

JETaa NY

QUARTERLY

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The Magazine for the
Japan Exchange and
Teaching Program
Alumni Association
New York Chapter

FALL 2008

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THE "POLITICS" ISSUE



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JET ALUMNI ELECTION SURVEY



Welcome to the second-ever JET Alumni Election Survey! Forty-five people from around the U.S. and representing over 30 prefectures responded to "vote" and share their thoughts.

The survey was conducted anonymously using SurveyMonkey, all responses were received between 9/10 and 10/6 (i.e., before the economy started imploding) and an effort was made to make the survey available to as many chapters as possible. In other words, it's completely un-scientific. That said, it's still fun to do, so see the results below.

COMMENTS

Ron Paul

***Ron Paul...real change. My experiences in Japan have provided me with a much different perspective since "return," made me more receptive to initially intimidating political and economic ideas. I left the American Matrix for a while, and now there is no falling back to sleep.

Undecided

***I'm torn on the issue. At this point I could see myself voting for either party. Originally I planned on voting for Obama,



but recently I do not like how his camp has been handling the issue of McCain choosing Palin as VP. I really could see the Republicans winning again. Since I live in California the state will go Democrat, so either way I guess it doesn't matter all that much.

***Undecided! I'm pretty liberal but I don't know about Obama's track record. Also, I have guiltily fallen for Palin...I want to read up more on each candidate's fiscal plans and then will probably vote with my wallet.

***Undecided. Agree with McCain more on economics, Obama more on social issues and foreign policy.

***Undecided: Swore I would not vote another Republican into office, but they picked the one guy I might consider. I like Obama the man, but am afraid about some of the stuff he is saying: taxes, trade, spending, healthcare, etc.

***McCain/Palin all the way! I'm a Democrat and Hillary supporter who can't

"JET Survey" continued on page 14

JET ALUM VOTES

McCain 3
Obama 37
Ron Paul 1
Undecided 4



McCain

JAPANESE EXPAT ELECTION SURVEY!

Who says Japanese people don't voice their political opinions? Read on to see what some of our ex-pat friends think about the U.S. presidential candidates.

The process: An e-mail was sent out to JET alums to ask their Japanese friends and colleagues to tell them for whom they would vote in the upcoming U.S. election and for what reason. Here are their responses:

MCCAIN

Good for Japan's economy and good for US's Business.

RON PAUL

I vote neither Obama nor McCain. I think I would vote for Ron Paul. From my understanding, he has specific plans and

"Expat Survey" continued on page 14

Letter from the President



Dear JET Alumni,

As many of you have noticed, things are on the upswing with JETAA NY.

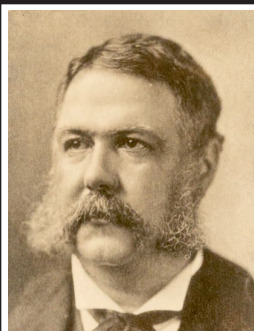
We have had a landmark year, bringing many new events to our schedule and significantly increasing member involvement. We are so glad to have so many of you involved, to have welcomed enthusiastic new returnees to the fold, and to have reconnected with those of you that we lost touch with over the years. It is you, our members, that make our organization so dynamic and worth being a part of, and your participation and involvement is key to our success.

Going forward, we will be implementing some changes to make JETAA NY even better. As most of you know, we are now a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. That means that we officially need to change some of our internal governance procedures to align with our new regulatory responsibilities. The first major change will be our election process. Going forward, executive roles such as President, Vice President, etc., will be appointed by our Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be voted in by you, the membership. The first Board election will take place in September of 2009.

Here's the challenging part. In order to help ratify these changes, we need more than 500 of our members to vote. This will be done via a short e-mail survey that you may have already received by the time the Newsletter reaches you. We are in great need of your support to help us move JETAA NY forward. While we officially have over 1,000 members, less than half of that number are active. So please help to enact these changes by completing the e-mail survey, so that we can better manage our activities and support all of you.

And finally, in these tough economic times, please remember to leverage the many resources and the great network that JETAA NY offers. Whether you find yourself in need of a job, an apartment, or just a friendly drink, there's a good chance you can find it right here. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our end of the year celebrations. Let's wrap up the year in style and put JETAA NY on the right track for 2009!

Megan Miller (Hyogo-ken, 2000-02)



**McCain...Obama...
Chester MacArthur...?
Whatever your views, we
want to hear them.**

Contact us at
newsletter@jetaany.org to join the
Brainstorm Crew or share any ideas,
comments or opinions.



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To see past issues, go to jetaany.org/newsletter/newsletter_archive

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The Editor and his wife:
Wynne Wu & Steven Too!

COMINGS & GOINGS

END OF AN EDITORIAL ERA...

...AND START OF A NEW ONE



After nearly seven years as the JETAA NY Newsletter Editor, it's time to hang up my editorial cleats and

I am glad to say I leave the institution of the JETAA NY Newsletter in the exceedingly capable hands of Justin Tedaldi. His editorial skills, perspective and commitment will continue to make the JETAA NY Newsletter a high quality publication and valuable resource for the JET alumni community.

My tenure as editor has been one of the most rewarding, enjoyable and satisfying pursuits I've ever undertaken. It's been a creative outlet, an opportunity to learn and experiment and a way to meet and connect with so many wonderful people. So if you've also felt a little more connected to the JET alumni community as a result of the Newsletter, then that's what I was aiming for.

I'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of the officers, JLGC and Consulate members I've worked with over the years for their support, and a very special thank you to every JET alum who ever contributed to the Newsletter and in turn to the JET alumni community.

That said, while I'll no longer have an official title, I'll still remain very much involved in the JET alumni community, attending events and putting in my two yen. I'll also be working on my new project, **JetWit.com**, an outgrowth of the **Writers Interpreters Translators (WIT) Group**.

And now, as the politicians like to say, it's time to spend more time with my family.

Domo arigatou gozaimashita.

Steven Horowitz
(Aichi-ken, Kariya-shi, 1992-94)
stevenwaseda@jetwit.com

Hi everyone,
I'm **Justin Tedaldi**, and since 2005 I've served as the Associate Editor of *JETAA NY Quarterly*. I worked as a CIR for the Kobe City International Center from 2001-02 after a previous year of study abroad in Kobe. On JET, I was responsible for translating, editing and writing stories for a bimonthly newsletter. While it was a lot of work at first, it soon became my favorite part of the job. My beat for each issue was to inform our readers of an organization or business that promoted internationalization in Kobe, and I relished the challenge of finding a subject, conducting interviews, and taking photographs for an added visual touch.

improving things with each new issue. To keep this tradition alive, I'd like to establish a team of writers with good ideas for future Japan-related features. You don't have to be a journalist; passion's what I'm looking for. Contact me at newsletter@jetaany.org and we'll talk.

I'd like to thank Steven Horowitz for all his guidance and encouragement over the years, and congratulate him on a long tenure that's seen this publication evolve in countless ways, all of them for the best.

Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu, and see you next issue!

Justin Tedaldi
(CIR Kobe-shi, 2001-02)

O-TSUKARE SAMA DESHITA! YOROSHIKU ONEGAISHIMASU!



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Welcome to the second-ever JETAA NY Quarterly Translators Challenge.

We once again invited JET alums and Friends of JET (i.e., anyone who wants) to take their best shot at translating a selected text. Why? Well, mostly to entertain, but also to give the greater JET alum community a chance to show their stuff as well as give the rest of us a fun way to study up on our nihongo.

The selected text for this edition of the Translators Challenge is an excerpt from "Political Science," the satirical 1972 song by Randy Newman.

Prize: \$25 gift certificate to **BOOK OFF**, the discount Japanese bookstore on 41st St. between Madison & 5th Aves.

*Asia's crowded and Europe's too old
Africa is far too hot
And Canada's too cold
And South America stole our name
Let's drop the big one
There'll be no one left to blame us
We'll save Australia
Don't wanna hurt no kangaroo
We'll build an all-American
amusement park there
They got surfin', too*

Want to hear the original song? Go to YouTube and search for "Randy Newman" and "Political Science."

TRANSLATORS CHALLENGE

THE WINNER!

Mia Simring
(CIR Aichi-ken, 2004-06)

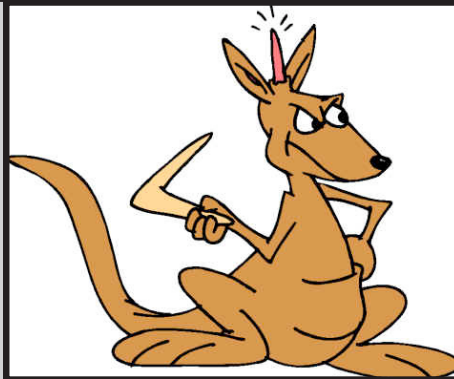
Omedetou gozaimashita on her second straight win!

Special thanks to professional translator **Jamie Graves** (Shizuoka-ken, 2002-03) for providing some commentary and insight.

Mia clearly put a lot of thought into changing the distinctly American rhythms and humor of a folk song into Japanese.

I was impressed at how Mia managed to avoid direct translation, instead finding uniquely Japanese ways of expressing the value judgements in the song. Instead of directly saying "old" in the line "Europe's too old" she used *ダサイ* (*dasai*, "not with it, uncool"), which conveys the contempt a lot better.

She was also very good on keeping the translated text rhythmic and simple, replacing a potentially messy translation of "Don't wanna hurt no kangaroo" with "*カンガルー可愛いから*" (*kangaroo kawaii kara*), which manages to keep the humor and simplicity of the original. She even managed to rhyme the last verse!



アジア込みすぎ、
ヨーロッパダサすぎ
アフリカなんて暑くて
カナダ - 寒すぎ
南アメリカ - 我が名を
盗んだ

世界をぶっ潰そう
反対する人間を消しちまおう

カンガルー可愛いから
オーストラリアだけ助けよう
アメリカン遊園地
そこで作るぞ!

Ajia komisugi,
Yoroppa dasasugi
Afurika nante atsukute
Kanada - samusugi
Minami Amerika - wa ga na wo nusunda

Sekai wo buttsubusou
Hantai suru ningen wo keshichimaou

Kangaru - kawaii kara
Osutoraria dake tasukeyou
Amerikan yuenchi
Soko de tsukuru zo!

