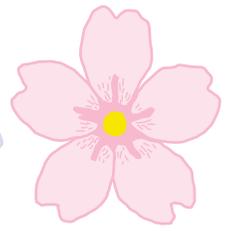


# JLGC Newsletter



Issue No. 49 Spring 2004

## CLAIR UPDATE

### *Greetings from the Chairman of CLAIR*

The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) was established in 1988 to promote local-level internationalization in Japan. CLAIR uses its seven overseas offices: New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney and Beijing, to support the international activities of Japanese local governments. Selected staff from Japanese local governments are dispatched to CLAIR's overseas offices to conduct research on matters such as public sector management, finance and administration at the local government level within these countries. The Japan Local Government Center, New York (JLGCNY) became the first CLAIR overseas office in 1989 and is celebrating its sixteenth anniversary.

International exchange among local authorities has developed to such an extent that there are presently over 1,400 international affiliations between Japanese and foreign local authorities. These include but are not limited to new sister city relationships and various friendship agreements. The content of international exchange has also become increasingly diversified with a growing trend to implement projects that go beyond the traditional objectives of promoting international good will. For example, local authorities are engaging in international cooperation projects in the fields of technology and human resource development. Responding to these developments, CLAIR is working to enhance its operations to meet and support the increased needs of local areas in Japan by

strengthening networks among local international exchange associations and cultivating personnel to further the goals and objectives of internationalization.

Decentralization has made many advances in Japan and local public organizations need to keep informed by gathering, analyzing and disseminating information about the systems and policies of local government in foreign countries. By actively expanding its research, CLAIR can provide the information to compare themes of particular interest to local governments in Japan. CLAIR will modernize and use state of the art technology such as the Internet and other means of communication to provide useful and informative findings.

CLAIR is enthusiastically working to improve upon the success of the Japan Education and Teaching (JET) Programme. The overseas Japan Local Government Centers in seven countries promote and provide information about the JET Programme as well as assist in the recruitment and selection processes. CLAIR is supporting the development of networks to foster effective links with the over 20,000 JET alumni.

I would like to express my gratitude for the assistance CLAIR has received over the years. We will continue to work toward achieving your expectations and to contribute to the progress of internationalization. CLAIR appreciates your



*Mr. Takahiro Kiuchi, Chairman of CLAIR.*

continued support and encouragement.

Takahiro Kiuchi  
Chairman of the Board  
Council of Local Authorities for  
International Relations

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CLAIR UPDATE	
<b>Greetings from the Chairman of CLAIR</b>	<b>1</b>
SPECIAL FEATURE	
<b>Minister Asou's Visit to New York</b>	<b>2</b>
CORE CITY	
<b>Hamamatsu City</b>	<b>3</b>
GUEST COLUMN	
<b>Johana, Toyama – Marlboro, NJ</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>My CLAIR Fellowship Experience in Japan</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Shinshiro Memories</b>	<b>6</b>
JLGC UPDATE	
<b>Ohio Treasury Hosts Japanese Government Official</b>	<b>7</b>
GUEST COLUMN	
<b>Random Thoughts After One Year in Office</b>	<b>8</b>

*Masthead: The sakura, or cherry blossom, is Japan's cherished national flower. Special hanami parties and excursions are held during blossom time each year.*



## Minister Asou pays a visit to New York to meet JET Alumni

by Masashi Takahashi  
Assistant Director of JLGC

CLAIR New York organized a round table discussion of how the JET Programme operates and how it might be improved on May 1st in New York City. Minister Asou of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications made his address in English to the gathered JET Programme Alumni and visiting Japanese delegates from CLAIR, including CLAIR Chairman Takahiro Kiuchi. "I have been greatly looking forward to seeing you, to learn more about how you managed to use your background of participation in the JET Programme to benefit you in your current careers in so many different fields."

Minister Asou also mentioned that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa, the first treaty between the U.S. and Japan. He has great hopes that the fellow alumni would continue to act as bridges between the two countries to carry this long relationship forward into the future.

