

JETAA.NY

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

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THE "MONEY" ISSUE



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MONEY-GATARI

Money is a constant theme of JET life. What did we do with our money? How did it affect our lives? Read on.

To make some money on the side, I tutored one guy on the Bible. He wanted to read and review the Bible out loud. At one point he couldn't get some pronunciation correct and I asked him to feel the vibration by touching my neck at which point he asked if I wanted to make love to him?!?!?! Crazy-ness.

Without a doubt, one of the best investments I ever made was my Suzuki Intruder motorcycle. I bought it at the beginning of my second year in Oita, Kyushu. They called me "Easy Rider" at the high school. Instant cred pulling up at the junior high schools in front of all the *chugaku-sei*. And it was the best way to see Kyushu. Took that thing all over the place. I felt a little buyer's guilt at first, but that evaporated quickly in the wind rushing by me as I was flying through the mountains and rice paddies, and along the sea. It was worth it without a doubt. You only live once, right?

Largest stupid expenditure...During my second or third year, I was moonlighting as a DJ in Roppongi and often started after 1 in the morning, so sometimes I would go to other parties

("Money-gatari" Continued on page 6)

RICH JET / POOR JET

Some of us were more equal than others. Who had the best and worst deals?

BEST (In reverse order)

No. 5: The most I ever paid in rent was a total of 600 yen a month. I had moved next door into a much nicer apartment in my building, and the budget for my salary and rent had already been submitted by my office. They were very apologetic...

No. 4: I was a JET living in Otsu, the largest city in Shiga prefecture, from August 2002 until August 2004. The Board of Education in Michigan paid for the rent for all of the occupants in the building, because there was (at the time) a special teacher exchange program happening between Lansing, Michigan and Otsu. I was given a 2-bedroom fully furnished apartment FOR FREE that had

two balconies and views of Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake. The apartment had everything from a TV and VCR, to a heater/air conditioner, dishes, a toaster oven, a microwave oven, measuring cups, towels, a washer and dryer and a double bed. It was a 20 minute train ride to Kyoto and a 40 minute ride to Osaka. Additionally, we had a lovely system called

("Rich JET" Continued on page 11)

MONEY SURVEY RESULTS!!

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The "MONEY" Issue

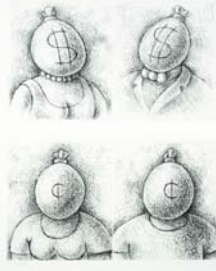
I actually don't need those condescending Citibank ads to know that there's more to life than money.

And yet money has certainly been a significant part of our JET and post-JET lives. It opens up new experiences to us, gives us options and can also weigh us down. It affects us psychologically and emotionally. Everyone responds just a little differently to it.

Though we may feel crass if we focus on it too much, money is also very much a part of our lives which needs to be looked in the eye (the little one on top of the pyramid) and addressed.

In this issue we attempt to do just that, stopping and assessing where we as the JET Alumni community are financially and how money has affected us and will continue to affect us in the future.

Hopefully you'll invest some time and realize a gain by the time you're done reading this (free) Newsletter. Oh yeah, and watch out for coins with a hole in the middle.



Steven Horowitz
Newsletter Editor

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JETAA NEW YORK SOCIETY PAGE

by Yoku Shitteiru

Yoku Shitteiru knows well that everyone is having an excellent Sprummer. And as temperatures heat up, so does JETAA Society.

First stop, the now annual ritual of the **Bohemian Beer Garden Happy Hour** in Astoria, Queens, the largest beer garden in New York, brought out well over 50 people, including 20 new JETs, many of whom were observed taking notes while sipping the Beer Garden's signature Pilsner Urquell.

Meanwhile, a week later saw the annual ritual of the *cho-*

natsukashii **Pre-Departure Orientation**, where the cute and loveable **Janak Bhimani** celebrated his birthday by MC'ing for the day.

Tallest New JET: A 6'5" gentleman, according to one JET alum, who predicts that such height may lead to Emperor status.

A big *Mazel Tov*, er, I mean *Omedetou Goza-imashita* to former JETAA New York webmaster and current JETAA International webmaster and database guru (and extremely funny guy to sit through a meeting with) **Scott Norman** who's tying the knot this Fall. Rumor has it the Newsletter is planning a 3 page spread with exclusive photos taken via the **JETAA Private Helicopter**. (Didn't know we had one of those at our disposal, did you?)



Also a big "*sutekiiii*" to Yale professor and Japanese diplomacy expert **Michael Auslin** (Hyogo-ken, 1991) who was recently quoted in a June 28 **Wall Street Journal** article ("Breaking Taboos, Japan Redefines Its Role with China") in which he commented on how Japan's younger politicians are more willing to voice nationalist ideas. Auslin also spoke at the JETAA Pre-departure Orientation in 2004. Yoku Shitteiru says, "**GO JETS GO!**" (But "No" to the West Side Stadium.)

We don't know what **Clara Solomon's** secret is for organizing *Nihongo Dake Dinners*, but the June 30th event at the very accommodating **Isle Thai** on Bleecker Street drew nearly **40 attendees**, over 60% of whom were Japanese. That was approximately 20 more total people than had rsvp'd and everyone somehow found a seat at the long table for a great time. Not only was the *nihongo* flowing in full force with the **Beard Papa** and **NTT** crews representing, but there was a surprisingly noticeable gender tilt as well. Stay tuned for the next one, as these continue to evolve in most *subarashii* way.

Finally, Yoku Shitteiru has learned that there is no truth to the rumors of a **pajama party** at the International Conference.

Until next time, enjoy the *hanabi* and have a **Happy Independence Day!**



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I had the honor of being asked to represent the New York JETAA Chapter at the JETAA International Chapter June 11-14, during which I also had the chance to visit the Aichi Expo.

-Steven Horowitz

What I learned at the JETAA International Conference

The JETAA International Conference was held in June in **Nagoya/ Kobe**, and the last one was held in **New York**.

There is a JETAA **Jamaica** chapter. And soon perhaps a **South Africa** chapter.

JETAA International is in the process of designing a **Content Management System**, which is basically a unified website and database for all JET Alumni and might allow all JET Alums to have a **jetaa.org lifetime email address**.

JETAA **United Kingdom** is the largest JETAA chapter with **2,700** members. And JETAA **Northern California** is the second biggest with **1,700** members. And **New York** is third with **800+** members.

The total JET Alum population is **40,000+** and growing.

COME YE TO THE AICHI EXPO!

What the heck is an Expo?

That's what I had a chance to learn on June 11 in Aichi-ken.



It turns out that Expos are kind of weird but fun. Even if it's raining. For example, say you can't get into the Toyota Pavillion with the band of robots playing actual musical instruments, or even the Italy Pavillion because for some reason it has a 90 minute wait. You can still go check out the Libya Pavillion, which was completely peaceful, the Lithuania Pavillion, which had a trippy film showing snow and fishing and other random clips running in a physical loop, and the Cuba Pavillion, which was serving vaguely infused mojitos.

On top of all that, you get to walk around an elevated boardwalk covering an area of several square kilometers and wonder who all these other people are that have come to wait in long lines in the rain. You can also marvel that the entire Expo is going to be broken down and recycled when the event ends. And that, given the environmental theme, one of the goals was to design it such that it leaves a minimal footprint once it's over.

Pretty cool stuff, even for the curious cynics in all of us.

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ZENSATIONS

Japan Society Networking Night

By Kat Barnas

I decided that the start of summer was a good a time as any to get out and explore some of the cultural networking events in the city. After all if I can't afford a few hundred for a plane ticket and a beach resort, why not look closer to home for some good deals? So, June 2nd was engraved in my mind as the evening I was going to check out Japan Society's "Little Boy" *otaku* art exhibit. Zensations, at \$12 which included two drink tickets, free *sushi*, music, networking and art seemed like an excellent idea to me.

