

Issue 2, July 2012**In this Issue...**

Jetting off to Japan	1
Charity Concert	2
Alumni Profiles	3
Dragon Boat	4
Japanese Study	5
Speed dating	6
Upcoming Events	7

FROM THE EDITORS

Summer is now in full swing! Ottawa has been steeped in a strange heat wave, giving us plenty of days to seek air conditioning or enjoy the outdoors. As the heat ramps up, it indicates that the newly-minted JETs are fast approaching their departure while some JETs are wrapping up their time in Japan. We wish everyone the best!

This issue reflects upon JETAA Ottawa's charity concert, benefitting children who were orphaned by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. We also check out the orientation seminars for the new JETs, the adventures of teaching in Dubai after JET, speed dating, learning Japanese and much more.

We're hoping to continue our alumni profile series. If you've got a story to tell, we'd love to hear it. We would also like to connect with current JETs who are experiencing life in today's

Japan.

Last, but definitely not least, we would like to thank all contributors who have made the JETAA Ottawa Newsletter possible.



Maureen Barry and Gemma Villanueva

JETAA Ottawa Newsletter Editors

Jetting off to Japan

By Stephanie White

The summer heat is upon us, which means it's time for the orientations of the departing JET Programme participants. From May through August, JETAA Ottawa will be working with the Embassy of Japan to ensure the new JETs are confident to handle anything they might face in Japan from non-participating students to signing up for a cellphone.

At the Two-Day Orientation on June 15-16th, the new JETs were also given the opportunity to purchase the new JETAA Ottawa-branded USBs which were loaded with

all of the workshop presentations, the General Information Handbook, and JETAA Ottawa's own Pre-Departure Guide and Cookbook.

Following the Two-Day Orientation, JETAA Ottawa hosted the annual Sempai-Kohai pub night at the Earl of Sussex. Over a few cold drinks, JET alumni shared cherished memories of time spent in Japan while the departing JETs listened eagerly and asked a plethora of questions about life in Japan.

On July 22, JETAA Ottawa will be offering a survival cooking class for the new JETs. We could use your help! Are you a Japanese culinary guru, or an Iron Chef in the making?

E-mail

events@jetaaottawa.ca
to volunteer.



Charity concert for 3/11 orphans

By Ala Ji

On May 24, JETAA Ottawa hosted a charity concert, featuring two local bands, to help raise money for children affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.



While Japan recovers gradually a year after the catastrophe, many children are still struggling with the aftermath and trying to regain a sense of stability in their lives. To help them move past the tragedy and build a brighter future, JETAA Ottawa continues to put in its best effort. With a team of dedicated JET alumni and their supporting family and friends, the charity concert helped raise money for Smile Kids Japan and the Tohoku Kids Project.

The concert was held in the picturesque town of Wakefield, surrounded by Gatineau hills and lakes just 30 minutes outside of Ottawa. The Black Sheep Inn,

a well-known local hub with open arms to all musicians and music lovers, generously donated this venue free for the concert. When dusk broke, a yellow school bus full of enthusiastic concertgoers pulled up to this live-music joint of an otherwise tranquil town. These guests consisted of JET alumni, friends and family, Embassy of Japan staff, and followers of the talented musicians who volunteered to provide music for the night.

The concert opened with JET [alumnus Jordan Patrick](#) playing a variety of English and Japanese songs with girlfriend Hiromi, who also brought us songs from Okinawa. Lincez, the musical duo featuring Jordan and his father Mark Victor, then hit the stage with some friends providing accompaniment. They played beautiful melodies and original scores of mix indie and modern folk music. By this time, the room had been heated up with the sounds guitars, keyboard, drums, chattering and laughter.

Catching this enthusiasm, Alex Svetlovsky, the current JETAA Ottawa President, leaped onto the stage introducing Smile Kids Japan and the Tohoku Kids Project, the charity organization that will be receiving the proceeds from the concert.



[Smile Kids Japan](#) is a non-profit organization focusing on supporting children who rely on orphanages for care and support. Many of its executive board members are current and past JET participants. It is part of the Tohoku Kids Project, which focuses on providing long-term material and emotional support to orphanages in Tohoku and other areas, directly and indirectly affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami.