The JET Programme is in its eighteenth year since its inauguration in 1987. With nearly 6,100 participants from 41 countries, the JET Programme has become the world's largest exchange program. Of these participants, roughly 2,800 people, or about 46 percent, come from the United States.

During the discussion, several topics were discussed with the Minister. James

Gannon, an alumni and former Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), Ehime Prefecture, suggested the importance of the public diplomacy aspect of the program relative to its purely educational objectives. Now that he works for an independent, nonprofit, and non-partisan organization dedicated to strengthening Japan's role in international networks of

(MPHPT) and CLAIR to play a more important role in facilitating the relationship between Japanese delegations and former JET Programme participants to make sure their alumni will also embrace this role of so-called "hometown ambassador."

Paige Cottingham-Streater, former ALT, Mie Prefecture, asked whether the number of JET Programme participants might be increased and the program expanded further. The Minister replied that because of the current situation in Japan and the policy of concentrating English language instruction at the junior and senior high school levels, there was very little likelihood that there would be significant demand to expand the program on the Japanese side. However he also felt that English education should be started at the elementary school level

so if we could see this as a trend, the number of the JET Programme could be increased.

Kimberly Duffy, former ALT, Niigata Prefecture, asked us to give any follow up or additional information regarding this round table to all the former JET participants in the United States. Although she knows some of the questions, raised during the conversation, cannot simply be answered, she hoped that not only today's attendees but all JET participants could get to know the new directions in which JET Programme will take into the future.



Minister Taro Asou (front, fourth from left) meets JET Alumni in New York City.

policy dialogue and cooperation, he told us that the impact of the program goes beyond the grassroots level, and that it really does have a political impact.

Rosemary De Fremery, former ALT, Shizuoka Prefecture, stated that many fellow alumni would like to take on the role of a local level ambassador: fostering good relations and helping out when there is a visit by a governor or mayor or citizen's group from one country to the other. In this regard, she expected Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications

Other than JET-related topics, various issues, such as Japanese pop culture, music, Japanese transportation system were discussed. Minister Asou talked about his efforts to keep his English fluent and when talk turned to his favorite Japanese pop song “Tomobo”

there was an impromptu a cappella sing-a-long with the attendees.

CLAIR Tokyo, along with CLAIR New York, will take the time to absorb and implement many of the ideas fellow alumni give to make improvements to the JET

Programme. Minister Asou and Mr. Kiuchi were grateful for the suggestions on how to manage the future of the JET Programme and thanked the JET alumni who contributed their time and effort so that MPHPT and CLAIR will have a key role in this internationally recognized venture.

## CORE CITY

### Hamamatsu City

#### *Global City with Cultural and Technological Excellence*



Hamamatsu City  
Symbol

Hamamatsu City, with a population of over 600,000, is the largest city in Shizuoka prefecture, and is located about the middle point between the cities of Tokyo and Osaka. The rich cultural heritage and the modern business of the city make it a unique blend of the traditional and modern.

Culturally, Hamamatsu is a diverse city. Currently, there are approximately 23,000 non-Japanese citizens from 79 countries living in the environs of Hamamatsu City. Sixty percent of these people are Brazilian. Japanese and non-Japanese alike find the city a comfortable place to live and work. Tourism has buoyed economic growth and the city’s popularity has made it a destination stop for tourists and visitors.

Major companies known for producing motorcycles, cars, musical instruments and textiles do business in Hamamatsu City, including Honda, Kawai, Suzuki and Yamaha. Hosting a wide variety of international concerts, operas, ballets and

piano competitions, the city has fashioned itself as the “City of Music” and, as a matter of fact, every piano manufactured in Japan is built in Hamamatsu City.

Act City, a multi-purpose facility strategi-



*Pacific Flora 2004, held from April 8 to October 11, 2004, is a place where nature and culture meet.*

cally located at the Hamamatsu train station, is anchored by a 45 story complex with a hotel, exhibition and event hall. In addition there are office spaces, conference rooms, a shopping mall and two concert halls that feature prominent musical talent such as the recently held 5th Hamamatsu International Piano Competition.

