

# JETaa NY

## QUARTERLY

jetaany.org/newsletter

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

SUMMER 2008

Vol. 17 Issue No. 3

NOW WITH  
CLICKABLE  
HYPERLINKS!!!

## THE "SPORTS" ISSUE



**What's Inside?!**  
(Click article to go  
directly to it)

- 2 Letter from the Editor
- 3 Comings & Goings
- 4 Interview with George Rose  
By Stacy Smith
- 5 JETAANY Society Page  
By Yoku Shitteiru
- 6 Trademarksman  
By Scott Alprin
- 7 Interview with Bobby Okinaka  
By Justin Tedaldi
- 9 Translators Challenge!
- 12-13 JETAA NY Society Photos
- 19 Eminent Domain: Ethan  
Levitas Photo Exhibit
- 20 Interview with Japanese  
Music Star Hiromi  
By Justin Tedaldi
- 21 Film Review: Kon Ichikawa's  
Tokyo Olympiad  
Reviewed by Lyle Sylvander
- 22 Top 10: Events in the JET  
Olympics
- 23 Index of Sponsors

Hirokazu Sano  
Owner, Cafe Zaiya  
1960-2008



## LEARNING TO PLAY SKI

Sporty stories from JET Days Past

*Some of us sought out the sports to play, and some of us stumbled into them. The universal experience was Sports Day, but there were many others as well. Read on!*

Damine Elementary School is an anachronism. A country schoolhouse in the foothills of the Japan Alps, it has used the same building since the Taisho period, if not earlier.

Last time I checked, Damine had a total student body of 17 children who were taught in combined classes. The school is unique in that it has compulsory *kabuki* training for all its boys and girls in order to perpetuate a 300-year-old village festival dedicated to the deity Kannon. With an eye ever watchful of waning interest in traditional arts, the Japanese government continued to fund the tiny school.

Two of the seventeen students were in a special edu-



Graphic by Ryan Hart

cation class. Seiji, a fourth grader, could interact fairly normally with the other students, but he required simpler explanations, clear directions, and extra patience. Fumiyo, a sixth grader, had severe down syndrome. He could sometimes form words, but more often, he would vocalize a series of sounds unrecognizable in any language. The school embraced them both, encouraging these two boys to attend classes with the mainstream students, but also reserving a classroom for their own studies and resting times.

Once, upon visiting the school, I was looking forward to recess outside. The kids, all quite athletic, usually played soccer, and despite my lack of ability in sports, they were always thrilled to have me in their non-competitive but fast-paced matches. On this particular day, however,

"Sports" continued on page 8

### GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNERS!

The winners of the Sports Anecdote contest are:

**Mia Simring** - Dinner for two at **Bao Noodles** ([baonoodles.com](http://baonoodles.com)), the *oishii* Vietnamese-style noodle restaurant owned by **Chris Johnson** (Oita-ken, 1992-95) (391 2nd Ave between 22nd & 23rd Sts.)

**Devon Brown** - \$30 ticket for draft beer at **Bar Great Harry** ([bargreatharry.com](http://bargreatharry.com)), the beer lovers' bar owned by **Ben Wiley** (CIR Fukui-ken, 2004-06) located in Brooklyn (Carroll Gardens) on 280 Smith St.

**Justin Tedaldi** - \$25 gift certificate for **Waltzing Matildas NYC** ([waltzingmatildasnyc.com](http://waltzingmatildasnyc.com)), an Aussie-style bakery owned by **Laura Epstein** (Gunma-ken, 2001-02)

**Emily Wong** - \$25 gift certificate at **Kinokuniya Bookstore** (now located by **Bryant Park** on 6th Ave & 41st St.)

\*Arigatou to everyone who contributed for making this a great article.

\*Special thanks to former JETAA Southern California President and Media Coordinator **Jennifer Lee** and former JETAA Pacific Northwest Newsletter Editor **Elizabeth Sharpe** for serving as independent judges.



## The "Sports" Issue



You could make the case that JET was like a big, foreign Olympics to us, with all sorts of strange challenges and obstacles that you didn't realize existed until you were there participating in it. In this issue, we tried to capture some of those experiences. We've also captured some of the ways sports has touched our "Japanese" lives post-JET.

Of course, sports is often about competition, and so we decided to up the stakes in this issue. First in the **Sports Anecdote Challenge** ("Learning to Play Ski"), for which we've awarded gift certificates to the winners. But not just any gift certificates. 3 out of the 4 sponsors are JET alums with their own businesses in New York, and we love supporting JET-run businesses. The second competition in the issue is the **Translators Challenge** (page 9), a new feature which hopefully will be a recurring one. And the third challenge (behind the scenes) was coming up with a new name for the Newsletter. As a result, the **Brainstorm Crew** was invited to consider other possibilities (e.g., *Chikatetsu Times?* *Dai Ringo?*) Of course some competitions take longer than others, so consider this one still open. For now we're going to keep it simple with the generic, yet descriptive, **JETAANY Quarterly Magazine**.

Lastly, I want to bring attention to the cross-chapter collaboration from which this issue has benefitted, thanks to input from newsletter editors **Mark Frey** (Northern California) and **Gina Anderson** (D.C.), former Southern California editor and president **Jennifer Lee**, and former Pacific Northwest editor **Liz Sharpe** (who's been helping me for years). *O-sewa sama deshita and kore kara mo ganbarimashou!*

*Steven Horowitz*  
Editor

### JETAANY New York Newsletter

#### Editor

Steven Horowitz  
[newsletter@jetaany.org](mailto:newsletter@jetaany.org)

#### Associate Editor

Justin Tedaldi  
[associateeditor@jetaany.org](mailto:associateeditor@jetaany.org)

#### Ad Sales

Earth Bennett  
[adsales@jetaany.org](mailto:adsales@jetaany.org)

#### Ad Orders

Peter O'Keefe  
[adorders@jetaany.org](mailto:adorders@jetaany.org)

#### President

Megan Miller  
[president@jetaany.org](mailto:president@jetaany.org)

#### Vice President

Shree Kurlekar  
[vicepres@jetaany.org](mailto:vicepres@jetaany.org)

#### Secretary

Meredith Wutz  
[secretary@jetaany.org](mailto:secretary@jetaany.org)

#### Treasurer

C.J. Hoppel  
[treasurer@jetaany.org](mailto:treasurer@jetaany.org)

#### Social Coordinator

Monica Yuki  
[social@jetaany.org](mailto:social@jetaany.org)

#### Philadelphia Representative

Renay Loper & Natasha Robinson  
[phillyrep@jetaany.org](mailto:phillyrep@jetaany.org)

#### Webmaster

Lee-Sean Huang  
[webmaster@jetaany.org](mailto:webmaster@jetaany.org)

#### Database Coordinator

Shannan Spisak  
[database@jetaany.org](mailto:database@jetaany.org)

For more info, subscribe to the weekly e-mail by sending an e-mail to our Secretary or check out [jetaany.org](http://jetaany.org) for updated announcements.

To see past issues, go to [jetaany.org/newsletter/newsletter\\_archive](http://jetaany.org/newsletter/newsletter_archive)

All material contained in this Newsletter is the sole property of JETAANY New York, Inc. with the exception of graphics as noted and may not be copied without permission.



## LOOKING FOR A NEW WAY TO CONTRIBUTE?

Contact us at [newsletter@jetaany.org](mailto:newsletter@jetaany.org)  
to join the Brainstorm Crew or share  
any ideas, comments or opinions.



**GRATUITOUS** efforts are not  
necessary to get a hardcopy of the  
JETAANY NY Quarterly Magazine  
sent to you.

Just send an e-mail with your snail  
mail address to:

[database@jetaany.org](mailto:database@jetaany.org)

# COMINGS & GOINGS



**JIRO OKUYAMA**

Okuyama-san will be leaving his position with the Consulate as the Director of the Japan Information Center to assume his new role at the Japanese Embassy in the Phillipines as Minister for General Affairs. Okuyama-san was very involved in helping to organize Japan Day at Central Park and also gave the welcome remarks at the recent JET Pre-Departure Orientation as well as the orientation in 2006.

**SHANNAN SPISAK**

(Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa-ken, 1996-98)

In August, Shannan will finish a two-year term as one of JETAA USA's two country representatives. In that span she continued her hard work behind the scenes, applying her knowledge of all things relating to JETAA and the Japanese government for the benefit of the JET alum community. As a USA Country Representative, Shannan focused on increasing communications and coordinating cross-border activities among the 50 chapters around the world through her work on 20th Anniversary project initiatives, the involvement of smaller chapters such as South Africa, Jamaica, Russia and Brazil, sub-chapter initiatives in the USA, and support for the JETAA Centralized Membership System. One of the driving forces behind JETAA



NY's evolution into an official non-profit entity, Shannan will continue to be involved with JETAA NY as a member of the Board of Directors, as our Database Coordinator and through continued participation in the JET selection process, Pre-Departure Orientations, and Kintetsu Essay Contest coordination as well as other efforts.

**MEET YOUR NEW JETAA COUNTRY REPS**

**Shannon Quinn**  
(Kagawa-ken, 2000-01)

Shannon was re-elected for her second term as Co-Country Representative. In addition to her hard work this past year and the strong knowledge base she has developed, she previously served as Secretary, Vice President and then President for the Pacific Northwest JET Alumni chapter. A Seattle-area native, she recently moved to Bloomington, IN to complete her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration.



**Ryan Hart**  
(Chiba-ken, 1998-99)

Ryan has been elected to serve for his first term as a Co-Country Representative. He has served as the President of the Pacific Northwest JET Alumni Chapter since 2006, and prior to that served as the chapter's Social Coordinator. As you read this, he is also (and has been) working hard to organize the JETAA USA Conference to be hosted by his chapter in August.



O-TSUKARE SAMA DESHITA!

YOROSHIKU ONEGAISHIMASU!



**bremar ASSOCIATES** 人材紹介・派遣のことなら

New York Office  
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 660  
New York, NY 10170  
T (212) 661-0909 F (212) 856-0989  
staff@bremar.com

San Diego Office  
T (858) 832-1378  
F (858) 832-1379

Full time, part time, and temporary positions in:

- ➡ finance
- ➡ import/export
- ➡ PR & marketing
- ➡ research
- ➡ fashion
- ➡ translation

...and more!

Browse open jobs, register online, and learn more at:  
**[www.bremar.com](http://www.bremar.com)**

~ Serving the JET community since 1987 ~



# PRIDE OF THE YANKEES (FAR EAST EDITION)

Interview by  
Stacy Smith  
(Kumamoto-ken, 2002-03)

JET Alum **George Rose** (Fukushima, 1989-91) has mingled with Japanese royalty, interpreted for two baseball superstars named Hideki (Irabu and Matsui) and currently heads Yankee operations in Japan. How did this New York native manage to accomplish all this in his post-JET life? The JETAA newsletter had a chance to talk with George about his past exploits and his present position. Here are some excerpts from his conversation with **Stacy Smith** (Kumamoto-ken, 2002-03), who is collaborating with George to lead Japanese tours during games at Yankee Stadium this summer.

**Stacy Smith:** What was your post-JET career path?

**George Rose:** I was going for my MBA at Columbia when I had the opportunity to become the interpreter for the new Yankee Hideki Irabu, so I took a leave of absence and worked with him from '98-'99. When he got traded, I resume my studies and after graduation worked on Wall Street. When Hideki Matsui came over, I did a bit of interpreting for him such as at his opening press conference. Because at the time I had my own business I wasn't able to do this full-time, but I did help with the interview process for his interpreter. Then last year the Yankees asked if I was interested in helping out with the opening of their office in Tokyo, and I went over last summer.