Following the intermission, the Ottawan band - the [Hornettes](#) - came on the stage and kept the energy peaked in the room with classic Motown, soul and funk sounds that drew the crowd to the dance floor. One great song after another, the Hornettes set everyone on their toes, chanting, jumping, heart pumping, and dance floor moving. We happily concluded this successful and energetic event in great appreciation and many thanks to the Black Sheep Inn, and to Lincez and the Hornettes, who generously donated their time and talent.

ALUMNI PROFILES: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Christian B- Côté

This former Fukushima JET (2008-11) reflects upon his life on the Lucky Island to the Father of the Gazelle

By **Christian B-Côté**

Leaving the JET program can bring a fair amount of uncertainty and stress. For me, February 2011 marked almost three years in beautiful Fukushima.



But upon the re-contracting deadline, I decided to seek another opportunity abroad. I consulted TeachAway, a Toronto-based agency. I checked their website and settled on teaching in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The "exoticness" and very favourable conditions certainly appealed to me.

Applying from Japan

Page | 3

presented challenges. The time zone differences created scheduling conflicts for phone interviews and it was difficult to determine a location for the in-person interview. It was essential I go to an interview outside Japan. I opted for Vancouver, conveniently during the annual spring break vacation in the Japanese school calendar.

I eagerly awaited spring break. Then, with the unexpected and devastating events of March 11th, suddenly it was not so certain I would make the interview. Luckily, an opportunity to get to Tokyo presented itself and I was on my way. The next day, I aced my interview and later was presented with a two-year contract to teach for the Abu Dhabi Education Council.

Arriving in Abu Dhabi felt surreal. The heat and humidity quickly had their effect. Also, being the start of Ramadan, I adapted to a much slower pace and prepared myself for a month of limited activity, while trying to discover my new surroundings. A month-long of buffet breakfasts and lounging by the pool wore old (I know, how is that even possible?). But once I received my housing and teaching placement, I looked forward to the first day of school and meeting my new students.

"I cannot help but marvel at the opportunity I have here."

But none of them showed. I was reassured by a colleague that students would trickle into classes over a three-week period. If the ESID (Every Situation is Different) motto accurately represented the variations that exist in JET experiences, the same can absolutely be said about teaching in the UAE. I teach at a school in a desert community where Bedouin traditions are still very strong. The majority of my grade 12 students (all males) have limited exposure to English outside of school, yet text frantically on their BlackBerries during class time and anxiously await when they can drift off in their customized race cars.

That, I think, accurately represents the dichotomy here. In shops, restaurants, government offices, etc. English is widely spoken and understood. Meanwhile, in local schools, students struggle to write a full sentence and, in some cases, their names, in English.



Just like anywhere in the world, living and teaching in the UAE presents its challenges. However, with the countless rewards and personal wealth available, I cannot help but marvel at the opportunity I have here.

Paddles Up!

By Tiffany Moreside

Organizer Tiffany Moreside describes the thrill behind competing in North America's largest Dragon Boat Festival

On June 23rd, JETAA Ottawa took part in the [Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival](#) for the third time. Alumni and friends donned their authentic Japanese hachimaki and gripped their paddles to hit the water at Mooney's Bay.

"Wringing hands and stomachs flutter, we readied ourselves mentally for the moment of truth.."

By 11 a.m. on the hectic race day, the team had assembled at tent site #72. By 11:20, we were lined up, ready to go – anticipating our first race of the day. Wringing hands and stomachs flutter, we readied ourselves mentally for the moment of truth. We got on the water, practiced some drills and once the race started, paddled hard to finish our

first race with a time of 2:43.36. We placed 161 out of 204 teams. It was not bad for our first race, but we knew we had to kick it up a notch the next time we hit the course.

With a fierce sense of determination, we took to the water for the second race that afternoon. The moment the starter called the race, the JETAA Ottawa team was paddling with a resolve that was inspiring to see. Each and every person found that little bit extra inside them and just rocked the boat (*badum dum tsss). We finished second with a time of 2:43:15, and placed 154 overall. We didn't make the rank for the Sunday races, but we were nonetheless proud of what we had accomplished.



Every year during training, you question why you put yourself through the ringer at practices for a race that lasts less than three minutes (one hopes!). But it suddenly becomes clear when you hit the water for that first race; a spark within is lit. The next thing you know, you'll be reserving your spot for next year's competition.

Mark your calendars for June 20 – 23, 2013 when the team takes to the water for the fourth year for another bit of friendly competition and a truly unforgettable time.