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JETAANY SOCIETY PAGE

By Yoku Shitteiru

Welcome back my, partisan alumni friends, to another edition of **JETAA NY Society**. So much tension and excitement these last few months, so let's start releasing it...First, an update on **B.J. Hill**, a JET alum who has been walking from San Francisco back home to Massachusetts, collecting messages from people around the U.S. to take to the next president. As of October 29 he was in **Newark, N.J.** To keep up, follow him on his blog walkamerica2008.blogspot.com or on his Twitter feed...Meanwhile, in the Midwest, we offer a hearty *irrasaimasse* to **Katherine Brannon**, the new newsletter editor for **JETAA Chicago**...And back eastward (or further westward, depending on your orientation) in the **CLAIR Tokyo** office, alum **Sharon Bignell** finished up her tenure as JET Liason (*o-tsukare sama deshita*) and fellow alum **Sacha Battrick** (a real live Kiwi) took over the role as of September... JET alum and Japanese history/politics professor **Michael Auslin** has moved from **Yale** to the **American Enterprise Institute** in D.C. and has put out a steady stream of articles on Japanese politics and security issues... *Ganbatte* to **Anne Koller** who recently started working for the **World Economic Forum**...Former JLGC liason and Okinawa native **Takao Aharen** was spotted in **Hong Kong** in August... **Shannan Spisak** was sited JET-setting between **London, Luxembourg** and **Italy** in the beginning of September after helping to plan back to back conferences, including the **JETAA USA Conference** in **Seattle** at the end of August...And *omedetou gozaimashita* to **Jennie Pu** on her engagement at the end of August!...Also, we say *sayonara* and *ki wo tsukete* to **Theresa Kanter** who left **Princeton, N.J.** for a position in **Atlanta**. Maybe she can say hi



Francis Lee, Ono-san and Noriko Furuhata of the Japanese Consulate, and Nelson Wan man the Japan booth at the 92nd St. YMHA International Festival on September 14

to former JETAA NY member and now JETAA Southeast member **Nicole Hebert** for us...And former Secretary **Ryan Chan** turned 30 on October 11! *Tanjyoubi omedetou, Ryan-oji-chan!*

Yoku Shitteiru knows well that sports was so "last issue." Nonetheless, a handful of JET alums and JLGC folks have created the first ever **JETAA NY Fantasy Football League**, and Yoku Shitteiru is now obligated to let you know that **El Presidente** (**Megan Miller's** team) is in first place, a game ahead of a four-way tie for second place among the **Hanzawa BILLS** (one chance to guess the owner), the **Toyo Angels** (**Nancy Ikehara**), the **Hamamatsu Eel-Dogs** (**Takashi Daito**) and the **19ers** (**Sho "Time" Nakazono**). At 4-4 stands the **Mochi Ballers** (**Monica Yuki**), followed by **Let's Football!** (**Shree Kurlekar**) and **Machine Gun Kelly** (**Meredith Wutz** - pretty amazing for a pregnant woman). Bringing up the rear in last place are the **Hanshin Tigers** (**Shinya Bando** - apparently thought it was fantasy baseball) and, most pathetically, **JanDaraRin** (owned by our soon-to-be ex-editor, **Steven Horowitz**)...And if you remain unimpressed by the randomness of the team names, go to this link (shared by **Monica**) for some really off-the-wall team tags: <http://gajintonic.com/2008/03/09/bizarre-japanese-amateur-team-names/>.

For all you bookworms out there (or people who like to socialize regardless of whether you read the book), **Jessica Langbein** and **Michael Glazer** are enthusiastically re-starting the **JETAA NY Book Club!** **Rosie DeFremery** and **Ryan Chan** both ran the book club back in the proverbial day, and a good club it was. So **Yoku Shitteiru** is happy to see it's revival and may even drop by for the first meeting (assuming an appropriate appearance fee is negotiated).

JETRock: **Brian Boyle** (Gifu-ken, 2000-03) rocked out at **Mercury Lounge** on September 13 with his band **Her Majesty**. An audio engineer who does sound "*Society*" continued on page 15



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ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

A discussion with Inuyama City Councilman Anthony Bianchi (Aichi-ken, 1987-91)

Interview by
Michael Glazer
(Chiba-ken, 1995-97)



Listen to a Podcast of the Full Interview at
<http://jetaany.org/documents/JETAA-Bianchi-Interview.mp3>



Bensonhurst, Brooklyn native **Anthony Bianchi** (Aichi-ken, 1987-91), the first-ever North American to hold an elected position in Japan, is still going strong in his role as a city councilman in Inuyama-shi, Aichi-ken. **Michael Glazer** (Chiba-ken, 1995-97) recently did a recorded interview with Anthony to discuss the hot local topics, learn more about politics in Japan and get a sense of how things look across the pond. A podcast of the interview is available at <http://jetaany.org/documents/JETAA-Bianchi-Interview.mp3>.

Michael Glazer: You have a very interesting background. How does a JET program teacher become a city council member?

Anthony Bianchi: Well, I'll try to make the story as short as possible. I studied filmmaking at New York University and I was interested in Kurasawa films and whatnot, and I was out in L.A. for a while. I came back to New York. I was working for New York City and I saw an ad in the paper about the Expo that was held in Gifu about 20 years ago. So I went over to Japan on a homestay program and decided it would be nice to try to live there for a year or so. I joined the JET program, stayed for a couple years, and decided I wanted to stay longer.

I was teaching, working for the Board of Education in Inuyama, and I kind of got involved in the administrative aspects of it. I was banging my head against a lot of brick walls and finding that I had to get in touch with the mayor and the city council people to help back up what we were doing. I finally got to a point where I got tired of complaining about things and needing other people's help, so I decided to try and do something myself. I ran in the election and somehow I got elected, believe it or not.

MG: Once you were elected into office, were there any things early on that struck you as unexpected?

AB: Yes, actually there were a few things in the beginning. One was that the council sessions seemed to go a little bit too smoothly for my liking. At first I thought I was missing something. That maybe people were somehow getting information through all the channels that I wasn't quite in touch with yet. But I started to realize there's a tendency here where, once things get to the council session, the *katachi*, the form is more important than the content.

As long as the council session isn't too rocky, everything is considered to be going well. Once proposals from the mayor or the city get to the council floor for a vote, by and large they get passed. I just felt there wasn't enough debate about certain things. It also took me a little while to learn the procedures and learn what I could do about that myself.

Lately I've been putting out more legislation and trying to cause more debate than usual. Actually, in the last council session, I caused a bit of a debate that some people didn't care for, and it became sort of a hot topic. But these are important things that need to be discussed and not just "rubber stamped." Some people don't like it. But, you know, I'm from Brooklyn, so what are you going to do about it. [Said in a humorous tone.]

MG: So how does debate happen in Japan?

AB: In the U.S., there seems to be a little more debate and people giving their opinions as the legislative session goes on. Here, sometimes there's a lot of back and forth, before the session starts.

But once it starts, what they do is try to drag things out. Once it's officially turned into a bill and it's on the agenda, people don't want to vote against it.

MG: You must have learned a whole lot in the process of running for office.

AB: Actually, we were fairly lucky. I had some people around us who were familiar with the process who gave us some hints. We decided we should campaign by instinct. I don't know if you're familiar with campaigning in Japan. It's a

lot of people out there with sound trucks repeating their name over and over again and annoying catch phrases, especially on this level. We decided that we would just let people know what we wanted to do. I say "we" because this is not some-

thing you really do on your own. People who decided to support me had the same kind of ideas about what was wrong with the city and what needed to be done as I did. So we just let people know what our ideas were, and we hoped that enough of them would write my name on a little piece of paper on election day and we would get a chance to do something about it.

MG: You mentioned a split in *bunmei* (civilizations) within the city council.

AB: It's been really difficult to try and put our finger on how to deal with it. I don't think there's anything devious about it. But they really believe that up until the administration decides on the agenda you can say whatever you want. But once it's decided, it's your job as a council person to make sure that things get implemented and move ahead smoothly.

But I think, if you don't think it's a good policy, you have to fight it until the end. And the difference is, they're acting as a spokesman for the administration. But that's not really our job. Our job is to be a spokesman for the people. And I think it's better to judge every policy on its own merits all the time, every time, until the end.

MG: Are you seeing generational dynamics play out in Japanese politics?

AB: What I found that was surprising in the last city council election, seven new members were elected. I used to think I was one of the younger guys when I first got elected, but I ain't anymore.

But now I see even some of the younger guys still have what I like to call a kind of old fashioned way of thinking where everybody has to work in lock step, and to reach a final decision, we all have to look like we agreed on something. The thing is some of the older members aren't that strict about doing things that way. So it's kind of strange. It's not really based on age.

"Bianchi" continued on page 16

POLITICAL ANIMALS

Stories of politics from days of JET

We didn't go over there to run for office or start a revolution, but sometimes politics had a way of finding us. Here are some stories from fellow alums.

Two days before our three-year stint on JET was to end, we had lunch with the mayor of our city, who wanted to thank us for our time and efforts. Nick and I were the only JETs in our relatively 30,000-small Hokkaido city. When the waitress came, we were asked what we'd like to drink and Nick and I both looked at each other and I knew what he was thinking, so I said, "beer *nonde mo ii desu ka?*" He thought about it for a second and said that he normally wouldn't drink at lunch, but would make an exception and ordered three beers. Well, it was obvious he "made exceptions" often as he was later forced to resign because he was taking bribes from companies for city projects. D'oh!! We both enjoyed the beer we had with him, though. It was a nice finish to a fun three years in the beautiful outdoor playground of Hokkaido.

Toby Weymiller (Hokkaido-ken, 1997-2000)

I call this the time that I used the power of fashion to chase away the right-winger black trucks. It was a typical Sunday in Harajuku. The cosplayers and indie bands were all out in full force, enjoying the attention of the crowds on Meijijingu-bashi. A black truck pulled up, parked, and was spouting (or rather, blasting) its



GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNERS

Clara Solomon (CIR Tottori-ken, 1999-2001)
Meredith Wutz (Saitama-ken, 2000-02)

One Prize: \$25 to **Kinokuniya Bookstore**, now on 6th Ave. between 40th & 41st Streets in NYC

The Other Prize: Dinner for two at **Bao Noodles** (2nd Ave. between 22nd & 23rd Streets), owned by **Chris Johnson** (Oita-ken, 1992-95) (baonoodles.com)

Domo Domo to the panel of independent JET alum judges:
Elizabeth Sharpe (Pacific Northwest), **Jennifer Lee** (Southern California), **Elizabeth White** (Southern California), **David Kowalsky** (Pacific Northwest) and **Mark Frey** (Northern California)

onto the platform. It was 7:30 a.m., and I had taken one of the first trains out of Tokyo back to my town. I smelled like beer, smoke and God knows what else as I did my best to avoid the main roads of my town on my stumbling walk to my apartment, for fear of running into students or co-workers. All the backstreet navigating proved successful, and I found myself staring blurry-eyed up at my apartment, just four short flights of stairs above me.

"No shower," I thought, "Just sleep." Yes, deep, deep sleep into the afternoon hours of a lazy Sunday was my plan. I burped and then smiled as I unlocked my door, slightly giddy since my journey home had ended. I tossed off my shoes and proceeded to close all the curtains to hold off the morning sun. I fell into my futon and just about nodded out when from a distance I heard what sounded like music and talking all at once, amplified, and moving closer. I couldn't make out the muddled Japanese, but it grew louder and louder until it felt like it was underneath me. It then slowly passed, only to be followed by similar booming music and talking 10 minutes later. After the third episode I got out of bed and made myself some tea. Sleep was futile. Election season had begun.

Rick Ambrosio (Iwate-ken, 2006-08)

One day I was approached by a faculty member at Kashiwazaki Shoyo Junior High, an advanced

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propaganda, so I decided to take advantage of the photo opportunity. As I struck my poses in front of the van, more and more photographers, both Japanese and foreign, gathered around, snapping photos. Behind me, the right-wingers discussed the situation nervously and within a few minutes had packed up and left. For all of their convictions, it was the foreigner who wound up chasing them away. They had no place in one of the most liberal-spirited places in Tokyo, anyway. In the photo you can see them packing up their ladder, while I sport the visual-kei with flair.

Dawn Mostow (Gifu-ken, 2003-06)

I was tired and hung over as the doors opened and I flopped out of the train and

"SELHI" school, to formulate a lesson about my experiences on September 11. What did I think or know about America before 9/11? What do I think or know now?