**SS:** Can you tell us a little bit about the Yankees operations in Tokyo?



George Rose with Hideki Irabu in Yankee Stadium celebrating the Yankees' World Series victory

**GR:** Well, it's just me, myself and I! I work in a flex office where there are several women (one of whom is my wonderful secretary) who help out several companies in the building by answering phones, etc. My title is Director of Pacific Rim Operations and I comprise the company. My job is half baseball operations and half business development. The former involves compiling information and reading articles and sending what I gather back home. I also make sure the Japanese scout gets where he needs to be and that his reports get where they need to go. I am not qualified to be a scout, but I do supervise scout activities. The latter responsibility involves searching for sponsorships for the new stadium, particularly from the luxury sector. I'm generating business development and always looking for new ideas and opportunities. The President of the team will often ask me to check into something, so that is also one of my responsibilities. Basically I'm just keeping my ear to the ground looking for potential business opportunities for the Yankees in Asia.

**SS:** I can imagine the Yankees are a hot commodity in Japan. How do people react when they find out that's who you work for?

**GR:** Yes, the fact that the Yankees are so big in Japan is what makes my job so in-

"Yankees" continued on page 18

Looking for a job?  
take **ACTION** with **US!**

**Actus**  
Actus Consulting Group, Inc.  
New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo

[www.actus-usa.com](http://www.actus-usa.com)

19 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036 • 212 575 7840 / 877 852 1566 • info@actus-usa.com

# JETAANY SOCIETY PAGE

By Yoku Shitteiru

Good afternoon, sports fans, and welcome to Game 7 of JETAA NY Society. Last time we checked in, the weather was not disgustingly hot and *mushi-atsui*. Now it is. *Shoganaï* and *gaman shite yo*. Ignore the sweat dripping down your forehead and start paying attention to what I'm saying *kudasai*. There's a lot of ground to cover and very limited time given everyone's iPhonic attention spans.

First, a welcome to our representatives from the newest subchapters of JETAA NY - *Kita Jersey* and *Chubu Jersey* (no word from *Higashi Jersey* and *Nishi Jersey*) as well as in **Pittsburgh, PA**. (JETAA NY technically covers NY, CT, NJ and PA. And *Minami Jersey* is already pretty well covered by our sub-chapter in **Philadelphia**, where **Renay Loper** and **Natasha Robinson** take the reigns from by the eminently able **Therese Stephens**, and whose responsibilities naturally will include production of Philly rolls.) *Tonikaku*, say hi to **Jenny Jung** (Washington, NJ) and **Shaheen Mani** (Basking Ridge, NJ) up north and to **Andrew Kenny** (Lawrenceville, NJ) in the middle, as well as **Patrick Tracy** out in Steeltown, USA. If you want to get in touch with any of them, either stand by the appropriate exit on the appropriate Turnpike with a *kanji* sign, or just send an e-mail to any of the JETAA NY officers.

Quick props to **Noriko Hino** of **NY de Volunteer** (a sort of Japanese subchapter of JETAA NY) for getting official sponsorship from **Derek Jeter's Turn 2 Foundation** for NYdV's "Explore Japanese Culture" After School Program with the NYC Parks and Recreation Department, and *domo domo* for providing an opportunity for another sports reference in this column!

**ON THE SCENE:** The JETAANY happy hour circuit kicked off the summer at the **Crooked Knife** (E. 30th St.) Organized by **Patrick Liu**, it brought out



Saitama-ken

Monica, Cindy, Mia, Lawrence, Jessica, Chau, Nancy, Isano, Kazu and Nevin from Sacramento, as well as **Jamie Graves** (who's been translating **Harumi Kawakuchi** on the side for fun). **Peter O'Keefe** led a discussion of recent developments in the feminine hygiene product advertising world (prompting **Carol** to declare her loyalty to OB--the product, not the



"Old Boy" network.) Following the happy hour, the *nijikai* location somehow ended up being **California Pizza Kitchen**. Did CPK start offering karaoke and *mizu-wari*?... **BEST COMMENT ON THE WEAK DOLLAR BY A RANDOM DRUNK BRITISH GUY IN THE BATHROOM:**

"I just got in from Newark Airport, took out 500 quid from a bank machine and got \$1,000. Thought I was robbin' a bank!"...**WEST COAST SMILE: HappyFun-Smile** just completed its **California Obon Tour** from July 19-27, playing at the

**San Francisco Obon Festival**, the **Los Angeles Higashi Honganji Obon Festival**, the Senshin Buddhist Temple, Nikkei senior homes and other live music venues...**HOW**

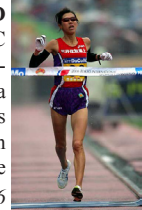
**TO SAY "YOU BETCHA" IN JAPANESE: JETAA Minnesota** recently made an event out of the minor league baseball match between the **Ibaraki Golden Golds** and the

**St. Paul Saints**. Saints games apparently feature a nun who gives massage, a hot tub stand, plus an entertainer named Seigo ("Sing karaoke with a Real Japanese Guy!")...**DOWNTOWN FEVER: The Japan Local Government Office** (aka JETAA NY headquarters) has picked up on the NYC vibe and will be moving a little further downtown, from its current office at 52nd St. and 5th Ave. to a new

office at 34th & Park Ave. in December...**X'D OUT:** X Japan's scheduled concert for NYC on September 13 was postponed due to a serious slipped disc injury suffered by the drummer. (You'd think he'd be able to find a good chiropractor in NY)...**PRE-D:** Over 40 JET alums, new JETs and JLGC and Consulate folks gathered at **Faces & Names** (54th St. & 7th Ave.) for Pre-Departure Orientation happy hour on June

"**JETAANY Society**" continued on page 16

office at 34th & Park Ave. in December...**X'D OUT:** X Japan's scheduled concert for NYC on September 13 was postponed due to a serious slipped disc injury suffered by the drummer. (You'd think he'd be able to find a good chiropractor in NY)...**PRE-D:** Over 40 JET alums, new JETs and JLGC and Consulate folks gathered at **Faces & Names** (54th St. & 7th Ave.) for Pre-Departure Orientation happy hour on June



JET alums take in the NY Philharmonic in Central Park



## Language House

We offer these Japanese Programs:

- Fall Semester 2008 (12 Levels) 9/20 - 12/13
- Winter/Spring 2009 (12 Levels) 1/24 - 4/11
- Private/Small Group Lessons (All Levels)
- Corporate Program

Small classes with 5 - 8 students, taught by all certified native instructors with Master's degrees in Linguistics/Japanese Language Pedagogy

For more information, please contact us:

Phone: (212) 949-5455

URL: <http://www.languagehouse-nyc.com>

Email: [info@languagehouse-nyc.com](mailto:info@languagehouse-nyc.com)

Address: 545 Fifth Avenue, Suite 910, New York, NY 10017 (@45th Street)

# TRADEMARKSMAN

By Scott Alprin, Esq.  
(Aichi-ken, 1992-95)

I am a trademark lawyer, and I think it's all because of my connection to Japan and sports in my post-JET existence.

Not only that, but the one thing I do all year that might be considered "charitable" is intertwined with sports and Japan as well. Because this article would be way too short if I didn't go on, I shall go on.

During my first year of law school in the spring of 1997, I did my time in the law library, longing for the carefree days of the JET program. When I saw a sign in the lounge in Japanese looking for a paralegal, I called the number in a Tokyo minute. An interview was scheduled.

Soon I was sitting in front of Mr. Kenichi Hattori, renegade Japanese patent attorney, who, at 40, left the Japanese Patent Office in an unprecedented move to America to act as a living link between the Japan and U.S. patent systems. He went to night school and got his U.S. law degree, and became a partner in a mid-size firm a few years later. He wrote a book about his experience, which became a map to future Japanese patent attorneys hoping to make it in the U.S.

I asked him for a job. He said there was no money for that. I thought: "Well then, fine sir, why did you put a sign in the lounge at American University Law School?"

But, exhibiting the coolness of a ninja, I revealed no disdain. Rather, I stated with un-ninja-like desperation: "I will work for free." I got the job, and worked as an unpaid intern that summer.

Mr. Hattori loved tennis, and was quite good. I had played for one year on the varsity team at Colby College. We would go to his club on hot summer nights and hit the heck out of the ball. We never played sets, just hit the ball, back and forth, discussing how to make our games better. Afterwards, we would go to a Japanese izakaya in Northern Virginia and eat and drink heartily in our sweat-soaked t-shirts, telling tall tales, and some short ones too. I learned all about his life. By the end of the summer, we were friends.

He decided to re-hire me as a paid intern, even though the firm was a patent firm, and I had no technical background. Years later, when I finally graduated from law school, Mr. Hattori fired the one trademark attorney at the firm and hired me to be the new one. If it had not been for tennis, I imagine I wouldn't have gotten past the first summer.



Scott Alprin helps guide Kazu through the 2007 NYC Marathon

*"Trademark" continued on page 18*

(C) JNTO

# Japan

- Discounted Air Tickets to Japan
- Discounted Air Tickets to Asia
- Japan Domestic Air Tickets
- Japanese Guided Tour
- More than 2000 Hotel/Ryokan in JAPAN
- Affordable Package Tour (Air & Hotel)
- Japan Rail Pass
- Gift to Japan

www.iace-asia.com

Since 1970

IACE TRAVEL

International Association for Cultural Exchange

Asia Division

1-866-735-4223

info@iace-asia.com

GST# 206672640

**NOW HIRING!**  
For those who wants to develop your career in Hospitality field and in Bilingual environment.

IACE Travel is a Japanese Travel Agency, that has 19 branches in the USA, 2 in Canada, and 36 in Japan as well. We are seeking for well-motivated Japanese speakers who can work in Canada and the USA. We are looking forward to your challenge!

With Working in IACE Travel, you will earn ...

- Excellent professional customer service skills.
- Japanese business manner.
- Exceptional Travel Industry knowledge from Air & Hotel reservation, Ticketing, a tour planning and more!
- The chance to generates what you learned in school to create new products!



For questions, please contact Mr. Narita at the informations below;  
18 EAST 41ST STREET, 3RD.FL, NEW YORK, NY 10017  
212-972-3200/1800-872-4223 / narita@iace-usa.com

# FASHIONISTA BRIDGE-BUILDING

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

**Bobby Okinaka (Wakayama, 1992-95) Keeps America Up on Japanese Fashion & Pop Culture with Tokyo à la Mode**

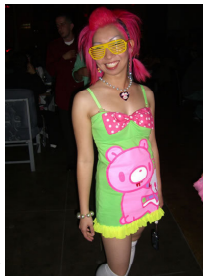
*Jonesing for Japanese pop culture long after the JET experience is over? L.A.'s Bobby Okinaka (Wakayama-ken, 1992-95) feels your pain. The Web editor for a site called Discover Nikkei (www.DiscoverNikkei.org) -- which in his own words covers the Japanese diaspora -- is also the founder of a unique pet project called Tokyo à la Mode (www.tokyoal-mode.com), a site that advertises itself as a "Magazine for Japanese fashion and urban culture."*



*The site spotlights those overlooked hip and hot fashions or pop culture nuggets you might otherwise miss (or not even notice they're Japanese in the first place), along with handy links for designer info and purchase. Associate Editor Justin Tedaldi (CIR Kobe-shi, 2001-02) recently caught up with Bobby to talk about all things sporty in the world of Japanese fashion and pop culture.*

**Justin Tedaldi:** Tell us about the origins of your site.

**Bobby Okinaka:** After JET, I worked in video production and managing content on Web sites. About two years ago, I started a Web site about Japanese fashion and Tokyo urban culture called **Tokyo à la Mode**. The inspiration for the site was other JETs. Before going to Japan, these girls knew very little about the culture and lifestyle, but after coming back they looked at Japanese fashion magazines, went to Japanese rock concerts, and ate Japanese food. I figured if I could tap into what they liked about Japan and share that information with other people, the result should be similar.



There's plenty of information on Japanese music on the Internet, but not a lot about fashion. So I started **Tokyo à la Mode**. Also, while the animé generation is very knowledgeable about all things animé, I've found that their knowledge

of Japan is limited. So I hope to expose them to more real Japanese culture through this project.