Okonomiyaki in Ottawa

By Lisa Fournier

Living in Japan, I would have to say that okonomiyaki, the Japanese "pancake", was definitely a favourite meal of mine! It's certainly not the *healthiest* Japanese dish, but it makes great comfort food. I couldn't attend a festival in Japan without sampling a local vendor's okonomiyaki.

When asked to write this article, I jumped at the chance, because it meant I would have to attempt Japanese cooking here in Ottawa.

I went to [T&T Asian Supermarket](#) on Hunt Club Road to find all the necessary ingredients.

Walking into the supermarket, there was a feeling of nostalgia as I smelled Asian fruits, vegetables, and treats in the air. I was surprised and delighted to see so many things I missed.

"It makes great comfort food."

As I tossed items into my basket, I checked my list to see what ingredients I would need. I found almost everything needed for okonomiyaki and more. They did not have okonomiyaki flour (which consists of yam flour and other ingredients) or tenkatsu. After all that shopping, it was time for lunch. My fiancé and I decided to grab a sushi bento. As I looked at their selection, I noticed some pieces of sushi were topped with tenkatsu. I asked the chef behind the counter where I could find those golden crisps of goodness, but she just shook her head and said they were not sold in the store. She asked me how much I needed and was kind enough to give me a tiny container of their precious stash!



It was exciting creating this dish at home for my fiancé and his family. They had visited us in Japan, and we were lucky enough to travel to Hiroshima with them and try Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki. We placed a

hot griddle in the centre of the table and watched our okonomiyaki cook. We reminisced about our travels and the wonderful times we had in Japan...which mostly revolved around eating!

The best part about okonomiyaki, just like pizza, is that you can choose your own toppings according to your taste. My fiancé doesn't like beni shoga (pickled red ginger), so we didn't add any. His parents did not want any nori (seaweed) on theirs...picky, right? Everyone added what they wanted and it turned out great!

The recipe that we used is a keeper! You can find it on the [JETAA Ottawa website](http://www.jetaaottawa.ca).

いただきます！

Let's Learn More Kanji!

By Santa Vinerte

Linguists are curious about them, artists adore them, and countless first-year calligraphy students grumbles in frustration over having to write them. No matter how you feel about them, you have to admit one thing: Kanji are certainly interesting! Each Chinese character represents not only a sound, but also some aspect of the object it refers to, and each has a unique story.

One particularly interesting story is that of the kanji for dove: 鳩 (kun-yomi: hato, atsu·meru | on-yomi: ku, kyu)

九鳥

Kanji often combine basic characters to give hints about both the meaning and pronunciation of the more complex character. 鳩 combines the basic characters for nine- 九(ku, kyu) and bird-鳥(tori, chou). The character for bird is rather self-explanatory, but what could doves possibly have to do with the number 9? As it turns out, absolutely nothing!

The most popular explanation behind this seemingly odd pairing is incredibly simple: what sound does a dove make? In both Japanese and English, doves coo (or ku-), so the character 九(ku, kyu) serves to give a hint about the sound of 鳩, as well as referencing the dove call. How 九 rious!

Chatting in Japanese

By André-Philippe Bouffard

じこしょうかい ; 自己紹介をお願いします - words every JET knows

too well. You spend three months introducing yourself in each of your classes or, if you're me, 9 months. Some of you may have forgotten, or you're still in Japan and have moved on to 自己 PR をしてください。Congratulations on the interview! Needless to say, you will be introducing yourself all your life...unless you're an Inaka person, in which case, everyone already knows everything about you and will gladly pass it on to the next person. Nonetheless, look up the following sample sentences to see if you can add them to your self-introduction!

初級 (Beginner)

Macrons (˘) indicate vowels that are pronounced longer.

1. My name is Peter.

ピーターと申します。
Pītā to mōshimas.

• I'm from Ottawa.

オタワの出身です。
Otawa no shūshin des.

• My hobby is surfing.

(私の) ;趣味はサーフィンです。
Shumi wa sāfin des.

• Please call me Alex.

アレックスとんでください。
Arekusu to yonde kudasai.

中級 (Intermediate)

• I am on the soccer team.

(は) サッカー部に入っています

• I'm terrible at tennis.

(私は) テニスが最大の苦手です。

• At age 10 I took up piano.

10 でピアノをめました。

• I came here to have new experiences.

(私は) 新しい経験をするためにここにきました。

上級

• I was born and brought up in Ottawa.

オタワで生まれ育ちました。

• When it comes to speaking Japanese, I get nervous.