With assistance from the Japanese teacher, I taught three classes intended for 2nd grade junior high and 6th grade high school. More than just a recounting of events, my goal was to inspire consciousness about the importance of political activism or even simple awareness. I wanted them to think about the meaning of icons--how their country was represented to the rest of the world and by whom. Like many teenagers, topics like fashion and music came before prime ministers and elections. However, I found it striking to notice in casual discussion that more students seemed to be aware of the American presidential candidates' backgrounds than

"Politics" continued on page 17

Bringing Power Back to the People One Call at a Time

Shaun Dakin's (Shimane-ken, 1989-91) Fight Against Intrusive Political Calls

Stacy Smith (CIR Kumamoto-ken, 2000-03)

Although JET Alum **Shaun Dakin** (ALT, Shimane 1989-91) grew up overseas, his first time in Asia was living in Japan. He spent two years there, an experience that would go on to shape his future as well as that of his family. Shaun shared with the JETAA Newsletter the unlikely connection between his time as an English teacher on JET and the non-profit organization National Political Do Not Contact Registry (StopPoliticalCalls.org) opposing political robocalls, where he is CEO.

Q: What led you to join the JET Program?

A: My reasons for going on JET were adventure and the chance to live in Asia. I grew up in Africa and Europe (Libya, Kenya, Nigeria and the U.K.) and was looking to get to Asia to experience something I never had before. JET was a hot thing to do so I did it.

Q: Is what you do now related to your time in Japan?

A: Not directly, though the skills I picked up while on JET certainly helped me throughout my life. The program taught me how to have self confidence in a new environment, as well as how to write. When I was there I actually had to write letters to friends to keep in touch (there was no e-mail at the time), and phone calls to the U.S. were once a month if that. Finally and perhaps most importantly I grew to love Japan, the Japanese and of course Japanese food! My experience impacted not only my life but my younger brother's as well. He came to visit me during JET and was so inspired by his time there that he went on to major in East Asian Studies at Princeton University and even had an internship in the Japanese diet as a university student!

Q: How did you get started in politics?

A: Undergraduate I majored in government at Colby College and I had a Capitol Hill internship with Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont. His chief of staff was mentioning this guy named Bill Clinton who was the governor of Arkansas and had great potential. Clinton was unknown at the time, but I valued her opinion so I decided to volunteer for the Clinton campaign in 1992 which was a lot of fun. I never worked full-time for politics, though; it was always more of a passion.

I went to Thunderbird for my MBA from 1994-95, and at this time the Internet and Netscape were big. I was recruited by FedEx in Memphis to help start their e-commerce business. They were true pioneers in terms of real-time tracking on the Internet, something we take for granted today. I was at FedEx for five years and met my wife there, though she is a doctor, not a FedExer. We both wanted to be closer to our families, which for me was D.C. and for her Atlanta, and it worked out when I was recruited by a dot-com in the D.C. area. Unfortunately, when the tech market went bust my company had layoffs.

Q: Did you return to politics at that time?

A: In 2004 I volunteered for the Kerry/Edwards campaign. They sent a group of us from D.C. to Cleveland by bus during the last week of the election, as Ohio was the ground zero of the campaign. There we staffed a phone bank, and it was then that I had my eureka moment! It was four days before the election and people were getting really annoyed due to the volume of calls they were receiving. In most cases, they would either hang up on us or curse at us, or threaten to vote for Bush if we didn't stop calling. I realized then that maybe we were doing more harm than good, and many of my fellow volunteers felt the same way. I had the same experience when I was volunteering for the Virginia Senator Jim Webb in 2006. People would say, "How'd you get my number? I'm going to vote for George Allen!" So once again I thought about whether all this was really helping democracy and if we weren't hurting the cause instead.



Q: How did this realization turn into a solid plan?

A: With my business background I know about database marketing and was familiar with the Do Not Call registry. I was by no means an expert in business or politics, but I knew enough about both and thought about how I could bring those two skill sets together. In most cases, business people don't get politics; they tend to want to leave things to the lobbyists and vice versa many politicians don't know much about business. I thought I could somehow span both groups.

In terms of restrictions on telemarketing, there are three exempt groups: politicians, NPOs/charities and market research. For NPOs/charities, most people are not going to get mad at the Red Cross for calling. For market research, they claim they need to understand how consumers think. But for politicians, they are the ones who passed the law so they exempt themselves! In order to remedy this problem the group I founded called Citizens for Civil Discourse (CCD), a non-partisan and non-profit group of ordinary citizens dedicated to raising the level of political discourse in the United States, is trying to implement a voter Privacy Bill of Rights.

In October 2007 we launched the National Political Do Not Contact Registry <<http://www.StopPoliticalCalls.org/ht/d/Join/pid/196>> (NP-DNC) at StopPoliticalCalls.org in order to allow citizens to opt out of political calls the same way they can with commercial ones. We advocate fair practices such as identifying who paid for the call (usually given at the end when people have already hung up), providing an actual number identifying the call, and no calls past 9 p.m. It is important to know that we are not looking to ban robocalls (automated telemarketing calls) as the First Amendment guarantees the right to free speech, but we would like voters to have a choice in the matter. However, of course there is always a tension between this right and the right to privacy.

On the federal level, we helped craft the bicameral/bipartisan Robocall Privacy Act along with Senator Diane Feinstein of California. In February I testified at the hearings regarding the impact of robocalls on voters' lives, and we are still working with Senator Feinstein's staff to get it passed. Although we don't anticipate that being any time this year, we are seeing progress. I recently had an op-ed published in the Washington Post calling for a Voter Privacy Bill of Rights. You can read it at: <http://tinyurl.com/PostPrivacyOpEd>.

Q: You are clearly well-versed in the American political scene, but do you have any commentary on the recent Japanese political shake-up?

A: To be honest, I don't follow things over there as closely as I used to, though I heard about Prime Minister Fukuda resigning. But I was absolutely fascinated by the political campaigning when I lived in Japan. The vans that go around with the loudspeakers were so annoying! As far as I know Japan doesn't have the issue of robocalls, but in England they are dealing with it now.

Q: Bringing things full circle, what was the greatest influence JET had on your career?

A: JET was one of the best times of my life. I lived in a small town where I was the only foreigner, so I was a traveling ALT and had to cover about 30 different schools. However, I was based at the local board of education and it was there that I learned how to work within a bureaucracy, a skill that certainly helps me today! In Japan things worked pretty much the same way they do in government here, in terms of knowing who you have to talk to in order to get something done or who has to sign off on things to put them into effect.

"Shaun Dakin" continued on page 16

Marc Carroll (Gifu-ken, 2001-03)
Senior localization engineer; Translations.com, New York, NY

How's the Economy Treating You?

JET Alums Share Their Perspectives

As for the economy and me?
Hmm, well, I was reassured, unofficially :-), that I am safe, but it could be a mixed blessing if my group was ever reduced in size. A ton more work for fewer people = longer hours. It's really hard to say what's going to happen.

And as for the economy and my company?
I'd guess we may see a slight shift in our focus. While projects for domestic advertising and marketing materials may decrease, there could be opportunities for companies who are looking overseas to jump the USS Titanic. With all the fanfare, we've been contracted to translate a tsunami of internal memos and press releases. It's not the meat and potatoes of our business, but it seems a bit ironic that some U.S. institutions are basically paying us to tell their foreign investors and constituencies it's gonna be a'ight and not to panic about their financial situations.

All and all, we're just following the money and providing a voice for businesses on whatever shores they choose to operate, foreign or domestic. It'd be naive to say we are recession-proof, but hey, we've roughed the dotcom bubble burst, Y2K and the cancellation of *Baywatch*.

Anonymous
Finance, New York, NY

I work at a major financial institution that has suffered billions of dollars of losses over the past year. Thousands of employees at my company, including many friends of mine, have been laid off, and it seems that the wave after wave of layoffs is never ending. Just today there were more rumors about a further "massive" reduction at year end. It is debilitating to morale, and worsened by the fact that all I read about are all the other laid off finance employees and how there are no jobs out there for us. In addition, because of the credit crisis, the secondary market for the product that I sell has dried up, and my own bank has no balance sheet available to extend credit to our clients, so our business flow has slowed to a trickle. I got into this business expecting to work long, hard hours and learn a ton, but in fact I have spent the bulk of the year struggling to get my hands on what work there is to do, and I have no idea what kind of future my group has. It really has been an awful year and I just hope we see the bottom soon.

Stacy Smith (CIR Kumamoto-ken, 2000-03)
Freelance translator, interpreter and writer; New York, NY

The economic situation is not good, and as a freelancer I think I am feeling the effects. But it is also one of those things that is hard to gauge as peaks and valleys are par for the course. However, after being away on business for the majority of last month for interpreting work and then coming home to a much slower schedule, I decided to focus on professional development. Over the summer I took a course at NYU regarding the business of translation (i.e. the market, setting rates) and found it to be incredibly useful and my professor wonderful! This month he is offering a web site and localization course so I jumped on the chance to join. In this class we are becoming familiar with HTML (something I did a bit of in college but have totally forgotten) and then how to localize a web page (this goes beyond translating and takes into account technical details like font style and size as well as cultural aspects like how to make the content relevant for the target country). I figure that I'm killing two birds with one stone by acquiring a new skill and doing something productive during a down time. I'm hoping to be able to create my own web page by the time I'm done with the course, something I have been wanting to do for a while to bring in more business.

Anonymous
Financial analyst, New York, NY

I work at a major financial institution that has suffered billions of dollars of losses

over the past year. Thousands of employees at my company, including many friends of mine, have been laid off, and it seems that the wave after wave of layoffs is never ending. Just today there were more rumors about a further "massive" reduction at year end. It is debilitating to morale, and worsened by the fact that all I read about are all the other laid off finance employees and how there are no jobs out there for us. In addition, because of the credit crisis, the secondary market for the product that I sell has dried up, and my own bank has no balance sheet available to extend credit to our clients, so our business flow has slowed to a trickle. I got into this business expecting to work long, hard hours and learn a ton, but in fact I have spent the bulk of the year struggling to get my hands on what work there is to do, and I have no idea what kind of future my group has. It really has been an awful year and I just hope we see the bottom soon.

James Kennedy (Nara-ken, 2004-06)
Author of the novel The Order of Odd-Fish, Chicago, IL

How's the economic situation affecting me? I just got attacked and beaten up in a park near my home a few weeks ago, so I suspect that those gangbangers who jumped me had significant investments in Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers. I guess they were just trying to blow off steam after their 401(k)s took a dive. And really, who could blame them?

Lee-Sean Huang (Oita-ken, 2003-06)
Grad student/part-time Web developer, Oita-ken, 2003-06

As a grad student, the economic downturn hasn't really affected my day-to-day life yet. However, this summer, one of my student loan lenders stopped accepting loan applications, so I had to find a new lender. It was all sorted out in a week, though. One of the big NGOs that I'm doing some freelance multimedia and web work for just sent out a memo about cost savings during the economic downturn, which involves a hiring freeze and a cut in discretionary spending, so I don't know if my consultancy will be renewed after my three-month contract with them is up at the end of November, but I've been getting buzz about other gigs anyway. Plus, I was thinking about doing an internship or taking on a heavier course load next semester anyway, so I'm OK either way. I think this "crisis," if you want to call it that, is an opportunity for our society to reexamine itself and for us to have a deep social dialogue about what our values and priorities are. Just to be clear, I am talking about things like universal health coverage and money for education. I mean, isn't turning threats into opportunities what business is all about? That is part of the game in a capitalist society. What made this country great was its sense of fearless innovation. It's time to return to that. Failure is sometimes necessary on that path. It's not pretty, but it's necessary. I'm hoping for the return of craft as well. Time to return dignity and economic viability to American craftspersons, artisans, and other creators of goods. The American worker is better than a cog in an industrial machine. With the costs of transportation and fossil fuels so high, this economic situation is a time to reconsider our policy of offshoring production. I'm dreaming of an American economy based on innovation, craft, and "making stuff."

