

# JETAA.NY

Newsletter for The  
Japan Exchange and  
Teaching Program  
Alumni Association,  
New York Chapter

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Spring 2002

it's all about networking (sort of) in this issue...

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## Reality TV- Japanese Style

R. Michael Kelley

The e-mail began this way: "Japanese production company in New York desperately needs white male who can speak some Japanese for a small role in a Japanese t.v. show. Great opportunity with Tomomi Kahara" Since it was signed by a program associate at the Japan Society and routed through the JETAA mailing list, I knew that it had to be legitimate, right? By the time I called the producer in New York, I was told "Thanks, but the part has been 90% cast already." Armed with that 10% window of opportunity, I showed up anyway, interviewed by phone with the director in L.A., sat for a digicam photo (so my face would match my voice, I supposed?). An hour later, my cell phone rang. I had gotten the role of "Key Man" (*ki-ma-nu*) with some unspecified record label here in New York. Sounds like something so nutty that it usually only happens in Japan, right?

The premise of the whole show (*Denpa Shounen*) was that NTV (Nippon Television Network) had approached the uber-cute Kahara Tomomi at some horse ranch near Tokyo in the wake of a tremendous breakup with her Svengali-like producer/boyfriend, Komoru Tetsuya. The network had offered her a paltry stipend to "make her American debut"—first in L.A., then in New York. Naturally, this being Japanese t.v., and she being a fallen pop idol with a huge following in Japan (and elsewhere, I was led to believe), cameras would be documenting her every move. I thought it sounded cool at first, but still I had no clue who Tomomi was—in my mind, she was probably just another flavor-of-the-month cutie I had seen on t.v. when I lived back in Toyama-ken. I hopped on the Internet, and within seconds I had tapped into about a hundred websites with links to "Kahara Tomomi". OK, so maybe this would be fun, after all, I remember thinking.

In addition to masquerading as a well-connected industry executive, I was charged with securing an actual vocal coach to work with Tomomi, since her voice had been punished by all manner of neglect, illness, and emotional distress. Through actual contacts I have in "the business," I was able to hire a singer who had toured in the opening act of New Kids on the Block. Meghan Brown is a tall, blonde woman from Ireland with

the voice of an angel—seemingly right out of central casting—a natural for Japanese t.v. The stage was being set, and the show was already on the air in Tokyo every Sunday night, chronicling Tomomi's daily activities over on the 'left coast' on the fringe of Hollywood.

Since the money offered by NTV was not nearly enough for her to survive 5 months in L. A. and another three in NYC, Tomomi would be "forced" to take odd jobs (car washing, nightclub gigs, etc.) now and then during her stay. Poor Tomo-chan, right? Wrong. As we well know, Japanese t.v. is awash in programs where the viewing public can watch their celebrities (and commoners as well) squirm for the audience, in some type of "Candid Camera-gone-wrong" carnival atmosphere. The one thing with her was that she knew that the cameras were on her all the time, and there was a mic pack in the back pocket of her jeans 24/7. As for me, I was to be paid a daily fee (double on weekends), whether I was on camera for five minutes or in a scene which ultimately would be cut from the show. Fine with me. Bring it on.

When the time finally came to lure Tomo-chan to New York with a phone call (things had not been going optimally for her in the "City of the Angels"), and after her grueling cross-country trek via Greyhound and Amtrak through New Orleans (you were thinking she would use a plane?), the show's producers made me intentionally miss her calls (twice!) on my cell phone. Another of the director's touches to create some drama, you see. I had even called her myself at a club in L.A. and invited her out to New York, yet upon her arrival, she was coldly greeted with "We'll get back to you, leave a message after the beep..." What a welcome to the center of the universe, right? Finally, the "powers that be" finally let her call go through, and we arranged to meet at my office in the Met Life building on Park Avenue. *My office on Park Avenue?* Yes, the producers had actually rented a space, furnished the entire interior right down to gold records on the wall and a photo of my wife on the desk (in reality, of course, I have no wife). When the pop icon finally showed up, cameraman/director trailing behind her, it was all I could do to remember my lines. What? I thought you said that this was

continued on page 6...

# behold, the changing of the editors...

## Jody Mousseau

Hello Everyone! It's me, your friendly neighborhood Newsletter Co-Editor. I'm back for another informative and fun-filled issue of the rocking NY JETAA Newsletter. Steven and I hope that we can put together issues that are as informative and creative as Lulu has in the past year. So feel free to call or e-mail with any suggestions for future issues at any time. Also, thank you Lulu for all your support, technical and moral, through this transition process!



As I introduced myself in the last issue, I was an ALT in Kagawa-ken (yes, in Shikoku), home of the best udon in the world, from 1997-2000. Now, I'm the dedicated JETAA servant who will work hard to bring you these 16 pages four times a year.

If you would like to contribute an article at any time, or have any suggestions for themes, please contact Steve or myself. Yoroshiku onegaishimasu!

## Steven Horowitz

Hajimemashite and welcome to the spring issue of the JETAA Newsletter, the first under the helm of myself and Jody (along with mucho help from Lulu the Newsletter Goddess.) How did I become a co-editor?



Originally I just wanted to write a review of karaoke or ramen spots in New York, and next thing I know I'm co-managing a major East Coast publication. East Coast, West Coast- there's no need to get caught up in all of that. But a good thing to get caught up in these days is Networking to help with career and social transitions. That's one of my motivations (among others) for getting involved with the Newsletter.

After a brief career as a lawyer, I've been transitioning into more fulfilling career and life paths. (See page 10 for another view on the law.) And what better way to explore the world without actually jumping on a plane than as the representative of a cross-cultural conduit like the NY JETAA Newsletter? I hope you find this spring Issue enjoyable, thought-provoking, useful and even interactive. Putting this issue together has been all of those things and more for me, and I hope it will better enable all of us to take full advantage of the resource that is the JET Alumni Network.

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The Greatly Anticipated  
2002-2003 NY JETAA Elections

are quickly approaching...

Are you game?

NO TO KEEP UP OR TAKE ACTION AND IMMEDIATELY RUNNING FOR OFFICE POSITIONS. PLEASE CONTACT THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE AT (212) 661-0909 OR FAX AT (212) 661-0909. PLEASE ANNOUNCE YOUR CANDIDACY AND THEN SUBMIT YOUR PLATFORM TO THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE BY APRIL 10TH. IN YOUR PLATFORM, PLEASE INCLUDE:

- THE POSITION THAT YOU ARE SEEKING
- THE REASON(S) YOU ARE RUNNING
- ISSUE(S) THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ENHANCE, IMPROVE, AND/OR WORK ON
- A LIST OF PRIOR ACTIVITIES, IF ANY, ASSOCIATED WITH JETAA.

VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE IN MAY. THE TERM FOR NEW OFFICERS WILL BEGIN IN JUNE 2002 AND END IN MAY 2003. FOR INFORMATION ON THE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH POSITION, SEE THE OFFICER POSITION PROFILES ON PAGE 13.

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# Why would we be Networking, again?



Introduction by Jody Mousseau, with Networking ideas offered by various NY JETAA members

Why do we Network? I guess that would be like asking ourselves, "why should we go out and meet new people and keep the people that we already know in our lives, too?" For personal happiness. For professional development. For just being an ultra-cool person.