**JT:** So it's inspired purely by fashion and popular trends?

**BO:** Actually, the real inspiration for Tokyo à la Mode is the animé generation. They grew up exposed to Japanese culture through **Pokémon** and **Naruto**, and now that they're growing older, they're branching out into Japanese music and fashion. I kind of knew I was on to something when

I noticed that some kids at the Animé Expo were wearing Japanese street fashion and J-rock clothes and not just doing cosplay.



But Tokyo à la Mode is not meant to be an animé Web site. In much the same way that New York in the '80s represented the growth of hip hop culture, Tokyo has a global image as a place where Japanese kids wear funky street fashion, men in spandex suits play human Tetris, robots are built to replace human beings, and so on and so on. Tokyo represents a certain lifestyle that anyone can be a part of.

**JT:** How did your experience on JET prepare you for running your site and choosing the content on there? Specifically, what knowledge or skills did you pick up by working with Japanese people and spending time with Japanese youths?

**BO:** Coming from a Japanese American background plus living on a U.S. military base outside of Tokyo as a youth, I already had a strong understanding of Japanese life. So it's hard for me to think of anything specific about my experience on the

*"Tokyo à la Mode" continued on page 17*



## DISCOVER JAPAN

With JALPAK, Japan is now within your reach!

- Air Tickets
- JR Rail Passes
- Special Tours
- Hotels
- Car Rentals
- Flex Packages and more



**JALPAK International U.S.A., Inc.**

1212 Avenue of the Americas, 19th Fl, New York, NY 10036

Toll Free: 1-888-3JALPAK (525725)

Tel: 212.850.7474 • Fax: 212.850.7490 • www.jalpak.com • jpinyc@jalpak.com



“Sports” continued from page 1

the kids were setting up a net in their meeting hall. “What, no soccer today?” I asked. “Oh, no,” came one student’s answer. “We’ve decided to play balloon volleyball from now on. It’s not fair if we always play a game that Fumiyoshi-san can’t also enjoy.” Nonplussed, I asked the teachers whether they had encouraged this, but it turned out that the students had thought of it and implemented it independently of any adult influence.

As we all clumsily bopped balloons at each other, giggling the whole time, I reflected on my own past. Going to an intellectually rigorous private school, I had never really interacted with disabled peers. Here was an environment where all the village’s children were in the same physical space; even more importantly, the community of kids did not feel that including them was a burden, but rather an opportunity to discover common ground. At this school, at this moment, there were no restrictions, only random, wild glee, buoyant pink balloons, and collisions leading to unmitigated laughter. These kids had transcended sportsmanship as a philosophy of winning and losing gracefully; their brand of sportsmanship was solely about having fun together. In a world where we can debate the supremacy of baseball, soccer and American football, I learned that balloon volleyball was indeed the greatest team sport of all.

**Mia Simring (CIR Shitara-cho, Aichi-ken, 2004-06)**

\*\*\*\*\*

The Funo-son *Shogakko* Sports Day took place only a few weeks after I arrived in Japan. I didn’t understand much, due to my electric dictionary’s severe lack of village dialect translation skills, but through my favorite new game, charades, I understood that I could sit and judge events. Since this involved plenty of ice water and copious amounts of sitting under a tent during a typically sweltering August day, I agreed.

All was well until after lunch. Fearing that I was bored (but actually still just jet-lagged), my principal asked me to participate in a teachers-only relay race. It involved running hand-in-hand around the razor gravel track with the second grade teacher, Nakamura-sensei. She and I didn’t have much time to get acquainted. We each quickly introduced ourselves and Nakamura-sensei gave a handshake that could crush bones. Her smile belied her iron muscles, and I realized that even if I fell behind, I was going to cross that finish line, under my own power or not.

The starter gun went off and, while the parents and students cheered us on, we ran like a very clumsy and slow wind. But there was an obstacle in our path! Up ahead, the other teachers had stopped and were frantically putting on costumes to wear for the final leg of the race.

We stopped at our pile and found that we were to be married. Nakamura-sensei pushed the voluminous white dress at me, graciously allowing me to be the blushing bride. After wrestling her tux on, complete with cummerbund and bow tie, we again raced around the track, this time like a very clumsy, slow, but blissfully wedded wind.

We crossed the finish line to many cheers and not a little laughter. After that race, I figured I’d capped off my daily wacky story from Japan quotient and would be allowed to collect myself under the cool shade of the announcer’s tent for the rest of the program. But that was before I was asked to wear a giant box and chase the first graders...

**Stacey Kerns (Hiroshima-ken, 2001-03)**



Being the only member of my sports-obsessed family who wasn’t offered an athletic scholarship to college, it is unsurprising that I have great disdain and even greater disinterest for most organized sports. Thus Sports Day certainly didn’t register on my social calendar in Japan, not even in pencil. But on my second year of the program, my visiting school begged me to come.

I did.

But I wore a suit and tie just to make my point clear.

Upon arrival, I was whisked off to the staff room, where my participation was explained to me.

“We are going to play Indiana Jones game, and since you are tall and big and have blonde hair and blue eyes, you will be the Nazi and you will chase the children with a machine gun.”

And along with the instructions, a huge plastic machine gun was handed to me, along with a swastika-emblazoned armband.

“But,” I said, “Won’t that be a little strange and confusing? After all, the Japanese and the Germans were on the same side.”

Silence.

Then response: “Don’t be sassy.”

At that moment, pride overcame good sense. I had taught the English teachers the meaning and different possibilities of the word “sassy,” and here it was, being used correctly! So I put on my swastika, grabbed the gun, went outside and chased little Japanese archeologists around and about the sports field, all in the name of internationalization and sassiness.

**Randall David Cook (Fukui-ken, 1991-93)**

\*\*\*\*\*

You may call it hump day or *suiyobi*, but for me Wednesdays were basketball days and, better yet, It’s-Okay-To-Be-A-Geek Day. After school on Wednesdays, I was happy to scurry home and scarf down dinner alone, because moments later I would be on the back of my *ba-chan* bike ringing the bell from neighborhood to neighborhood gathering fellow JETs, like the pied piper of intramural sports. We were headed to 4-chu for our weekly meeting with Ramen-sensei.

I cannot tell you how he got his name, but I can tell you that Ramen-sensei was about twenty-five years old, drove a minivan and was the *de facto* leader of our misfit basketball club. His wife, Asuko, was also a member and probably the best player of the bunch. She would often lead our warm-ups, which had an uncanny resemblance to the innocuous morning calisthenics radio program broadcast all over Japan. *Ichi, ni, san, shi---go, roku, shichi, hach...*

For the first few sessions we gave legitimate basketball a try because we had some real players show up, like the guy from city hall who gave himself the nickname *Hanabi* Hair. Even I, a girl much better suited for stomping around the gym and shouting cheers in broken Japanese, was scoring points. But the most memorable meeting of all was the day we pulled all the equipment from the gym closets and set up a ninja warrior-style obstacle course. Where else but Japan can you get ten adults to do nine turns around a dizzy bat on any given Wednesday?

**Devon Brown (Tokyo-to, 2002-04)**

“Sports” continued on page 10



Welcome to the first-ever JETAA NY Quarterly Translators Challenge, where we invite JET alums and Friends of JET (i.e., anyone who wants) to take their best shot at translating a particular 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 WINNERS**

**1st Place (Tie) - Most Creative Translation**

**Sharon Tatro (Fukuoka)**

線路の上、ピーナツマンが座って  
 いました  
 Senrou no ue, pi-natsu-man ga suwattemashita  
 コラゾンがドキドキ、わくわくしてて、  
 Korazon (Corazon= heart in Spanish) ga dokidoki, waku-waku shitete  
 突然! チャガ チャガ、チャガ チャガ チュー  
 チュー  
 Totsuzen! Chaga chaga, chaga chaga chu- chu- (choo choo)  
 予定どおりの電車が来て。。  
 Yoteidourino densha ga kite...  
 さよならピーナツマン  
 Sayonara pi-nattsu-man  
 ハローピーナツバター  
 hello- pi-natsu bata-

**1st Place (Tie) - Works Best as a Song**

**Mia Simring (Aichi, 2004-06)**

落花生  
 が線路にかけて、  
 その心はドキドキ  
 あらま!  
 汽車が来た!  
 ポッポ!  
 ピーナツの下敷き!

**TRANSLATORS CHALLENGE**

For this first challenge, we entered the world of wreckless, anthropomorphized legumes and requested a translation of the following ditty:

**A peanut sat on a railroad track  
 Its heart was all a-flutter  
 Along came the 6:15  
 Toot! Toot!  
 Peanut butter**



Click the peanut to hear the song on YouTube

**THE JUDGING**

All of the submissions were excellent and are worth reading. Many thanks to each participant for adding your own flavor to this challenge. The basis for choosing the winner(s) was ultimately how well they captured the spirit of the original text, maintained the sing-ability and interpreted the elements that don't lend themselves to direct translation.

To assist, we brought in professional translator **Kia Cheleen (CIR Aichi, 1996-99)** to judge the submissions and provide some perspective. Our collective comments follow below:

Sharon Tatro's interpretation of the song was the most creative. In particular, we appreciated (1) the use of Spanish, (2) the use of her onomatopoeia for *chaga-chaga-choo-choo*, and (3) "Good-bye Peanut-man. Hello Peanut Butter." If we were Japanese 8-year-olds (likely the intended audience for the song), we would have giggled excessively.

Mia Simring's submission was also chuckle-inducing and was the translation that worked the best in song form, both rhythmically and in the creative way she constructed rhymes. Go ahead and sing it to yourself and you'll see.

Additional comments:

**Train whistle:** Most submissions used "po-po-!" or a similar variation. It's worth noting that while "fua-n! fua-n!" is the proper onomatopoeia these days, if we assume the song itself comes from back in the day, then "po-po-" is the more appropriate translation for capturing the spirit of the time.

**"A-flutter":** Some submissions used *waku-waku*, which implies a positive form of excitement, while others went with *doki-doki*, which is associated with nervousness.

"Comments" continued on page 11

Rakkasei  
 Ga senro nikakete  
 Sono kokoro wa doki doki  
 Arama!  
 Kisha ga kita!  
 Poppo!  
 Pi-natsu no shitajiki!

Note from Mia: Alternatively, the last line could be ピーナツ砕き! (Pi-nattsu kudaki!) The last line fits the tune better, but I like the image of the peanut shitajiki as a new product at the stationery store!

\*\*\*\*\*  
**OTHER GREAT TRANSLATIONS**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

**Ariel Shearman (Ichikawa, 1994-97)**

線路に座っているピーナツ  
 どきどきしているよ  
 ポーポー  
 電車が通った  
 ピーナツバター!  
 senro ni suwatte iru pi-nattsu  
 doki doki shite iru yo  
 po- po-  
 densha ga tootta  
 pi-nattsu bata-!

**Noriko Sakamoto (wife of Sean Sakamoto, new JET in Gifu)**

ピーナツ君が線路にぼつり  
 ピーナツ君の心臓はドキド  
 キもの  
 6時15分の時が来た  
 ポー、ポー  
 ピーナツバターのできあがり

"Translators" continued on page 11

# FLY TO JAPAN

WE PROUDLY OFFER YOU

- The Discount Air Fare Tickets
- Domestic Flights in Japan
- Japan Rail Pass
- Rental Cell Phones
- "Onsen" Package Tour
- Group Tours
- Day Tours in Japan

Please tell our experienced travel agents  
**"I SAW AMNET'S AD IN THE JETAANY NEWSLETTER"**  
 in order to receive additional discounts!

**TOLL-FREE: 1-800-929-2663**

TEL: 1-212-247-1900

152 W.57th St., 8th Fl,  
 New York, NY 10019

MON-FRI 8:30AM-7:00PM  
 SATURDAY 10:00AM-5:00PM

[www.amnet-usa.com](http://www.amnet-usa.com)

"Sports" continued from page 8

\*\*\*\*\*

I once went with a friend to his softball game and almost got to play. I stepped up to the plate but was wearing blue jeans. Standard softball wear in America, not accepted in Japan, so I didn't get to play....I lived in a small town and we started with Sports Day on Oct. 10 for the entire town. Then over the next few weekends the *shuuraku* (neighborhoods) had their sports days. There were also competitions involving the town-hall staffs of the

next to the building's entrance, and started asking him questions in broken English. Half-drunk and panicked, my friend took advantage of Japan's relatively friendly approach to law enforcement: He dashed out the front door. Once he felt he'd put enough distance between himself and the officer, he found another park bench and resumed his nap. He woke up a few hours later to a *shogakusei* girl standing next to the bench and looking disapprovingly down at him. He begged the train fare home from her parents.