ジャパン・ソサエティ
Japan Society

The peaceful sanctuary of the Japan Society's foyer has always been a fave

inside spot of mine in the city, so I was pretty surprised the first time I saw *pachinko* machines being moved into the space. I am not sure what the execs at JS first thought of them either, but after a short evening (and a few drinks) I didn't find it so strange after all.

I walked in and within minutes saw my first JET. In some ways, Zensations felt a local pub that night – a few regulars around, but also new people to meet in a nice atmosphere. The mood lighting was nice, not too dark and not too bright for a Thursday afterwork. I wandered up to the art while people were still coming in downstairs, met up with some more JETs I haven't seen in a while and pondered the meanings of the "exploding" subculture of Japan. For someone (that's me) who knows very little about *anime*, the exhibit offers an interesting look at art from the past few decades along with current examples. For those who are disturbed by the body half covered in glass with bits of *sushi* on it, you can return to the front room for a few dozen (maybe even 100?) pieces of cuddly Hello Kitty paraphernalia. And for those who grew up with anime, there are quite a number of pieces to bring back memories.



After pondering the art which I probably don't understand even a quarter of (hope to fix that by attending the JETAA Little Boy tour on June 25th), I returned to the main floor, the DJ, the bar and the people. Music was still good, although more American than I expected, but loud enough to set the mood and quiet enough to hold decent conversations. Drinks offered were straight *sake*, a *sake* cocktail (which got rave reviews), plum wine and beer. A great deal since you get two free drink tickets with admission. Soda and water were free (better than the \$5 they charge for water at the average shi-shi bar) and I was happy to see trays of *sushi* being replenished throughout the evening. I stayed around chatting with familiar and not-so-familiar faces until about 8:30pm with the not-so-subtle turning on of the lights and the ending of the event.

My final verdict: a new and interesting way to mingle with other young people in New York and see different art, all on a Thursday evening. I will definitely keep an eye out for more happenings at JS.

Zensations happens at the Japan Society on E. 47th St. once every new exhibit. Check your weekly JETAA e-mail, www.jetaany.org or www.japansociety.org for the next event.

ASIA SOCIETY HAPPY HOUR

By Steven Horowitz

So I decided to check out the Asia Society Happy Hour (since I couldn't make the Japan Society's Zensations event the day before) and report to the JET alum community.



Both events are based on a similar model, i.e., getting young professionals to network in each of their buildings and maybe get a little more involved in the organization as a member. And to be frank, it seems like a pretty good model, because both organizations have great spaces in their buildings and seem to be using them effectively.

The Asia Society uses its lobby, set to the right of its fairly extensive and funky gift shop and below and an architecturally interesting staircase (which I am admittedly too unsophisticated to describe any better.) The lobby space bends around beneath a long sky-light which gives a nice outdoorsy feel to the event. There's even a classy full-service café around the back if you're feeling hungry.

Another nice feature similar to the Japan Society is the free coat check room downstairs and a large amphitheatre downstairs as well. Incidentally, there was an Indonesian film series being shown simultaneously which I didn't attend but which definitely piqued my interest.

Now onto some of the more interesting topics- the cost and the people.

There was no cover and the drinks were very reasonable. \$5 for a bottle of beer (though no dark beers, but that's really my own issue. And yet somehow I managed...) A nice glass of white wine for \$6 and, on the high end, lychee martinis for \$8.

The crowd was definitely corporate, though in a bit of a quirky way which made it fun. I arrived early to a mostly empty lobby. But as I sat at a little table with chairs that looked like it was part of a life-size *i-go* set and moved the stones around on interactive maps of Asia projected onto the white table top, I made my first contact - with a middle aged Caucasian guy in a suit who seemed to be veteran of these events. Soon I learned that he had founded the first internet cafes in Beijing back in 1996 (which were then burned down for reasons I never learned) and is involved in various other ventures in China which sounded vague and fuzzy yet basically legit.

Next I made my escape by talking with a young Indian-American guy who works as an attorney for the city, lives nearby the Asia Society and was just curious as to what the event was all about. We had a good long talk about the merits of fighting the system from the outside versus from the inside. (And we also talked a lot about basketball, but that seems less socially relevant.)

My girlfriend's friends were there, partly on a stake-out for nice men and partly for new jobs. The man-hunt got mixed reviews, though there certainly seemed like enough nice guys there. The job-switch hunt seemed to be progressing nicely, though no word on total contacts.

Best part of all was that we'd gotten our fill by about 8pm, though the room had really filled up by then and was well hopping, and had time to go downtown and catch a film ("Enron: Smartest Guys in the Room" which will not be reviewed in this publication.)

Final verdict? Great setting, good looking and interesting crowd, exposure to new things – a nice way to kick off a Friday evening.

Check www.asiasociety.org for future events.

BEARD PAPA & JETAA DEVELOPMENT



Beard Papa himself at the JETAA NY quarterly development meeting in May?!

Perhaps a little hard to swallow. But JETAA NY did sweeten the meeting with guest speaker Mr. Yoshinori Tanimoto, the Director of Sales & Marketing for Beard Papa in the US, who explained Beard Papa's business strategy and as well as insights into cultural differences in US and Japanese markets. And the free "shoe creams" were the icing on

the cake (or the cream in the puff.)

For the uninitiated, Beard Papa became a huge sensation a few years ago in Japan selling extremely yummy and addictive cream puffs in packs of 6 (kind of like a Dunkin' Donuts box), with an emphasis on using high-grade ingredients and a fully visible process that lets the customer witness the injection of cream into each pastry puff. Along with the traditional cream puff are chocolate and, my favorite, green tea flavored as well.

Then about a year ago Beard Papa, a subsidiary of Muginoho, an Osaka based flour and related food products conglomerate, opened its first test shop in NYC in *Cafe Zaiya*, a Japanese café on 41st St. between 5th Ave & Madison. Success there led to the opening of Beard Papa's first independent store on the Upper West Side (2176 Broadway between 76th & 77th streets to be exact.) And as Americans have learned to crave the treat, franchises have opened up at Astor Place in Manhattan and even in New Jersey (though not yet in Brooklyn, much to my chagrin.)

If your dream has been to own a Beard Papa franchise, by the way, head to the Upper West Side shop, where you'll find Yoshi-san working six or seven days a week. (Though the very fit and trim manager says he only eats about

CALLIGRAPHY SCHOLARSHIP

By Stacy Smith

JETAANY created two scholarships for JET alums to each spend one term studying Japanese calligraphy at the Kampo Cultural Center on Bond Street in Manhattan. Based on their application essays, Stacy Smith and Spencer Foxworth were chosen for the scholarship.

I had learned calligraphy extensively in Japan and didn't know what to expect from a class here. Takemori-sensei, who led the group, is from Okinawa. Wearing flip-flops and frequently discussing his golf game, he and his class were definitely of a different style than anything I had ever experienced.

However, the best part of the class was the diversity of the participants. The teacher-student ratio was great, and the people who attended were from all walks of life. There were Japanese who were looking to get in touch with an aspect of their own culture, as well as non-Japanese who had been studying calligraphy for years.

For those who like their calligraphy with *seiza* and a bit of study, this class might not be for you. It is more like "Intro to Calligraphy" and is great for first timers looking to get a casual taste of this wonderful Japanese art form in a fun environment.

Stacy is a writer for the *Nikkei Business Journal* in New York City.