JETs come back from Japan and are not only thrown into the whirlwind of readapting to American culture, but also jump back into the social scene to meet new people, search for that after-JET career or return to the one that they were a part of before they left for Japan, and often relocate to a new city for professional or personal reasons.

Through all of these changes that newly returned JETs go through, there are many outlets available, especially in New York City (aside from our wonderful NY JETAA chapter, that is) to meet new people for both personal and professional reasons, and to sometimes try to stay connected to Japan in some way. And many JETs who have been back in the States for a while also want, and need, to get out there and network for the same reasons.

So, various NY JETAA members have written the following "blurbs" to give you an idea of the various Networking opportunities that are available out there in that amazing City of ours. Perhaps you're the quintessential social butterfly, or maybe you'd rather stay home with a video than go out and socialize with people you don't know. Perhaps you want to find a sports team or event to get involved with, or maybe you just want to relax and talk with some new people. Maybe you want to keep connected to the Japan-thing, and maybe you just want to get out there and socialize in general. The following picks from NY JETAA members offer opportunities for all kinds of people with different tastes who are looking for different things in their networking experiences.

**Achilles Track Club-** (212) 354-0300; website: [www.achillestrackclub.org](http://www.achillestrackclub.org)

Affiliated with the New York Roadrunners' Club ([www.nyrrc.org](http://www.nyrrc.org)), Achilles is an organization for runners with disabilities who either require or just prefer a running or walking partner. It's a great way to meet new people in a friendly, casual environment, provide a valuable service and get a little exercise. One JET alum has even worked with the Japanese chapter of Achilles, running with a blind Japanese runner as a guide in the last New York Marathon. To get involved, show up at the New York Roadrunner's Club at 89<sup>th</sup> St between 5<sup>th</sup> & Madison on Tuesdays at 6pm and Saturdays at 10am.

**Big Apple Greeter-** (212) 669-2364; 1 Centre St., Suite 2035; website: [www.bigapplegreeter.org](http://www.bigapplegreeter.org);

If you like walking around New York and helping out-of-towners discover a less "touristy" New York experience, this is a great place to volunteer. The idea is that people visiting the city have someone to walk around with who knows the city and can add a little local perspective to the visit. No need to be an expert on New York history. Just a general familiarity with the area you're walking around and enthusiasm for meeting new people from the US and abroad. Visitors from other countries usually come from the Europe, Australia and South America, with the occasional one from Japan, so language skills can be a plus. A short orientation is required before you can become a Greeter.

*continued on next page...*

## interesse international inc.

# iii

### Exciting Career Opportunities!

Japanese companies are seeking JETs for positions in: finance, travel, accounting, research, non profit, information technology, media, import/export, manufacturing, telecommunications and more.

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**Drip Café**— (212) 875-1032; 489 Amsterdam between 83<sup>rd</sup> & 84<sup>th</sup>; www.dripcafe.com

A charming Upper West Side coffee shop that doubles as a matchmaking service. Walk in, sit down and peruse other people's personals in the big notebooks while sipping your decaf mochachino. Fill out your own questionnaire if you're so moved. Eavesdrop on tentative first meetings set up by the café's staff, as all first dates are done at the Drip Café itself. And perhaps meet the significant other of your dreams. As awkward as it might sound, they actually do a good job of destigmatizing the whole process. What have you got to lose?

**International Center of New York**- (212) 255-9555; 50 W. 23rd St., 7th Fl (between 5th & 6th Aves), email: info@intlcenter.org; website: www.intlcenter.org

If you like one-on-one English teaching, if you miss the medley of international folks you used to meet while living abroad, or if you just want to return the favors done for you when you struggled through life in a foreign country, this is a great place to volunteer. The International Center provides language help, information, social activities, an informal gathering place, and various other kinds of resources for people new to the USA. Three short orientation sessions are required for being a conversation, writing or advanced English partner. After that you meet your partner at the always lively International Center about once a week. (Or more if you want.)

**Japan Society Young Professionals Network**- Japan Society Corporate Programs: Karen Hawkins at 212-715-1218 or Ellie Montazeri at 212-715-1247 to register for upcoming events

The Japan Society Young Professional Network (formerly the Young Executive Program) provides opportunities for young Japanese and American professionals to meet, exchange ideas and learn from experts in various fields. Since it began in 1992, this program has been highly successful in bringing together the next generation of business leaders through a combination of social gatherings and informal discussion groups. Participants are primarily professionals in their 20s and 30s interested in international business. YPN is very easy to join- just attend one event, provide your contact information, and you're a member.

**JETAA Meetings/Newsletter/Happy Hour**- Need we say more?

**Nichibeï Toastmasters' Club**— www.toastmasters.org

Toastmasters (www.toastmasters.org) is the internationally reknown organization for people who want to improve their communications skills. New members go through a step-by-step program that teaches the art of public speaking.

Nichibeï Toastmasters is the only one of the 90+ chapters in the NYC area that is bilingual-- Japanese and English. They welcome non-members to come in and join their meetings anytime. Check out the website for upcoming events.

**Nihon Benkyo Kai**

If you're looking for an academic setting in which to deepen your knowledge of Japan and meet people with a similar interest in stimulating their brains, try out the Nihon Benkyo Kai, a lecture and discussion series organized by graduate students of Columbia's East Asian Institute to discuss current issues affecting Japan and its relations with the international community. To find out what's coming up or to get on their mailing list, go to <http://www.geocities.com/nihonbenkyokai>.

**Shorinji Kempo Group/Grapppling**- (212) 924-7687; 104 W. 14th St. #2; website: www.newyorkji.com

If you have any siblings, you know that fighting is a great way of bonding. Martial arts groups are great organizations to join and meet interesting people while getting in touch with your physical and spiritual

sides. Although a little more expensive than some other activities, a one-time fee often gets you almost unlimited access to the dojos at times convenient to you. For more information on shorinji kempo, check out the article from the Winter JETAA Newsletter. Grapppling is sort of a ju-jitsu/wrestling type of martial art, made popular by the Ultimate Fighting Championship. There's a dojo on 14<sup>th</sup> St. The school is called Gurgel/Clemente Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and is associated with the Alliance team. The teacher's name is Fabio Clemente.

**Ultimate Frisbee**

Perhaps the most inexpensive and social sport in which you can participate, there are a number of pickup games and club teams, often co-ed, for players of all levels including beginners. A good place to start is the New York area ultimate website ([www.wudi.org](http://www.wudi.org)) and the Ultimate Players Association site at [www.upa.org](http://www.upa.org). You can also contact Steven Horowitz (you know, the Co-Editor guy of this publication) at [stevenwaseda@yahoo.com](mailto:stevenwaseda@yahoo.com) for more information.

### Just a Tid-Bit: Top 10 Networking Don'ts in Japan

10. Bringing Quaker instant oats packets to a nabe party.
9. Using meishi to remove slightly piece of nori from your teeth... before memorizing the person's name and position.
8. Saying, "Actually, I prefer my sashimi fried."
7. Ending enkais with a big group hug.
6. Insisting your acquaintances respond, "Yeah, you know me!" every time you say, "You down wit' L-D-P?!"
5. Attempting to facilitate an in depth discussion of the merits of SMAP versus the Kinki Kids.
4. Asking, "Explain to me again how Dorothy's dog left Kansas to become the military ruler of Japan?"
3. Sticking chopsticks in your ears when someone asks if you know how to use them.
2. Drinking out of the communal beer bottle at an enkaï.
1. Tickling a co-worker and saying, "Kootchie-kootchie-Koizumi!"