West of Hamamatsu City is Lake Hamana, a popular resort and a place of serene and natural beauty. Lake Hamana is famous for eel farming and is the home to the Kanzanji Hot Springs, the Hamamatsu Zoo and Flower Park and Pal Pal Amusement

Park. This year from April 8th until October 11th, the Shizuoka International Garden and Horticulture Exhibition – Pacific Flora 2004 will grace the lakeshore, enjoyed by all who visit the attraction.

There is a sense of uniqueness about Hamamatsu City – an interesting blend of Japanese tradition and progressive ground breaking international projects such as Pacific Flora 2004. Hamamatsu

City has become an essential place to visit on a tourist’s itinerary while in Japan – and you are never disappointed!

For further information, see the Hamamatsu City and Flora 2004 websites: <http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp>, and <http://www.flora2004.or.jp/english>

## 富山県城端町 (*Johana, Toyama Prefecture*) - *Marlboro, NJ, U.S.A.*

### *A Lasting Friendship*

by R. Michael Wirin

A relationship which began when Monbusho (the current Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology—formerly Ministry of Education) sent me to a small town near the Japan Sea in 1991 continues to grow—like the branches of a beautiful cherry tree. When I was accepted into the JET Programme after graduation from Boston College in 1989, I had a mission: to help promote international relations and understanding between our countries, but at the grassroots level—without joining the U.S. State Department! I was afforded the opportunity to teach English side-by-side with Mr. Nobuo Ishikuro at Johana Junior High School in Johana-machi in Toyama Prefecture. Not only was I able to share the culture of my own homeland and hometown (Marlboro, NJ, U.S.A.), but I was also able to learn many lessons from the people of Johana and the surrounding Toyama-ken region. I tried many things during my time in Japan, among them rice-planting (*taue*), pickled plum (*umeboshi*) and fermented soybeans (*natto*), mountain climbing (on Mt. Tateyama), Japanese “pinball” (*pachinko*), calligraphy (*shodou*), tea ceremony (*chadou*), Japanese fencing (*kendo*), and even a stint as a cable television reporter! What I learned is that despite our various historical, cultural and linguistic differences, we are still all human beings, very much the same.

To prove my point, soon after arriving in Johana-machi, I contacted Mrs. Rita Scalzo, a middle school social studies teacher in

Marlboro. Together, we initiated a video-pal exchange between the students of both of our schools. Students in New Jersey were as surprised to see the school uniforms (*gakuseifuku*) of Japan as were the students of Johana to see our “dress code” (jeans, etc.!) here in the United States. But that was only the beginning. Starting in the summer of 1991, a delegation of students and adults from Johana set out to visit my hometown, as well as Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Every year since that time, a group from Johana has visited the east coast of the United States, enjoying everything from roadside fruit

Miyajima (*Itsukushima*) and Nara, Himeji Castle, the beauty and history of Kyoto, and the mindblowing Takeshita-doori shopping street of the modern capital, Tokyo. This past year, I traveled to Japan with Mayor Matthew Scannapieco of Marlboro, his wife, Michelle, and Council vice-president Jim Mione to sign an official document commemorating our Sister-City activities, recognizing the future of our relationship and proclaiming it to the world community.

Even with all the excitement which comes from touring each country's famous sites, the centerpiece of our exchange program continues to be the homestay experiences, both in Johana and Marlboro. Though the initial exchange experience only lasts for a short time each summer, a door has been opened to lifelong relationships with new friends and family, many of whom keep in touch with phone calls, emails, letters and even return visits! Just like the *hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing) experience, where we sit under a cherry tree at full bloom, we realize that the beauty of the cherry blossoms and homestays sadly only last for a short time, yet they are symbolic of something greater. We know that the opportunities for exchange and sharing our cultures will always be there for us to enjoy, just like the cherry trees which blossom every year, without fail. Once these seeds have been planted, it is still up to us to cultivate and appreciate our relationships, and enjoy them for generations to come.