3 pastries a week on average.) He pointed out that the franchises are not, in fact, Japanese owned, so you've got a chance.

And what's the biggest difference between the shoe cream market in the US and Japan? "In the US people will buy boxes of shoe creams and bring them to the office for meetings," according to Mr. Yoshi. "In Japan, people don't do that."

(*"Money-gatari"* continued from page 1)

nearer to home in Saitama, and catch a late train to Tokyo. One evening I stayed later than I expected at a party in Kawagoe. I missed the last trains from Kawagoe to the city, so I grabbed a cab knowing that I might be able to grab a train from a station a bit further down the line towards Tokyo. As it looked as if I would be cutting it too close time-wise, I said "Screw it, just take me to Roppongi crossing." The cabbie laughed and off we went. About an hour later and about 50,000 yen lighter, I got to work.

Well, my biggest expense - ah, the bliss of being young and foolish with all that money - was my phone bill. I made enough long-distance calls to boyfriend at the time to earn two trans-Atlantic plane tickets with the reward points that came with the account. Each month I probably spent about \$600. Easy come, easy go, I guess. Then, some companies in Japan came up with the prepaid plan. I took advantage of that during the last 3-4 months I was there.

I was in Japan '94-'96, so the exchange rate was great from yen into dollars. It got to be that the first thing I would do every morning without fail, upon rising from my futon, was to check the exchange rate to see how much money I had. This is before doing ANYTHING! And this is from someone who, before, would never have known what an exchange rate was! Sad, but true: I managed to save about \$12,000 dollars on JET and spent it all in one year on living expenses in NYC while going to law school.

During my first Golden Week, I went hitchhiking with two friends. While on Shikoku, we discovered that between the three of us, we had a total of about 10,000 yen to last us three days until the banks reopened. We bought beer.

Back in the early 90's when I was on JET I went out one night with my cousin

(I requested my mom's town) to a *yatai*. While sucking down some noodles, an older gentleman started up a conversation with us. After I told him what I was doing in Japan, he asked if I would be interested in giving his office workers some English lessons for an hour once a week. It turned out he was a bigwig for JAL and I wound up "teaching" 5 JAL employees every Friday night. They were some of the coolest people I met while on JET. I think I was there more as a "cultural curiosity" than as an English teacher. They did the usual, testing my *ohashi* ability by making me pick up a single bean, or quizzing my Japanese knowledge by having me name all 9 prefectures of Kyuushuu or discussing topics that you'd NEVER find in any English textbook! (Use your imagination here.) Anyway, back to the money part...the first two weeks, I was never



paid but I never said anything because this group was a blast to be around. The following week they handed me an envelope with 50,000 yen. I thought this was for two weeks pay until I received the following week's envelope with the same amount! Here I was getting paid \$500 an hour to literally "hang out!!" Of course our sessions lasted longer than an hour and sometimes we actually DID study English (we even got textbooks.) Eventually, the bubble burst and the company had to cut down on expenditures so the company couldn't pay anymore. The group decided to pay out of pocket but I couldn't take any money from them so we met out for a few weeks after that. Unfortunately, the company hammer came down on them all and their workload increased and we met less frequently each month until we just lost contact. So...moral of the story is...you never know where and when a moneymaking (and friend-making) networking opportunity may arise so get out there!!!

(*"Money-gatari"* Continued on page 10)

“J” IS FOR JETS ...AT THE JAPAN SOCIETY

by Ryan Chan and Steven Horowitz

Did you realize that there are now *five* JET Alums working for the Japan Society? And that one of them, **Kendall Hubert** (1989-90), is the Executive Vice President, i.e., number two in the organization?

It's certainly a bit of a different place than when **Michelle Andrews** (Miyagi-ken, 1998-2000), Assistant Director of Membership for the Japan Society for the past five years, first entered the building on 47th Street for her pre-departure orientation. (Back then, **Hideki Matsui** and **Derek Jeter** didn't live in the building right next door.)

And more significantly, as the JET Program ages, JET Alums are moving up the ladder and reaching positions of authority.

Now, in addition to Kendall and Michelle, there is **Christy Jones** (Nagasaki-ken, 1995-98), Special Events Manager, **Christopher Poston** (Okinawa-ken, 1989-90), Senior Program Officer, Corporate Programs, and **Harper Alexander** (Hokkaido, 2002-04), Program Associate, Global Affairs.



Left to right: Michelle Andrews, Harper Alexander, Christy Jones, Chris Poston. Not pictured: Kendall Hubert

JETAA NY Newsletter was fortunate enough to have the chance to stop by the Japan Society for lunch with Christy and Michelle the other day. And what a fun lunch it was. Pachinko machines and large-scale anime sculptures in the lobby, a lively office lunch room, a co-ed *onsen* on the fifth floor.... (ok, I'm kidding about the *onsen*.) And a nice walk around the lobby and offices which allowed for a short run-in with a busy Harper, who was organizing a lunch meeting for the Society's Innovators Project, and a brief stop by Chris's desk where he was preparing for the next day's corporate event involving a discussion of the US-Japan-China Power Triangle.

We didn't get a chance to meet Kendall on our field trip, but after a post-JET career that has included stops at CNN, Carnegie Hall, a cultural sponsorship consulting firm in London, a Japanese ad agency, and the Guggenheim Museum, where she served for the past 5 years as Director of Corporate Development, it's good to know her energy and multi-disciplinary skills are now benefitting the Japan Society and, indirectly, the JETAA community.

But wait. What exactly is the Japan Society? And what does it have to do with JETAA other than the fact that they both have the word "Japan" in their titles?

According to their website, the Japan Society is a "private, nonprofit, nonpolitical institution offering programs in the arts, business, education and public affairs."

But more interestingly is that the Japan Society was founded in 1907 and that 2007 will mark its 100th anniversary. And contrary to popular belief, John D. Rockefeller III did not found the Japan Society. During World War II, it more or less ceased activities for political reasons, and it was Rockefeller in the post-War era who revived it.

Nowadays, at least from the JET Alumni perspective, the Japan Society serves alternatively as a refuge from reverse culture shock and way to keep a toe in the culture many of us left behind when we finished the JET Program.

A number of JETs have taken the Japanese language courses at the highly regarded Toyota Language Center. And the cultural events such as regular film screenings, the current neo-pop art exhibition curated by Takashi Murakami, and Zensations networking nights have attracted additional JET Alums into the building, as have the Global Affairs events which have brought in speakers on political and economic topics including former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, former SEC Chairman William McDonough, Japanese baseball author Robert Whiting, and Ripplewood Holdings CEO Tim Collins.

All of these fit in with the Japan Society's move towards unique and creative events to attract new supporters, including a younger audience.

At the same time, as the JET Alumni community reaches nearly 20 years of existence, it has begun seeking new and more sophisticated ways of staying connected with Japanese culture and community.

As the common interests among JETAA and the Japan Society grow, you can probably expect to see increasing connections in the two communities, as reflected in the number of JET Alums now working for the Japan Society. Stay tuned for more collaborations between these organizations!

Want to be a Japan Society member? Go to www.japansociety.org.

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

Cindy Hoffman, a Japanese history teacher at a high school in Connecticut, was hired back in late May to coordinate a Summer exchange for the Japan Society. Her official title is Program Supervisor.

Ritsumeikan School in Kyoto is sending 30 students to visit and do volunteer work in New York from 14 July-20 July. Cindy is responsible for organizing their itinerary/schedule, finding volunteer work and also hiring interns to accompany their group from sight to sight. It's a seasonal position that she says she found via the JETAA/Japan Society connection. That is, Japan Society JET Alum Christy Jones forwarded the information to her, knowing that she's usually off in the summer and it would be a position for which she would have plenty of experience.