Clara Solomon (CIR Tottori-ken, 1999-2001)
Director of Career Services, NYU Law School, New York, NY

When jobs go down, graduate school applications go up. There is no question that NYU Law is a safe place to work at a time like this, when people who can't find jobs, or are worried about their future careers are flooding our admissions office already. So, is my job safe? You bet. Now more than ever. However, as the Director
"Economy" continued on page 10



OLD JAPAN IN EDGEWATER, NJ A TRIP TO MITSUWA MARKETPLACE

By **Kirsten Phillips**
(Niigata-ken, 2007-08)

I had frequented many an urban Japanese supermarket in my college days, but a megastore like **Mitsuwa** always meant something special. Mostly because it required bus fare, a map, and a ranger with a sword to reach the distant shores of **Edgewater, New Jersey**. Crossing state lines just for *konnyaku*? A mad quest, indeed.

But if you want something bad enough, you'll go the distance.

I can definitely say that it's really not as complicated to reach Mitsuwa in New Jersey as some New Yorkers may think. There is a regular and convenient bus service that leaves from **Port Authority** directly to and from Mitsuwa. But, why bother hitting up Mitsuwa if you can get Japanese goods at **Sunrise** or **Katagiri**? Well, just for the sheer variety and size. Going to Mitsuwa is definitely a fun and less-cramped experience than going to the more local NY spots.

Besides, Mitsuwa offers a lot more than just quality yam starch jelly. It is the experience that makes me cough up the change and head on over. As well as an impressively-stocked supermarket, Mitsuwa also offers an authentic *shokudo/kissaten* cafe experience serving quickly made and reasonably priced Japanese dishes. Everything from *tonkatsu* to Japanese-style pasta is served in the often-crowded food court. There is also a delicious bakery for those who long for freshly baked *an pan* and miss eating toast as big and fluffy as a pillow. There's even a small stall devoted to sweet festival treats such as *tai-yaki* and *oban-yaki*.

Of course, this wouldn't be an authentic Japanese shopping experience without glass cases of *omiyage*, featuring seasonal delicacies from around Japan. I had forgotten how much I had missed seeing the shifting colors and textures of artfully-arranged Japanese sweets with the



passing of each season.

Merely introducing a newcomer to authentic Japanese food can be done without a major trip if you live in New York. But walking into Mitsuwa is like giving a family or friend a slice of the life that you, the ex-JET, once cherished. (Except the food doesn't sing at you on a recorded loop and no one is constantly yelling "*ir-rashaimase!*" every ten seconds. This is still Jersey, after all.)

"This place is huge!" My sister commented, "Isn't Japan small? How can they have so much food?"

Japan is a country of wondrous variety and there is no better place to appreciate that than Mitsuwa. I was amazed at how much fresh and imported produce lined the shelves; products I had grown accustomed to buying at my own local *depatto*. I squealed with delight at the rows of homemade rice balls, burdock root salad, and the lusciously sinful *daigaku* sweet potato.

For me, it was like coming home again, clutching packets of *tarako* spaghetti sauce with a nostalgic sniffle. For my sister and her roommate, they described it as a fun albeit a tad pricey adventure.

There is one aspect of Mitsuwa that isn't nostalgic--the prices. You may raise an eyebrow at the cost of your favorite brand of bath powder or bottled tea compared with what you used to pay back in Japan. Again, if you want it bad enough, you'll pay for it. Besides, it's not a crime to let emotional attachment or one's tastebuds sway reason every now and again.

"I don't care how much it is!" I cried, seizing a bag of Burboun's mini choco *an-pans*, my favorite late night JR vending machine snack. "This stuff is crack cocaine!"



"Economy" continued from page 9

tor of the Office of Career Services, I'm in charge of figuring out how to get all of these budding lawyers jobs, even in a time when mega law firms are dissolving and laying off hundreds of lawyers. With a published placement rate of more than 99%, I've got some very high expectations to live up to.

Alexei Esikoff (Fukushima-ken, 2001-02)
Editor, *Scarletta Press*, Minneapolis, MN

Right now we're not feeling the strain, possibly because we're in the arts, and arts are always strained, lousy economy or not.

Shannan Spisak (Kanagawa-ken, 1996-98)
Program Officer, *Institute of International Education*, New York, NY



Not sure. working at a non-profit, we get operational funding as well as scholarship/fellowship support from banks and corporate foundations. In addition to government-funded programs, the Institute of International Education manages scholarship programs for AIG and various other investment, insurance and banking companies, so it could severely affect us. It won't be a direct immediate reaction, but eventually it will have an impact on IIE and our employees. The good news is that the organization has existed since 1919, meaning it's weathered several economic downturns and maintained its reputation, so there's a hopeful chance that this time will be the same.

Brian Hersey (Fukuoka-ken, 1994-96)
New York, NY

I work in the marketing department at the subsidiary of a Japanese bank in New York. Over the last few weeks, the biggest impact I have seen has been from the collapse of Lehman. There are too many deals to unwind -- lots of stuff is just in limbo. Keeps everyone busy and me busy answering customer inquiries. Over

"Economy" continued on page 15



ODD-FISH ALUM

A talk with James Kennedy (Nara-ken, 2004-06), author of the fantasy novel *The Order of Odd-Fish*

Interview by
Gina Anderson
(Nara-ken, 2003-05)
JETAA DC
Newsletter Editor

In August 2008, James Kennedy (Nara-ken, 2004-06) published his first novel, *The Order of Odd-Fish*, a fantasy novel inspired partially by his experience in Japan. Book sales have been going well and JETAA DC Newsletter Editor Gina Anderson (Nara-ken, 2003-05) recently talked with James about the book and, well, some other things.

Let's start with your hair. Do you razor it or clippers? Neither?

Usually my wife Heather cuts my hair. Scissors all the way. Recently I've been getting my hair cut by a friend instead. At first it felt like a kind of betrayal, but actually Heather is relieved.

Paper or plastic?

I generally write on paper.

Are you an extrovert or an introvert?

Like many introverts, I enjoy playing the extrovert.

Who's your favorite author?

That's not fair! There can't be just one.

The authors who have most inspired my own writing are Evelyn Waugh, Douglas Adams, Roald Dahl, Madeleine L'Engle, Edwin O'Connor, C.S. Lewis, J.K. Huysmans, G.K. Chesterton, and Lewis Carroll. I find myself rereading their stuff again and again.

(My all-time favorites are James Joyce and Marcel Proust, but that sounds mighty pretentious. And anyway, since I don't have the chops to emulate them, they don't directly affect my own work.)

What made you do JET?

I had lived in Tokyo from 1997-98 and loved it. Tokyo was thrilling – like living in a frantic video game, or on the moon – but I did feel something was missing. I was curious about life in the *inaka*. In 2003 my fiancée and I applied for the JET Program and I was lucky enough to get placed in Nara, our first choice. I much preferred Nara to Tokyo. I made Japanese friends more readily, and I was able to learn Japanese more quickly. We stayed there from 2004 to 2006.

My school gave me a lax schedule, and with this free time I was able to do wonderful things such as explore local ruins, temples and shrines, participate in *matsuri*, and bike the month-long solo trip following a pilgrimage path around the 88 temples of the Shikoku. The school at which I taught was not a first-tier school, but the students were very friendly and rambunctious. I learned not to push them too hard, especially if they were shy. Many of them just wanted to hang out with a foreigner, but not necessarily speak English. That went for many of the adults I met as well. I spent a lot of time in Nara drinking with old men. I have a feeling this is a universal JET experience.

Were you inspired by Japan and/or its people while writing this book?

The book was already finished by the time I came to Japan, so during JET I was editing the manuscript and sending it around to agents. Details about Japan did manage to sneak in, though. Eldritch City, the setting of most of the story, is a teeming tropical metropolis, each of its neighborhoods with its own colorful rituals and festivals for the city's many gods. These festivals were certainly inspired by the *matsuri* I've attended.



Do you remember how to speak any Japanese?

I meet my friend Yuko weekly to gossip in Japanese for an hour or so. This slows the rate at which I'm losing my Japanese ability, but it's inevitable – I'm losing it.

Did you go to any special writing school or are you just that darned good?

(Well, thanks for the compliment!) No, I never went through a writing program. I majored in physics and philosophy at university, and a couple of years later I studied computer science. I know that many people like writing programs, but I don't feel they fit my habits. For me, writing is a fragile, solitary, long-term process, and though I do send drafts around to my friends for criticism, the idea of workshoping doesn't appeal to me.

How long of a labor of love was *Odd-Fish*?

I wrote the first version of *The Order of Odd-Fish* in short story form in 1995. It was called "The Cockroach and the Music-Box" and it has no relation to *Odd-Fish* except for a couple of the characters.

After I wrote the story, I put it away and forgot about it for a while. I wrote other things. But from time to time I took the story out, fiddled with it, and then put it away again. I started adding characters and situations. Little by little, I chipped away at the original plot until there was nothing left of it. Finally I completely overhauled the whole thing. The original short story had only been a scaffolding, and so I dispensed with it.

At last I finished the first draft of *The Order of Odd-Fish* in 2003, and I completed the final draft in 2006.

How many more books do you have in your right this second?

I've got two, possibly three more *Odd-Fish* books in mind. Right now I'm working on a young adult sci-fi comedy called *The Magnificent Moots*. I also have a couple of short stories and an unfinished novella kicking around. Having ideas for books isn't the problem – the problem is making the time to get it all down on paper. (I work full-time as a software engineer at the American Medical Association.)

What do you want people to remember most about you? Start with this: "Here Lies James Kennedy: [fill in the blank]"

"He never gave unicorns an even break."

Okay, we're going to do this in reverse importance level questioning. This way you're so amazed at how easy the questions are that you forget that it's hard! Oops, did I wait until the end of the questioning to tell you this? My bad!

Oh, this is geared towards JETs returning to the D.C. area? Then I've got more stuff to say.

My first job after college was a volunteer science teacher for a junior high school in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. I lived in a grubby convent in the city with a couple of nuns and some other volunteers. For those of you familiar with D.C., the convent was Blessed Sacrament on Chevy Chase Circle. I don't know if it's even a convent anymore.

The convent had lots of odd little rooms full of old junk nobody had touched in years, an attic full of bats, fraying red carpet that smelled overpoweringly like cat

"*Odd-Fish*" continued on page 15

JETAA NY SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

SEPTEMBER 13, 2008



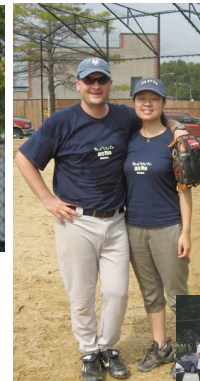
Sluggers row: John "the Antelope" Beck and Matt "Boom Boom" Silverman



The winner, and still champion...Actus!



Champion
Actus Consulting
(2nd year in a row)



Scott & Keiko
Real swingers



Moto-Prez Jenn O. and her Columbia boys



Christy Jones looks on as her man Matt makes his pitch.



"Yoroshiku onegaishimaaaasu!"

- 2nd Place - Mitsubishi**
- 3rd Place - TV Japan**
- 4th Place - JETAA NY**
- 5th Place - Kintetsu Travel**
- 6th Place - NTT Docomo**
- 7th Place - Columbia Center for Japanese Economy & Business**
- 8th Place - CLAIR/Japan Local Government Center**

Thanks to everyone for coming out, to **Ito En** for providing tea, and to **Monica and Zack** for organizing!



Chau catches as Saki-tani-san socks it to JETAA NY



Sluggor-chan!



JLGC Director Sasaki-san and Son



"Kattoubase! Yor-da-nis!"



It's Sho-time!