*The author, Mr. R. Michael Wirin (front, far right), and other delegation members from Marlboro, New Jersey, USA., visit with friends in Johana, Toyama Prefecture during the Hikiyama Matsuri (Hikiyama Festival) following the Sister-City signing ceremonies.*

and vegetable stands to the beaches of New Jersey to amusement parks and family gatherings; from the Statue of Liberty and the Federal Reserve Bank in Philadelphia to F.A.O. Schwartz toystore and St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue in New York City. In return, students and adults from this side of the Pacific Ocean have experienced the Peace Park in Hiroshima, the friendly deer of

## My CLAIR Fellowship Experience in Japan

by David Mora  
City Manager of the City of Salinas

In October 2003 I had the unique privilege and opportunity to participate in the 2003 CLAIR Local Government International Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. It was one of the most significant and enriching experiences of my career in local government.

As one of ten (10) North American representatives of the CLAIR New York office, I was chosen to participate as a representative of the International City/County Management Association. My interest in the program was based on working in California local government for over thirty (30) years, serving as a senior staff member in the City of Santa Barbara, as well as manager of the California communities of Los Gatos, Oxnard, and Salinas. The last thirteen (13) years as City Manager of Salinas has provided a rich experience in an ethnically and economically diverse community of 155,000. The CLAIR Exchange allowed me to understand and appreciate both the similarities and differences of local government management in the United States and Japan.

The CLAIR program began informally in Los Angeles, California with an orientation and the beginnings of the unique hospitality experienced throughout the exchange as CLAIR New York staff hosted us the evening before our departure for Tokyo. The experience then broadened with the seminar program in Tokyo and in-depth local government visits and discussions in Aichi Prefecture.

The Local Government International Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2003 held in Tokyo included participation from CLAIR offices throughout the world. London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, Beijing as well as New York all had representatives. The international representation was richly balanced with participants from throughout Japan from numerous local, prefecture, and national government agencies. The topics and interaction among the participants provided an outstanding intergovernmental and intercultural experience.

What followed was perhaps the most personally and professionally rewarding seven (7) days of our local government careers as we visited Aichi Prefecture, including Inuyama City, the Central Japan International Airport Project, the site of the upcoming Aichi World Expo, and the Town of Nagakute. Each of these visits allowed the CLAIR participants to discuss local government management ideas and experiences with Japanese local government elected and appointed officials. All of us were impressed with the dedication, professionalism, and expertise evident wherever we visited.

The visit to Aichi Prefecture was not all official and formal as each CLAIR participant spent the weekend with a host family. Each of us enjoyed the hospitality of Japanese home life and had the opportunity to share personal and informal experiences with Japanese families. The host family visits were informative, enriching, and a highlight of the exchange.



*The author, Mr. David Mora, City Manager of the City of Salinas, California.*

The only disappointment of the program was that it had to end. The final dinner and celebration in Nagoya was a celebration of new friendships filled with the sadness of departure. The formal ending of the visit to Japan did not end the exchange, as it was my personal privilege to be recently visited in Salinas by Kazuhito Watanabe from the CLAIR New York office. I am confident that the dialogue and friendships established during the visit will continue for both our Japanese hosts and for each of the CLAIR New York office sponsored participants. To CLAIR and to all of the hosts, I extend my deepest gratitude for the privilege of participating in such a wonderful, enriching program.

## *Shinshiro Memories* 🇯🇵 🇺🇸 *Or; How I spent my summer vacation*

by Joe Samalin

My summer in Shinshiro City, Aichi Prefecture, began with not a little bit of trepidation and anxiety. Before even arriving in Japan, I was informed that I would be giving an 1-hour speech in Japanese in front of over 70 politicians and local business leaders from the city in my first week there. The theme that was chosen for me was: “*Amerika kara mite nihonshakai no fusigi*” (Mysterious Japan as Seen From American Eyes). Although I had experience talking on this topic - even in Japanese, the setting and length of this speech were new. In spite of my anxiety and a Japanese mistake or two- at one point meaning to say “*tomorokosi ga suki*” (I like corn), I actually said “*tamanokosi ga suki*” (I like gold-diggers), the speech went pretty well and set the tone for my three months in Shinshiro.