In the past, Cindy has organized and lead trips to both Japan and China for her students.



FIRST EVER NEWSLETTER
MONEY SURVEY

Welcome to the first ever Newsletter Money Survey!

CLAIR has done salary surveys of recent returnees, but this survey is a little broader. This was designed to help us get a sense of where we are now financially as the JET Alum community

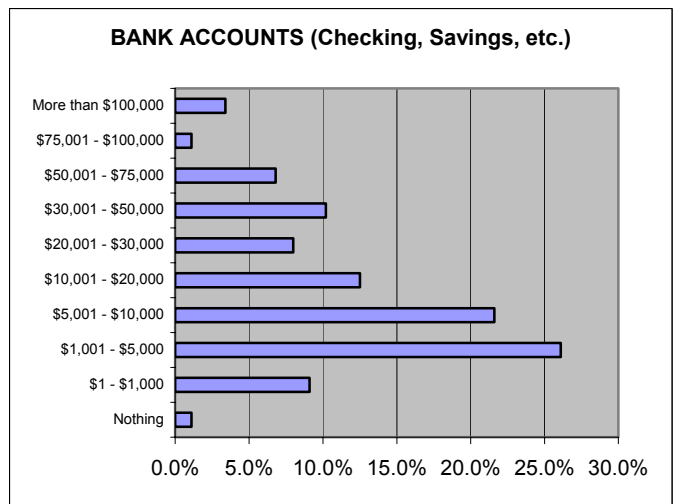
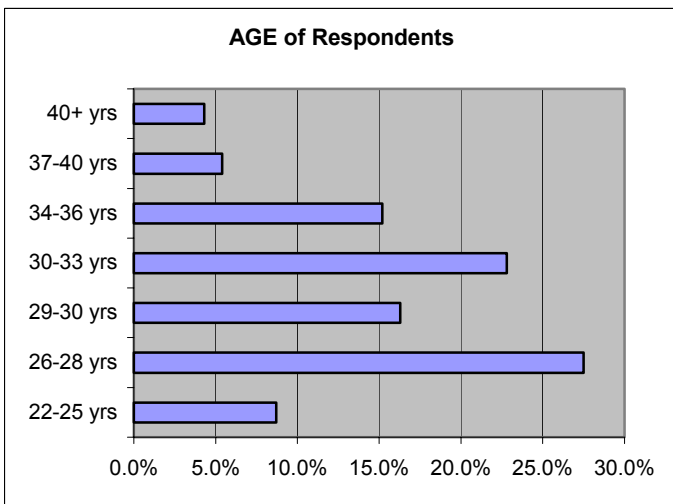
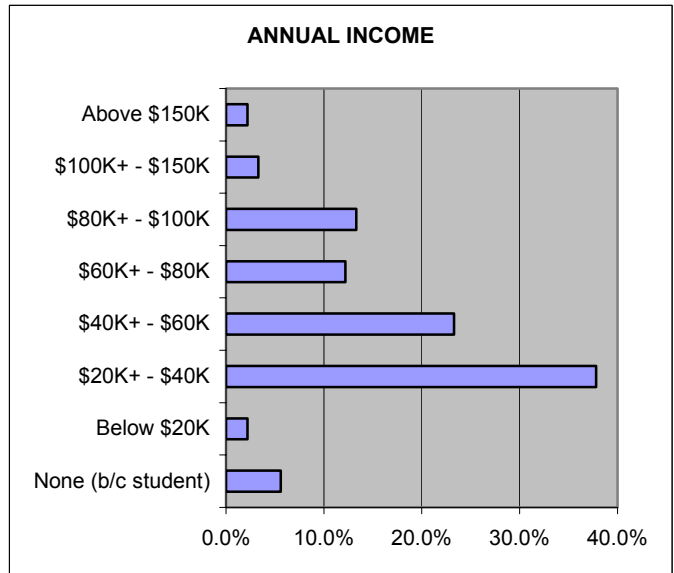
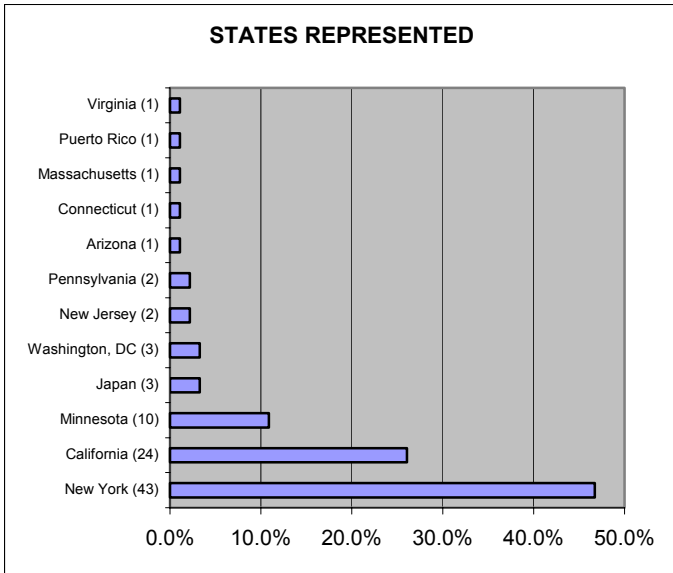
reaches the ripe post-pubescent age of 20.

