

# Japan America Society of Minnesota



# 通 信

*The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota*

January 2019 Vol. 28, No. 1

## Recap: 2018 Annual Meeting/Bonenkai



*JASM President Marc Blehert speaking to attendees at the Annual Meeting*

On another chilly Minnesotan evening, Sakura Restaurant was filled with warm celebrations. On December 10, JASM's annual meeting took place, followed by our Bonenkai celebration.

To start off the annual meeting, outgoing JASM President Marc

Blehert welcomed attendees and introduced JASM Treasurer Shannon Meyer, who presented the financial report for 2018. Shannon was pleased to report a successful financial year for JASM. Members then elected new JASM board officers Bob Luck and Motoko Hioki, and Marc introduced Chris Armacost, who has taken the role of JASM's new board secretary since September. Lastly, he welcomed Elizabeth Fehrmann as the incoming JASM president.

Following Marc's introductions, Executive Director Rio Saito recognized the contributions of JASM's past board members and spoke about JASM's future.

JASM Vice President Elizabeth Fehrmann closed the meeting with her excitement as the incoming President and expressed her gratitude to Marc and the rest of JASM and its members.

Following the meeting, attendees were able to celebrate Bonenkai with food, drinks, and exciting conversations. Thank you to Sakura Restaurant for hosting our event and for the delicious meals.

A big thanks especially to those who came to this event and to the rest of our members whose contributions allow these events to happen!



*JASM Treasurer Shannon Meyer presenting the 2018 financial report*

## Happy New Year!



*2019 is the Year of the Boar*

明けましておめでとうございます！

**Thank you, JASM members, for all of your support.  
The Japan America Society of Minnesota wishes you and everyone a wonderful and happy new year!**

## Upcoming: Shinnenkai 2019

JASM is bringing the sights, tastes, and sounds of a Japanese New Year to Minnesota through our Shinnenkai celebration on Sunday, January 27, 2019.

**Sunday, January 27th, 2019**  
3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

**Washington Technology Magnet School**  
In the Great Hall  
1495 Rice Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55117

Shinnenkai is JASM's annual event which brings the traditions of a Japanese New Year celebration to Minnesota so that we can promote cultural exchange and new experiences in a fun environment. There will be cultural performances, delicious Japanese food, a silent auction, a raffle, and children's activities. We hope to create a fun family atmosphere that allows people of all ages to come together, meet other Japan-related groups, and experience a Japanese New Year! More information, including ticket prices, on page 4.



*Dance group, New Thunder Wave, performing at Shinnenkai 2018*

## Letter from the JASM President



*Elizabeth Fehrmann  
JASM President*

JASM members, friends, and family,

はじめまして! My name is Elizabeth Fehrmann and I have the privilege of assuming the title and duties of the President of the Board of JASM for the next two years.

First, I have to acknowledge Marc Blehert, my predecessor, for his staunch support of and service to JASM over the past several years. Marc presided over several organizational transitions — including the retirement of former

JASM Executive Director Ben van Lierop from his 12-year tenure as Executive Director — with patience, poise, and tenacity. I know that I'm not alone when I say that I am very grateful to you, Marc, for your time and dedication to the JASM mission, and I'm so glad you will be staying in Minnesota and engaged with JASM! どうもありがとうございます! いました!

Next, I'd like to offer a quick introduction of myself to you. I am not originally from Minnesota, but the "Land of 10,000 Lakes" has been my home for the past 10 years. I have spent all of those 10 years working at medical device company Medtronic as an engineer for the Restorative Therapies group in Implantables Research and Development.

I was introduced to Japanese culture relatively late, only really gaining exposure via sporadic self-study in college, so when I moved to Minnesota, I wanted to broaden and deepen my Japan connections. I started studying kyudo (弓道) with the Minnesota Kyudo Renmei, hired a Japanese tutor, and began attending JASM events. While I've never had the opportunity to live in Japan, I have been able to visit several times (for both work and pleasure). Every time I'm there, I find something new to appreciate about the country and its people and customs.

