obviously an always busy restaurant.

Make the trip to Syun. Many feel it is the best Japanese restaurant in PDX.

Bamboo Sushi

If you haven't heard of Bamboo Sushi you should be ashamed of yourself... the August 2009 issue had a two page feature interview with the owner about them being the first fully certified sustainable sushi restaurant in the world! Back issues are available online at:

www.jetaaportland.com/newsletter

Take a date to Bamboo. It's swank. Stone, paper, and wood are contrasted to create a soothing contemporary stage to dine in. (If nothing else, take a date for dessert: the Ota Tofu cheesecake is divine, and the azuki filot has a depth a richness hard to describe.)

Did we mention sustainability? It

really is important! Even beyond that, the food still deserves hype. Dishes are complex yet balanced with thoughtful ingredient combinations.

Bamboo is expensive compared to most Japanese restaurants. We were divided on if, how, and what justified which prices. We were all shocked at the salads though, especially for the sake of the non-fish eaters. The green salad was dry and boring and crazy expensive if not HH; the seaweed was typical but tiny and overpriced.

Bamboo is another must visit. Many also feel IT is the best Japanese restaurant in PDX.

Menu Selection

Bamboo

Extensive sushi, even without all the unsustainable fish they don't serve. Solid cuisine selection. Many unique.



Food Quality

Pristine. One of the few Japanese restaurants at the top in Portland.



Service

Not outstanding, but very good.



Ambience

Minimalist walls, tableware, and lighting focus the attention on the gorgeous food before you.



Value

Best sushi in town for true quality vs. price. (And for the 'real' global price!) Other items were quite mixed...



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



Where are they now?

By Daniel Mick

We catch up with Portland JET alum Chris Riedl, Tokushima 1997-2000



Tell us briefly about your time on the JET Programme.

I'd never lived abroad nor even been abroad prior to JET. I tried everything and attempted to suck the marrow out of every experience. I got involved in my school's sports teams, I joined the local AJET musical every year, I traveled to other foreign countries during the school breaks, and overall grew as a person. It was tough leaving Japan. I had a good life: a nice apartment, a car, a girlfriend, and a job I liked, but my contract was up and I was missing aspects of home.

What happened in the year after you returned?

The first year back was a mixed bag. On the plus side, I was able to reconnect with family and friends. I went on a couple of amazing trips, including a three month backpacking trip to the Europe and the US East Coast. On the down side, my career completely stalled. Looking back I see the biggest reason was that I didn't have a plan. The economy was tanking so I didn't stand out to prospective employers. I also had zero interest in going to grad school. So career-wise it was a challenge. After several months of nothing, I had to settle for a job as an assistant manager at a video store just to pay the rent. It was very humbling.

I was an active member of JETAA Portland and enjoyed a blossoming social life within the US-Japan community but it wasn't enough. It was almost one year to the day that I had left Japan when I went back for a friend's wedding. As soon as I stepped outside of Kansai Airport and smelled the hot, humid air and heard the taped music of some awa odori drums in the back-

ground, I knew I wasn't done with Japan. I wasn't happy with my life in America and I had a chance to rectify it. So I hit-up a few JET friends I still had and within two months I had a job teaching English in Japan again.

What was different about your second time in Japan?

I didn't come in as a fresh faced newbie. I was solid upon touchdown. I knew what to expect from the job, the culture, and the social life. And I appreciated the second chance. Some people might say I couldn't handle the "reality" of life back home. But, honestly, I wasn't done with Japan. Like Rocky Balboa, I still had something left in the basement.

There were some definite changes: whereas the first three years I was focused on the JET community, the second time I broadened my social network to include more Japanese people and other non-JET foreigners. I also gained a better understanding of the Japanese school system. I was no longer a temporary JET, "a foreigner under glass"; I was there as long as both I and the BOE wanted me there. By the time I left in 2008, I had been at my school for longer than 75% of the teaching staff. The teachers treated me differently as a result which allowed me to see a much different side than I had previously.

Why'd you return to the US again?