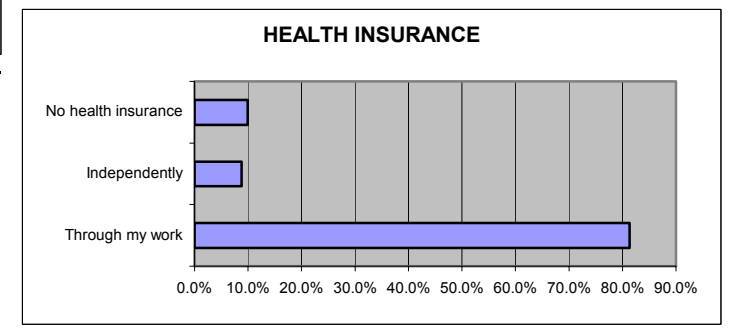
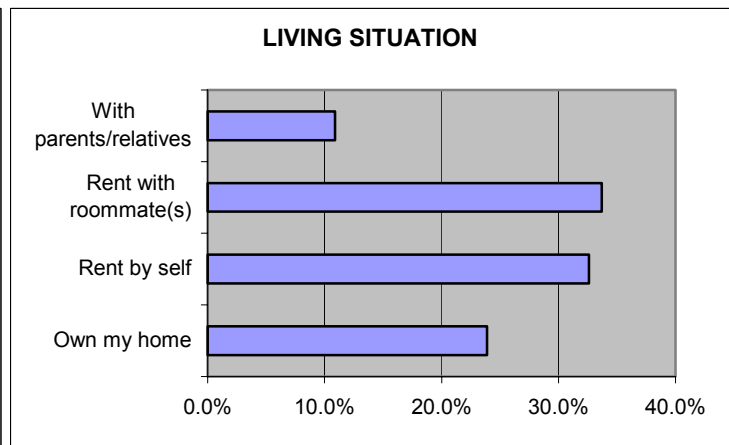
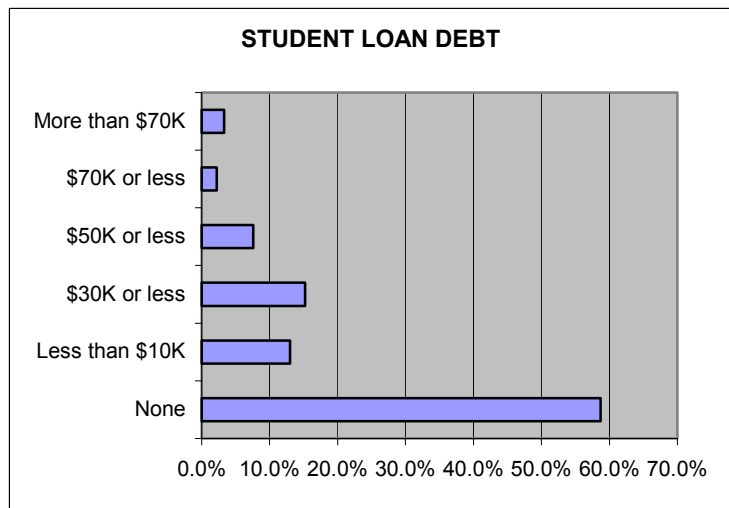
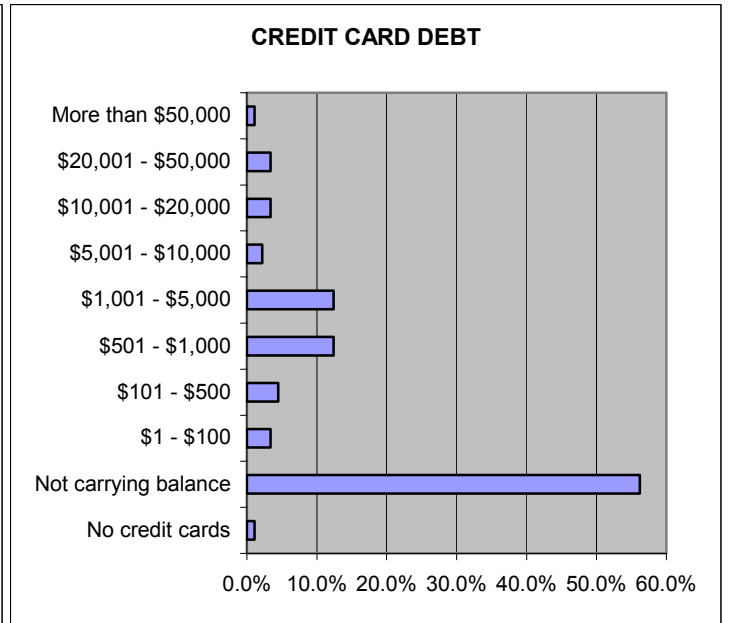
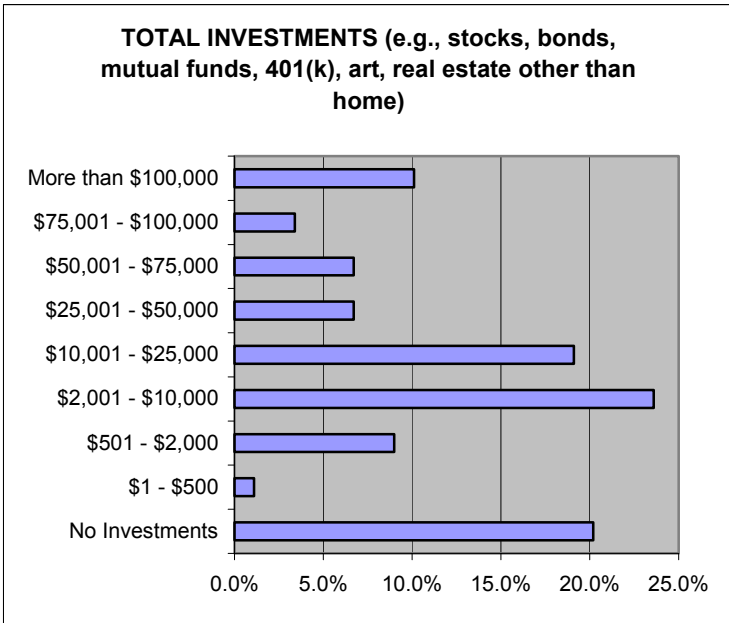
Now, to put things in perspective, the worldwide JET Alum population is somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 and this survey received **92 responses** (which is fine since SurveyMonkey.com charges after

you get past 100.) So extrapolate at your own risk.

We're sure the survey has its flaws (see next page), but in terms of the big picture, we hope it sheds at least some light on the financial status of the JET Alum community and perhaps makes us all a bit more financially aware.

For the record, the request for survey responses was sent out first to the **New York** chapter and subsequently to the Newsletter Editors e-mail group, which resulted in a significant number of responses from **California** and **Minnesota**. Kind of random, but then again, New York, California and Minnesota comprise a pretty nice cross-section of population. Plus it's always nice to collaborate with other JET Alum chapters. Many *arigatos* to everyone who participated!





One survey respondent offered the following perspective:

"I just took your survey for JETs and thought I'd point out a few options you seem to have overlooked. In the question on health insurance, I wanted to answer "I get health insurance through my spouse" and had to settle for "independently." In #10 I wanted to answer that I rent with my wife and had to settle for "live with parents and/or family members." It may be too late for you to alter the format, but I'm sure there are quite a few people in similar situations."

- *How could this survey have been better?**
- *What questions should've been asked that weren't?**
- *What statistical relationships would have been more interesting or telling?**



This survey was just the beginning.

E-mail your thoughts to: newsletter@jetaany.org for a follow-up article in the next issue.



What's Cookin' in Other Chapters?

We know what goes on in the New York chapter thanks to e-mails from Secretary Brian Hersey and reporting in the Newsletter. But what kinds of interesting events do other chapters have?

One JET Alum from Portland posted this description to the uschapter group for chapter officers following the recent National Conference in San Francisco.

Hello! Britt Sexton here from the Portland chapter. Some from the recent National Conference in San Francisco requested an explanation of Portland Chapter's "Iron Chef" competition and pot luck, so I've just included the web posting below (from www.jetaaportland.com), which offers a good explanation. If you have any questions, send me a note at brittonio@hotmail.com.

We usually have this event twice per year; once at Halloween with a costume party, and once in the Spring. It is always very popular and attended by Japanese and JET Alumns alike. We even get a few Consular staff, and occasionally the CG himself. One year we had the CG's personal chef as one of the judges. Usually 2-3 judges are about right.

Dishes are prepared at home (any Japanese dish is acceptable), and only final prep is done in the host's kitchen. This is hosted at a JET's home, so this costs virtually nothing to run. Everything is laid out, and we have a drink away from the kitchen to give the judges a chance to judge. They finish and then we eat dinner. Winners are announced for each category, and sometimes prizes are awarded, budget permitting. Here is the last announcement we sent out to everyone:

JETAA PORTLAND IRON CHEF NIGHT

Will you be the next Iron Chef? Test your Japanese culinary expertise on the most discriminating Japanese food connoisseurs in the city at the JETAA Potluck. Bring your best Japanese dish and pull out those *yukatas* you received in Japan as farewell *omiyage*.



What to Bring: Categories and Prizes

Rather than the traditional Iron Chef France, Chinese, etc., we have decided to separate the categories into Iron Chef Main Dish, Iron Chef Side Dish and Iron Chef Dessert. Prizes will go to the winner in each category.

Please try to bring your dishes prepared ahead of time (if possible). Also, please bring your recipe because we want to post them online and create a JETAA cookbook.

Judges

We are hoping to have a set of esteemed judges for the competition! The panel for the competition will hopefully be Consul General, his chef, and new Vice-Consul. Each will utilize their culinary palettes to test and decide who takes home the grand prizes for each category.

Kid friendly?

Everyone is welcome, but people will be bringing alcohol, so it's your judgment.