Earth Bennett (Aomori-ken, 2000-02)



Copyright Earth Bennett "Every Situation Is Different" www.angelfire.com/comics/esid/archive.htm

four towns in our county. The town meet had teams based on the *shuuraku* in which you lived, and the neighborhood meets formed teams based on what part of the *shuuraku* you lived in. People wore colored headbands to indicate their team....In the neighborhood sports meet I once pinch hit for an office-mate in the husband-wife piggy-back relay. The track was maybe 60 to 80 yards long. The men waited one-third of the way along the track and the wives ran to them, they ran piggy-back for the next third, and then switched. Unfortunately, both the woman and myself were carrying some extra pounds. One of the other events I remember at the neighborhood meets was the *ikki* relay, using tea and a *jan-ken-pon* relay for the senior citizens. Of course, with an *enkai* afterwards.

Mike Harper (CIR Kagoshima-ken, 1990-93)

\*\*\*\*\*

When the World Cup came to Japan in 2002, I was lucky enough to secure tickets to a game in Sendai. Three JET friends and I and were treated to a stadium of 50,000 screaming soccer pilgrims divided into green (Mexico) and yellow (Ecuador) who'd crossed the globe to support their teams. Mexico won a thrilling victory, but soccer fans of all nationalities created a Mardi Gras-like atmosphere up and down the shopping district of this normally sedate city by setting off fireworks and dancing to music played on native instruments.

The party intensified when the Japan national team pulled off its first World Cup victory against Russia that evening. My friends and I watched the entire game on the TV screens above each of the lanes in a local bowling alley. In the spirit of the moment, the owner had opened the alley's doors and broadcast the game gratis for anyone who wanted to cheer for the home team. Stepping out into the raging festival on the streets, my friends and I followed a crowd into a nightclub packed with a drunken mass of Japanese and *gaijin* alike. It strongly reminded me of the JET Renewers' Conference.

Two of my friends and I caught a cab back to the place where we were staying, but our fourth member decided to stay at the club. When we woke up the next morning, he still hadn't returned. We figured he'd found a place to stay with another reveler somewhere, but we began to get worried when we hadn't heard from him by lunchtime. He showed up in the early afternoon, a complete mess and lacking his cell phone and wallet.

He didn't remember losing his personal effects, leaving the nightclub, or what park he'd eventually curled to up to sleep in. But he keenly recalled waking up in the holding cell of a small *koban*-like police station early the next morning. The officer on duty opened the cell, led him to the front desk

\*\*\*\*\*

I was never much of an athletic person in school. In fact, I was one of those individuals who were usually the last to be chosen on a team by my classmates during gym class. I also did very poorly during tryouts and could not join any sport teams. Sports and I just did not mix, and the sour memories of watching the jocks get all the praise and attention lingered within me for many years.

When I arrived in Japan, I was shocked to find out that tryouts did not exist, and students were free to choose and enter their club of interest. Seeing as club activities were the perfect opportunity to watch and interact with my students outside of English class, I decided to make my rounds through the various clubs every day. I spent the most time with the softball club since they constantly reminded me to visit.

As I observed the students warm-up and practice, I noticed that many of the *ichi-nen-seis* did not put forth much effort. I distinctly remember one girl attempting to hit the softball as it was pitched to her and she lazily swung her bat and naturally missed. *Yaru ki ga nai* (lack of motivation) was written all over her face. Yet, the other members continued their "*fighto*" and "*ganbatta*" chants. I found myself annoyed and after watching them constantly lose to other schools during matches, I thought that it was only normal since anyone could play! The coach did not even seem to show much care towards the losses. I explained to my Japanese friend that in America we have tryouts to choose the best students to play. In America, it was always about winning. In America, you just could not play if you dragged down the team.

The softball girls eventually invited me to practice with them and for a while, I was ashamed at my poor skills of tossing the softball back and forth with students. Not only did they not laugh at me, they even taught me a few tricks on how to improve my throw. With the daily practices, the *yaru ki ga nai* girl and I started to actually hit the ball somewhere during practice matches. When I did well, they cheered. When I did poorly, they constantly assured me, "*Dajjoubu! Ganbatta yo!*" (It's OK! You tried!)

I was touched, but more importantly, I realized that initially, I was looking at them through my American glasses. I took the standards I was used to, the very ones I loathed, and used them to judge these amazing girls. Looking at their team, I realized why Japanese people treasure the group mentality. These students were not constantly playing to win; they were playing to teach and support each other. The skilled students had the opportunity to guide the weaker students. If they performed well, they truly reached it as

"Sports" continued on page 14

"Comments" continued from page 9

ciated more with a fear-based form of excitement. In this case, either could be appropriate, as it is unclear if the peanut's heart was a-flutter with the excitement of converting itself to peanut butter or a-flutter with fear of the potential for danger. Was he being wreckless, or was he just a nut? ;-)

**6:15:** To paraphrase the Beastie Boys, it's tricky to translate a time, to translate a time that fits the rhyme. Special props to Anthony Tranchina for Japan-izing the time to "18:15." But the solution for some was to circumvent the problem by simply avoiding the mention of the exact time, which was not itself crucial to the story, and referring to the *yoteidouri* (on-time) train, or simply stating that the train came.

**Peanut butter:** The submissions also provided some thought provoking characterizations for how a peanut is converted into peanut butter. Most interestingly, Nao's Husband karmically delved into a birthing metaphor suggesting death and rebirth.

"Translators" continued from page 9

**Nancy Ikehara**

(Yokohama, 1994-97)

ひとりぼっちのピーナツが車線に座り込み  
ドキドキときめき  
6:15時の車両がやってきて  
ポーポーポーポ!  
ピーナツバター塗り塗り

**Anthony Tranchina (Saitama, 1999-2001)**

ドキドキするピーナツが  
鉄道トラックで座り、  
1 8 1 5 の電車が来て  
プップー!  
うまいピーナツバターになってしまった

Doki Doki Suru Piinattsu ga  
Tetsudou Torakku De Suwari  
1815 no Densha ga kite  
Puppu-!  
Umai Piinattsu bataa ni natte shimatta!

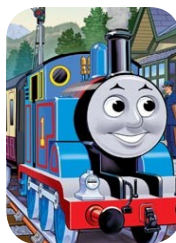
**Nao (Friend of JET)**

線路の上に座っていたピーナツ。  
Senro no ue ni suwatteita pi-nattsu.  
緊張しつつも、ワクワクしていたピーナツ。  
Kinchoushitsu sumo, wakuwaku shiteita pi-nattsu.  
時計の針が6:15分を指したとき、  
Tokei nohari ga 6:15 fun wosashitatoki,  
ポッポー! と汽笛の音とともにやってきた。

Poppo-! Tokitekino ototomoniyattekita.  
あつという間にピーナツバターに変身!  
Attoiumani pii-nattsubata-ni henshin!

**Nao's Husband (Friend of JET)**

線路の上に一粒のピーナツ君が座っていた、  
Senro no ue ni hitotsubuno pi-nattskun ga suwatteita,  
バクバクする心臓をおさえながら  
Bakubakusuru shinzo wo osaenagara  
ついに六時十五分発の汽車がやってきた  
Tsuini rokujiyugofunhatsuno kisha ga yattekita  
ポーッ ポーッ  
Po-ppo-



そして生まれ変わった、ピーナツバター君  
誕生!  
Soshite umarekawatta, pi-nattsu bataa-kun tanjyou!

**Marie (Friend of JET)**

心臓をドキドキしながら、  
shinzo wo doki doki shinagara  
あるピーナツ君が線路の上に座っていた。  
aru piinattsu-kun ga senro no ue ni suwatte ita  
そしたら 6:15 に シューポーポー シュー  
ポーポー  
soshitara 6:15 ni shupopo shupopo  
ピーナツバター出来上がり。  
piinattsu bataa dekiagari

# あなたを活かす、シゴトと出会う。

あなたの人柄・才能を活かした  
オシゴト探しを  
パソナはお手伝いします。

[www.pasona.com](http://www.pasona.com)  
[www.pasonamic.com](http://www.pasonamic.com)  
info@pasona.com  
info@pasonamic.com

**Pasona NA/  
New York**

Tel 212 661 5110

**South Bay**

Tel 310 324 1196

**Los Angeles**

Tel 213 489 2989

**Orange County**

Tel 949 752 9201

**Atlanta**

Tel 404 848-9221

**San Jose /San Francisco**

Tel 408 452 1557

**Toronto**

Tel 416 867 1162

**Pasona MIC/  
Chicago**

Tel 312-640-5647

**Detroit**

Tel 248-351-1711

**Cincinnati**

Tel 513-247-6193

**Nashville**

Tel 615-355-4955



P A S O N A

# PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

JUNE 21, 2008



*Keynote speaker Randall David Cook drops some wisdom, perspective and humor on the new JETs*



*New JETs absorb the collective wisdom of JETAA NY*



*Nelson Wan, Chau Lam, Nick Cook and Dawn Mostow (who apparently were very thirsty)*



*Sarah Kravitz and Marianne Nieman discuss the high school teaching experience*



*Nancy Ikehara and Monica Yuki stoically address life as a city-slickin' JET*



*JLGC Crew in the house: Kobayashi-san, Nakazono-san and the back of Bando-san*



*New JETs demonstrate the correct, and incorrect, ways to be photographed in Japan*



*Lee-Sean gettin' post-modern with the elevator mirror*



*"So they just let him publish this every three months?!"*

# BOHEMIAN BEER GARDEN

JULY 19, 2008



*The Jetaany Twins!  
(Megan & Monica!)*



*Lee-Sean Huang, Cindy Hoffman and  
Amanda Sidebottom*



*Kielbasa, sauerkraut and fries  
(Prague-shi, 2008)*



*“Kampai!!!” says Secretary Meredith Wutz, with her  
fiancée on one side and a new JET who is not her fian-  
cée on the other side*



*“CHEEEEEEE-ZZU!”*



*Monica Yuki, Scott Hiniker, Keiko Mitsunaga and Jenn  
Olayon surround and comfort an enthusiastic new JET*



*Monica Yuki, Kathryn Knell and Susan Krulic work in tandem  
to refrain from making the peace sign*

“Sports” continued from page 10

a team, not because of certain individuals. For someone like me who was never good enough to enter a sports team in high school, they showed me that supporting each other made winning so much sweeter.

**Emily Wong (Mie-ken, 2004-06)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Story #1:** At my first Sports Day I was recruited to run one of the legs for the teachers in the 100m relay. The rest of the teachers were fairly slow, and we were a bit behind the students when my turn came. I run pretty fast, and I took off, and passed two to three teams during my lap. We ended losing pretty bad nonetheless, but it was fun. After the event, however, one of the teachers pulled me aside and told me that we weren't supposed to pass the kids—we were supposed to let them win. Oops.