日本語を話すとなると、ドキドキしてしまいます。

• I'm often told that I look like my father.

父親似だとよく言われます。

• If only I could speak Japanese a little better!

せめてもう少しうまく日本語が話せたらなあ。

自己 PR!!

• I am a person who spares no effort or smile to reach the goal.

私は目標のためには努力と笑顔を惜しまない人間です。

• I have learned many things such as how to propose new ideas and the importance of communication.

提案することやコミュニケーションの大切さなど様々なことを学びました。

• I have acquired skills as an Interpreter/Programmer/Instructor.

通訳者、プログラマー、教師としてのスキルを身につけました。

• I have cultivated management skills and an ability to communicate with staff and trading partners that I believe will be of great use to your company.

私の今までに培った管理能力、スタッフや取引先とのコミュニケーションは、きっと貴社のお役に立てるものと信じております。

Speed Dating in Japan

By Rika Sawatsky

The following column was originally published in Hyogo Times, a monthly publication produced by Hyogo AJET. Some parts have been edited for length. JETAA Ottawa Membership Coordinator Rika Sawatsky (Hyogo, 2009-11) was a regular columnist for Hyogo Times.

Read about her experience with "goukon," which loosely translates to a group blind date.

My ambivalence towards goukon (aka konpa), stems from participating in a few. I found them to be unnatural, but amusing after the fact. In a goukon, everyone is forced into a seating plan -- usually a boy-girl pattern -- making it difficult to escape a less-than-desirable person. Most participants are too shy for direct flirtation, so they resort to "ice-breaker" games.

My first konpa had a "3 vs. 3" set-up involving three firemen and three female

teachers. The men timidly introduced themselves after we settled in our designated seats. They were taken aback by my direct self-introduction with eye contact, a smile, and Kansai-ben. It was an awkward night. A goukon should be strangers simply getting to know each other. But in this case, my friend and I had to carry the conversation since two of the firefighters were too shy to speak. Another simply drank himself into a stupor. The other girl gave up on talking altogether after discovering she was older than the men. I did learn something new, though -- these three Japanese men, like many others, actually pluck their facial hairs as part of their grooming habits to attract the ladies. Ouch!

A pseudo-goukon followed this disastrous night. My friend and I invited a guy from the gym to join us for a drink. He brought a couple of friends along. Things were going well until they suggested playing a konpa game. They closed their eyes, stuck out their hands, and waited for us girls to grip the hand of the boy we each found most attractive. My friend, in exasperation, tapped all three hands. They immediately opened their eyes and compared results; each of them half relieved he got tapped at all yet half-annoyed he wasn't victorious. I found out they watched their caloric intake to maintain their "model-like" figures. Gym Boy was not what I expected.

It took quite a few beverages to survive these dates. But in retrospect, they

do make for a good laugh! I highly recommend going on at least one goukon before returning overseas.

UPCOMING EVENTS

*(JETAA Ottawa events are in **bolded red**)*

Check out [JETAA Ottawa](#) for further updates.

7/13-15: "Jiro Dreams of Sushi" screenings at the [Bytowne Cinema](#)

7/22: Cooking Class for new JETs

8/3: Farewell Reception for departing JETs

8/11: [Matsuri Japon 2012](#) in Montreal

8/18: JETAA Ottawa's Summer Festival @ Vincent Massey Park

Japanese Summer Festival: Volunteers

We need volunteers to help out with this year's festival taking place at [Vincent Massey Park](#) on August 18. We are looking for people to help with the food, calligraphy and children's areas, to name a few.

Previous volunteer experience is an asset but not a requirement.

volunteer@jetaaottawa.ca

Call for Submissions

The **JETAA Ottawa Newsletter** is a quarterly online publication. We are always looking for articles, essays, photos, arts and comics.

We welcome contributions (regular or one-shot) from current JETs, alumni and non-JETs.

newsletter@jetaaottawa.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE?

- Alex Svetlovsky's report on the [2012 JETAA National Conference](#)

- Lisa Fournier's delicious okonomiyaki [recipe](#)

Membership Benefits

[Join JETAA Ottawa today!](#)

Membership is **free** for all JET Alumni.

- Free Japanese classes in the fall and winter
- Discounted or free Japanese culture classes/workshops
- Quarterly newsletters
- A wide variety of scheduled social, cultural, professional and athletic events throughout the year.
- An opportunity to interact with other JET Alumni as well as make a strong connection to the Japanese community in the Ottawa area.