My time was spent divided among many different jobs at the office: I taught English to elementary school through junior college students, citizens, City Hall employees and city councilmen in Shinshiro City. I gave speeches about America to the Rotary Club and about firefighting techniques used on 9/11 at the Shinshiro Fire Department. I spent three days working at a local lumber company learning how houses are made. I translated everything from medical forms to folk tales at City Hall and interpreted for visiting guests. I was a judge at the annual English contest as well as the annual *Ikada* Carnival (Rafting Festival). Out and about in the city, I was kept on my toes and always challenged.



*The author, Mr. Joe Samalin (center), with his colleagues in Shinshiro City Hall.*

Part of my time at City Hall was spent preparing for the Newcastle World Summit that started eight years ago by Shinshiro City, which means Newcastle in Japanese. Every two years, eight different towns and cities named Newcastle from around the world gather to hold a summit hosted by a different “Newcastle” each time. During the time between summits, there are student exchanges and various cultural exchanges between the Newcastles. I worked hard on the summit over the summer, handling exchange programs and preparing for the summit that took place this last February in Newcastle, South Africa. One of the biggest benefits and life changing experiences of the summer was an invitation to go to South Africa as an interpreter for the Shinshiro delegation.

I was also able to conduct research on my thesis topic, “Gender issues in Japan;

especially the problem of sexual violence in Japan”. Not only did I get to interview various people involved with the issue, but the people I worked with at City Hall were also extremely helpful and supportive: giving me related articles and introducing me to people working on gender issues. The most rewarding thing by far, however, was the city of Shinshiro itself and the people with whom I worked and interacted. People have a great affection for Shinshiro because the city is part countryside and part urban with all the benefits of both. The three homestay families I lived with, my co-workers, the students, the Mayor, and even all the people I met randomly on the street or in the *Onsen* (hot spring) made my summer an unqualified success. There are truly no words that would be enough to express my gratitude to Shinshiro City and CLAIR for the opportunity I enjoyed this last summer!

## Ohio Treasury Hosts Japanese Government Official

As the responsibility for international exchange increasingly falls on local governments in Japan, the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) in New York City has developed special training programs specifically for their employees to promote “*kokusaika*” (internationalization).

In 1992, JLGC initiated the Staff Intern Program designed to broaden the perspective of Japanese local government officials living and working in New York City. In partnership with American state and local governments and their membership organizations including the United States Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the Council of State Governments, United States Conference of Mayors, the National Governors’ Association and the Illinois Municipal League, these two week internships afford opportunities for JLGC staff to conduct research on key local government issues while experiencing American culture. More than fifty JLGC Assistant Directors have participated in this pioneering experience exchange. Their research interests covered a wide range of topics, among them urban search and rescue, forestry management, emergency medical services, e-government, school choice, adult education, tax administration and performance measurement.

The Staff Intern Program is a mutually rewarding experience for state and local officials from both societies. It encourages open interaction and collaboration and continues to reinforce the spirit of international cooperation and good will among the governments that are closest to the people in their daily operations.

When Atsushi Wakimoto, Assistant

Director of JLGC visited the Ohio State Treasury earlier this year, an enduring and valuable relationship between professional counterparts was forged through the internship program. Mr. Wakimoto, whose background is in financial management (including positions with Japan’s Nara Prefecture and the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications), was interested in learning about the state’s cash management practices and investment of public funds.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) arranged for Mr. Wakimoto to spend two weeks, starting in Columbus on March 11, 2004, with the State of Ohio Treasury, which received the 2003 Government



*Mr. Kevin Talty (right), Ohio Treasury Director of Operations, welcomes Mr. Atsushi Wakimoto (left), JLGC staff.*

Finance Officers Association Award of Excellence in the category of cash management and investing. He visited with the Auditor of State, the Office of Budget and Management, and the Franklin County Treasurer and Auditor Offices. Mr. Wakimoto also spoke at length with state treasury directors and staff of the Revenue Management, Investments, Internal Audit,

Risk Management and the Center for Public Investment Management departments.