**Story #2:** I played for an adult baseball league on occasion. One of the

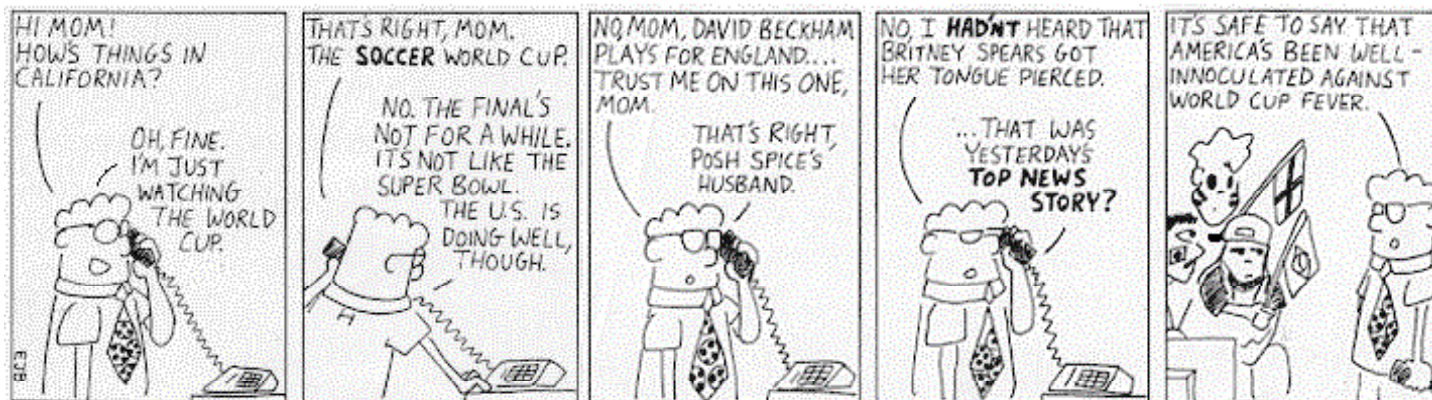
The week was electric, and on the morning of the first match, I was graciously permitted to run around in the bleachers before they were graced by their first-ever spectators.

At week's end, after three matches and countless 50-yen bottles of Aquarius (Coca-Cola was a sponsor), I bid *sayonara* to my courteous hosts. As a parting gift, the press manager presented me with a giant-sized official World Cup promotional poster, which featured a dreamy watercolor of Kobe Port Tower superimposed over a vast blue ocean.

“Justin-san, thank you for your hard work in making Kobe City everybody's city,” he bowed.

I bowed back, and the framed poster hangs in my living room today.

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



Copyright Earth Bennett “Every Situation Is Different” [www.angelfire.com/comics/esid/archive.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/comics/esid/archive.htm)

reasons I love Japan—baseball, not softball, and 70-year-olds are out there trying to hit the pitches (and they occasionally succeed). This isn't a great story, I just always thought it was funny that we were named “Bubbles.”

**Story #3:** One night I went out to karaoke with my soccer team. It turns out they liked to play a drinking game where they light each other's pubic hair on fire. Burning hair smells gross.

**Anonymous**

\*\*\*\*\*

It was just another ordinary day at the office when my *bucho* slid a glossy photo over my desk.

“That's Wing Stadium, Kobe City's new venue for this summer's World Cup,” he said. “We want you to go there during match week to help promote the city to international visitors.”

Then the day stopped being ordinary.

Tickets for the World Cup had been sold out before I even knew what the JET Programme was, and now I had an all-access pass!

The year Japan co-hosted the World Cup with Korea was the year that everyone suddenly became a soccer fan. All the men could explain what an indirect free kick was, and all the women were crazy about David Beckham. Japan constructed seven new stadiums across the country just for the occasion, and bright and early one sunny morning in June, I followed the city's bilingual public transportation signs to the stadium, which curiously instructed me to “get it on” from the central station.

My job was to hang out in a special press pit below the pitch, where my natural enthusiasm for Kobe (as well as being relieved from rank-and-file office work for a full week) translated beautifully. One memorable encounter involved a pair of French journalists—one asked me questions in his native tongue, which his colleague translated into English for me, which I then in turn translated into Japanese for the press manager.

As part of my job as a CIR, I would visit elementary schools once or twice a week in order to introduce the students to American culture. The pattern was usually the same every time: a presentation in Japanese about New York for one or two different classes, followed by lunch with one of the groups and then spending recess together. For the most part, the game of choice during the break was dodgeball. It could be played indoors in the gym on rainy days or outdoors on the field when the weather was nice, and the kids loved it like nothing else! Thinking back to my elementary school days, I remember being a big fan of kickball and not having played dodgeball as often. But my time in Japan quickly got me up to speed.

In the beginning I was amazed at the strength of the students, no matter how tiny they seemed, and how fearlessly even the most mild-mannered ones would take out the *gaijin sensei!* But over my three years on JET, I was determined to master dodgeball in order to gain some cred with the kiddies. Every visit I was less worried about how my presentation would go than how my skills would be on the dodgeball court! Sure enough, over time it took longer and longer for them to eliminate me, and I even got some kids out myself (which I felt bad about until my pint-sized teammates cheered in joy).

After each school visit we usually received thank-you letters from the students, which tended to go into detail regarding what they had enjoyed about our time together. Initially these notes would include the same generic message of “I learned a lot about New York,” but once my inner dodgeball goddess came out the students would write things like, “You rock at dodgeball!” and “I wish you had been on my team.” Who would have figured that the international language of exchange was not English but dodgeball?

**Stacy Smith (Kumamoto-ken, 2002-03)**

\*\*\*\*\*

One night over a few drinks with colleagues I'd casually mentioned that I'd played tennis at the varsity level in high school. And before I could slur out

“Sports” continued on page 15

“Sports” continued from page 14

the words “shibaraku yatte inai kedo,” I was recruited on to the company’s tennis team.

The following weekend, I found myself with several colleagues and families at the company’s research center in Kanagawa-ken, home to two weather-beaten asphalt courts. As I was the newest recruit and the team’s first-ever *gaijin* member, I was greeted with much enthusiasm and called upon to play in the first doubles match of the day. I was paired with my colleague, Yuko. I quickly asked her about tennis terminology and was pleased to find out that it is basically the same as what I’m accustomed to: Love, 30, 40, deuce, advantage receiver/server. Great, I should be able to get through a game without miscommunication. Or, so I thought.

In my inaugural doubles match, I’m paired with my colleague, Yuko. I recall one rally when she glared at a ball as it sailed out-of-bounds. She veered up and shouted back at our opponents, “*Wan-boorudesu!*”

I turned to her, “Huh, ‘one ball’?”

She returned the quizzical look on my face, “It looked a little long to me...”

When I’d inquired further, it was explained to me that, in the Japanese tennis vernacular, the expression “one ball” is used to describe a ball that goes out-of-bounds by a narrow – one ball! – margin. And there you have it. My first brush with tennis *gairaigo*, or loanwords.

Over the next few months of practice, I’d come across some more English-based terminology. Here are a few gems for the uninitiated:

Romaji	Origin	Meaning/Usage
<i>Foa</i>	Fore	Forehand
<i>Bakku</i>	Back	Backhand
<i>Jasuto, jasuto!</i>	Just, just!	Used to describe a ball just out of bounds. Never means just in.
<i>Wan-boo(ru)!</i>	One ball!	Used to describe a ball a mere one-ball margin out of bounds.
<i>Don-mai!</i>	Don’t mind!	Never mind! No worries!
<i>Naisu-wocchi!</i>	Nice watch!	Used when a teammate allows a ball to sail out of bounds, untouched, by a small margin.
<i>Naisu-kyaa(cchi)!</i> <i>Naisshoo(tto)!</i> <i>Naisaa(bu)!</i> <i>Naisu-bolee!</i>	Nice catch! Nice shot! Nice serve! Nice volley!	As is.

Not-so-surprisingly, once I committed these common expressions to memory, I was able to communicate with little difficulty during play. I’ll admit that my colleagues and I had many a good laugh over the use of such loanwords, with a handful of teammates going as far as changing their speech to reflect more standard English, much to my dismay. But those experiences served up on the tennis court allowed me to gain a broader insight into the culture and the actual spoken language that would have been difficult to attain otherwise. For this, I am truly grateful to my former colleagues and teammates at Tosoh Corporation.

Nancy Ikehara (Yokohama-shi, 1994-97)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Note:** The following submissions were received after the deadline (or were submitted by the editor of this publication) and were not eligible for consideration in the judging.

\*\*\*\*\*



It was no coincidence that I was on JET during the 2002 World Cup. I’ve been obsessed with the game of soccer since I was eight years old and nothing is more thrilling to an avid fan than watching the World Cup live.

Through the ticket lottery, I was able to purchase seats to four first round games but was locked out of the much-coveted quarter and semi-finals. I had resigned myself to watching the Brazil-England quarter final on TV when my friend called with truly wonderful news. He had just broken up with his girlfriend and wanted to sell me her ticket to the match.

Not believing my good fortune, I immediately said yes and then called Akamine-san, my colleague at Kibogaoka JHS, to say that I would only have time to teach my first class the next day as I had to catch a train for Shizuoka at 10:00 AM. The next day, as I prepared to leave my school, I said the obligatory “*shitsurei shimasu*” but was met with silence from my fellow teachers. Eventually, the *kocho-sensei* broke the silence and said, “Lyle-san, escape. Soccer *baka*.” And shook his head in dismay.

Lyle Sylvander (Yokohama-shi, 2001-03)

\*\*\*\*\*

I joined a *shorinji kempo* club in my town and, despite countless hours of practice, never reached a point where I actually felt confident fighting another human being. That didn’t stop my *sensei* from entering me in a local tournament that involved sparring. It was all relatively mild and controlled - we wore head and chest protectors, and points were scored by making contact with a punch or kick to the chest protector or a kick to the head. But even then, it was more about making contact than knocking out your opponent.

I have to be honest here and say that I really don’t like the idea of getting hit in the face. (Maybe it has something to do with my “high” nose.) So when my opponent’s punch accidentally caught my face, I was suddenly gripped with a fear that quickly converted to anger, and I started using that anger to attack my opponent (though not necessarily with success).

At the end of the round, my club mates (all Japanese) were chuckling and saying to me, “Exciting *shorinji!*” And I realized that my reaction was embarrassment. Why? Because I had lost control and lost my cool. I had turned to the Dark Side of the Force.

I believe that back in the U.S. my reaction would have been acceptable. But I realized that in Japan, people rarely competed in that way. I thought of professional soccer matches I’d watched between Japan and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran. In those games, while their opponents faked injuries and complained to the refs, I remember noticing and realizing that the Japanese players did not. They had too much pride, and perhaps confidence, to complain or fake an injury.

Thinking back, I still shudder a bit with self-consciousness at the way I responded. That kind of unchecked aggression just seems so....American.

*Side note:* The *gi* for *shorinji kempo* is like a karate *gi* except for the Shinto temple symbol on the chest that looks similar to the Nazi sign. I can’t tell you how much my parents appreciated the video footage I sent home of their nice Jewish son fighting while wearing a “swastika.”

Steven Horowitz (Aichi-ken, 1992-94)

“Sports” continued on page 17

"JETAANY Society" continued from page 5

21. Beer glasses were raised and *o-tsukare samas* exchanged for an event well done. And thanks to **Randall David Cook**, who had everyone rolling in the aisles with his Pre-D keynote speech, we learned how salsa dancing with your boss can build bridges. An excellent way to finish the day. The post-Pre-D *nijikai*/download-ing session was held at **Five Guys** burger joint down the block. (That's the second *nijikai* with no alcohol or karaoke. Have we no pride?)...**JAPAN DAY:** Sunday, June 1 saw the second annual **Japan Day in Central Park**. This year they had room for the 40,000+ people who came out. The Japan Day 4-Mile Run included **Reiko Tosa**--Japan's entrant for the **Beijing Olympics Marathon**--and, more importantly, the JLGC's own **Shinya Bando** and JETAA NY Social Coordinator **Monica Yuki** (both of whom will be running the NYC Marathon come November.) **HappyFunSmile**, **Gaijin-a-Go-Go**, **Soh Daiko** and others were all out in force. According to a non-JET source, there were also some random teenage karaoke people who didn't seem terribly talented, but were subsequently mobbed by hundreds of people backstage cheering and trying to get their picture taken with them. "They were apparently some kind of huge stars back in Japan. I'll never understand the whole J-pop thing!".....