Monica demonstrates why she's the Social Chair as Zack looks on in reverent admiration.



Root! Root! Root! for Jetaany!



"Ahhhh! Sap-pari da!"



"Yatta! We came in 8th!"



"Buy me some bentos and cra-ckerjacks."

CAREER FORUM/ WELCOME BACK RECEPTION

OCTOBER 4, 2008



The always-charming Ambassador Motoatsu Sakurai



Clara Solomon (CIR Tottori, 1999-2001) offers resume guidance to JET alums



Jill Schimmel educates the crowd on the profession of teaching



Writer/Interpreter/Translator Stacy Smith talks about her work while Itoen senior marketing manager Beau Bernstein looks on



Eager JET alums absorb all the valuable information



Ziggy and two other recent returnees listen to the speeches



No eating yet!



Our wonderful and talented President, Megan Miller, welcomes everyone



Waitin' for the kampai



CLAIR Tokyo's Shigeo Kurige



A recent returnee from Hokkaido shares his story



Zully Santiago, just back from Wakayama-ken, getsures vigorously

"JET Survey" continued from page 1

fathom voting for a candidate who has such little experience. That his ego prevented him from picking Hillary as VP was the final straw.

Obama

My friends and I were so frightened when Palin was picked as McCain's VP that we created a site (www.superbarracuda.com) with a compilation of comics about the presidential election in hopes of getting the apathetic to vote. So in other words, I'm voting for Obama.

***Another 20-35 year old white male for OBAMA! (Take that, pollsters!) He is the first candidate in my lifetime who has inspired me with a vision of an America for all. I think he can restore our country's place in this world as a leader in diplomacy and justice and allow us globetrotting Yankees to lift our heads in pride again.

***Hopefully a third party candidate... otherwise, Obama. In NY, I vote third party as the Democrats will win the NY electoral college, but I want to send a message that our choices are not good enough. If Obama is the best choice, there really is a problem with America.

BY STATE
California - Obama 5, Ron Paul 1, Undecided 2
Connecticut - Obama 1
D.C.-Obama 1
Georgia - Obama 1
Japan - McCain 1, Obama 1
Maryland - Obama 1
New Jersey - Obama 2
No State Indicated - Obama 5
New York - McCain 2, Obama 15, Undecided 2
Virginia - Obama 1
Washington - Obama 4

BY PREFECTURE
A completely useless statistic, other than to note that 28 prefectures were represented by 45 respondents.
Aichi - Obama 1
Akita - Obama
Aomori - Obama
Chiba - Obama 2
Ehime - Obama
FOJ - McCain
Fukuoka - McCain
Gifu - Obama
Gunma - Obama
Hiroshima - Ron Paul
Hokkaido - Obama
Hyogo - McCain 1, Obama 1, Undecided 1
Ibaraki - Obama
Iwate - Obama
Kanagawa - Obama
Kobe - Obama 2
Kumamoto - Obama 1, Undecided 1
Kyoto - Obama
Nagano - Obama 3
Nara - Obama
Oita - Obama
Saga - Obama 3
Saitama - Obama 2, Undecided 2
Shizuoka - Obama 3
Tokushima - Obama 2
Tottori - Obama
Toyama - Obama
Yamaguchi - Obama
Yamanashi - Obama
None Indicated - Obama

***I'm an Obama-mama!

***Obama -- being female, I am slightly excited at the possibility of having a female VP, though not enough to endure another term (or possibly two) of Republican policies. They will not get my vote just because Palin is a woman :-)

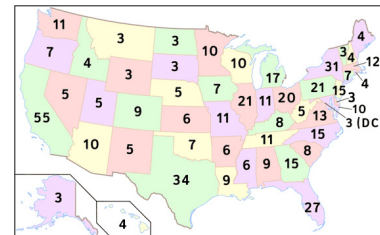
***Obama More honest, stands for what I believe in.

***Obama's presidency will be a huge and much-needed rebranding of America's image abroad and will hopefully inject more rational thinking into our domestic and foreign policy.

***Obama FTW!!! [Translation: For The Win]

***Obama. He's got the greater vision, and, it appears more lately, the greater integrity. McCain has really lost me by aligning himself more with Bush over the years. And the Rovian defamation tactics he's turning to in this campaign are just gross. Yet another signal of his Bush-like stance. We need to move far beyond what we've had for eight years.

***Obama. I don't really believe in the two-party system, although I was a Kucinich supporter early on. I just don't want McCain to win. That would be the beginning of the Republicans' 1,000-year Reich.



"Expat Survey" continued from page 1

interesting background (Is he used to be a republic but now a third party?).

OBAMA

I still want Hillary to be the next president but it is not happening, so I would vote for Obama. The reasons is that I am strong anti-gun and pro-abortion (freedom of choice). So, I don't vote for McCain who chose Palin for vice-president. It is simply by an elimination. If there is an independent candidate, I may re-consider my vote.

Well, in Clinton (Democrat) days, the U.S. immigration law was more flexible and more open to foreign residents like me. (Now, many of international students have to leave this country due to the severe visa cap restriction...!) I just simply expect that "Open America," which provided what-is-called "American Dream" to motivated international students and immigrants, if the Democrat has taken back dominance.

Given that I am not that familiar with both candidates' policies at this time, i could say that I lean towards to Obama over McCain for some reasons as following:



1) Because of my beliefs, which are pro-politico-religious-separation, pro-gun-control, less-military-spending, universal-health-care-system, I tend to agree with the Democrats' policies.

2) I do not like the idea of McCain bringing Palin into the scene just because she is a young white female in order to match up with Obama's youth and the fact that Clinton almost won the primary.

3) After eight years of Bush Republican administration in the White House, something needs to be flipped upside-down to make things better in the economy, U.S.-UN-relations, U.S.-Russia-relations, U.S.-Mideastern-relations.

If I could vote for in the upcoming election in America, I would vote for Obama for three reasons. 1) He insisted that if elected, he would put an end to the Iraq war. I've met some people who fought in the Iraq war as soldiers, who told me about the horrible experiences they had over there. President Bush has been sending soldiers to Iraq to take revenge for 9/11, but if we continue fighting, nothing good will come out of it. Therefore, I agree with Obama's idea. 2) I feel that he can bring a special leadership as president. He is also much younger than McCain, so he can make

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"Society" continued from page 5

design and mixing for television and film by day, he also does improv electronic music and produces hip hop to boot....**Roland Kelts** (Osaka, 1998-99), author of *Japanamerica*, recently spoke in New York at an event at **Kinokuniya** and another one at the **NY Anime Festival** at the **Javits Center**, and more recently was in **San Francisco** hanging with **Haruki Murakami** (yes, *the* Haruki Murakami) and interviewing him in front of an audience of 2,000 people....**MANGA DIPLOMACY**: Former Prez **Jenn Olayon** recently had the good fortune to get to see **Prime Minister Taro Aso** speaking at the U.N....**CLASSY JETAANY**: **Marc Carroll** is taking an industrial design class at **Pratt's** Brooklyn campus....**Stacy Smith** recently took a web design class for translators....And **Janak Bhimani** is leaving **WatchMeTV** and going on scholarship to **Keio University** in Tokyo to study media....**JETAA QUEENS**: **Shree Kurlekar** has jumped on the bandwagon and moved to **Astoria, Queens** along with what seems to be the rest of the JET alumni community in NYC....**Rego Park** resident **Justin Tedaldi** accepted his **WaltzingMatildaNYC** gift from last issue in the form of a delicious **pavlova** made by **WaltzingMatildaNYC** owner **JET alum Laura Epstein**....Former Vice-Prez **Kat Barnas** was seen in **Barcelona** having a mini-JET reunion with her **Chiba-ken** peeps...**Omedetou** to **JETAA Southeast Past President Kristina Murphy** and her husband **Chris** as they welcomed their first child into the world on October 8.



Ambassador Sakurai and his wife, hosting a dinner for JETAA NY members

The **JETAA USA Conference** in **Seattle** at the end of August was a huge success thanks to the efforts of **Ryan Hart, Shannon Quinn** and **Lynn Miyauchi**, not to mention **JETAA goddess** and braintrust **Shannan Spisak** who bid farewell to her role as **Country Rep** in admirable fashion. Notably, it was not only the first ever **JETAA** conference attended by a rep from every chapter, but there were also subchapter reps from a slew of new subchapters, including our own **NJ, Pittsburgh** and **Philly** subchapter reps. (Philly, by the way, is actually moving towards full-on chapter status, so stay tuned for more on that front.)....**JETAA International's Secretary Michelle Fox** recently announced that **Room to Read (www.roomtoread.org)** has been selected as the **JETAA International** charity, which can be supported at the chapter or country



Adren Hart helps out a future JET at the 92nd St. YMHA International Festival

level.

Back to sports, **JETAA NY** finished out of the money while **Actus** took the **JETAA NY Softball Tournament** trophy for the second consecutive year. But everyone had a good time at the **Red Hook** fields and ate yummy *bentos* (or Mexican food) and drank yummy **Ito En** tea. **John Beck** was an antelope in the outfield for **JETAA NY** while **Matt Silverman** hit four home runs and turned multiple double plays. **Christy Jones** looked on lovingly from first base as hubby **Matt** pitched and snared a comebacker. **Michelle at 2B** followed an excellent play with a little jig and "Oh what a feeling" Toyota jump. **JETAA NY's** favorite swingers, **Scott and Keiko**, helped ensure that **TVJapan** took third place with a win over **JETAA NY** in the final game of the day, while **Harper Alexander** flew all the way out from **L.A.** to play with **NTT Docomo** (his wife's former company)....**Kenichi Mikami** of **Kintetsu**, the founder of the original **Kintetsu Essay Contest**, also flew out from **L.A.** just for the tournament and had a happy reunion with **Nicole Bongiorno** who was a **JETAA NY** officer at the time it all started. The **JLGC** lost all of its games but were looking good in their pinstriped shirts (with the exception of **Hanzawa-san** who was looking chic in his "Maldini" Italian soccer jersey)....**Moonshine** (at **Columbia St.** and the **Battery Park Tunnel**) hosted the post-tournament *keg enkaï*....**Yordanis** (Meredith Wutz's fiancé) and an unnamed **Mitsubishi** player were on grill duty keeping everyone happy while **Monica** and **Zack** passed around **PBRs** and held a nice trophy awarding ceremony for the **Actus** folks.

Still on the sports theme, on November 2 the **NYC Marathon** this year was run by **JET** alums such as **Earth Bennethh, Stacy Smith** and **Monica Yuki**. The **JLGC** was also well represented by members of its running club, including **Shinya Bando, Toru Mukaikubo** ("the fastest runner in our club who also ran the **Chicago, Boston** and **NYC** marathons), **Kaoru Fujiwara, Satoru Kimura** (Honolulu Marathon), **Junji Imada, Takashi Daito** and **Fumitake Saijo**. But per-

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"Economy" continued from page 10

the next couple of months, however, I expect (secretly hope) to see a temporary slowdown in setting up new investment vehicles (my job) as everyone waits to see how the recent turbulence shakes out. For me personally, a slowdown lasting until through the holidays would be welcome...

I think (emphasis on me -- I am not really in a position to know) that this crisis could be an opportunity for Japanese investors who I serve. Japanese banks in general are sitting on large cash reserves as a result of Japan's high savings rate and having just recovered from its own series of banking crises over the past 10 years. So there are opportunities for them (witness **Mitsubishi-Tokyo's** recent tie-up with **Morgan Stanley**).

