



JLGC NEWSLETTER

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*1. Introduction of New
JLGC Staff (Page1-8)*

*2. JETAA Canada National
Conference in Vancouver
(Page8)*

*3. Japanese Governors
Attended the NGA Summer
Meeting
(Page 9)*

1. Introduction of New JLGC Staff

Wataru Tozawa, Executive Director, Representative of Tokyo

Hello everyone! My name is Wataru Tozawa. It is my great pleasure to inform you that, as of July 11, 2016, I was appointed as the new executive director of the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC), CLAIR New York. As was my predecessor, Mr. Yasuo Tatsuta, I am also dispatched from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which is now pretty busy preparing to host the next Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020.



First of all, on behalf of all the staff members of JLGC, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for your continuous heartfelt support and cooperation with our office. Mutual understanding between nations is all the more essential in today's world to generate development and prosperity. In order to achieve this, we try to gather recent topics from each of you and update you all on the latest information through this newsletter.

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Tokyo Skytree

Illumination

Sushi

Matsuri

Secondly, I would like to stress the following three main objectives JLGC is pursuing now:

- 1) To strengthen grass-roots relationships and cooperation by state/provincial/local governments between North America and Japan;
- 2) To support the activities and research carried out by Japanese local authorities with these governments;
- 3) To support the Japan Exchange & Teaching (JET) Program and the JET Alumni Association. I am determined to make much progress in these aims during my term.

Thirdly, I want to refer to the 30th anniversary celebrations of the JET Program held in Japan and North America. As a part of this program held in Japan, CLAIR held a photo contest and a video contest. In addition, CLAIR is planning to host the JETAA International Meeting and JET Program 30th Anniversary Ceremony, both in November. I know both these events will be productive and meaningful. As for the 30th anniversary of the JET Program held in North America next year, though details are not determined so far, I would like to pull out all the stops and cooperate with all of our JETAA groups.

CLAIR is planning to hold a Japanese Food Fair at the Mitsuwa Supermarket in Torrance in Southern California next February. This is the first time for CLAIR to do this kind of event in North America. We went there last month and consulted with the coordinator, the supermarket's head officer, JETRO's office, and others in preparation for this. Now, CLAIR will select the participants from among the applicants in Japan and help them take the required measures to export foods. Each region's unique foods will be in the market. I expect a lot of people, including the members of JETAA in Southern California, will drop by this fair.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude again to all of our readers and the various government officials in the U.S.A. and Canada as well as the JET alumni for all the help and support you have given to our staff members. I believe your continuous cooperation will make the relationship between Japan and the U.S.A. and Canada even more wonderful.

Arisa Kurihara, Assistant Director, Representative of Miyagi Prefecture



Hi everyone! My name is Arisa Kurihara. I'm from '**Miyagi**' Prefecture. Miyagi is situated in the north eastern part of Japan, facing the Pacific Ocean. This area is called "Tohoku". Everyone may have heard this name from the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

Again, I would like to express my deep appreciation for your warm and kind-hearted support extended by many countries in response to this horrible disaster.

Please look at Miyagi Prefecture's homepage to see our restoration and reconstruction efforts :

<http://www.pref.miyagi.jp/site/ej-earthquake/hukkoutorikumih256.html>

Miyagi was severely damaged by the earthquake and tsunami, but today, more than ever, it is very beautiful. I'd like to introduce you to Miyagi where I was born and raised.

Spring

Miyagi is one of the most beautiful places famous for cherry blossoms in Japan.

In the south of Miyagi, there is a "Hitome Senbon Sakura". This means "a panoramic view of a thousand cherry trees". When the cherry blossoms begin to bloom, the trains also run slowly under the cherry trees. It is a very good feeling to walk in the cherry trees. In addition, cherry blossoms are also fantastic at night.