Some of the broader issues covered during his visit included the authority and organizational structure by which the treasury operates, the budgetary and governmental oversight for the office. Treasury functions, staff professional development, and special programs which the office is currently developing to improve operations and measure risk were also covered. Mr. Wakimoto was most interested in professional development for staff, particularly in the area of investments, and the methods used in transferring knowledge and skill sets from one employee to another.

Treasury staff spent much time discussing methods used to provide oversight and objective evaluation for investment and treasury management performance. At the conclusion of the professional visit, Mr. Wakimoto told his hosts: “I learned a lot of very useful applications concerning treasury and investment management. I’m sure that what I learned in Ohio will make a contribution to the development of public fund management by Japanese local governments.”

Ohio Treasury Director of Operations Kevin Talty summed up his own thoughts on Mr. Wakimoto’s visit: “Whenever we share our methods for conducting government treasury management business, it encourages us to reevaluate the rationale for our methodology. More importantly, it provides opportunities to meet public officials from other countries and to learn their methods for conducting government business while looking for ways to improve our own processes for efficiency and effectiveness.”

## Random Thoughts After One Year in Office

by Anthony Bianchi  
Inuyama City Council Member

One year has passed since my election last April in Inuyama City, Aichi Prefecture. I'd like to share some random thoughts I've had since that time.

### Upon Being Elected

As someone born outside of Japan, getting to this point was obviously a struggle. But actually, now I feel that I can sometimes affect things in ways that maybe some other council people can not. I mean, if some of the things that I've said or done were coming from a 45 year old former school teacher, a born in Japan "Japanese school teacher", I'm sure some people may say "Who does he think he is?" People say that my election is a sign that people are hoping for change. I've come to think that it is equally accurate to say that people are hoping for representatives who will say what the average citizen is thinking, but cannot due to social pressures. Anyway, I believe that this is my mandate and why I was elected with a record number.

### Too Much Government

There are too many elected officials and too many bureaucrats. There is an imbalance of power, the bureaucracy has too much, and this power needs to be cut back. Tokyo sneezes and everyone gets a cold. With all the talk about decentralization, why is Tokyo still telling us what we should be doing, such as cutting the salaries of our city employees? Lawmakers in other systems actually make laws and put forward bills. Most proposals come from the bureaucracy, and council people just say yes or no. I think we council people should be writing these bills and making laws, and the bureaucracy should be implementing them. It's not to say something

couldn't come from the bureaucracy, but right now, almost everything comes from the bureaucracy.

### Feedback from the Community

We've been getting a fair amount of feedback, apparently more than some other councilors. One reason is that our office makes efforts to communicate with the citizens and makes it easy for citizens to communicate with us. Believe it or not, I am the only council member with a web site ([www.bianchi-inuyama.com](http://www.bianchi-inuyama.com)), and an office that is staffed and easily accessible to the average person.

For example, we got a call from a woman whose son has a learning disability, a problem not widely accepted in Japan. She said that although she lives closer to another councilor, she felt that we might be easier to talk to. This led me to bring up this issue at next council meeting.

My feeling is that there are too many "professional politicians", people who do this all their lives, but are really out of touch with the average person. I hope my candidacy encourages more average citizens to participate in the system.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. I would welcome any comments or feedback.



*Inuyama City Council Member, Mr. Anthony Bianchi (left) visits the director of JLGC, New York, Mr. Naofumi Hida (right).*

You can reach me at: [mail@bianchi-inuyama.com](mailto:mail@bianchi-inuyama.com)

Take care.  
Anthony