Justin Tedaldi (CIR Kobe-shi, 2001-02)

Financial editor

In a perverse way, the market turmoil has given me even more work: my line's in business and financial news. So I'm not hurting for material, but it is depressing to read about these age-old institutions going under overnight. My company has insisted there won't be any layoffs, so it looks like we're safe for the time being. The current economic state does make work juicier, and I wonder if things will feel unusually vanilla when the markets bounce back. Japanese banks made a smart move with their recent international buyouts and investments, but whether that's good news for our country is another story.

"Odd-Fish" continued from page 11

urine, and a woozy, wobbly, extremely aged nun that trundled around the halls at all hours. The basement was a music room for the adjoining elementary school, with a piano, drums, xylophones, and other instruments we liked to play; an Ethiopian refugee moved in with us for a while; everyone took turns cooking for the rest of the convent; gloomy oil portraits of distinguished churchmen glowered on the walls and none of us had any money. Looking back, the atmosphere of that convent was a very much an inspiration for the lodge of the Order of Odd-Fish.

Thanks James, and thanks Gina as well!

In addition to writing novels and engineering software, James is also the bass player in the Chicago-based band **Brilliant Pebbles** and blogs at <http://jameskenedy.com>.



"Expat Survey" continued from page 14

proposals smoothly with his own passion and aggressiveness. 3) He is from a mixed background, so he would think about what is needed for everyone in this society, including me as a Japanese visitor. America is a huge country based on many kinds of societies, so Obama's victory could be important for dealing with all kinds of people.

I'm for Obama, because I hate McCain! Bush cheated twice to become president, and we're at the point where America's two-party system says vote or don't. I like some of the things McCain had to say, for example the Mexican border policy, but now he's just become an ass-kisser. Before he was a progressive Republican, but now he's an evangelical Christian. That's why he picked Palin. I don't think he will carry out his promises. I think it's time America has a black president. Even third world countries have woman presidents. Obama is more like regular people and not from the rich class. He's also from the North, and might gradually unite people together, even though his ideas about things like universal healthcare seem impractical. If McCain is elected, I'd be forced to move back to Japan since he'll make this country bankrupt!

Obama, because he's progressive, reasonable and communicative. I don't have the right to vote in this country, but let me tell you that it is very surprising to hear the policies and the plans of the Republican party. Hey people, we are living in the modern society in the 21st century, and what kind of people are they chanting "drill, baby, drill!" I think most of foreigners would agree with me. Having a Catholic husband from the Midwest, driving Smart Car in New York City, having Zip Car membership and "mottainai" mentality embedded in my gene, I can't follow the Republicans. This is a great country but there are certain things I can't get along with or I don't think cool in the American culture, and they all come from the whole Republican ideas. Madame Palin is a good pick for the oil-oriented cowboy business people who try to achieve into the administration for larger market control, but if they keep getting millions of dollars of our tax money for unexisting bridge project, Alaska would be the perfect state to pick to make more excuses and justification to raise fortunes from the Department of Treasure. More people in this country should see how "crazy" and "strange" this country is in terms of the life style and material consumption. I was yelled at the other day on the subway that Chinese are the most evil to sell cheap junks to the U.S. forcing the U.S. to borrow

"Bianchi" continued from page 6

And yes, in Japan, it's changing a little bit. Actually, the American election now is causing some interest here in the fact that, within the next month or so, they are probably going to dissolve the upper and lower house. And there'll be an election here. And the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) is worried about the timing.

If in the American election, Obama gets elected, that represents change. The LDP has been in power for 50 years since the end of World War II and that wouldn't bode well for them, so they're trying to avoid that timing. That generational aspect-- I don't know if it's generational aspect, or a cultural aspect -- is kind of like

"Shaun Dakin" continued from page 8

As an example, I wanted to make an English workbook that incorporated music, which I figured would be a successful teaching method since karaoke is so popular. I was able to put this book together, but soon learned that I needed more than just a good idea. I had to learn how to maneuver and convince the necessary people in order to make it work. This is no different from my current job, only the players have changed. Instead of Shimane civil servants, now I am on Capitol Hill talking with candidates and politicians. By the way, in the end my book was distributed across the prefecture accompanied by audio cassettes (that's how long ago it was!).

more money from China... Hey, you are the one piling up all the cheap junks in your unnecessarily huge garage and never dig up anything, and keep buying for your satisfaction. Before blaming China, dig your junk and sell them on eBay and make your OWN money. Or, like most people in the rest of the world do, get a decent product and use it forever. Fix it when it breaks instead of buying a new one.



Interesting question! If I can, I would vote to Obama. In Clinton (Democrat) days, the US immigration law was more flexible and more open to foreign residents like me. (Now, many of international students have to leave this country due to the severe visa cap restriction...!) I just simply expect that "Open America," which provided what-is-called "American Dream" to motivated international students and immigrants, if the Democrat has taken back dominance.

Obama. Young. Prefer Democratic party than Republican.

Thanks to everyone who contributed their opinions in the land of the free and the home of the brave. And thanks to the JET alums

who helped gather some of this data by interviewing their friends and colleagues.

Japanese Back Obama Over McCain Disapproval of Bush and disappointment in domestic politics factors

TOKYO -- A Gallup Poll conducted in late June and early July 2008 finds Japanese support Barack Obama over John McCain in the U.S. presidential election. Two-thirds of Japanese adults (66%) surveyed by telephone say they would "personally rather see" Obama elected, while 15% say they would prefer McCain. Eighteen percent express no opinion.

Obama may be tapping into the Japanese public's broader desire for change at a time when the country's politics may be viewed as stagnant and corrupt. Within the past two years, two prime ministers, Shinzo Abe and Yasuo Fukuda, have resigned amid low approval ratings.

a split in civilization. I would just say in our council we have a problem that is one of *bunmei*. We have two different civilizations in our city council.

Thanks Anthony, and thanks Michael! To hear or download the full podcast, go to: <http://jetaany.org/documents/JETAA-Bianchi-Interview.mp3>

Q: Impressive! Let's hope your persistence pays off in similar ways this election cycle.

A: The NPDNC Registry currently has over 60,000 members nationwide and we are hoping to get 100,000 by the end of the election. We are working to improve quality of life for Americans.

Thank you, Shaun! Incidentally, he was a JET during the same period as Yankee-affiliated George Rose.

"Politics" continued from page 7

their own prime minister. There seemed to be a general sense of disinterest and or lack of knowledge whenever I asked my Japanese friends or colleagues about the current political climate in Japan.

A number of the upperclassmen I spoke to that day were aiming for Tokyo University—the place where prime ministers, cabinet members, CEOs, lawmakers and ambassadors get made. Because the fight to get into Japan's top university is so strenuous on the student as well as the student's family, it is generally accepted that once the goal is reached, very little is to be expected from the prize filly. For students like these, an awareness of politics and a motivation to think positively about national representation is an essential lesson best served young.

Kirsten Phillips (Niigata-ken, 2005-08)

On JET, I lived in a very small town in a very small prefecture (Nichinan-cho, Tottori-ken). One of those places where everybody knows everybody, and as the resident *gaijin*, EVERYBODY knew me. I knew the mayor, the council members, and all of the other politicians in town (along with the shop owners, gargamen, policemen, and little old ladies in their gardens). It wasn't until I returned to New York, however, that

I really learned how close-knit Tottori-ken really is. A few years ago, I was at the JETAA NY Welcome Back Reception at the Nippon Club chatting with some JET alums new and old, when one of the staff from the JLGC pulled me over and said, "Kurara-san, you used to live in Tottori, right? There is someone else here from Tottori, you should meet him." So I wandered over to this newcomer to say some "Yoroshikus." The Japanese man I introduced myself to looked vaguely familiar, but I didn't really pay much attention to it (he was, after all, another Japanese man in a suit; perhaps they were starting to blend together in my mind). So I said I used to live in Nichinan-cho, expecting him to say "doko?" Which is the response I typically get when I mention my lovely town. But instead he said, "Oh Nichinan! I know Mayor Yata well." We continued talking in Japanese and I asked why he knew the mayor of my town, and he responded by saying he used to be "chiji" of Tottori-ken. Now, I was a CIR and I know my Japanese pretty well, and I thought *chiji* meant governor, but I double-checked, "Chiji?! Honto?" He said, "Yes, *chiji*, like Arnold Schwarzenegger!" Right, no wonder he looked so familiar! Governor Hirai recently came back to NYC for a business trip, and I was invited to a party for Tottori residents in the NY area to greet him, I'm now an official "Tottori ex-pat" in NYC. Leave it to the power of JETAA NY to bring me together with the governor and other residents of my favorite *ken*!

Clara Solomon (Tottori-ken, 1999-2001)

My Japanese "mother," who kind of adopted me, teaching me Japanese and feeding me every week, has a brother who is a Harvard-educated economist and member of the diet. Never met the guy but it was interesting to hear about him. My friend at the Bank of Japan says that the guy is always attacking the BoJ.

Brian Hersey (Fukuoka-ken, 1994-96)

In terms of local politics in Japan, those big political campaign sound trucks were a real interesting cultural difference. One time, a local politician on the campaign trail turned up at my door, presented his *meishi*, and began his spiel for a little bit, before I politely informed that I wasn't actually Japanese so I couldn't vote for him. But I told him "*gambatte*" anyway. Granted, I did live in a "city" of 80,000 people, but since when did politicians in this country actually go door to door themselves to campaign? In any case, I thought it was rather quaint. Certainly a novel relief from

the Jehovah's Witnesses that would show up without fail every month or so bearing copies of the *Watchtower* in Japanese. One of their women actually brought me *bentos* for a while. Not enough to get me to convert, though.

Lee-Sean Huang (Oita-ken, 2003-06)

I was discussing the finer points of Japan's ubiquitous vending machines with the former prime minister of the Netherlands, secretly marveling at how I never expected to meet any heads of state when I first applied for JET. Life is occasionally like that.



Dawn Mostow (Gifu-ken, 2003-06) fights the powers with cosu-play

Mr. Dries van Agt was in Kobe for several days, and my assignment was to show him around and provide any necessary translating. I ended up being a test audience for a speech he wrote for a conference later that week on posh Rokko Island. That's politics for you.

We made a good team, and my *bu-cho* tagged along on every step of the way, which was typical when the international center hosted dignitaries. This made for some interesting conversations. Since *Baba-bucho* (whom Mr. Van Agt slyly dubbed "the Arabian" whenever he was out of earshot) spoke decent English, Mr. Van Agt grabbed the opportunity to ask him all sorts of loaded

questions about Japanese society, culture and—especially—culinary customs.

Mr. Van Agt made a strong impression on me. At over six feet, he was remarkably open, direct and inquisitive. I didn't know at the time whether that just went with being Dutch, but it was refreshing to meet a man with a larger than life personality after spending several months in a formal Japanese office.

Towards the end of Mr. Van Agt's stay, I was given an extra duty: speechwriter, or more appropriately, speech typer. The night before his talk, it occurred to the simultaneous interpreters that his speech (written entirely in longhand!) looked more like binary code than standard written English. Since they needed copies of it the next day, could I be a dear and type the whole thing out? I agreed, and Mr. Van Agt was generous enough to dictate at his opulent hotel suite, which made parts of the Met look shoddy.

It took about two hours to hammer it out, and Mr. Van Agt was delighted, since he probably didn't have anyone else to help him with such a unique task. His talk went well, and on his last night in town I was asked to introduce him for the toast at his farewell reception. There was a lot I wanted to say (finally, a chance to go nuts with *keigo!*), but we were told that Mr. Van Agt unfortunately succumbed to jetlag, forcing a no-show at his own party. Still, I'm glad to have helped him leave Kobe with positive memories of the city and its efforts for internationalization.