Eventually I ran out of ways to entertain myself as an ALT. It was time to come back to America. But this time was much different: I wasn't being forced out. I came back with a plan and hit the ground running. Within two months of returning to Oregon I had started classes in massage therapy. A lot of the Japanese people I talked to about it thought I was crazy. After all, in Japan teachers are highly respected. Massage therapist?! Not so much. But I had the support of my wife and her very open-minded father in addition to my own family and friends.

Tell us about your life now.

I am currently working as an LMT (Licensed Massage Therapist). I have a small practice in my home and I was recently offered a job at a local massage business. Starting in April, I'll be participating in an eight-month research study looking at the effects of Swedish massage on people with chronic pain whom are recovering from opiate addictions. As for my continuing connection to Japan, my wife makes sure that is staying solid. We do video-conferencing calls through Skype to her father or sister every week, and of course we're involved in the local community through J-Kaiwa and JETAA.

How does or doesn't your life look like what you expected after JET?

Right now my life is pretty close to what I envisioned when I first told Akiyo about wanting to go back to Oregon and become a LMT. The only strange part is that I wouldn't have guessed that my sister would be living with us, but even that has been a positive experience.

How has your time on JET helped you back in the US?

It helped me to see the bigger picture in just about anything. Especially being able to see life, politics, culture, and relationships from another perspective. I don't think I was ever close-minded before, but I certainly had a much smaller worldview.

What are you looking forward to?

Starting a family and building my massage practice. Eventually I think it would be awesome to open a Japanese style onsen/ryokan somewhere in or near Portland, but that is definitely going to take some time.

Thanks Chris!

*Know someone with interesting post-Japan stories to share? Maybe yourself...? We'd love to feature you in the next **Where are they now?**!*
newsletter@jettportland.com



Continued from Page 1 ...from the back of your closet (like that great pair of socks you received last year, you know, the green and orange striped ones with the pink puff ball reindeer on them), wrap it up nicely, and try to avoid taking it home again at all costs. As it turns out, this time not everyone took that approach. There were several fabulous items up for grabs, including a NASCAR beverage dispenser, some light-up psychedelic beer mugs, and perhaps the most hotly contested item of all, a snuggie. If there's one thing to be learned from a snuggie, it's never judge something by it's terrible name.

There were also donations taken for Room to Read, a very worthy cause that sends donated children's books to impoverished libraries in developing countries around the world. Even more books were collected for donation at the Shinnenkai the last Saturday in January.

The smoothness of the 2009 Bounenkai speaks volumes for the strength of the JET community in Portland and what we have to look forward to in 2010. It went so well in fact, that it's hard to not wish the next one was just around the corner. We have to wait almost another year though folks. Thank goodness for the Shinnenkai!

Spring Photo Contest

"I wasn't expecting this..."

By Daniel Mick

As mentioned in the Letter from the Editor there will be regular content submission possibilities for the newsletter. We want your photos for the next issue!

The theme is *"I wasn't expecting this..."* Submit photos of your interpretation of this theme.

Photos must:

- Be set in Japan.
- Been taken by the person submitting the photo.
- Be no less than 1000 pixels on any side.
- No more than 3 submissions per individual

How to Submit:

Email to newsletter@jetaaportland.com. Include:

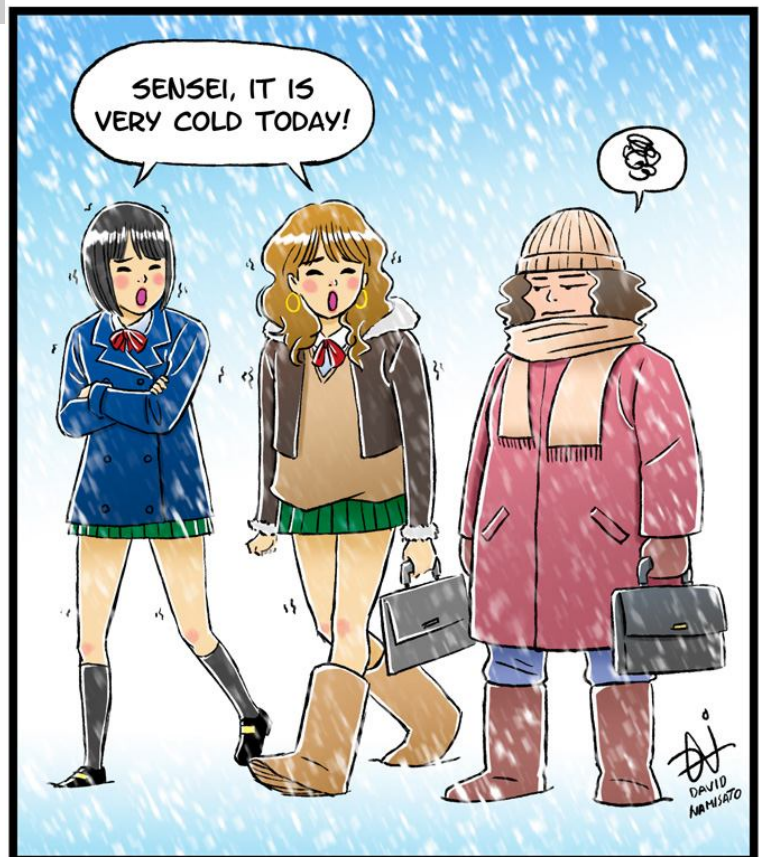
- Your full name.
- If JET, JET alum, or foreigner, prefecture and years on program; if Japanese, prefecture of [prior] residence
- Photo title.
- Photo location and short description.

Submission Deadline is **Friday May 14th**. (Best to send one now so you don't forget!)

A selection of the best photos will be included in the June newsletter. All will be displayed online. Get snappin'!

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



March 2010



JETAA Portland
P.O. Box 8772
Portland, OR 97207

Ahhh....

Ofuro Soak @ Kennedy School
Thursday, March 18th, 8PM

You miss those hot baths, ne?
 Come soak in the huge outdoor coed pool,
 then enjoy McMenamin's late Happy Hour.

Join the cool kids.
 Get the JETAA Portland Newsletter
 hardcopy mailed to your door.

You must ***opt-in*** to receive a copy

At the very bottom of every JETAA
 email is a link to "Manage/Update"
 Under "Additional Information" select
 "Yes" for Mailed Newsletter and save



Let's Japanese cuisine eating!

Tabemashou! @ Maki
Thursday, March 11th, 6PM

Email Daniel if you plan to attend.
 Or just show up and join us for food and drinks!

Upcoming Events:

Visit www.jetaaportland.com for event details

- Thu 03/11** Tabemashou!, 1800 @ Maki
Email Daniel if you plan to attend
- Fri 03/12** Movie Night, *Ponyo* in J with E subtitles
The International School, 6:30PM
- Sun 03/14** White Day, men sometimes reciprocate for V-day
- Mon 03/15** Election: officer platform statements due
See jetaaportland.com for details
- Thu 03/18** Ofuro Soak at Kennedy School, 8PM, \$5
It's big, hot, and coed, but not nude
- Sat 03/20** 春分の日, *Shunbun no Hi*, Vernal Equinox
- Sat 03/27** Portland Taiko Performance, 2PM & 8PM
Discount tickets deadline Thu March 11th
- Sat 03/27** Sake One Spring Kura Blessing, 11AM
JETAA tour after event
Email Amanda by Fri Mar 19 for tour
- Fri 04/02** J-Kaiwa, 1900 @ Hawthorne Lucky Lab
Nijikai at Hollywood Bowl
- Thu 04/08** Tabemashou!, 1800 @ Yoko's
Email Daniel if you plan to attend
- Sat 04/29** 昭和の日, *Shouwa no Hi*, Shouwa Day
- Sat 05/03** 憲法記念日, *Kenpou Kinenbi*, Constitution Day
- Sun 05/04** みどりの日, *Midori no Hi*, Greenery Day
- Mon 05/05** こどもの日, *Kodomo no Hi*, Children's Day
- Fri 05/07** J-Kaiwa, 1900 @ Hawthorne Lucky Lab
- Sat 05/15** Iron Chef! Details TBD
- Fri 06/04** J-Kaiwa, 1900 @ Hawthorne Lucky Lab