### HEY, WHAT ABOUT KARAOKE?!

Why not use one of the cornerstones of popular Japanese culture to network or kick back and relax, with American and Japanese friends alike? And just to let **you** be the one to say, "hey, I know a great place," some of our members have reviewed a few, for your entertainment.

**Karaoke DUET**- (212) 753-0035; 256 East 49th Street, New York, NY 10017

Duet is the Cadillac of New York karaoke boxes. It is clean, has good equipment, good soundproofing and the best selection of English songs out there. The central midtown location has some decent restaurants and bars nearby and a liquor store across the street. The rooms are mid-sized you can do a group of 10-12. Duet is a bit pricier than the other places, especially if you order food and drinks there, but the higher quality is definitely visible.

**NEW TOKYO 18**- 18<sup>th</sup> St. between Park Ave. So. & Irving Place, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl above Sushi Desse restaurant

If you're looking for that authentic Japanese neighborhood karaoke pub ambience without a hefty cover charge, the New Tokyo Inn is one of the best karaoke deals in New York. Divided into a cozy bar and a separate communal karaoke room, the bar serves reasonably priced drinks with a \$12 minimum if you enter the karaoke room on weeknights and a \$5 cover to enter the karaoke room on weekend nights. There's also a

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"Reality TV?"

Of course, "reality television" is just as real as a network will allow it to be. Since t.v. airtime costs much yen, I suppose that there must be some creative control to play within the constrictions of a one-hour, weekly program. (Kinda makes you wonder about all those Survivors and Real-Worlders on American t.v., right?) I came to learn that most of my encounters with Tomo-chan were to be semi-scripted—at least on my end, anyway. It became a ritual to meet up with the producers (over coffee or *udon* usually) before my scenes with Kaharasan were to be shot, in order to go over the intended "dialogue" for that day. The routine was this: I would receive a list of "talking points," and my goal was to try and keep our conversations on course, no matter what her responses happened to be. Simple? Not entirely.

I never could figure out how much Tomomi herself was in on the joke—most times she would lead me to believe she had no clue where things were headed. Once, however, she even turned off her audio pack in order to tell me not to worry about her sleeping on the couch of my "office." On her first night in the city, after being rebuffed by the tightly-locked door of a church in Harlem (another stunt planned by the producers), she had stayed up all night drinking coffee at a Chelsea diner. Since she had arrived already sick and in the dead of winter with nowhere to go, it was finally decided that she should stay her first few nights on the couch in my "office". Huh? I registered my concerns with the director off-camera about this setup, and he conspiratorially assured me that Tomo-chan had in fact spent her second night at the hotel with her manager (who had accompanied her on the trip). So much for "reality" programming, eh? But I wasn't supposed to know this (and certainly neither was the viewing public back in Japan).

As time went by, I actually came to like Tomomi-san as a person—in some respects, she was just a nice 26 year-old woman who, with her red ski jacket and cute little backpack, looked to be no more than a *koukousei*, more often than not. I felt sorry for her at times, as her rigorous attempts to make it big in America were being broadcast every Sunday night back in old *Nippon*. Each day's videotapes were

flown immediately to Japan by super airmail in some special pouch, in order to be reviewed by the network and then aired within a few days of shooting. Unfortunately, I soon learned that my feelings of goodwill for our "star" were coming across on-camera. More than once, I was asked by the director to be "tougher, more businesslike" and "not so friendly" with Tomomi. His intent was to get her to realize how serious the situation was, and that if she didn't work hard enough in New York, her dream of making a "debut" here would never come to pass. What exactly had she agreed to get herself into? I caught myself wondering more than twice.

After many hours of working with Meghan at the historic S.I.R. recording studios in midtown Manhattan, she was deemed ready (by me) to meet with one Andy Marvel, a record producer who had had a few albums go platinum in Japan with Celine Dion and Diana King (names which really rock the Richter Scale of the music world over there). Though Andy had supposedly been a friend of mine from college days, I actually only met him a mere half-hour before our first scene together. He had been hired through a contact at Sony Music in New York, and agreed to play along for the duration of Tomomi's stay. For a while, we huddled together in the recording studio, trying to get this poor girl to use a voice (in English yet!) that had been ravaged by mental anguish and jet lag, not to mention depression, drugs and alcohol. The catch was that she was expected to test-pilot two of Andy's original songs which had not yet been recorded by any other artist. Considering that Tomo-chan probably hadn't used any passable English since *chugakko*, what were we asking her to do? Just sing on-key and in-accent in the native language of a foreign country—No problem! I envisioned myself in the middle of a Bangkok recording studio, surrounded by professional musicians and producers, with a song in front of me and the same music playing over and over and over until I got it. You get the picture.

I had no concept of how popular the *Denpa Shounen* program was until I started getting emails (unsolicited) from my former students

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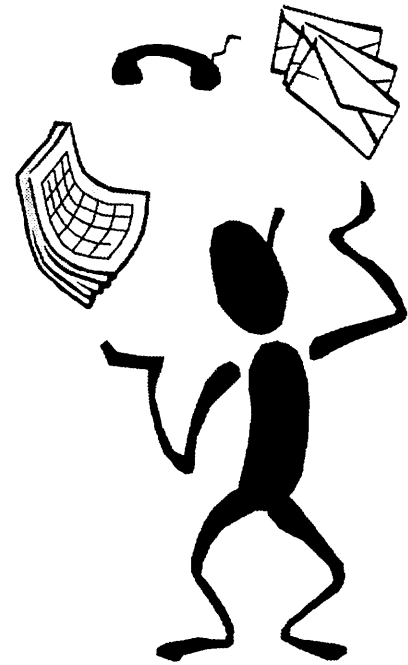
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of Johana, Japan was watching me, cheering for the second coming of Kahara-san ("Ganbatteru, ne, Tomo-chan?"). Suddenly, too, at the Momotaro hair salon in midtown, I now enjoyed attendants on either side of me, sweeping my hair virtually before it had a chance to hit the floor. They were all constantly thanking me for helping Kahara-san get back on her feet, asking me how she was in real life, et cetera. My hairstylist, Kushi-kun, and all the staff had been watching the shows on tape delay, thanks to the Newtok Video-ya just around the corner. All of Japan was still rooting for Tomomi, and I was feeling the love, just for giving her the chance it to make the big time again via the New York experience. How crazy was this? The weirdness continued.