Cherry Blossom

Summer



Sea squirt

“Ishinomaki” and “Kesennuma” fishing ports in the north of Miyagi are two of the most famous fishing ports in Japan. Off the Sanriku coast there are abundant marine treasures. The Ishinomaki and Oshika peninsula areas are close to the Kinkasan-Sanriku fishing ground, one of the world’s three major fishing grounds. It is famous for the quality of its bonito and mackerel, branded as “Kinka Brand”. It is also famous for catches of sea squirt and sea urchin. There are fish markets that sell fresh fish and shellfish in these areas. Summer is the best season for sea squirt. Sea squirt is also called “sea pineapple” from its shape and it can be eaten with sweetened vinegar. Please try it!



Autumn

Autumn is the best season for enjoying sports! Miyagi has 3 professional sports teams. We love our teams and go to the games to cheer them on.

“Vegalta Sendai”

Vegalta Sendai is a Japanese professional soccer club, currently playing in the top league. The name “Vegalta” was chosen as a homage to the famous Tanabata festival in Sendai. The names of the two celestial stars of the Tanabata legend, Vega and Altair, were combined to form Vegalta. They are not a very strong team...but we always cheer them anyway, without giving up.



“Tohoku Rakuten Eagles”

The Tohoku Rakuten Eagles is the youngest Japanese professional baseball club in Japan. The team was established in 2005 and they won the Pacific League Pennant in 2013.



©Rakuten Eagles

“Sendai 89ers”

Sendai 89ers is a Japanese basketball team playing in the B league. The B league is just getting started this September!

Winter



“Zao” is one of Tohoku’s largest ski resorts. Its trees are covered with ice, becoming “snow monsters”, during winter. These are a rare sight even in Japan and appear only when the conditions are just right.

Also, there is a village that we call a “village of foxes”, where you can see 6 different species of fox. They are cared for but allowed to roam unrestrained in this “village”. People can visit this “village” and be amongst them. Some foxes follow visitors around, others pull on their clothes. It is a unique opportunity to observe the foxes’ natural behavior. And... they are just so darn cute!



Musubi-maru



“Musubi-maru” has been created as a special character to promote tourism in the Miyagi and Sendai area. To express Miyagi’s rich food and cultural traditions the character has a rice-ball shaped head made from delicious Miyagi rice, with a crescent-shape stuck to his forehead similar to that found on the helmet of the famous samurai and lord of Sendai, Date Masamune.

There are so many more of my favorite things in Miyagi I could write about here, but for more information please go to:

Miyagi Touring Navigation!! <http://www.pref.miyagi.jp/kankou/en/>

Travel to Tohoku <http://www.en.tohokukanko.jp/>



Date Masamune

OCTOBER 2016

Hello everyone, I'm Tatsuya Matsumoto from Saitama City. Today, I'd like to introduce Saitama's attractions, which are not well-known, even among Japanese people. Saitama City is located north of Tokyo and it takes only 25 minutes from Tokyo by train. The attractions I personally recommend in Saitama are bonsai, Hikawa Shrine, soccer, trains and the local food!

Tatsuya Matsumoto, Representative of Saitama City



1. Bonsai

While bonsai may at first look like a hobby for retired people, as you can see from the picture it can be quite cool and modern. Saitama has the "Bonsai Art Museum," a source of bonsai culture for the world, and Japan's best bonsai nurseries are located right next to the museum. Furthermore, there are many houses with their own unique bonsai gardens, creating a peaceful atmosphere around the whole town. Trees in the outdoor exhibit of the museum, which are changed according to the seasons, are masterpieces with a history of more than 100 years. In 2017, the 8th World Bonsai Convention (<http://www.world-bonsai-saitama.jp/en/index.html>) will be held in Saitama from April 27 to 30, so please visit Saitama!



2. Hikawa Shrine

Hikawa Shrine is one of the oldest shrines in Japan and it's said to have a history of more than 2,000 years. In addition to the shrine itself, the approach to the shrine, called Hikawa Sando, stretches for 2 kilometers straight, making it one of the longest approaches to a shrine in Japan. The approach features a walkway in the middle with rows of Japanese zelkova trees and lanterns lining both sides. These factors create a serene atmosphere. There is nothing like taking a stroll in and around the shrine while indulging in dango, or Japanese-style dumplings.