**GARDEN OF GOOD BEER:** 40-some JETs, new JETs and FOJs turned out July 19 and took up six tables for the annual happy hour at the **Bohemian Beer Garden** in **Astoria-cho**. One determined attendee took a bus nearly three hours to be there. Was it worth it? As one JET alum said, "How can you not have an awesome day at the beer garden with the pitchers of Spaten flowing, kielbasa and bratwurst? I'm already wanting to go back."....And as is the tradition, **Ambassador Motoatsu Sakurai** once again graciously invited us to his home on E. 67th St. on July 25 for the reception to see off the new JETs, who promptly departed the next day. The ambassador kicked off the evening with appropriate ceremonial comments and diplomatically disregarded the bubbling cell phone ring of a JET alum (who later reported that it was actually an event reminder to remind her of the reception). JETAA NY **President Megan Miller** then followed with fresh and insightful words of for the new JETs to prepare them for their physical and spiritual journey to Japan. Though **Kat Barnas** and **Cindy Hoffman** may have thought they mistakenly joined a reception for the Greco-American Exchange Program when their tardy entrance coincided with the new JET **Theodore Heart's** heartfelt speech covering the tale of **Icarus**. In all, over 30 JET alums attended, including former **Secretaries Clara Solomon** and **Ryan Chan**, **Ann Koller**, **Kia Cheleen**, **Lawrence Sage**, **Chau Lam**, recent Florida import **Zina Boyd**, **Randall David Cook** (with his lovely and very impressed mother), **Monica Yuki** and **Vice Prez Shree Kurlakar** (who admitted to a bit of a crush on the always-charming Ambassador.) The Consulate's **Noriko Furuhashi** did an outstanding job of organizing and entertaining, as always, and the **JLGC Crew** was out in full force as well to make the event run smoothly. *O-sewa sama deshita* as well to the catering staff, for among the tasty melange of foods available, the secret highlight was the *sato-imo*. *Cho-beri natsukashii deshout!*....**UNDERGROUND HAPPY HOUR:** The happy hour circuit concluded on July 31 at the **Underground Bar** (2nd Ave. and 33rd St.), promoted by **Monica** as "perhaps the cheapest bar in Manhattan." (She knows the JET pressure points well. That's why she's the Social Coordinator.) 20-some JET alums and FOJs took over the back garden, including special guests **Noriko Hino** and some of the **NY de Volunteer crew**. **Saitama-ken** was particularly well represented by **Susan**, **Nick** and **Naomi** as well as **Kozue** and **Ryo**. Also, a surprise cameo appearance from **Ben Lang**, now a Tokyo resident back in NYC for 4 days. A big *omedetou* to Ben who is getting married in both Japan and Ohio in the fall (presumably to the same woman in each instance.)

**JETWORKING:** JETAA NY journalist **Stacy Smith** was recently seen at **Yankee Stadium**, serving as interpreter for a special Japanese tour group....JET alum **Mike Hart** and his wife Angelina, creators of **The Little Travelers** video series (which started in Japan) just put out their third DVD--the **United Kingdom**--and are heading for **Iran** in October to begin filming the fourth. For more info, go to **thelittletravelers.com**. And in case you're looking for a recommendation, my boss and your Newsletter editor **Steven Horowitz** reports that not only did his 4-year-old niece request multiple viewings of the Japan episode, but he believes the video might actually make a good primer for new JETs....**B.J. Hill**, the JET alum walking across the U.S. to bring a mes-

sage to our new President (U.S., not JETAA), is currently in Missouri and will be in St. Louis, southwestern Illinois, Kentucky, western Tennessee, northeastern Mississippi, northern Alabama, northwest Georgia, Atlanta, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia over the next month or so. Can you offer a bed? A hot meal? Check out his blog at <http://walkamerica2008.blogspot.com> and get in touch with him....Former JETAA DC Newsletter editor **Jemelyn Taco** is off to Japan to do a **Mansfield Fellowship** program....JET alum **James Kennedy** from Chicago has a new novel, **The Order of Odd-Fish**, set to be published by **Random House** in August....JET alum **Ariel Shearman** was seen pounding the *taiko* drums for **Soh Daiko** on July 13 for **O-bon Day** at **Bryant Park** and then July 18 at **Prospect Park** in Brooklyn for **Celebrate Brooklyn**....**Hisataka Hiragochi** left the **Japan National Tourist Organization's** US office in June for a new assignment in Japan....**Dawn Mostow** recently lectured at **Kinokuniya** on **Yokai Day** and will begin a new job teaching at **The School for Democracy and Leadership** in Crown Heights, Brooklyn in September....Board of Director member **Shannan Spisak** started a new job at the **Institute for International Education** as a Program Officer in the Scholarship & Training Division.... And JETAA Pacific Northwest Newsletter editor **Jennifer Wascher** just moved to Portland, OR from Seattle to assume the position of Housing Director at the University of Portland....



VP Shree with her favorite Ambassador

**I SURVIVED A BAD REALITY SHOW ABOUT A JAPANESE GAME SHOW:**

JET alum opinion on this show that came out in June was a metaphorical shoulder shrug. A cliché cast of reality characters, less than insightful comments from the contestants, and little focus on the cross-cultural interactions that might have given the show a bit more depth. Then again, that *is* the formula for a successful show on network TV, *deshout!*....**TOKYO SUBPRIME JOB MARKET:** JETAA Eastern Japan reported a successful Job Fair in Tokyo in June with over 200 current and former JETs in attendance as well as over 20 companies. But they also noted that, "Sadly, the job market with foreign multi-nations has weakened greatly due to the subprime crisis. Some major investment banks have sent home hundreds of expatriates in the past months." Looks like next year's JETs may have more *ganbatte*-ing to do when they start their job searches. Here's a call to all alums to do what we can to help them out



I Somehow Survived a Season on Network TV

**ACHI-KOCHI-DOKODEMO:** The JET Alum community was saddened to hear of the death of **Hirokazu Sano**, 48, owner of Japanese bakery and lunch spot **Café Zaiya**, in a fire at his home in Leonia, NJ on July 23. He is survived by his wife and children, who were in Japan at the time....On July 19, Newsletter ad rep, cartoonist and frequent contributor **Earth Bennett** celebrated his recent birthday in island style, starting at **Governors Island** and moving it up to the **West Village**. From there, several JET alums in attendance moved on to the **Bohemian Beer Garden** happy hour.....June 7 found former Vice Prez **Rosie Defremery** celebrating in *natsukashii* style at **Village Yoko-cho** followed by karaoke at **Sing Sing** at St. Marks Place....Former Prez **Jenn Olayon** was spotted having a mini-Nagasaki reunion in style on July 26 with fellow alums **Charles** and **Lana**, starting off with German wine at **Cafe Sabarsky** (at 10:30 in the morning?!) followed by burgers at **Le Parker Meridien**....Back to birthdays, celebrating their 40th (stop looking so horrified, it's going to happen to you too someday) are former JETAA NY officer and Country Rep **Nicole Bongiorno** (May) and former NY webmaster and current Great Lakes Chapter Prez **Scott Norman** (June)....Meanwhile, **Lawrence Sage** just announced that he and his wife are expecting their first child in December. *Mazel tov gozaimashita!*



Soh Daiko

**YOU DIDN'T ASK BUT....**The June 17 issue of **Time** magazine contained an article titled "**Japan's Booming Sex Niche: Elder Porn.**" Just something for JET alums to keep in mind as they grow older and seek new and exciting opportunities for intercultural "exchange.".... Or, if that doesn't do it for you, there's always a **Robot Girlfriend for \$175 from Sega Toys**, as reported by **Weird Asian News**. Targeted at lonely adult men, the report speculates that Sega made the robot so small because the men who could afford a life-size version would just get the real thing....Many of you likely saw **Saturday Night Live's** Japanese parody of **The Office** a couple months ago. But only a true



"JETAANY Society" continued on page 17



*"Tokyo à la Mode" continued from page 7*

JET Programme that prepared me for starting up my Web site other than just learning more about Japan. I do wish I studied the Japanese language harder, though. While I lived in Japan, I decided that I wanted to make a career about cross-cultural communication, basically showing people back home in the States what I enjoyed so much about Japan and Asia.

**JT:** How would you describe the brand of your site?

**BO:** Tokyo à la Mode's brand is "cute and cool." The more I got into this project, the more I realized there is a huge market for all things *kawaii*. It is comparable to men who grew up with comic books and as adults still have this obsession with Batman. I think that women are beginning to realize that just because they're older now, they don't have to give up being cute. Instead of Batman, their icon is Hello Kitty. And "cool" because I wanted to focus more on what makes Japan cool, not just the bizarre or otaku-centric.

**JT:** Have you had any surprises in terms of what Americans like from "cool Japan" compared to Japanese?

**BO:** With all the popularity of "cool Japan" there are very few Japanese people that have become famous or popular here in America. Puffy AmiYumi got close, but that came from being cartoon characters. The language barrier is a definite problem for Japanese talent to make it in the U.S., although Hikaru Utada bombed, even though she speaks English.

Also, there is a myth that persists about Japanese people that they want to be "American" because they wear Western-style clothing, eat Big Macs and listen to rock or hip hop. I don't believe that's completely true. Take American kids who watch animé and wear Japanese street style: are they trying to be Japanese? I'm



Bobby Okinaka (left) poses with Hello Kitty

not so sure. But I was surprised to see American kids recording themselves singing Japanese songs on YouTube. That's pretty cool.

**JT:** What kind of challenges do you face running Tokyo à la Mode?

**BO:** The challenge for me in doing this project is that I'm based in Los Angeles and not Tokyo. Luckily, there are plenty of Japanese things here in Los Angeles that I can cover. Also, I use the Internet to look for stories, but my Japanese isn't fluent, so I'm not able to read much. It's also very hard for me as a writer to write for a twenty-year-old female. So I end up just putting together very short articles.

**JT:** What are your future plans for the site?

**BO:** I think it's a good idea to add a Web store and even make some T-shirts featuring retro Japanese girls' comics. But I'm just too spread out to really give that effort the proper attention that it requires. It's hard enough for me to update Tokyo à la Mode on a weekly basis. Surprisingly, while I've received a lot of help on this project, I'm not working on it with anyone else. But I'm a very collaborative-type person, so I don't know why I have trouble in finding partners. Probably because no one wants to work for free! Hopefully Tokyo à la Mode can grow into something. If not, my backup plan is to move to a place where there are no Japanese people and open a Japanese toy store selling Gloomy Bear and Domo-kun goods for the girls and Gundam robots for the boys.

*Domo domo, Bobby!*

*We'll see you in fashion cyberspace.*

You can learn more about Bobby Okinaka at [www.myspace.com/okinaka](http://www.myspace.com/okinaka).

*"Sports" continued from page 15*

\*\*\*\*\*

I tried out for the Colby College hockey team, but before I could get cut on account of talent, they cut me because my right shoulder, dislocated two years before while wrestling with my own teammate, was deemed to be, in medical terms, "too weak."

When I arrived for a three-year stint as an AET in Kariya-shi, Jeff, a friend on JET, and I joined a team in Nagoya. We were surprised to find that the level of play was pretty high, especially the guys from Hokkaido. Jeff and I were placed on a line with Terry, from Canada, and we became a bona fide *gaijin* line. We dominated the league (I embellish, but who is going to fact check this?).

Then, in February of 1994, six years after being cut from the Colby team for shoulder weakness, it happened. This little guy on our team, Fukami, nudged me while my arm was extended towards an elusive puck, and out it came. (My shoulder, not the puck.) Apparently, being cut from the Colby team hadn't been incentive enough to actually strengthen my shoulder. Brilliant.



I was sweaty and groggy as my coach drove me to Mizutani *Byouin* in downtown Nagoya. It was after hours, so a real doctor was not present. A scruffy looking fellow with sneakers was present, though, and he stuck his shoe in my armpit and started yanking. I squeezed the nurse's hand hard, as if I could relocate my shoulder by dislocating her fingers. My armpit started to bleed from his shoe. Jeff said my screams, which he heard echoing through the halls of the hospital, reminded him of genocide. Really, he said that. After a second unsuccessful attempt, I learned a new Japanese word: *masui* (i.e., anesthesia). Even with *masui*, the shoulder would not go in. They called a real doctor, and 20 minutes later I was signing a special document for those too wimpy to weather the storm like a true *nihonjin*. I signed my life away, gladly, and after being administered an obscene amount of anesthesia (by Japanese standards), I blanked out and woke up with an arm intact.