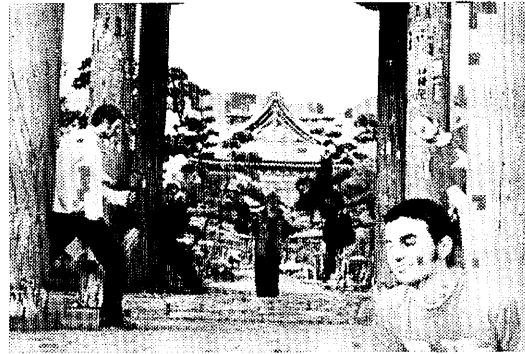
In between rehearsals and recording sessions, Tomomi was settling into her new apartment on 94<sup>th</sup> between 5<sup>th</sup> and Madison. The production assistants had finished wiring the bedroom and living areas with the hidden audio and video cameras (did she know? She had to, right?), so that the entire nation of Japan was privy to seeing her life in the Big Apple. Meanwhile, Tomo-chan was led to believe (by me) that this fully-furnished apartment belonged to a musician buddy of mine from Australia who was back home visiting family for the holiday season. (No problem if she stayed as long as she wanted to, since it was actually a short-term rental unit in a B&B that the producers had found on the Internet.) The director went so far as to shoot alternate building exteriors to be used in the broadcast in an effort to throw off the Tomomi fans who were living in New York and constantly trying to figure out where she was staying. Crazy? Yes, but entirely true. There were some rules: buy her own meals (soup, sandwiches, etc. at a local deli); *not* drink milk (Meghan advised her that all dairy was akin to cyanide in a singer's throat); and just practice her little heart out (usually with a demo tape and a Mr. Microphone-style *karaoke* setup)—all this until her much-anticipated recording day.

This improbable odyssey was finally winding to an end, three months after Kahara-san first arrived with a dream and a knapsack at Grand Central Station. She was, by now, emotionally drained, homesick for Japan (I later learned that Tomo-chan's mother had flown in to town a few times to console her daughter), and just plain tired of the recording

schedule. On the bright side, she was wildly successful in the eyes of her adoring fans, considering she had managed to record two original songs in English, and was scheduled to re-record them in Japanese upon her return home. There was a bittersweet sense of accomplishment when all the mixing and dubbing was finally done, and I was happy to see the wearied look of achievement in Tomomi's eyes when it was all over. Sadly, I also knew that this meant no more hanging out with Tomo-chan on taxi rides across town or at her rented uptown apartment near Central Park. No more French bistros with the producers and no more cell phone calls from the director. At the recording studio down in Chelsea, after a lot of hugs and promises to keep in touch, it was time for her to go.

Kahara was greeted at Narita airport by NTV studio executives who blindfolded her, put her in a van, and whisked her to an outdoor concert hall in Shinjuku. The event space was populated by thousands of Tomomi fans who had all won tickets offered by lottery on NTV to welcome her back home. Next, they led her out into the eerily silent stage—still blindfolded, of course. When the blindfold came off, everyone erupted into cheers, Tomomi cried briefly, composed herself and went on with the show, giving her people what they had come to hear—her new "English" songs. The true performer in her had risen to the occasion. In true "alternate reality t.v." fashion, the saga came to a fireworks-laden close with the triumphant return of a reinvented pop idol.

P.S.: Though I haven't been in touch with Tomomi since she got back to Japan (the producers told me it would better preserve the reality concept if I wouldn't), I know through friends that her career has been steadily on the rise, starting with a Lawson's commercial and appearances on a few variety shows. I can't help but laugh when I think that in whatever small way, I was helpful somehow in getting Tomo-chan back into the public eye as a singer/performer. But we all know that the very same spotlight that illuminates the stars in Japan tends to singe them sometimes, too. Hopefully Kahara-san won't become one of the many who get burned out over there by the limelight in our beloved Land of the Rising Sun.



**Matthew Cholerton (Yamanashi-ken, 1999-2001)**

"Seven musicians from three continents met by chance at a karaoke bar near Japan's infamous Mt. Fuji"

Well, the story of the Great Tokyo Foodfight didn't actually didn't start just like that, but pretty close. It turned out to be one of the reasons the JET Program was one of the best things I have ever done.

The first year on the JET program, I made sure to attend all those "Welcome" functions. The very first of these functions, was at a neat back alley izakaya bar, called Nishiki - so obscure was the location, we had to meet a second-year JET on the corner so he could guide us through the back alley maze. At Nishiki's, I found myself mingling with the other new JETs, telling each person the same generic background story and reasons for coming to Japan. When I mentioned I played the drums, Pat, another new JET said he played guitar and that we should try to get together and jam sometime. Soon after, I found myself consumed with finding my way to school, getting to know my neighborhood (meaning I could find my way back in less than an hour after getting lost), figuring out what I could possibly teach to actual students, and planning what exotic locale I could spend my, not-so-hard earned, salary on. I also continued to meet those same JET friends at Nishiki's. We shared experiences and frustrations, discovered that bottle beer was actually cheaper than draft, and really got to know each other. Every time I saw Pat we mentioned we should jam sometime, and 6 or 7 months later, it actually happened.

We found a practice studio and invited anyone who could play an instrument to come join our "Project". Actually, playing an instrument wasn't a strict prerequisite. Over the weeks more and more JETs from the area came around, and by a complete and utter act of serendipity, they all played different instruments. Similar to all my initial feelings about going to Japan, I was slightly intimidated and burdened by the new faces that I would have to interact with, but it always turned out to be very fun and the music even sounded ok. Definitely not great, but pretty good. And just like my other experiences in Japan, the band turned out to be one of the most rewarding things I have done with my life.

After a month or so, we had the chance to perform at the International Center in Yamanashi. As far as venues go, I suppose it was akin to the cafeteria at the local Recreation Center. Nonetheless, our new Japanese friends, and tight, supportive, fun group of JETs came out in force, consumed lots of alcohol, danced and cheered! We all celebrated with food and beer, things got out of hand, and when the hot sauce for the bland Japanese pizza was all over the place, we named our Project "The Great Tabasco Fiasco." Soon, we had a gig at the local live house. Perhaps because the local JETs were starved for nightlife and a reason to hangout, or because the Japanese folk in our little inaka (country-like) city enjoyed having an opportunity to stare directly at us foreigners, or perhaps just because the music scene in Japan is pathetic, we sold out the live house and were a hit!

We practiced more, we played more, we went on a local radio show, and we played at different venues - even in Matsumoto and Tokyo. Time went by, and it was great. Just being a foreigner in Japan, as most JETs will know often puts you in a position of a celebrity of sorts - you get noticed, and receive special attention. Playing in a band must have the best way in the world for me to take advantage of this. Other musicians, with keen musicianship and a good sound, often struggle for years playing to a couple of people, trying to make a name for themselves. But we were in Japan, and despite our unrefined tunes people loved us, and it was so much fun just to play. Occasionally, we were recognized on the streets; it seems all foreigners are recognized from time to time, but we were able to pretend it was due solely to our rock star status! Time passed, we played at some small festivals and were even the focus of a music TV show.

But all good things must end...or must they? The JET program had a maximum of three years in which to renew your contract, and some band members were in their final year. Others also planned on returning home. A bit before the other Tabasconians were to make their final decisions concerning the next year, the band did as it always did, we drank and thought of silly and crazy things to do - but this time with spectacular results. This newest and by far most delirious contrivance was to take the band on a cross-country U.S. tour. Now don't get me wrong, we put a lot of consideration into the final decision. How much would it really cost? How would we get around? What equipment would we need and could we feasibly locate it? How many shows would we play each week? Could we handle not having the crowd we enjoyed in Japan? How about having no audience at all? Chain link fences, flying bottles, broken glass...? After realizing that it would be too expensive, that it would be difficult to get shows, and that we weren't actually that good, we decided to do it.