Check our Website for updates & other upcoming events: www.jetaaportland.com

A big arigatou gozaimashita to Portland!

("Money-gatari" continued from page 6)

For many of you who have the ability to communicate in Japanese, live in or are returning to Japan, you may want to consider taking your speaking abilities to the next level. For three years, I found a better way to improve my Japanese and made more money compared to moonlighting as a part-time English teacher.

My secret was public speaking in Japanese. Considering that most of the exposure to *Gaijin* the Japanese have in *Inaka-Mura* or *Nanimonai-Shi* is either a Hollywood movie, sill Japanese primetime shows or local farm help, speaking events in these little towns proved extremely successful.

Be aware that most people want to hear about how much you love Japan, your ability to eat with Chopsticks and your admiration for *Nato* and *Tofu*. Tailor any speech to incorporate any of the above mentioned and chances are they request that you come and talk again. For further information on how to go about becoming an *inaka-gaijin*



Toni Robinzu, please feel free to contact me at ohayokurinton@hotmail.com. (by Clinton Fairbanks)

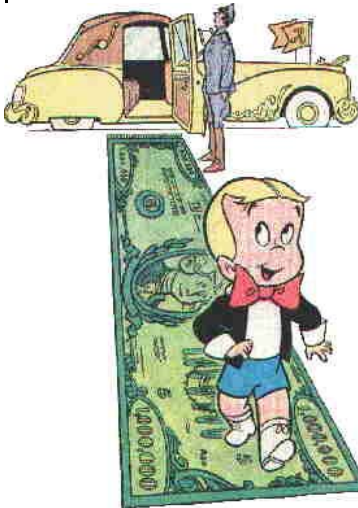
I had more money than I could possibly spend. The interest rates were virtually zero, and back then even the ATM's had bankers' hours (i.e., 9am-5pm). I didn't want to keep all my money under my mattress, so I had my dad set up a mutual fund back home, and once a month I'd go to the bank and go through a whole rigamarole of filling out some form I couldn't understand and that didn't seem to have fields to fit all the info they needed. But it got my money back home safe in the end.

I decided to go hitchhiking whenever I had vacation time, in part to save money and in part for the challenge of seeing how far I could get. But the unanticipated benefit turned out to be that not only would people give me rides to my next destination (while explaining to me that hitchhiking doesn't work in Japan), but they would also often buy me a meal. One family with two elementary school kids picked me up and then bought me a steak lunch. Wish I track everyone down and thank them again.

Thanks to all who contributed, including those we couldn't fit.

("Rich JET" continued from page 1)

Home Duty set up, which meant that during all school vacations (during the New Year's Break, during Spring Break AND the 6 weeks of summer), we were allowed to "work at home" or "explore the culture in the city" with Japanese colleagues. That means 8 or 9 extra weeks of vacation each year. We did NOT have to take *nenkyu* for this time, unless we left the country. The Board of Ed also reimbursed us for any work-related travel. The building had at least 5 other JETs living in it at all times, which meant that should we need to borrow some eggs, sugar or a futon for a friend visiting, then all we had to do was take the



elevator down one floor. I was even able to have kerosene delivered to my door. Because the landlords were so flexible about the comings and goings of JETs, we were even able (and encouraged!) by the landlords and Board of Ed to leave a week or so before the contract ended, so that the landlords could clean and prepare the apartment for the new JETs.

No. 3: I had a small but completely furnished apartment – tv, vcr, phone and answering machine, ac/heater, etc. – all paid for. I received *two* *mama-chari* bikes and, the kicker, a free CAR. Did I mention the little account book that I handed to the gas station attendants so

that I didn't have to pay for the gas? So essentially my only expenses were gas and electric and entertainment, which was pretty sweet considering I also received semi-annual bonuses equivalent to a month's salary. As good as my deal was, I know it wasn't the best one on the JET Program, because the other ALT in my town had the same deal except they gave him a full-on house to live in. If there was a downside, it's that my town was pretty strict with the holidays and time off. No leaving school early if there was nothing to do, and no more than the allotted vacation time.

No. 2: Living in the countryside of Shimane-ken I was able to save almost all of my money. My apartment (suitable for a family of 4) was fully paid for and stocked with all manner of household necessities including TV, VCR, desk, bed, etc. I received a vehicle to travel to my countryside junior high schools. This was also paid for by the Board of Education in my town. They paid for all gas to travel to and from the schools in addition to paying for the insurance and minor repair work. Of course, how can I forget those delicious mid-day lunches with all my wonderful students for the bargain price of 200 yen each. All in all, my only expenses were for fun and travel. I was able to save quite a bit during my time in Japan and by prudently saving and waiting for the yen/dollar exchange rate to hit new lows (at that time approx. 100 yen/\$), I would go down to the local bank and exchange my yen for dollars which on returning to the states amounted to a healthy sum. My only regret, if I had stayed one more year the yen/\$ exchange rate hit the all time low of 80 yen/\$. Ah well, to be an expat in Japan for just one more year.

No. 1: I lived in a small town in Tottori-ken (the least populated prefecture in Japan). My town had less than 5,000 people spread out over a hilly and green 250 square kilometers. In other words - it was *CHO-Inaka*, podunk, small town. I loved it! And, I have to say, I may have had one of the best deals on JET. In my 2 years there, I actually had two houses. The first was a brand-new, 2 story town house with three bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, and huge bath

room. I also had a garage with extra storage space and a small flower garden. However, that was hospital housing, and half-way through my first year, a young doctor moved into town and I had to relinquish my swanky digs. I was prepared to move into a small apartment down by the river (which is where some of my predecessors had lived). Instead, however, my supervisor took me to another house down the street from my original place. This one was even bigger, and it was cheaper because it was owned by my office. For a mere 3 *man* a month I got: a two story, three bedroom detached house with a driveway big enough for three cars, and a huge terrace (the *yaki-niku* parties I had up there...). It also had a huge and fully planted garden (asparagus, potatoes, tomatoes, *shiso*, blackberries, tomatoes, eggplant, etc), which I quickly learned how to take care of. (Would you know what a potato plant looks like?). But the best part was something I didn't discover until the spring of my second year (just months before I was to leave) - my house had its own small rice paddy! I discovered this one day when I was chatting with my neighbors and inquired about the overgrown, weed-infested rice paddy next door to me. To my surprise, my neighbors said that the reason that paddy was overgrown was because it was mine, and I hadn't done anything to cultivate it! Wow. We did plant in it, but I left the country before we could harvest it. Either way, it is pretty cool to have your own rice paddy. I guess that's the benefit to living in the *inaka*!

A BAD DEAL?

It turns out the JET before me had "high tastes" and demanded to have her own apartment away from the other teachers' housing. To tell you a little bit about her background, I heard that she demanded to eat sushi every night, made the school pay for some outrageous things, and during her last year as a JET (1995), her family came to visit and bought a nifty, new Toyota RAV-4 as a toy and had it shipped to England! Meanwhile, I was MADE to pay for the "inheritance" of:

- a 5-man/month, tiny, dingy apartment that was a stones throw away from a porn-theater
- around 4-man/month in utilities.
- horrible neighbors who had one of those yelping dogs on a 3 inch leash
- an upfront 8-man payment to the previous JET for having access to a phone in the apartment
- another 8-man payment to the previous JET for the "sight-unseen" moldy furniture and chipped dishes.