Scott Alprin (Aichi-ken, 1992-95)

*"JETAANY Society" continued from page 16*

JET alum would notice some of the *bimyo* points, e.g., No one says "moshi-moshi" in a professional setting, and staplers aren't called *stei-pura*, but rather *hocchu-kissu* after the Hotchkiss company that originally introduced the stapler to Japan. (*Domo-domo* to Earth-san for pointing those out.)....And in case you missed it, **Hello Kitty** was named Japan's tourism ambassador to Hong Kong and China. Kind of funny given that she has no mouth.

That's all for this edition of JETAANY Society, sports fans. Until



next time, keep your chin up, your elbows down and don't take your eye of the JETAANY ball.

Got something to share for the next column? E-mail it to [Yoku Shiteiru at yokushiteiru@jetaany.org](mailto:Yoku Shiteiru@jetaany.org).



*"Yankees" continued from page 4*

teresting and exciting. Everyone loves them! They're one of the most well-known brands in Japan and the world, and people are especially crazy about baseball here. No matter who they are, everyone wants to talk about the Yankees! In this respect, finding sponsorship is relatively easy.

**SS: What's been the most challenging aspect of your job?**

**GR:** The need to be on call 24/7. Because I am communicating with everyone back home, I get a lot of phone calls from NY at midnight and other late hours. Very often I have to work on their schedule. I came here with my family so in a way this can be tough. My son is two and half so I'll see him for dinner and then go back to working once he goes to sleep. I think it's harder for my wife because she doesn't speak Japanese so when I am busy it can be a bit isolating for her.

**SS: What is it like being back in Japan after all this time?**

**GR:** Well, it had been 19 years ago that I last lived here so it was a real hiatus! But I love being back. The people are nice and it's an easy place to live, let alone the food being awesome! When I was in the States I spoke Japanese and worked for Japanese companies, but it is still not the same as being in Japan again and being immersed in the culture here. To tell the truth, I am really into the *o-warai* (comedy) TV genre and watch all those goofy TV shows. They are slapstick and stupid, but I really enjoy them. My favorite celebrity used to be Beat Takeshi, but now I'm into popular comedian Yoshio Kojima who appears in a small bathing suit saying "*Sonna no kankei nee!*" ("What does that matter?"). I also like Downtown. But if you think about it, *o-warai* talent are the same as the convenience store *onigiri* here. You can find new flavors every week!

**SS: Are you in touch with any JET alums?**

**GR:** In Tokyo I do tend to see many former JETs. For example, the other day I gave a presentation at the American Chamber of Commerce that had been organized by the young professionals committee, which is headed by two former JETs. In addition, when I was done speaking, about four or five people in the audience came up to me and introduced themselves as former JETs. So you never know where they are going to appear! It's great to have that connection.

**SS: You were one of the initial JETs when the program first started in the**

*"Trademark" continued from page 6*

Meanwhile, during JET I was known as the "*kanji otaku*," and I had started working on a method to teach *kanji* to Westerners just after finishing JET. When I became a lawyer, I still had the *kanji* itch, and through connections at American University, was asked to give a lecture at Maryland University on my breakthrough method (now simply a broken method, gaining dust in my closet).

Mr. Hattori, my old tennis buddy, allowed me to pursue this *kanji* obsession, as long as I got my work done. The audience at Maryland was filled with Japanese professors, including a woman who ran marathons with a group called Achilles Track Club, a group dedicated to helping disabled runners participate in general running events. I had run my first marathon the year before. After the lecture, she asked if I'd like to join Achilles and help a Japanese runner in the New York Marathon. I was like, "YES!"

That autumn, I was partnered with Kazu, a blind runner who had flown in from

**late '80s. What was that like?**

**GR:** I was in a very small town in Fukushima and there had only been one guy there before me. Being in the countryside gives you a lot of opportunities to speak Japanese! I'm not sure what it's like now, but at the time I was the only American. Before I went on JET I was actually a teacher at a public middle school in Brooklyn, so working in Japan was my second job and I spent two years there. Japanese people are great, because as you know they invite you out all the time. I literally could have been doing something every night of the week! Back in the day, there were about 35 JETs scattered around the prefecture. But thinking about it now, we were really limited in terms of having no Internet, no cable TV, and there was barely even satellite. As a result, I watched a lot of Japanese TV, which helped my language skills. However, even though I limited my calls home to only a couple of hours a month, due to KDD's monopoly on phone service my bill was always somewhere around \$350! I chalked that up to the cost of living in Japan, but communications were few and far between compared to today.



*George Rose with Yankees captain Derek Jeter in the locker room after winning the 1998 World Series*

**SS: What was it like when you returned home after finishing JET? Did JETAA exist in New York yet?**

**GR:** It did and I was president of the group in the early to mid-'90s. Thanks to JETAA, we all became friends after getting back home, and we did many of the same things you enjoy today like *nomikai*. The annual softball tournament with Japanese companies is something we started in the early '90s! I heard JETAA finally received non-profit status. That application process was something I started back then though we weren't officially recognized at the time. The highlight of my tenure as president was when Japan's emperor and empress visited NY and there was a reception for them at Japan Society. About 40 JETs were invited to attend, and they held the function in the room off the lobby. I got to greet them at the door as I was President, so that was pretty thrilling. At the reception there was a portion called, "What Are JETs Doing Now?" and we had made a slide show for that. After the usual speeches we made a reception line which the Emperor and Empress went down and chatted individually with each person.

*Thanks for chatting with us, George.  
And good luck in your quest for another World Series ring this year!*



*Scott walks his new bride Ani through the Metro turnstiles in D.C. (Photo courtesy of the Washington Post)*

Tokyo. Team Kazu consisted of Kazu, myself, and two other runners. We navigated him through the streets of New York, alternating rope duty. I offered helpful advice to him in Japanese, like "POTHOLE, KI WO TSUKETE!"

By about mile 24, I was done. I was, in fact, behind the blind runner. Kazu urged me to fight on. Then, the cramping in both legs began. I persevered, running with the gait of a man on stilts. We crossed the finish line, and all hugged. HELL, it had been, but it was one of the happiest moments of my life.

I've run with Kazu in seven straight New York Marathons, and it has never been as painful, or as fulfilling, as the first time. Last year, after the race, I proposed to my girlfriend, and Kazu and his wife met us during our dinner to congratulate us later that night.

So, my sporting adventures in my post-JET life have been linked to Japan, as has my legal career and my status as "guy who helps guide a blind Japanese man in the New York Marathon." Kazu and his wife attended my wedding this May. So did Mr. Hattori.

# EMINENT DOMAIN

Photographer Ethan Levitas (Nagano-ken, 1993-94)  
Is Quietly Featured at the New York Public Library



WHEN: May 2 - August 29 (FREE)

WHERE: New York Public Library, 5th Ave & 42nd St., First Floor

We last heard from **Ethan Levitas** (Nagano-ken, 1993-94) in Winter 2003 when we interviewed him in connection with his *Conversation Continued* project, which he began in 1998. He had created a textbook called *Conversations About Identity* to be used in Japanese schools. The book consisted of photographic portraits by Ethan of Americans from around the U.S., such as a Southern Baptist, a Native American and a Hells Angel-style biker, among others. Students were asked to select a pair of photos and then have a conversation about whether the people in the photos were more similar or different from each other as well as from the student.

Now Ethan's own identity has evolved, as his name is one of five on a large banner hanging from the front of the **New York Public Library** in connection with the *Eminent Domain* photography exhibit on display until August 29. (The exhibit has been profiled by PBS, the *New York Times* and *New Yorker* magazine.) Concurrently, his work, titled *This is Just to Say*, is also on display in a solo exhibit at the **Grandes Hall in Arles, France** from July 8 through September 14.

According to the exhibit web site, *Eminent Domain* "presents selections from the work of five New York-based artists who have recently created large photographic projects that take on the theme of the modern city." The exhibit theme was inspired by public outcry in response to proposed NYC regulations to require a permit and liability insurance for anyone wishing to take photographs or film in the streets of NYC.

**For more information, go to:**

*Eminent Domain* exhibit web site: <http://www.nypl.org/research/calendar/exhib/hssl/hsslexhibdesc.cfm?id=462>

Ethan Levitas: [www.elprojects.com](http://www.elprojects.com)

Winter 2003 Newsletter interview with Ethan: [http://jetaany.org/newsletter\\_files/winter%202003.pdf](http://jetaany.org/newsletter_files/winter%202003.pdf)



*Top: Photo from This is Just to Say exhibit. Left: Takashi Murakami, taken by Ethan for a New Yorker article. Middle: Cover photo for Conversations Continued textbook. Right: Portrait of an American from Conversations Continued textbook.*

Pop Culture Beat

# Beyond Typical

## A Conversation with Japanese Music Star Hiromi

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

Madonna. Bono. Prince. Hiromi. If you don't quite know who that last one is, here's your chance.

Born in 1979 and raised in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka prefecture, **Hiromi Uehara** is usually categorized as a jazz or fusion artist, though she refuses to label her music. Introduced to classical piano at age six, Hiromi gave her first public performance at age 12, and played with legendary pianist Chick Corea at one of his concerts in Tokyo before her 18th birthday.

In 1999, after a few years of paying dues writing jingles for corporate Japan, Hiromi came to the U.S. to continue her studies at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston. It was there that she met veteran jazz bassist Richard Evans, who in 2003 co-produced her Telarc Records debut album *Another Mind*. Consisting of all-original tunes and performed as a trio, the album was a launching pad to international acclaim and awards for the young pianist with speedy fingers.

Hiromi recorded three more albums, each more complex than the last, forming her own band, **Hiromi's Sonicbloom**. Consisting of Tony Grey on bass, Martin Valihora on drums, David Fiuczynski on guitar, and Hiromi on piano and keyboards, the group recorded Hiromi's fifth and latest album, *Beyond Standard*, released in June.

*Beyond Standard* takes a novel approach to the usual "covers album," featuring compositions as diverse as Debussy's "Claire de Lune," John Coltrane's reinvention of "My Favorite Things," a scorching rendition of Jeff Beck's "Led Boots," and even "Ue Wo Muite Aruko" (commonly known as "Sukiyaki," Kyu Sakamoto's signature tune that topped the U.S. charts for three weeks in 1963, the only Japanese-language song to ever accomplish such a feat).

A part-time New York resident, Hiromi returned with Sonicbloom for a weeklong residency at Greenwich Village's **Blue Note** from July 22-27. Before catching her show, **Associate Editor Justin Tedaldi** (CJR Kobe-shi, 2001-02) asked about a few more of her favorite things.

**Justin Tedaldi: Why does jazz seem to be more popular, or at least more respected, in Japan compared to the U.S.?**

**Hiromi:** In Japan, they put jazz musicians on TV, and there are more opportunities for it to be introduced to the public, not just jazz lovers.

**JT: If you were to perform with two other noted musicians (one living, one dead), who would they be?**

**H:** Frank Zappa. I can't list living ones, since there are too many that I want to perform with.

**JT: Name an album that changed your life.**

**H:** *Concert by the Sea* by Erroll Garner [Live jazz trio recording from 1955 -ed.]

**JT: Is your style influenced by any Japanese musicians?**

**H:** Since I grew up in Japan, I also should be influenced by all kinds of music that I've heard, so of course, I should be.