Justin Tedaldi (CIR Kobe-shi, 2001-02)

Way back in 1999, I was with some friends at a free outdoor techno concert in Yoyogi park when all of the sudden Dr. Nakamatsu, the wacky inventor of *pyon-pyon* spring shoes and floppy disk technology, jumped up on stage with his campaign flag and started dancing with the techno heads. He was running for Tokyo governor at the time and I guess trying to win over some young votes. The crowd started to go wild and chant his name. It was such a great spectacle that I tracked him down for a picture. He's known to frequently run in elections but always loses, the poor guy.

Meredith Wutz (Saitama-ken, 2000-02)

"Society" continued from page 15

haps the "quickest" runner of all was Quick USA head honcho and marathon veteran Tadashi Saito. Minasan yoku dekimashita! O-tsukare sama desh-ita!...Ehhhh? Chotto matte, this just in....Yoku Shitteiru has just learned that Chau Lam also ran a marathon (her first ever), on October 11 in Hartford, CT.

CAREER FORUM/WELCOME BACK RECEPTION: The JETAA NY crew put together an outstanding Career Forum on October 4. A crisp opening presentation by Evan Hyman followed by an excellent resume talk by Clara Solomon (who advised everyone to watch out for poopieppypants@hotmail.com) including nice use of past Newsletter Top 10 lists from Fall 2003 and Fall 2002....Megan "Charlie Rose" Miller led the discussion with panelists Jill Schimmel, Anthony Rivera, Stacy Smith and Beau Bernstein. And the panel was followed by a helpful schmooze session with recruiting firms Actus, Pasona, Quick USA, Bremar and Drum Associates. Attendees Emily Wong, Kirsten Phillips, Rob from Albany, Allison from Bethlehem, Jeffrey from Missouri and Sheenae from Flushing all found it helpful and fun. Most original job search: Joyce Chen seeking work in biostats...The Welcome Back Reception was kicked off by the always funny and charming Ambassador Sakurai, who was accompanied by his lovely (and fluent in French) wife. Over 100 JET alums showed up for the free food and drink, including John Ellis, Nina Ibarra, Iku Fujimatsu, James Scanlon-Canegata and Ziggy. Also Isao Tsujimoto, head of the Japan Foundation...As is the tradition (given the dearth of decent bars near the Nippon Club), the nijikai was at Faces & Names, which brought out First Dude II Sun and Brit newcomer Jonathan Gibbard.

BEAR MOUNTAIN HIKE: Jon Beck led 23 JET alums on a subarashii hike of Bear Mountain upstate on October 18, followed by some hearty mountain Oktoberfest. Lisa Birzen brought her boyfriend and her doggie, but only had to carry him for the steep hike down. (The doggie, not her boyfriend.)

*That's all for this stump speech. And now it's time for Change.
Domo arigatou, and God Bless.*

JETAA NY
FANTASY FOOTBALL LEAGUE



El Presidente (6-2)
Hanzawa BILLS (5-3)
Toyo Angels (5-3)
Hammamatsu Eel-Dogs (5-3)
19ers (5-3)
Mochi Ballers (4-4)
Let's Football! (3-5)
Machine Gun Kelly (3-5)
Hanshin Tigers (2-6)
JanDaraRin (2-6)







Akiko Wada's Whirlwind Tour of NYC

By Justin Tedaldi (CIR Kobe-shi, 2001-02)

If you've ever watched TV in Japan on New Year's Eve, chances are you've seen **Akiko Wada**. One of Japan's most celebrated stars, the singer and entertainment personality has made over 20 appearances on the annual *Kohaku Uta Gassen* (Red-White Song Contest). To celebrate her 40th year in show business, the "Female Emperor" performed a landmark one-night-only concert, *Power & Soul*, at Harlem's renowned **Apollo Theater** on September 29.

Born in Osaka, the headstrong Wada made her recording debut in 1968, shortly after dropping out of high school at age 17. The following year, she broke big with "Doushaburi no Ame no Naka de" (In the Pouring Rain), with pop stardom and numerous variety show hosting gigs to follow. With her tall, stocky build and direct nature, Wada is something of an anomaly in the Japanese entertainment world, where women are less encouraged to speak their mind or even think about criticizing their peers.

Three days before the Apollo date, Wada held court at a press event in Midtown's **Kinokuniya Books**. Hosted by store manager **John Fuller**, the conference (conducted entirely in Japanese) kicked off with an *a cappella* performance of "Amazing Grace" from American vocal trio **The Wild Women**, who also opened Wada's concert.

The superstar then emerged from the back to thunderous applause, fielding questions from Fuller and the Japanese media. She gushed about New York, which she's visited eight times, and explained that she hand-picked the Apollo over venues like Carnegie Hall because of the "sacred place"'s ties to the R&B acts that inspired her growing up.

Other questions focused on her rehearsal of English-language songs ("the pronunciation is the hardest part"), who catches her ear these days (**Beyoncé**, **Jennifer Hudson**), and her thoughts regarding Japan recently naming its third prime minister in two years ("*taihen*"). She wrapped things up by giving copies of her latest book *Otona no Shikari Kata* (*How to Firmly Guide the Younger Generation*) to fans, then posed for some photos, laughing about how different the whole process was compared to back home. After that, it was off to a talk event at the **Nippon Club's Rose Room**, presented by the **Business Women's Committee of the Japanese American Association**.

The concert itself was a highly polished affair. Backed by an all-Japanese 12-piece band and clad in a sparkling silver gown, Wada encouraged the crowd to stand, sing and dance from the word go. Though the songs from her repertoire were more pop than R&B, the flavor was just right. The bilingual show program helpfully provided English translations of Wada's introductions to several of the songs, as virtually all her stage raps were in Japanese for Japanese, which must have been a first for the Harlem venue with a history stretching back to the early 20th century.

Halfway through the show, Wada prepped the crowd for a very special guest: Sam



Akiko Wada interviewed at Kinokuniya press event by store manager John Fuller

Moore of trailblazing soul duo **Sam & Dave**. His appearance was more than window dressing, as a giant screen slid down to run a loop of the guys performing their debut hit "Hold On, I'm Comin'" on Japanese TV in 1970 with a then-22-year-old Wada singing backup. Returning to the present, Moore appeared dazed by it all, and his conversation with Wada through an interpreter seemed unrehearsed, making for a *Lost in Translation* moment. Nevertheless, the two teamed up for a mighty performance of an American classic: "Soul Man."

After Moore's exit, Wada slowed things down to talk about another legend she knew personally: **Ray Charles**. Ever since hearing "I Can't Stop Loving You" as a junior high school student, Wada said that if not for the song, "I would not be who I am today."

Treating the audience to a video of "Ray-chan" performing at her 30th anniversary concert, Wada regretted that Charles couldn't return for her 40th, but in his honor took the opportunity to perform "Georgia on My Mind" while the screen flashed a montage of a cheery (were there any photos of him that weren't?) Charles. While her reading of lines like "sweet and clear as moonlight through the pines" had a high mortality rate channeled through that thick Japanese accent, Wada ultimately sold the song on the passionate memories of her youth.

She was also having a ball. Marveling at all the young faces in the crowd, she asked the theater's youngest patrons to identify themselves. When a 14-year-old chirped up, Wada was astonished. Discovering that she was born in New York, the temptation to ask if her English was *pera-pera* was too great for the singer to resist.

Later returning in an elegant red dress, Wada paid her respects to another departed maestro: "Respected senior and grand master" **Hibari Misora**, one of Japan's most revered entertainers. **The Bronx Mass Choir** then gathered behind her, singing "Ai-San-San" in a glowing tribute.

The encores saw a surprise guest, as 77-year-old American-born All Japan Pro Wrestling champ **Dick "The Destroyer" Beyer** (who wore his trademark mask throughout the entire show) tottered up to the front row, presenting Wada with a long-stemmed rose. The two had appeared on television programs together in the past, and Wada was touched by his unscripted gesture.

Prefacing the final song "Yume" (Dream) with tears of joy streaming down her face, Wada said, "I am grateful to be on the stage of the Apollo Theater, the place of my dreams... now I would like to sing this song for you, my wonderful audience in New York."

For many in attendance that night, it was also a dream come true.

Special thanks to *Gorgeous Entertainment* for assistance and photographs. For more on the show, visit www.akikowadany.com.



Film
Review

Secret Shame

New Documentaries Spotlight U.S.–Japan Human Rights

By
Justin Tedaldi
(CIR Kobe-shi
2001-02)*The flames are all long gone
But the pain lingers on*

-Pink Floyd, "Goodbye Blue Sky"

For all the good they've done advancing equal rights and universal peace in the generations since World War II, the U.S. and Japan continue to struggle with charges of insensitivity and unfair treatment of minorities stemming from that era. Two important new films highlight the historical signposts of the **Japanese American internment camps** of 1942-44, and the growing international tensions surrounding Tokyo's **Yasukuni Shrine**.

Passing Poston, a documentary by journalists **Joe Fox** and **James Nubile**, premiered in America this past summer. Its narrative unspools through the tales of four of the 17,800 Japanese American internees forced to live at Poston in Arizona, one of the 10 War Relocation Authority centers launched five months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. While the camps were devised by the U.S. government under the guise of internal defense, they were ruled unconstitutional two years later by the Supreme Court, with formal apologies finally issued by Congress in 1988 and 1992, along with \$1.6 billion issued in combined reparations to survivors and heirs.

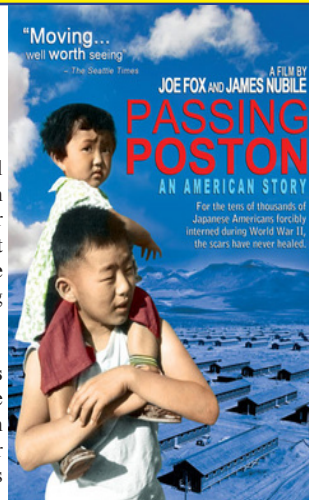
Opening with a propaganda film from the U.S. Office of War Information to set the mood of the time, *Passing Poston* reveals that of the nearly 120,000 people interred nationwide, nearly 2/3 of them were American citizens. **Ruth Okimoto**, a survivor of Poston, tells the story of how her family first arrived in the U.S. when she was 11 months old. The daughter of a missionary to the Japanese-speaking congregation of her hometown, Ruth and her siblings refused to learn Japanese. "I wanted to be like other people," she explains, suggesting the irony in the government's decision to punish those who were eagerly willing to assimilate. "It blew holes in my father's idealism," she says, forcing the viewer to ask how one can forgive their adoptive country when it takes away your rights.

Kiyo Sato, another survivor, recalls with vivid precision the day her house was raided: "Agents read my diary and patted my head, and I had to translate everything that was asked of my family." She compares life in Poston to the Nazi concentration camps in *Life is Beautiful*, saying, "When we arrived, my mother and I fell to the floor and cried. We couldn't believe how we could survive in a place like this."

Mary Higashi remembers the cruel policy of how no one knew where they were going until they got there. Poston was built on an Indian reservation (whose tribesmen were ordered there after the Japanese left), and life at the camps was a different world, with those old enough to attend university forced into a curriculum of "Americanization" classes.

"We had nothing to look forward to...the water was so bad, everyone had diarrhea," says **Leon Uyeda**, noting how human resources were so limited that Poston's cook used to be in charge of laundry. Higashi ended up marrying while interred, describing how her paper wedding bouquet rustled during her walk down the aisle. Her husband's wedding gift: a luxurious gardenia corsage.