I was definitely shafted compared to the rest of the JETS in the same town who received rent-free, new (with A/C!!) apartments, cars, and even paid for no utilities. My school was great, though, and wanted a "fresh new start" for me. They bought me a new fridge, top-of-the-line *mama-chari* bicycle, and extra-long futon. Although, instead of A/C, they gave me one of those glass bells to hang in the window. Like a good JET, I made sure I didn't screw the next JET after me. I ditched the apartment with 6 months left on tour (and I had to pay "*Rei-kin* of 8-man just to get out of the apartment!!!) and went into a homestay. I paid the homestay 5-man a month and got all the food, beer, and *nihongo* they could force-feed me with. Right before the next JET arrived, I got him into the free teachers housing just one floor away from an incredibly nice administrator in my school. The only thing I charged him for was the phone line.



TM

JETAA USA - KINTETSU ESSAY CONTEST

JETAA USA will host its second essay contest from June until August 31 this year.

***15 winners** will receive **round trip airfare and accommodations for three nights in Tokyo plus a one-week JR rail pass**, courtesy of Kintetsu International.

*Interested writers should write an essay about a project or idea that **promotes grassroots exchange between Japan and the United States.**



*All former JETs of any nationality living in the United States during the contest period are eligible to enter, including this year's returning JETs.

For complete details, please visit www.jetalumni.org.

JETAA PHOTO CONTEST

In conjunction with Japan's National "Yokoso Japan" campaign, JETAANC/JETAA is kicking off a national photo competition with a "Focus on Japan." This is open to all JET alumni currently living in the United States.

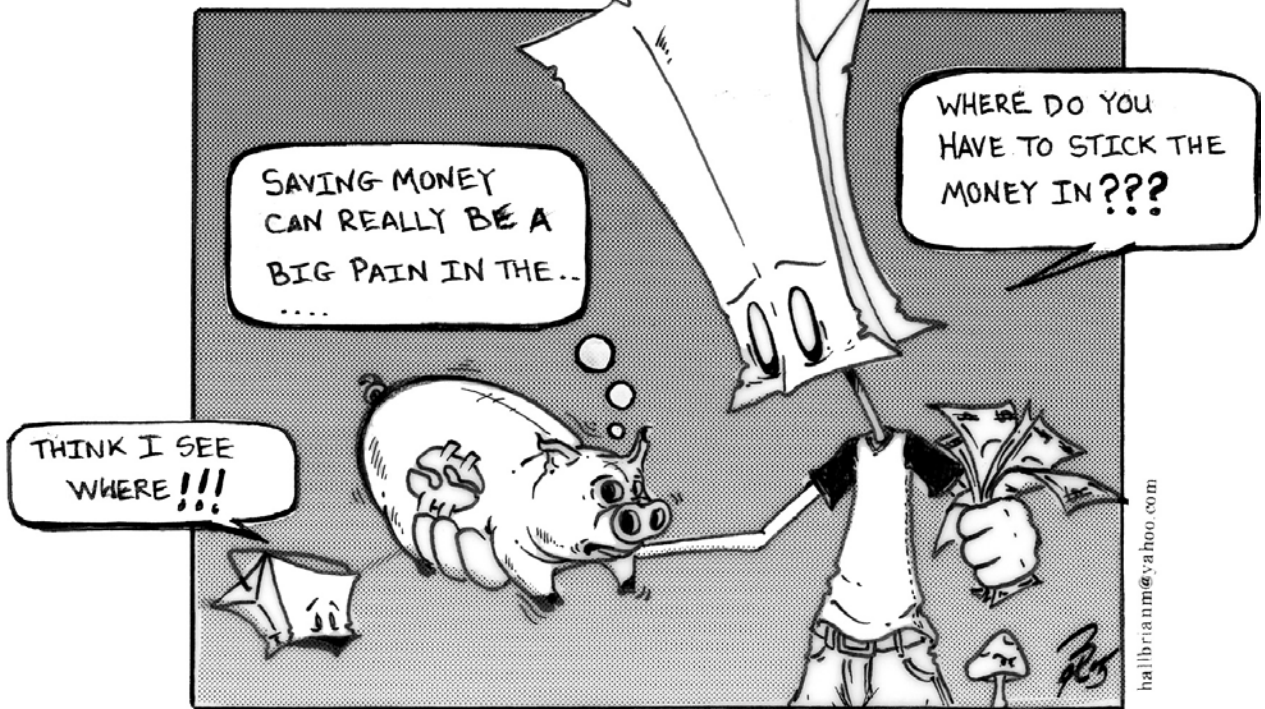
Submissions will be accepted between 6/30 and 8/29/2005. The challenge is to capture unique Japanese related influences, culture in the United States. We are **NOT LOOKING FOR PHOTOS FROM JAPAN**. You will be required to submit a **HIGH-RES** black and white or color digital version of your photo submission for consideration by a select panel of judges from ANA, All Nippon Travel, JNTO, CLAIR and the Japan Consulate of San Francisco, CA. Up to 3 photos may be submitted per contestant. Photos must be at least 300 dpi. Digital scans and images should be emailed to: photo@jetaanc.org OR sent on a CD, by August 29, to the attention of:

JETAANC Attn: Focus on Japan Photo Contest
P.O. Box 2873
San Francisco, CA 94126-2873



Entrants must be the sole author and owner of the copyright in all photos entered. Images must not have been digitally altered in any way other than necessary burning, dodging and cropping. The ownership rights of submitted photos will become the property of our sponsors (including CLAIR ANA, JETAANC, All Nippon Travel, JNTO and MOFA); and our sponsors are entitled to use these photos at their discretion. The winner will be awarded one free round trip ticket to Japan and a week-long Japan rail pass. The winner will be notified on Friday-Sept.16th, 2005.

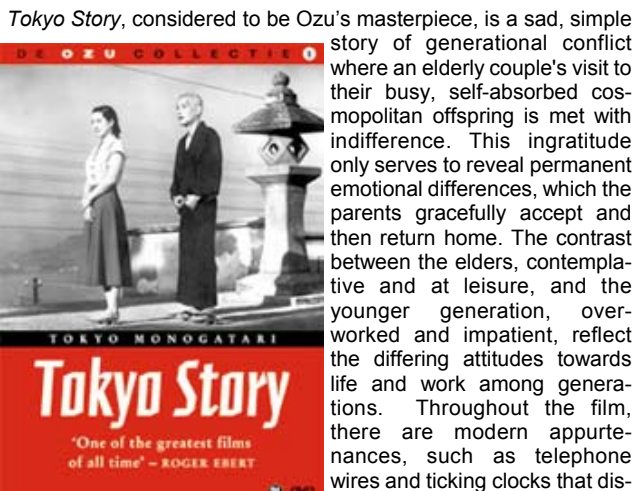
Nubus and Pint



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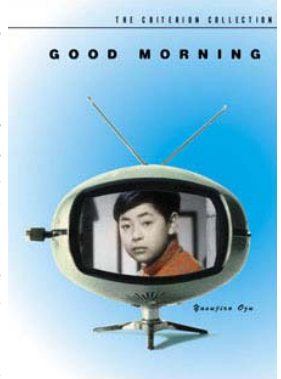
(Continued "Movie Review" from page 14)

some 19 characters who are poised between the prewar years and the new world they now inhabit. Compassionate and characteristically reserved, Ozu chronicles the disintegration of the traditional extended family as a young woman rebels against the wishes of her family by choosing her own husband. Ozu's signature camera strikes a delicate, harmonious balance in *Early Summer*, and echoes the dichotomy of contemporary Japan: tradition versus modernization, selfishness versus altruism, respect for elders versus independence. It is a theme that characterizes Ozu's work as a whole but is especially poignant in this early film.



rupt the symmetrically ordered Japanese homes. The Tokyo landscape is littered with automobiles, steamboats and trains that obscure the natural landscape. The visual contrast between the traditionally clothed and out of place elder couple is heartbreaking to watch as they eventually recognize the inability to coexist with modernity.