**JT: Who's an artist that you recommend seeing live?**

**H:** Raul Midon. [American singer-songwriter/guitarist -ed.]

**JT: For those unfamiliar with your music, how would you describe each of your five albums?**

**H:** It's impossible for me put a name on it.

**JT: How did you choose the songs to cover for *Beyond Standard*?**

**H:** These are my favorite songs, songs that I have been listening to and playing for years.



**JT: Were there any songs you thought about including that ultimately didn't make the album?**

**H:** No.

**JT: This is your second album with your quartet Hiromi's Sonicbloom. Is there more improvisation in your recorded music compared to when you first started out, or are things more written out in advance for the rest of the group?**

**H:** For my music, the place where it's written is very much written out, but the place where it's not written is blank. Every performance is like a new journey.

**JT: What's the nicest compliment you've ever received from a fan?**

**H:** Music is up to someone's taste, so people can love your music or dislike your music, but people cannot forget you, that's for sure.

**JT: Name a Western artist who you wish was more well-known in Japan, and vice versa.**

**H:** Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Kaz Kumagai [Cuban jazz pianist and tap dancer -ed.]

**JT: You've been studying music since early childhood. How did you schedule learning another language at the same time?**

**H:** I did not study English at the same time, I learned it after I came to the U.S.

**JT: What places do you recommend checking out for first-time visitors to Hamamatsu?**

**H:** Green tea farms, Mount Fuji, and Yamaha's piano factory.

**JT: All JETs experience culture shock when they first go to Japan. Tell us a story about one of your own culture shocks in America.**

**H:** Men open doors for women.

**JT: What are some new places that you'd most like to visit on tour?**

**H:** A small Italian town with old history—so romantic!

**JT: Is there a difference in audience reaction between Japan and the U.S.?**

**H:** In Japan, people are more shy, but big smiles after a good performance is the same everywhere in the world.

**JT: Is there anything special you enjoy doing when you have free time here in the city?**

**H:** Walking around the Village to check out great music every night.

**JT: What can living in another country do for one's own music appreciation?**

**H:** Traveling a lot and getting to know another culture makes you reexamine some of your own beliefs, and I think your mind can be opened much more. Also, you can look at your own country from the outside, and love it even more.

**JT: What are your plans after this tour?**

**H:** Keep touring.

*Special thanks to Kelly Johannis-DiCillo with Telarc/Heads Up International for interview assistance. For more on Hiromi, visit [www.hiromimusic.com](http://www.hiromimusic.com).*

## Film Review

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

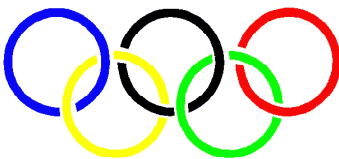
## TOKYO OLYMPIAD

In 1964, Tokyo became the first Asian city to host the Olympic games. Much like the imminent Beijing games, the tournament was meant to spotlight the rapidly rising economy of the host nation and officially welcome the country into the pantheon of the modern global economy.

Traditionally, every Olympics to that point had been filmed and recorded for posterity. The Tokyo Olympic Committee hired Japan's most eminent director, **Akira Kurosawa**, to direct what was to be his first and only documentary. During pre-production, however, the dictatorial director demanded complete control of the opening ceremonies and an acrimonious clash with the committee resulted in his dismissal.

**Kon Ichikawa** was hired as a replacement and, while his working relationship with his crew and the authorities was relatively stable, the finished product disappointed the commissioning officials. From over seventy hours of footage, Ichikawa created a formally innovative and idiosyncratic film modeled on **Leni Riefenstahl's** classic *Olympia* (filmed during the 1936 Berlin Olympics) rather than the conventional genre of more mainstream Olympic films and sports documentaries. Forcing Ichikawa to re-edit the film (in a two-hour version), the Olympic Committee and Toho Pictures released *Tokyo Olympiad* in 1965 and, despite attacks from both sides of the political spectrum, it became the highest grossing film in Japanese history. It was only recently, however, that Ichikawa's original cut was restored to its original three-hour length, and that version has finally been released on DVD by the **Criterion Collection**.

When viewed today, it's hard to imagine what upset so many critics in 1965. *Tokyo Olympiad* is a truly impressive spectacle, utilizing the work of 164 cameramen and 57 sound recordists to capture the events in stereo and in Cinemascope (both rare for a documentary). While Riefenstahl's film is more famous, Ichikawa's film definitely rivals hers in ambition and scope. By shooting in Cinemascope with telephoto lenses, Ichikawa paradoxically focuses on the individual athlete's intimate moments within the wide frame. The use of slow-motion and freeze-frames further aestheticizes the Olympic experience and makes for a much more profound visual experience than that of the typical sports television broadcasts. Rarely has the pain of intense athletic competition been so palpably captured on film--the audience really grasps the extreme limits to which these Olympians push themselves. One of the most stirring sequences involves a runner who finishes a race long after the winners have been announced--his personal pride and accomplishment bring the spectators to their feet. Another focuses on two African runners from the newly independent nations of Ethiopia and Chad who finish in first and second, respectively. What is even more remarkable is that these stylized sequences were filmed live at the games and required an extraordinary amount of logistical planning to capture them so clearly. Ichikawa once quipped that he had to plan



each and every camera set-up down to the most minute detail for he knew that his "actors" would not be available for second takes and re-shoots.

Apparently, Ichikawa's visual stylization is what most irked the Tokyo Olympic committee, which would have preferred a straightforward account of the games. Another caveat was the lack of Japanese patriotism in the film (although the Left criticized the final shot of the Olympic torch dissolving into a red setting sun as "ultranationalist"). Tokyo Olympiad's eschewing of politics and nationalism is, in many ways, "anti-Olympian" (especially in light of today's politicization). The camera rarely leaves the confines of the athletic competition and the entire gymnastic sequence is filmed within the confines of a pitch black background. It's as if the gymnasts are competing in some sort of abstract space devoid of Earthly politics. Even the city of Tokyo is unrepresented, except for a few opening shots of a wrecking ball clearing land for the Olympic stadium. Overall, Ichikawa's vision is a refreshing antidote to the grandiose quality that defines most of today's Olympics and sports coverage.



As expected, Criterion has released Tokyo Olympiad in a pristine print, preserving its vivid colors, multi-layered soundtrack and wide aspect ratio. There are a number of notable extra features, including voice-over narration by Peter Cowie, who serves not only as a film historian but an Olympic one as well; an interview with Ichikawa (who passed away last February) about the making of and controversy surrounding the film; and an article by noted sports columnist George Plimpton.

It is interesting to note that China has hired its most famous director, Zhang Yimou, to direct a film about the upcoming Beijing Olympics. Unlike Kurosawa, Zhang has been granted permission to stage the opening ceremonies as well. Working under the auspices of the Chinese communist party, it is doubtful that he will be able to avoid any political influence and achieve the singularity of Ichikawa's bold vision. Tokyo Olympiad is a must-see for those sports enthusiasts who truly value the elite competition that the Olympics are meant to celebrate irrespective of politics.



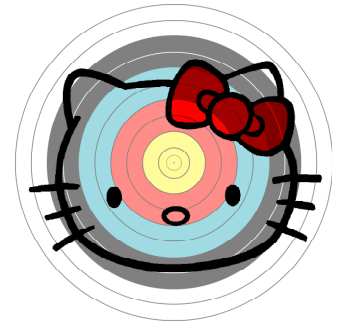
With the Summer Olympics in Beijing soon to begin, you may not have realized that the JET Program is hosting its own Olympics this summer, capitalizing on the special abilities of JET participants. Through our ubiquitous JET alumni contacts, we have obtained an advance list of...

## THE TOP 15 EVENTS IN THE JET OLYMPICS



Graphic by David Namisato

15. Post-nomikai Uneven Bars
14. 100-meter Read and Repeat
13. Shogakko Kancho Triple Jump
12. Obaasan Elbow Throw
11. 50-Meter Last Train Dash
10. July 4th Nathan's Nattou Eating Contest
9. Neighborhood Address Locating
8. Synchronized Chu-hai Swigging
7. Prefectural Meeting Marathon
6. Acting Busy Office Decathlon
5. 8-Hour Alone in the Teachers' Room Endurance Test
4. The Long Jump to Conclusions About the Size of Your Pole Vault
3. Three Words: Hello Kitty Archery
2. "What Am I Doing Here" Inner Wrestling
1. Playing ski



*\*Domo arigatou to JETAA Northern California newsletter editor Mark Frey, JETAA NY's associate editor Justin Tedaldi and webmaster Lee-Sean Huang along with the rest of the Brainstorm Crew.*

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN OTHER JETAA CHAPTERS?



### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Kayaking at Alamitos Bay in Long Beach, CA on August 9

### CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

Masquerade bowling event from 5pm in exotic Tuggeranong on August 3.



### PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Ichiro (and the Mariners) vs. Minnesota Twins on August 4.

### PORTLAND, OR

Monthly J-Kaiwa on August 7 at Bush Garden lounge. *Natsu-matsuri* theme. Wear your most festive Japanese attire – *yukata*, *happi* coat, *jinbe*, karate/judo gi, whatever!

### WELLINGTON, NZ

Nabe party on June 28. (Because it's winter down there.)



### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Family Day Picnic & Golf Disc Fundraiser on July 12.

**INDEX OF SPONSORS**With clickable  
hyperlinks!**STAFFING FIRMS****Actus Consulting**

19 West 44th Street, Suite 415  
(212) 575-7840 [www.actus-usa.com](http://www.actus-usa.com)  
*Ad on page 4*

**Bremar Staffing Professionals**

Grand Central Station  
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 660  
(212) 661-0909 [www.bremar.com](http://www.bremar.com)  
*Ad on page 3*

**Pasona NA, Inc.**

757 Third Avenue (Bet. 47th & 48 Sts)  
Suite 1901  
(212) 551-9583 [www.pasona.com](http://www.pasona.com)  
*Ad on page 11*

**Quick USA, Inc.**

551 5th Avenue, Suite 620  
(212) 692-0850 [www.919usa.com](http://www.919usa.com)  
*Ad on page 23*

**LANGUAGE SCHOOLS****Language House**

545 5th Ave  
(212) 949-5455  
<http://languagehouse-nyc.com>  
*Ad on page 5*

**HEY!**

Please tell our  
advertisers if you saw  
their ad in the JETAA NY  
Newsletter and/or click on  
their links to see their  
Websites.

**TRAVEL AGENTS****A-Kind, Inc.**

19 West 44th Street, Suite 415  
Online travel agency  
[www.a-kind.com](http://www.a-kind.com)  
*Ad on Back Page*

**Amnet New York**

152 West 57th street, 8th Floor  
(212) 247-1900 [www.amnet-usa.com](http://www.amnet-usa.com)  
*Ad on page 9*

**JALPAK International U.S.A., Inc.**

1212 Avenue of the Americas, 19th Floor  
(212) 850-7474 [www.jalpak.com](http://www.jalpak.com)  
*Ad on page 7*

**IACE Travel**

18 E. 41st St., 3rd Floor  
(212) 972-3200 [www.iace-asia.com](http://www.iace-asia.com)  
*Ad on page 6*

**Excellent Human  
Resource Solutions****[www.919usa.com](http://www.919usa.com)**

貴社の人材採用に際して、経験豊かな採用アドバイザーが、  
的確なヒューマンリソース・ソリューションを提供いたします。

**人材紹介・人材派遣****QUICK USA, INC.** 全米で人材サービスを提供**New York Office**

551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 620, New York, NY 10176

**Los Angeles Office**

19300 S. Hamilton Avenue, Suite 190, Gardena, CA 90248

Toll Free: **1-877-300-8808** E-mail: [quick@919usa.com](mailto:quick@919usa.com)

# JETAANY SHOPPING WO SHIMASHOU!!!

## http://jetaany.org/shop



T-shirts, Mugs, Buttons, Stickers, Ties and More! Click above to go directly to the web site.

# A-Kind

online travel agency

- ✈ Discount Airfare to Japan/Asia
- ✈ Flights originating from Japan
- ✈ Japan Domestic Airpass
- ✈ Japan Rail Pass

**CLICK TO FLY!!**

24/7 ONLINE BOOKING

# www.a-kind.com

Discount Tickets from USA to JAPAN!  
24/7 Real time searching  
Booking and Purchasing!