Rarely does a group of best friends hale from completely different areas, but JETs often do, and it can really be an advantage. The three Americans in the band came from distinctly different parts of the U.S. (West coast, East coast, and Iowa - or "outside Chicago" as Brian liked to put it). We called every old friend, stretched every odd connection, and got numbers for every bar we had ever heard of. Every band member compiled lists upon lists of venues from the internet and beyond. We wrote and re-wrote promotional info, compiled email lists, researched rental equipment, and transportation methods. JET jobs are often filled with a bit of "downtime," which we advantageously used to plan our band tour.

The overwhelming fun and unforgettable memories from our tour can primarily be attributed to the succession of burdens, catastrophes, and the change of plans that we encountered from day one. Even before the tour started, the lawyers from a big hot sauce manufacturer were displeased with our bands association to their product and let us know in a cease and desist order that our band "will confuse and mislead the consuming public," and that we "suggest an affiliation which (our) band does not have." Geez! Feeling affectionate towards our acronym, The GTF, we chose among many great suggestions like "The Guerilla Tastes Funny" and "The Great Tomodachi Flumpies," to finally rename ourselves "The Great Tokyo Foodfight." After a grand search for a RV

*continued on page 12.....*



# NEW JET

## Michael Noakes (Kagawa-ken, 1999-present)

I'm crap at networking. I've got this friend, Dave, who's a master at it. He remembers names the first time around; he writes contact e-mails and keeps in touch with people he's only met in passing; even after finishing JET and returning to England, he remembers his Japanese friends' birthdays and sends little gifts. I, on the other hand, can't remember the name of my kocho-sensei after three years, and frequently forget my family's birth dates.

I've nevertheless managed to develop a nice network of friends and acquaintances in Japan, despite my utter lack of common social skills. In some ways it wasn't easy. Back home in Canada before joining JET, I was a bit of a shut in. Here in Japan, though, making the effort and going out certainly pays off.

For me, it started my very first night in my new city. In retrospect, I got lucky. A third year JET named Sylvia lived in the same building as I, and she took me out for a few beers. I was tired and jetlagged and needed to unpack, but following her to the bar proved one of the best decisions I've made in my three years as a JET. She took me out to the local drinking hole. I met her Japanese boyfriend, Masakuni, and through him I met a number of his friends, both Japanese and foreign. I got to know the owner of the bar, eventually, and the staff as well. Over time and as my Japanese gradually improved, the effect began to snowball; and before I knew it I had my own little network of friends established in Japan.

It's "out" that a lot of the real networking takes place in Japan: outside of your home, outside of work, outside of class. At first, many of the teachers at your school(s) may seem withdrawn or cold; more likely they're overworked and shy. Eventually, though, you'll be asked to join them at an enkai—a Japanese office party. After a few beers these seemingly distant people are clamoring to talk to you, using what little English they know and not really caring if you can't quite understand what they're saying. It's great fun, and for many JETs the first chance they get to talk with their co-workers.

These enkais are key for establishing connections in the work environment. While they eventually get a bit expensive (and average of \$30-\$40 each) and often lead to alcoholic-like drinking binges, the first few are, in my opinion, absolutely essential to join (especially since the cost will probably be covered). You'll find that your relationship with fellow teachers at work will markedly improve.

For extra bonus points, get involved with life outside of the English classroom. Join after-school clubs. Talk with students during lunch break. On quiet days, see if you can join the P.E. or Home Economics class. The more you engage aspects of the job that fall outside of the minimum requirements of your contract, the better and stronger the network you'll establish in the workplace.

Of course, the biggest hindrance to networking in Japan is the language barrier. It's hard to get to know people if you can't move beyond, "Good afternoon," and "I am a pitcher." At the end of the day, being able to speak Japanese isn't that big of an obstacle: between furious dictionary consultation and frantic gesticulating, communication will happen. Make the *effort* to learn the language, however, even if you're only staying for a single year, is worth a lot. And even a tiny increase in ability pays off big: this is a country, after all, where knowing, "Here's looking at you, kid!" ("kimino hitomini kampai!") can actually work as a pick-up line.

Getting involved in the community is also worth the effort. Martial art classes, traditional craft organizations, Japanese music courses: not



only do they often not require the ability to speak much Japanese (Karate senseis seem to believe pain is an adequate means of communication), but these social groups are important elements of networking in a foreign country. The people you meet and the friendships you (hopefully) form provide important connections into the community. Especially in more rural areas, it's not unusual to be presented with gifts or showered with invitations once you've joined and proven a certain level of commitment.

...continued from page 5

20% service charge, but that's in lieu of the tip. Although the place has become more popular as a group party spot for Americans and can get crowded on weekends, it still retains a neighborhood feel with a number of Japanese regulars from outside the salaryman mainstream. And even when packed full, the New Tokyo Inn attracts a friendly crowd always willing to share the mic. Open from 9pm to 4am, it's a great place to start or end an evening. Bonus tip: Akira the bartender (young guy with thick black-rimmed glasses) will do an excellent beatbox on request if it's not too busy.

**TOTO Music Studio-** (212) 594-6644; 38 West 32nd Street, New York, NY 10001

Chosen by the Village Voice as 'Best Karaoke Song List' (2000) this Korea Town karaoke box offers a central location, low prices and a good selection of English tunes (as well as Korean, Japanese and Chinese). It also has the largest private rooms I have found in the city, able to accommodate over 20 JETs at one event. There are several good cheap Korean restaurants around as well as the usual fast food. The downside is the rooms are a bit shabby and dark and the English and Japanese play lists are not as up-to-date as I would like. But for large events, Toto can't be beat.

**Village Karaoke** -(212) 254-0066, (212) 420-7859; 27 Cooper Square

A smaller place on Cooper Square (around East 4th street), Village has a good selection of Japanese, Korean and English songs (slightly more up to date than Toto). Located four blocks south of St. Marks Place, Village is central to all those great East Village bars and restaurants and attracts a young hip crowd. But, the rooms are smaller (I would not use Village for events with more than 8 people, 10 if they're really skinny) and the soundproofing is a bit thin. Also it gets quite crowded on weekend nights and you may have to wait to get in.

Of course this is not exhaustive (there's no way we can cover ALL the karaoke hot spots!), but you can check out some more reviews and references at these two sites:

<http://www.murphguide.com/karaoke.htm>

[http://www.eatsquid.net/html/media\\_karaoke.html](http://www.eatsquid.net/html/media_karaoke.html)

# Getting On...

**NY JETAA's own Steven Horowitz interviews Brian Yeager (Iwate-ken, 1991-92) about his career in Law.**

I first met Brian about nine months ago while he was still working in Cleary, Gottlieb's New York office. But to get his full story I had to track him down in Tokyo to where he recently relocated.

**Steven:** How long have you been working for Cleary, Gottlieb?

**Brian:** I've worked for Cleary for 3 1/2 years now.

**S:** Tell me a little about your background and how you ended up a lawyer?

**B:** I'm 33 and was born in Scranton Pennsylvania, but we moved quite a bit while I was growing up from one army base to the next. I went on the JET program the year I graduated from college. After the program I went on to grad school in linguistics, but I decided that teaching linguistics at a college level wasn't what I wanted to spend my life doing, so then (surprise) I went to law school. During law school my wife Tamami and I got married. We had met in college and stayed in contact afterwards. We've been married now for 7 years.