Good Morning differs from the other two films as it is in color, has a quirky comedic pacing to it, and is seen through the eyes of children. The plot concerns two brothers who take a vow of silence in protest of their parents' unwillingness to buy them a television set. Through the children's perspective, polite conversation becomes a meaningless exercise in civility and the importance of owning material objects (or goods) is of utmost importance. Ozu takes a whimsical and comic, yet socially astute, commentary on the growing consumerism and suburbanization of Japan.



There is an overwhelming sensibility running through all of Ozu films that is hard to define. Donald Richie, in his commentary on *Early Summer*, refers to it as *mono no aware* - "a point of view of sympathetic sadness". *Mono no aware* is the perspective of a "tired, relaxed, even disappointed observer, perhaps someone sagely approaching death." Ozu captures this aesthetic concept as none of his fellow filmmakers could. As a result, Ozu's films sadly recognize the postwar dissolution of traditional cultural and familial values.

Movie Review

Hayao Miyazaki's
HOWL'S CASTLE

Reviewed by Fran Bigman

Howl's Moving Castle Defies Disney Logic



Call it a spoiler, but I feel safe letting slip in my first sentence that *Howl's Moving Castle* has a happy ending—of a sort. Sophie, our heroine, is a plucky but serious teenage brunette who has a romantic run-in with the young wizard Howl. In a jealous fit, the Witch of the Waste transforms her into a 90-year-old crone. Setting off in search of a way to break the curse, Sophie attaches herself to Howl's entourage as a cleaning woman and works her way into his life, ultimately managing to find true love, end the colossal and pointless war that has tempted the wizard into destructive violence, and change back into her old self. Except for the shock of white hair on her head.

This is proof that Hayao Miyazaki—known informally as the greatest animation director in the world today—hasn't sold out to Disney yet, although the dubbed version of *Howl's Moving Castle* does feature some wince-inducing voice-overs by the likes of Billy Crystal. At first, the movie's too-perfect ending seems to come straight out of a Disneyfied fairy tale, with all loose ends resolved and the characters set to live happily ever after. But Sophie's white hair, which lingers as a reminder of the old woman she once was, reminds us that in Miyazaki's world, things are never that simple.

Reviewers of the film have gushed over the inventiveness of Miyazaki's characters, from the gentle Totoro to the ghostly No-Face of *Spirited Away*, his stunning art direction (the way he sends wind rustling through grass has to be seen to be believed), and his anti-war, environmental consciousness, almost as explicit here as in previous movies like *Nausicaa* and *Princess Mononoke*. Yet almost all have complained about the plot, calling it mystifying and magical at best and pointlessly meandering at worst. You could call it dream logic for the way it blends a turn-of-the-century, vaguely European setting with fantastical war machines right out of Jules Verne, the way it has its characters travel through two time periods and four different worlds.

But even to use the word "logic" is misleading; the movie is deliciously inconsistent in a style only Miyazaki can pull off. What are we to make of a wizard who rules over a moving castle but can't even change his own hair color? On a larger scale, characters drift in and out of the plot and our heroes forgive every villainous act in the movie so quickly they seem to suffer from amnesia; as in *Spirited Away*, you have absolutely no idea what will happen next, and next to no idea how Howl and Sophie—or your fellow movie-goers—are making it through this tangle of seemingly arbitrary events.

This defiance of typical movie logic is sometimes maddening, but it's refreshingly honest in its denial of the comfort that comes from an ending

where evil is vanquished, the good guys win, and order is completely restored to the world. Miyazaki himself has told interviewers that he doesn't believe in villains, that the idea that you can blame a few people for evil acts is ridiculous. In the current political climate, this is an embattled idea.

The beauty of Miyazaki's movies, then, is the questions he raises, not the comfort he provides. The artist Takashi Murakami, whose current exhibit *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* at the Japan Society connects anime to a streak of immaturity in contemporary Japanese culture, loves Miyazaki all the same. In the exhibition catalog, Murakami calls *Howl's Moving Castle* "the movie Japan needs now." *Howl's Moving Castle* deals, as he notes, with issues like personal responsibility in a time of war, the need for community, and the joys and terrors of aging at a time when many Japanese are against the war in Iraq but feel powerless to change government policy, when Japan's traditionally strong communities are showing signs of erosion in the forms of juvenile crime and shut-ins who refuse to leave their homes, when the aging and shrinking of the Japanese population is a national obsession.

Spirited Away's focus on one girl's quest to rescue her parents from the pigsty made it a better and more enjoyable movie than *Howl's Moving Castle* in many ways – a more coherent plot, deeper emotional resonance, and a tighter resolution, to name a few. Yet Miyazaki's ambition in addressing these issues in his wonderfully dreamlike, oblique style—a style resistant to the Manichean worldview of many other movies for both kids and adults—cannot be denied.

Howl's Moving Castle is now playing only at Loews Lincoln Square at Broadway and 68th St; if you want to avoid the dubbed version, I've heard rumors that the original will also be shown in a week or so.

FILMS OF YASUJIRO OZU
The Criterion Collection

Despite his popularity in Japan, the filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu remained unknown in the West during his lifetime. Unlike other directors from Japan's Golden Age, such as Akira Kurosawa and Kenji Mizoguchi, Ozu, who was dubbed "the most Japanese of all filmmakers", was considered unfit for export. His minimalist style and unconcern for plot turned off foreign distributors until the growth of the art house movement in the 1960s made more formalist schools of filmmaking acceptable. Ozu's stature has grown among film students and scholars and his influence can be seen in the work of such contemporary directors as Wim Wenders and Jim Jarmusch. The Criterion Collection has recently released three Ozu films on DVD that serve as a great introduction to his work: *Early Summer (Bakushu)* (1951), *Tokyo Story (Tokyo Monogatari)* (1953) and *Good Morning (Ohayo)* (1959). All three DVDs contain voice over narration, which provides the necessary aesthetic and historical context needed to truly understand the films.



Stylistically, Ozu works against many of the conventions of popular cinema by reducing his craft to the bare minimum. There is little to no camera movement and absolutely no transition effects, such as fades, wipes, and dissolves; only straight cuts remain. He also disregards the "180 degree" rule, wherein the camera remains on one side of an imaginary axis drawn between two characters, and replaces it with a technique in which actors speak directly to the camera. Ozu also places the camera at a low angle, as if the viewer were sitting crosslegged on a *tatami* mat. This idiosyncratic style complements Ozu's barebone narratives, which focus on the effects of modernization on the traditional family structure in postwar Japan.

The earliest of the three films, *Early Summer*, meticulously observes the lives of

(*"Movie Review"* continued on page 13)

THE "MONEY" ISSUE TOP 10!

As JETAA NY prepares for eventual financial independence and seeks 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status, how it raises and uses its money becomes increasingly significant. Therefore, to assist in the process of prioritizing, below are the Newsletter's ...

TOP 10 Suggestions for How JETAA NY Should Use Its Money

- 10. Construction of a West Side Sumo Stadium
- 9. Shoe cream sent with every Newsletter
- 8. Nihongo Dake Dinner at Masa (the rather high-end Japanese restaurant in the Time Warner Center)
- 7. JETAA Development Meetings at Club Med
- 6. Stretch Humvee "JETAA-Mobile"
- 5. Keynote speaker at upcoming JETAA Career Forum: Billy Graham
- 4. Hostile takeover of Princeton in Asia program
- 3. Pizza schmitza! Caviar and Dom Perignon at next Newsletter stuffing
- 2. Start JETAAology religion
- 1. One word: Saketinis



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