3. Soccer

Saitama City is home to two J-League professional soccer teams, and in fact is one of the major soccer cities in Japan. In particular, the Urawa Red Diamonds are the most famous soccer team in Japan not only because of their strength as a team, but also because of the loyalty and passion of their fans. As seen in the picture, the stadium fills with devoted fans wearing the team's red uniforms and singing the team's song.



4. Trains

If you like trains, consider visiting the Railway Museum in Saitama! There you can find displays of past railway train car models, train control simulators, a railway model diorama, miniature trains that can be operated by visitors, and much more. Saitama's Railway Museum is fun for the whole family!



5. Local Food

As for local food, Saitama City is known for its unagi, or eel dishes. Tofu Ramen and Stamina Ramen (a dish which combines ramen noodles with the Japanese "stamina" style — a thick, strong soy sauce and garlic sauce over vegetables) are also Saitama specialties loved by local ramen connoisseurs. There are also numerous confectionary sweets shops which draw visitors from other prefectures in Japan.



Unagi



Stamina Ramen



Sweets

The next time you find yourself in Tokyo, please take the opportunity to experience Saitama's local history, flavors and sights!

<Bonsai> <http://www.omiyabonsai.jp/>

<Saitama Tourism> <http://www.stib.jp/e/index.html>



Fireworks



Rape blossoms

2. JETAA Canada National Conference in Vancouver

[Arisa Maruno, Assistant Director, Representative of Wakayama Prefecture](#)

The annual JETAA Canada National Conference was held in Vancouver from June 10th to 12th this year. The host chapter was JETAA BC & Yukon, and delegates from the 7 Canadian chapters, 2 of the 3 country representatives in the U.S., and staff members from the consulate general in Vancouver and our office attended.

The first day, JETAA BC & Yukon arranged a dragon boat experience for us. As background, the chapter uses dragon boating as one of their activities in order to communicate with JET alumni, Yokohama City, their sister city in Japan, and people in local communities with connections to Japan. It was chilly and cloudy that day, but we enjoyed the adventure and got to know each other better thanks to it.

In the conference, we explained CLAIR issues such as CLAIR projects regarding the JET Program 30th anniversary and the system of our grants for chapters. We also informed them of a short movie made by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. It shows the current situation of the recovery of the prefectures affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and rallies people in support of them. This is the link below:

→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVzUf2lW3wk>

The U.S. country representatives talked briefly about some activities undertaken by U.S. chapters and also gave a progress report on JETAA International. The new website was also shown

(<http://www.jetaainternational.org/>). Canada chapter delegates reported on their activities such as pre-departure orientations for new JET participants and Japanese festivals. They shared ideas with each other and the conference was very fruitful.



3. Japanese Governors Attended the NGA Summer Meeting

Shindo Hayase, Assistant Director, Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Japanese governors talked with their US counterparts at the National Governors Association (NGA) Summer Meeting in Des Moines, which was held from July 14th to 16th.

Two Japanese governors, Gov. Shinji Hirai (Tottori Prefecture) and Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki (Hiroshima Prefecture), joined a special session on the second day of the meeting. NGA Chair Gov. Gary Herbert (Utah), Gov. Terry Branstad (Iowa), Gov. Matt Bevin (Kentucky) and Gov. John Bel Edwards (Louisiana) also participated in the session.

The session was titled “Generating Jobs and Economic Growth: Foreign Direct Investment in the United States and Selling to the Global Marketplace”, moderated by award-winning journalist John Hockenberry. The president of JETRO’s (Japan External Trade Organization) New York office and other international company executives joined the session as panelists.

In the session, Gov. Yuzaki highlighted the importance of cooperation between sub-national governments on issues including economic development, international trade, and investment. “Hiroshima has a very good relationship with a Mexican state. Investments and jobs are growing rapidly based on this relationship. That’s what we’re looking forward to with US states”, he said.

“We share the same values,” Gov. Hirai said to the US governors. “We are attacking the same targets, job creation, social welfare, healthcare, and things like that. We can share best practices, so we do hope to enhance this type of conversation.”

We, JLGC, supported these two governors’ visit, and we continue to encourage strengthening cooperation between the US and Japanese governors in wide-ranging areas.



Gov. Yuzaki



Gov. Hirai