**S:** What's it like being a corporate lawyer? What do you do all day? What are some of the things you like about it?

**B:** My firm encourages its corporate associates to gain experience in a variety of areas with the aim of becoming generalists. As a result I've had assignments in all kinds of transactions and matters. The advantage of this sort of system is that it exposes you to a variety of areas of knowledge--I've gotten to learn about the Japanese land registration system, the English tax system, the US bankruptcy system, etc. Most of what I do, though, involves some sort of financing transaction, often with implications under the US securities laws.

An actual day in the life, while it varies depending on the status of the matters I'm working on, can be pretty long. Most days I have things to draft or edit and phone calls to make and receive. A fair amount of my time is spent organizing documents and controlling what's going on in my deals, basically, making sure that what needs to get done gets done. Generally the most interesting phase of a transaction is right at the beginning--since I often get assigned to work on matters I've never encountered before, trying to understand a transaction can be quite intellectually stimulating.

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**S:** Are there any things you dislike about it?

**B:** The two main things I dislike about the job is how time-consuming and how stressful it can be. Clients in our practice usually are in a position to require us to work on very demanding schedules. It's hard on your personal life to know that, for example, a client can call at 6pm on a Friday and expect you to work all weekend, and while work isn't always that abrupt, I do generally end up working late most days and working on most weekends.

**S:** So now you're back in Japan for the fifth time and Tokyo for the third time, right? How did you end up back in Japan this time?

**B:** My wife and I were thinking that we might stay in New York for a while this time around, since that's where my firm is headquartered. But it did not work out like we expected, mainly because she did not find a job in New York and decided to return to Japan to her job here after her sabbatical ended in June.

**S:** What's it like working for an American law firm in Tokyo?

**B:** I think that people's experiences probably vary a lot depending on the firm. Even though the office has grown a lot since the last time I was here, it's still one of the smaller places in town. Having an office this small is a lot different than New York where a lot of firms have hundreds of lawyers in the same building. A big advantage for me this time around is having Japanese lawyers as colleagues in our office. It really increases the interest in the work for me as a New York lawyer to have to consider the Japanese law aspects of a deal, and that happens a lot more frequently with Japanese lawyers in the office. It's particularly interesting for me to consider how the two languages shape the way that specialists think about things and I have real admiration for people who can operate at a high level in legal situations both languages.

**S:** Where did you go to law school? Did you go right after the JET Program or did you do something else in between?

**B:** I went to law school at Columbia University in New York, which I chose principally because it has a very good Japanese law program. There are always several Japanese lawyers attending the school for a one year degree and there are a number of classes on Japanese law and Japanese legal documents.

Between the JET Program and law school, I studied linguistics for a year and a half and then worked as a paralegal for a year. Japanese was one of the reasons that I decided to switch from an academic career to a career in law--I felt that I'd have more practical exposure to the language and the society here. I certainly have found that I've had contact with Japan, so I suppose that this worked out.

**S:** In what ways did your JET experience affect or influence your law school experience?

**B:** I almost certainly wouldn't have ended up going to law school if I hadn't been on the JET Program, although I'm not sure the Ministry of Education had yet more lawyers in mind in designing the program. If my interest in the language and the

country hadn't been stimulated by the year I spent here right after college I doubt that I would have spent time learning the language or sought opportunities to live and work here.

**S:** How has it influenced your career as a lawyer?

**B:** I think the influence on my career is similar to the extent that I probably wouldn't have chosen this path all if I hadn't participated in the program. At the same time, though, my perspective on "internationalization" is quite a bit different now. When I was in Iwate, this central theme of the AET's existence always seemed like a bit of a swindle--after all the schools that I taught in, despite a few strange details, were fundamentally similar to the schools I'd been in in the US and most of the confusion about different cultures I saw could be boiled down to people not getting sufficient explanation in a language they could understand.

Here in Tokyo, my experience is almost exactly the opposite. Most of the Japanese people I meet in work situations speak English. But there are a lot of cases where even a pretty sophisticated grasp of English (or Japanese, as the case may be) may not be enough to avoid misunderstandings. For example, a certain US legal concept may not have an exact analog in Japanese law, even if there is a translation or a katakana term that can be used. Negotiations may be carried out by business people who have a general understanding of the concept, and since they can express it to some extent in Japanese, the parties may end up with the impression that they've agreed to something even though neither side really understands the other (this is related to the limitations on the extent to which each side understands its own position).

**S:** What kind of advice would you give JETs who are thinking about law school?

**B:** I've been told quite a few times that you should concentrate on becoming a good lawyer first before aiming at being a Japan specialist. I suppose that's good advice. At the same time, though, I think that given the sort of communication problems that can crop up, I expect there will continue to be a niche for people who are more likely to be able to prevent miscommunication. Quite apart from Japan considerations, I'd advise them to think carefully (law school is expensive), and most important, to enjoy the experience.

**Muchas arigatos, Brian! If you'd like to ask Brian some questions of your own, you can catch him on the Discussion board at [www.jetaany.org](http://www.jetaany.org) under "Jetting On With Brian Yeager".**



The next Newsletter, Summer 2002, is the  
**LOVE**  
issue. Any ideas or suggestions? Want to submit an article? Contact Steven at [stevenwaseda@yahoo.com](mailto:stevenwaseda@yahoo.com) or Jody at [mousseau@hotmail.com](mailto:mousseau@hotmail.com).

## Distant Thunder

### *A Review by the JETAA Book Club*

*Amanda Trull, Ryan Chan, Nina Morgenlander and Other Members*

"Distant Thunder" describes changes in rural Japan and the conflict between traditional and modern ways of life. The story focuses on the life of Mitsuo, a tomato farmer, and his family as they deal with the (after) effects of the Bubble Economy. Mitsuo seeks out a traditional life by choosing not to give into the temptations of new cars, fancy houses, overseas tours (and shady entrepreneurs.) In the midst of a family break up, the downfall of his best friend and a small town political scandal Mitsuo finds solace in his relationship with Ayako. It is a story that shows how the relationships of this changing community can be strained and broken but not forgotten.

While the author was generous with his descriptions, readers can easily see his environmentalist motivations in writing the story. His ambitions to explore all aspects of contemporary rural Japan overwhelm the reader and there is little opportunity to see a clear resolution to the conflicting ideas. As readers, we wonder if the lack of complex character development is due to the

limitations of the novel length or to the intended audience's expectations. Overall, the attention given to our protagonist gives us a detailed perspective of an internal conflict between an overdeveloped self-interest and concern for one's family and community.

Personal reactions varied among BookClub members, but all in attendance agreed that reading this book lead to a greater appreciation for their lives in Japan. But, without a doubt, those that had the "inaka experience" had a greater connection to the story. Book recommendations ranged from, "Read it if you can borrow it from a BookClub member - it may not be worth the price of admission," to "After reading this, I understood what was happening around me in that small town I taught in. A real expose for survivors of inaka!"

Pick it up and decide for yourself.

...continued from page 8

that would actually move and was a reasonable distance beyond our price range, we pulled our funds together and purchased a 35 foot Allegro motorhome. It was great to own something and we LOVED it, despite the fact that it had a small electrical fire on the way home from purchasing it. Every week, the motorhome would have a major problem, we didn't have much attendance at our shows, money was going quick and we were having the time of our lives.