Following their release in December 1944, the formerly interred found themselves with even less to look forward to. Many returned to find their homes vandalized or bought out from under them in their absence. No income for two years meant parents couldn't buy another home, forcing them to rely on their children for support. And while Poston was no Shangri-La, Okimoto concedes that at least people looked out for each other there. Back in the town she grew up in, the neighborhood kids "would throw rocks and spit on me," the damage done by propaganda despite their



supposedly restored status as Americans.

The film ends in Hawaii with a reunion of Poston survivors and a look back at how the principals learned to cope over the years through community involvement by speaking at schools or by using art as a creative outlet. While they appear joyous, a dark thread runs through their thoughts when asked about equality in America today. Uyeda still bears a strong inferiority complex, and questions whether his country is truly a democracy. "Any time I have a problem, I assume it's because I'm Japanese," he says. Others have trouble believing they are fully integrated, feeling forever on the alert. Another points to his "all-white" grandchildren and chillingly accepts the fact that there may be a time when Japanese Americans cease to exist, an attitude directly at odds with our supposed embrace of cultural pluralism.

Where Poston had the interred, Yasukuni has the enshrined. In 1978, the Shinto shrine—which is said to house the spirits of nearly 2.5 million killed in wartime—secretly added another 1,068 names to its roster, all convicted war criminals. While no emperor has visited the shrine since that time, other prominent Japanese civil servants have, including former **Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi**, who paid his respects at the shrine multiple times during his tenure, claiming his visits were as a private citizen and not a politico.

Such a decision sparked resentment from other countries, particularly Japan's neighbors, which suffered indignities under imperialist aggression in the years leading up to and during World War II. They argue that for criminals to be enshrined and honored in the same place as war casualties is both insulting and arrogant of Japan, which since 1945 has renounced war and is forbade a military. Naturally, Yasukuni has its equally adamant supporters at home, chiefly conservatives within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

It was lawmakers among their ranks who called for a boycott earlier this year of *Yasukuni*, a two-hour documentary by Chinese director **Li Ying**, a current resident of Japan. First screened in 2007 at Korea's **Pusan International Film Festival** (and earlier this summer at New York's **Japan Society**), the film—a joint Asian co-production—took 10 years to complete, and manages to be mostly objective in its focus while remaining antiwar.



The film begins with the crackling images of a sword forged in fire. Strong enough to slice through bone, this is the symbol of Yasukuni, made by its last living swordsmith, 90-year-old **Naoji Kariya**. "My hands are dirty," he says plainly, back turned to the camera. We then cut to the shrine on the 60th anniversary of Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, a hotbed of tension between loyalists and protestors. Throughout *Yasukuni*, footage from this day along with commentary from Kariya are woven through other on-location shots of notable events at the shrine and how they affect people.

Some of Yasukuni's visitors on that day pay their respects in what look like full military regalia, waving the Rising Sun flag and cheering the emperor. Tellingly, many of them look young enough to have been born long after the war, meaning they've never seen combat overseas. None are identified, but their dedication is frightening.

When asked how his fellow swordsmiths felt when the enshrinement of war criminals first came up, Kariya nervously declines to say. A statement by Koizumi is more polarizing: "I cannot understand why worshipping at Yasukuni is objectionable," he says, calling it "a matter of the heart" protected under the constitution. These words paint the sword as a means of defense instead of a destructive weapon. Such dualities and contradictions continue to define the fragile definition of Yasukuni.

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BOOK REVIEW

JAPAN RISING



Reviewed by Lyle Sylvander
(Yokohama-shi, 2001-02)

Bookstores are stocked full of tomes charting the recent rise of India and China. The IT and computer programming revolution in the former and the manufacturing explosion in the latter have accompanied such massive population growth in both countries that the world's attention has naturally shifted to that region of Asia.

In this context, **Kenneth Pyle's** new book *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* may seem anachronistic, as a holdover from the 1980s, the decade when, to quote a book from the era, Japan would be "first among equals." But Pyle, a Professor of Asian history at the **University of Washington**, makes a strong case for Japan's continuing relevance in the international global community, both politically and economically. His book is a fascinating account of Japanese foreign policy history, from its origins in the Meiji era to its current strategic calculations.

Much commentary has been made about Japan's ability to preserve tradition while adapting to foreign external forces. Pyle's analysis demonstrates that this trait is just as salient in Japan's foreign policy as in its economic and cultural developments. As the country industrialized after Commodore Perry's famous landing in 1853, the old feudal system was replaced by a system which preserved Confucian hierarchical structures while establishing a modern nation state, with the emperor as its head. As German industrial processes were adopted in modernizing the economy, the Prussian doctrine of *realpolitik*, with its emphasis on the maximization of national self-interest, complemented the new state's ambitions well. Pyle cleverly notes that this pragmatic paradigm shared many traits with the old samurai order and provided a firm foundation for Japan's interactions with the outside world. Throughout the course of its modern history, this theoretical foundation allowed Japan to adapt its domestic institutions and policies to the changing demands of the international system.

During his narrative, Pyle recounts some of the more famous events from Japanese history, such as the victory over Russia in 1905, which raised the nation's status as the preeminent power in Asia. As a country poor in natural resources, Japan adopted the Western model of colonization, and its victory over Russia inspired its imperial expansionist policies throughout Asia. After its descent into fascism in the 1930s and its humiliating defeat in the Second World War, Japan was forced to accommodate itself to the new U.S.-dominated international order.

Less well known is how Japan built its mercantilist foreign policy principles during the Cold War. **Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida** designed the foundation for postwar economic development, in which pacifism allowed economic resources to be diverted from military means to the promotion of export-based industries.

Japan cleverly used the U.S. imposition of Article 9, which forbids Japan from having a military, for its own ends. Using its unique security arrangement with the American armed forces, Japan was able to penetrate their consumer goods market while simultaneously closing its own market to American products. American industries were virtually powerless in persuading Congress to enact protectionist measures for fear of endangering the security arrangement. Yoshida's successors continued his policy of economic advancement with great success as Japan grew to become the second largest economy in the world and a leading industrial and electronic manufacturer.

Pyle concludes his book with a discussion on Japan's newfound purpose after a "lost decade" of post-Cold War confusion and economic stagnation. When **Junichiro Koizumi** was elected in 2001, he ushered in a new political era in which the entrenched bureaucracy, crony capitalism and factional dominance was challenged by financial deregulation, government accountability and constitutional reform. Koizumi's government was also responsive to the new Heisei generation (those who matured in the post-Hirohito years) of voters and reflected their values of informed public opinion. Militarily, the Self

Defense Force members were dispatched to Afghanistan and Iraq to support U.S. aid efforts. Koizumi's successor, **Shinzo Abe**, continued these efforts and hinted at revising Article 9 while pursuing more open trade with China. Tokyo's future foreign policy will inevitably involve a carefully calibrated balancing act between the interests of Beijing and Washington.

Japan Rising is most successful in bringing disparate analyses of Japan's historical, economic, political and sociological changes under the umbrella of a succinct foreign policy narrative. While his overall tone is academic and maybe off-putting to readers not familiar with social science rhetoric, he does provide occasional glimpses into the insights of such literary figures as **Natsume Soseki** and **Kenzaburo Oe**. Works of fiction are often superior to policy analysis in analyzing the psychological health of a nation, particularly the *ennui* of a populace adjusting to modernization.

Ultimately, though, his book most valuably serves as a blueprint for the future of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The new Japan is no longer sheltered from the political developments in its part of the world and will be more active in international disputes.

As Pyle makes clear, Japan will continue to adjust its economy, political structure and sources of relative power to maximize its interests in the prevailing international system.

he demands to know how his father and other non-Japanese who were forced to support the war effort can be arbitrarily enshrined there if they didn't want to fight in the first place. "The souls are in the wrong place," he says.

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In one bizarre scene, an American who identifies himself as a real estate broker stands at its gates waving Old Glory, screaming "I support Prime Minister Koizumi" in halting Japanese with a huge grin on his face. Public reaction to him is divisive. "An American supports us, we should lend a hand!" one onlooker says, while two more scream "Yankee go home" (in English) and "don't act so cool, asshole!" Eventually, he is forced to leave without explaining his motivation. A later night scene at Yasukuni finds a single Japanese man brandishing a sword in the pouring rain. Running up to the shrine, he pays his respects and dashes away, catching stares from surprised onlookers.

While the film is directed with some historical background including archival photos and news clips, it is the lives impacted by Yasukuni's legacy that are the most touching and informative. A Taiwanese man who identifies himself as Chiwas Ari claims his father was "brainwashed" into fighting for Japan and was enshrined at Yasukuni in 1951. Confronting a priest at the shrine,



Demonstrator at Yasukuni Shrine

Echoing his sentiment in another interview is a Japanese Buddhist priest whose father was also made to fight, ending with his enshrinement. The priest, who says his father's life was ruined by the war, has tried unsuccessfully for years to have the name removed from the register. "The war dead don't belong to their families, they belong to the state," he explains. "There is a perversion at work here...the families cannot object." No Yasukuni officials are interviewed.

The film's climax, likely from the same 60th anniversary, depicts controversial Tokyo Governor **Shintaro Ishihara** leading a rally for fellow conservatives at Yasukuni. Together they sing a song extolling the virtues of "dying for the emperor" and "never looking

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Who would be a better president, McCain or Obama?
 Maybe that's the wrong question. Perhaps the focus should be on what presidency they should really be running for. And thus the question is begged, what would be...

The Top 14 Ways JETAA Would be Different If Obama or McCain Were Your JETAA Chapter President

14. Early bird special *nihongo-dake* dinners
13. JETAA Delaware's Tax-Free Shopping Day
12. Beach Boys parodies about genocide replaced by Morning Musume parodies about market turmoil
11. General skepticism about president's claim that while on JET he "could see South Korea" from his school's window.
10. Promises of lower noodle taxes for Joe the *Ramenya-san*
9. *Onsen* trips...in Maui
8. President shows off "maverick" side by putting *tonkatsu* sauce on *okonomiyaki*
7. Chicago deep dish served at Newsletter stuff n' mails
6. Softball Tournament in Brooklyn replaced by Moose Hunting Tournament in Staten Island
5. Next happy hour destination: *USS Intrepid!*
4. Election opponent branded as a terrorist after admitted to having bought a phone card from an Iranian guy in Ueno Park in 1995
3. Uniqlo shopping spree for the veep
2. Position on *yaki-niku enka*? "Grill, baby, grill!"
1. "I'm Barack Obama, and I approve this *sake*"



WHAT'S GOING ON IN OTHER JETAA CHAPTERS?



WELLINGTON, NZ
Hanami Sakura Picnic - September 29

PACIFIC NORTHWEST
Imonikai at Crystal Mountain - October 4

CHICAGO
Chicago Marathon Cheering Section - October 12

PORTLAND
Halloween House Party - October 25



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back," followed by a rendition of national anthem "Kimi ga Yo," which itself can be interpreted as a symbol of Japanese imperialism and militarism.

While this is happening, a protester is tackled by a middle-aged man. "Are you Chinese? Go back to China!" he barks. Onlookers stare at the now-bloodied young man, who claims to be Japanese. "How many Asians did Japan murder?" he asks. "This injury is nothing!" Refusing medical attention, he continues to preach as a riot breaks out, with many in the crowd neither opposing nor agreeing with what he has to say. He is then handcuffed and dragged away by the police, even though he's committed no crime.

At that moment, almost on cue, Koizumi arrives, flanked by an entourage of navy blue suits. He solemnly ascends the steps, bows, and disappears.

Both *Passing Poston* and *Yasukuni* are available on DVD in their respective countries.

For more information, visit www.passingposton.com and www.yasukuni-movie.com.

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