We started our trip driving up and down the East coast, from New York to North Carolina, and back up to New Jersey through Pennsylvania down to DC. We would sleep in the motorhome, party in the evening with drinks from the on-board fridge, and save half of our Subway sandwich so we could eat it for dinner. We performed at any venue that would take us. Occasionally, the booking staff would be surprised that although we were from Japan, we certainly didn't appear to be Japanese. Nonetheless, just about every place asked us to come back again. A highlight was the mid-west. We were a hit at a popular metal bar, had an article written up about us in the Des Moines Register, and we were the sole entertainment for a Halloween party at a small college. The dry-campus policy, however, prompted us to flee the college to a Halloween bash at a nearby JET alum's house. Apparently, there is a lack of music to come through areas like Iowa, Wyoming and South Dakota, so we were an instant hit. It was like being in Japan again; we even signed autographs and were featured on NPR.

Onward through Mt. Rushmore, Las Vegas, Yosemite National Park...The motorhome would break down wherever it wanted, and we'd bust out the baked beans, a can of beer, some dice and enjoy ourselves. I think it was the wonderful friends, like age-old buddies, thrown together in Japan (and then on the motorhome) that enabled us to diffuse even the worst situations. There was always one of us who was positive, and always

someone to hang out with. A bit worried about returning home after two years in Japan, it was the best transition I could have imagined. There is nothing like not showering regularly, not really knowing where you are going each day, and living with six other people to enable you to deal with, or not care about, culture shock. We didn't care about anything too much I suppose. Now the tour is over and I can, for the first time, look back on my time in Japan, the wonderful people I met, the amazing things I experienced and, of course, The Great Tokyo Foodfight.

*If you would like to know more about the adventures of The Great Tokyo Foodfight, check out their web site at [www.thegtf.com](http://www.thegtf.com).*

## **The Great Tokyo Foodfight**



# NY JETAA OFFICER POSITION PROFILES

AS PREFACED ON PAGE 3

NY JETAA Elections will be coming up in May. Platforms, as outlined on page 3, must be submitted by April 16th. Please contact the Elections Committee members, Alex McLaren or Sue Castroman, if you would like to run for one of the Officer positions. Below are descriptions of the four JETAA Officer positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) as written by the current officers. Contact any Officer for more information. (See page 2 for current Officers' e-mail addresses.) Yoroshiku onegaishimasu!

## PRESIDENT:

The President has the official responsibility of representing JETAANY in a variety of formal events sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan, the Japan Local Government Center, the Japan Society and other similar Japan-related organizations. The President chairs the monthly business meetings and is responsible for setting the agenda for these meetings. The President also establishes and reviews the annual calendar of events, in collaboration with the other officers. The President represents JETAANY at official conferences and meetings sponsored by JETAANY or by other JETAA chapters worldwide. The President is responsible for facilitating the process of organization necessary to fulfill and implement the annual calendar. The President may not be the point person for these annual events but the President is responsible for the organization of these events, through the delegation of responsibilities. Basically, the President must be a detail-oriented, organized and well-connected person. A familiarity with the current process of organization of events is important but not necessary. The main part of the President's job is maintaining, sustaining and motivating the resources within the organization. This feat requires a lot of follow-up and a lot of checking in on the processes. The President's responsibilities usually require between 12-15 hours a week, depending on the calendar. The President also submits some articles to Japan-related organizations when necessary.

## VICE PRESIDENT:

- \* Supports the President's initiatives.
- \* Responsible for all JETAA President functions in lieu of the President.
- \* Assists with recruiting new JETs, including on-site recruiting at colleges and universities and interviewing of JET candidates.
- \* Plans and arranges monthly JETAA activities.
- \* Advises JET returnees on jobs, interviewing and other relevant topics.
- \* Attends monthly business meetings.

## TREASURER:

- \* Directly responsible for the organization's budget.
- \* Maintains accurate records and accounting for all income and disbursements.
- \* Assists President with developing a balanced budget for the fiscal year.
- \* Attends monthly business meetings.




- \* Monitors the finances of the organization.
- \* Prepares an annual financial statement for distribution to members at the April meeting.
- \* Prepares an annual budget and submits it to CLAIR.
- \* Prepares all mandatory financial reports throughout the year and submits them to CLAIR.
- \* Functions as one of the organization's representative at the national conference, various seminars, receptions and other social and professional events.
- \* From time to time will chair the business meeting if the president or vice-president are unable to do so.
- \* From time to time will aid in organizing any JETAA-NY function or event.

The treasurer's position is constantly busy. Whether it be depositing checks from advertisers or disbursing checks to various vendors and individuals for all the JETAA-NY events that take place throughout the year. I would say that takes about 50% of your time and a few hours a month with filling out paperwork, recording accurate accounts, photo copying, going to the post office, and going to the bank. I usually do this during lunch hours. The other 35% of your time will be filling out mandatory forms for CLAIR. This happens towards the end of the fiscal year (Dec thru March). What you need to submit as the Activity Report and the Grant-In-Aid Application is quite voluminous. So be prepared to fill out a lot of paperwork and do lots of photocopying. I usually do this after work for several hours for a few weeks. The other 15% is devoted to attending the monthly business meetings, helping out the other officers if they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities, attending various functions as a representative of JETAA-NY. These happen at different times of the year. For example the pre-departure orientation, the returnee receptions, the national conference, etc. For any questions, just contact me at scastroman@yahoo.com.




## SECRETARY:

The responsibilities for Secretary, and I think any office, can be divided into required and elective tasks. While the official responsibilities of the Secretary are easy to explain, the elective ones are very flexible. Since JETAA is a volunteer organization, a lot of responsibilities fall on the officers that are not in their descriptions. The central role of the secretary is communication with the members. I have e-mailed weekly announcements with JETAA events, job listings and other events. In addition I sent out monthly meeting minutes and, like all officers, attended the monthly business meeting and other events. Besides these official jobs, I started a regular 'Japan Night' with Japanese cultural events and social events to compliment our other activities. I also moderate and promote our message board, answering questions from JETs and JET candidates. Finally I try to go to as many JET events as I can and support our members. The e-mail messages take an hour or two a week as I write up explanations, check directions and manage the mailing list. It requires a good amount of organization and communication skills. Usually it is not enough just to list an event. The secretary must also promote it.

# APRIL

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5 Happy Hour at No Idea	6
7	8	9 JETAA Elections Meeting	10 Book Club <small>Okinawa's Rinken Band Concert</small>	11 Lecture- <u>A Hundred Years of Japanese Film</u>	12 Documentary- Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness	13 
14 Last Day of Play- 36 Views	15 Exhibition Talk- Warlords, Merchants & Tea in Mo-moya Japan	16 Nihongo (Dekiru) Dake Dinner	17 Film- Vengeance is Such a Great Business	18	19 Kazuko Shirai-shi: An Evening of Poetry & Jazz	20
21 Film- Home Sweet Home	22	23 Exhibition Talk- American Art for Japanese Tea	24 Young Professionals Network- World Cup Kickoff Reception	25	26 Akira Kansai in Pallen Revolution	27
28  JETAA Hanami at Brooklyn Botanical Gardens	29 Global Security Roundtable	30 Film- Warm Water Under a Red Bridge	<b>Exhibits</b> Thru Apr 14- 36 Views. Play. The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. Thru May 4- <i>Hiroshi Sanju: Influences of the Moon</i> . Exhibit. Maxwell Davidson Gallery, 41 E. 57th St. Thru May 19- <i>The New Way of Tea</i> . Exhibit. Japan Society and Asia Society			

# MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>REMEMBER!</b> May is the time for JETAA Elections!		1	2	3 Happy Hour!	4 Last Day of Exhibit- Hiroshi Sanju: Influences of the Moon
5	6	7 JETAA Meeting	8 Lecture- Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World	9	10 Film- Double Feature  <small>Dream &amp; Gemini</small>	11
12 	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Last Day of Exhibit- The New Way of Tea	20	21	22	23	24 Film- Messengers	25
26	27 	28	29	30	31 Film- Nagisa	

**Apr** (the entire wonderful month) **JETAA Election Nominations and Campaigning** for Officer Positions....

**Apr 9** **JETAA Elections Meeting**  
Japan Local Government Center, 666 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm  
RSVP to secretary@JETAA.org

**Apr 10** **Book Club**  
RSVP to racha@yahoo.com and look in upcoming JETAA e-mails for more information

**Apr 16** **Nihongo (Dekiru) Dake Dinner**  
RSVP to McLaren@aol.com

**Apr 28** **Hanami at Brooklyn Botanical Gardens**  
look in upcoming JETAA e-mails for more information

**May** (yes, all of it) **JETAA Officer Elections!!!**

**May 3** (most likely) **Happy Hour!** basho TBA, look in upcoming JETAA e-mails for more information

**May 7** **JETAA Meeting**  
Japan Local Government Center, 666 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm  
RSVP to secretary@JETAA.org

## Film

### New Films from Japan 2002 Series

**Apr 17** **Vengeance is Such a Great Business (Sukedachiya sukeroku)**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
A samurai comedy about the business of revenge. Followed by a reception.  
2001, 88 min., color

**Apr 12** **Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness (Documentary)**  
Columbia University, Altschul Auditorium, 6:00 pm  
The story of a Japanese diplomat's kindness in Europe during WWII. 102 min.  
See JETAA e-mails for more details

**Apr 21** **Home Sweet Home (Homu suito homu)**  
Japan Society, 1:30 pm  
A black comedy about a family's struggle with a father with Alzheimer's. The film is 2000, 114 min., color

introduced by director Tomio Kuriyama and producer Kazuo Miyake at this New York premiere.

**Apr 30** **Warm Water Under a Red Bridge (Akai hashi no shita no nurui mizu)- Members-Only Preview**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
The story of a troubled man who falls in love with a beautiful kleptomaniac.  
2001, 119 min., color

**May 3** **Double Feature**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm

**First Film: The Season of Cherry Blossoms**  
A young man finds hope in his time of despair from being rejected from film school when he meets an interesting man. The film is introduced by the film maker, Yasushi Toyota.

**Second Film: Sunday's Dream (Nichiyobi wa owaranai)**  
A coming-of-age drama about a young man's various struggles. The film is introduced by the director, Yoichiro Takahashi.

**May 10** **Double Feature**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm

**First Film: Dream**  
A woman's voice tells her story of how she murdered her boyfriend and ate his body as the story moves backwards to a more peaceful time. The film is introduced by producer Mineko Okamoto, and is followed by a reception.

**Second Film: Gemini (Soseiji)**  
The story of a young doctor in Tokyo in the early 1900's who encounters many life difficulties, including his wife losing her memory.

**May 24** **Messengers (Mesenjaa)**  
Japan Society, 6:30  
The story of a fashionable young woman who must make a career change from being a press agent for a designer boutique to a bike messenger.

**May 31** **Nagisa**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
The story of a sixth grader and her life growing up in the 1960s.



**Jun 7** **The New Voyage (Gakkoh III)**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
The third of a popular film series introduces the story of a window with a mentally challenged son and their triumphs in life. The film is introduced by storywriter Hisako Tsurushima.

**Jun 14** **island, alicia**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
The story of a man who falls in love with an older woman, and struggles with her sudden death, which leads him to his love's daughter.

**Jun 21** **Do You Know Shonan Island? (Shonanto o shiite imasuka: Senka ni utsutta ningen-zoh)**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
A controversial documentary from Nagoya TV that addresses the Japanese role in Singapore during WWII. The film is introduced by director Hachiro Ikeda.

## Performance

**Apr 10** **Okinawa's Rinken Band Concert**  
Japan Society, 8:00 pm  
Noted as a "hot World Music band," this group is one of the tops in Okinawan popular music and combines traditional Okinawan music and American rock for a funky sound.

**Thru Apr 14** **36 Views**  
The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. A play about the lies and scandal that occur with an artist and art dealer's assistant when a unique Japanese Pillow Book is discovered.  
(212) 539-7555, www.publictheater.org

**Apr 19** **POETRY FORUM- Kazuko Shirashi: An Evening of Poetry & Jazz**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
As one of Japan's leading poets, Kazuko Shirashi's poems have been translated into more than 20 languages. On this unique occasion, she is joined by jazz trumpeter Itaru Oki. Followed by book signing.

**Apr 25-27** **Akira Kansai in Pollen Revolution**  
Japan Society, 8:00 pm  
This butoh dance solo work captures the "beauty and horrors of contemporary life."

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...continued from page 15

**May 15** **CONTINIUM®: Japanese Composers: New Voices**  
Japan Society, 8:00 pm  
Performances by some of Japan's most interesting and talked-about contemporary composers.

**Apr 24** **EXHIBITION TALK- American Art for Japanese Tea**  
Japan Society, 6:30  
In association with the exhibition *The New Way of Tea*, this lecture talks about the influence of Japanese traditional tea ceremony on American art.

## Exhibits

**Thru May 4** **Hiroshi Senju: Influences of the Moon**  
Maxwell Davidson Gallery,  
Works are also being shown at *The Way of Tea* exhibition.  
(212) 759-7555, 41 E. 57th St.

**Thru May 19** **The New Way Of Tea**  
Japan Society and Asia Society  
This exhibition explores Japanese tea traditions as an influence on East Asia in the US. Tea masters will teach the public about traditional tea practices, and demonstrations will be held between 2:00 pm and 4:00 p.m. on April 19 and May 17.

## Lecture & Discussion

**Apr 15** **EXHIBITION TALK- Warlords, Merchants & Tea in Momoyama Japan (1568-1615)**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
In association with the exhibition *The New Way of Tea*, this lecture explores the aesthetic and cultural significant of tea in Japanese history.

**Apr 29** **GLOBAL SECURITY ROUNDTABLE- New Challenges to Global Security: The View from the United Nations**  
Japan Society, 6:30 pm  
Ambassador Yukio Sato, the Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN, explores the future for global security. A reception will follow.

## Networking

**Apr 24** **Young Professionals Network- World Cup Kickoff Reception**  
Citigroup Center, E.53rd St.,  
6:00 pm-9:00 pm  
Toast the kick off to the World Cup hosted by Japan and Korea.  
See [www.japansociety.org](http://www.japansociety.org) for more details.



**Apr 17** **A Hundred Years of Japanese Film**  
Columbia University, Kent Hall,  
6:00 pm  
Donald Richie will discuss his book of this title from the early achievements of Japanese film to today's young filmmakers. A reception will follow.  
See JETAA e-mails for more details.

**May 8** **Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912**  
Asia Society, 6:30 pm  
In association with the exhibition *The New Way of Tea*, Donald Keene, Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, discusses the opening of Japan to the West and the biography of the Emperor Meiji.

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