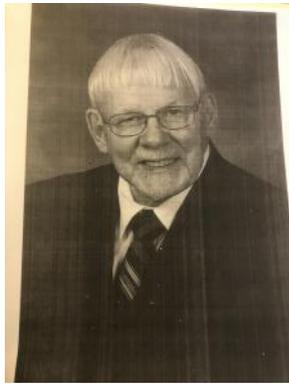
Finally, we are in an exciting time right now! JASM has a number of opportunities to grow over the next few years, and JASM has a motivated and enthusiastic office staff in Rio Saito, Executive Director, and Yoko Ueno, Program Manager. I am very much looking forward to working with Rio, Yoko, the office team, and all of you who make JASM even better and to further our mission of building bridges between Japan and Minnesota.

Please mark your calendars for two major upcoming events: Shinnenkai (January 27) and J-Quiz (February 16). If I don't see you there, I hope to see you soon at one of our other events! Please feel free to contact me anytime at [jasm-board@us-japan.org](mailto:jasm-board@us-japan.org).

よろしくおねがいます!

*By Elizabeth Fehrmann*

## JASM Mourns the Passing of Lifetime Member Dean Potter



*Dean Potter*

Dean Potter was born on October 30, 1927 to John and Hilma Potter. Dean passed away on December 16, 2018 at the age of 91. He is survived by his wife, Masako Potter.

Dean first met his wife, Masako Onta, when he was serving in the Army in Japan during the Korean War. Dean planned to land a job after he was discharged from the army that would bring him back to Japan, in order to marry Masako.

Unfortunately, civilian jobs connected to Japan were scarce. He also discovered that the Japanese quota for immigrants to America was consistently surpassed and the U.S. government was not in favor of people coming to the U.S. on a visitor's visa and getting married to stay in the country.

After exploring several options, Dean asked Minnesota 4<sup>th</sup> District Congressman Eugene McCarthy to introduce a special bill to allow Masako to come to the U.S. and marry him. Congressman McCarthy wrote the bill and when it passed, Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the bill in the Senate that also passed. President Eisenhower signed the special bill in 1958 and Dean and Masako were married at Epiphany Episcopal Church in Saint Paul, January 24, 1959. Masako became a citizen of the United States in 1964.

Dean worked at the Saint Paul Post Office for 30 years and he also became a freelance writer. He wrote many articles for *Asian Pages* and the *Asian American Press*, in which he featured stories of people and events in the Japan-related community.

I was featured in one of his articles in 2006 when I became executive director of JASM. Dean was a long-time board member of the Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee and JASM. In 2010, Dean and his wife Masako were honored as recipients of the Mondale Award for Japan-Minnesota Partnership.

A memorial service for Dean Potter will be held at the Spring House Ministry Center on January 2, 2019 at 12:30 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials to the Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee and the Japan America Society of Minnesota.

*By Ben van Lierop*

## Membership News

Thanks to the following new corporate member:

*Surdyk's Liquor and Cheese Shop*

Thanks to the following renewing JASM member:

*Yasushi Nakagawa*

## Another Visit to Nagomi Ya!



*Sansei Yonsei Kai dancers, Leana Shelendich, Tia and Emma Lee performing a dance for Nagomi Ya residents*

In November's issue of Tsushin, we were excited to talk about a trip that two junior high school dancers made to Nagomi Ya Senior Living in Apple Valley. In December, another trip was made to Nagomi Ya! Nagomi Ya, one of JASM's corporate members, is a care home for Japanese seniors with locations in Burnsville and Maple Grove, in addition to the one in Apple Valley.

On December 1st, Leana Shelendich (8), Tia (8) and Emma (5) Lee, dancers who are a part of the Sansei Yonsei Kai dance group, visited the residents at Nagomi Ya to perform their dances for the residents. The

seniors were thrilled to be able to interact with the young dancers as they chatted and engaged in other leisure activities together. For the residents at Nagomi Ya, being able to interact with these young dancers was likely the brightest part of their day.

Thank you to the dancers who volunteered their time to spend time with the residents of Nagomi Ya, and thank you Nagomi Ya for receiving these dancers. Also, special thanks to corporate member Mall of America, who upon learning about this visit, presented the young dancers with tickets to Nickelodeon Universe, the Mall of America amusement park.

## Corporate Spotlight: Surdyk's Liquor & Cheese Shop

# SURDYK'S

## Liquor & Cheese Shop

JASM is proud to announce a new Partner in Service, Surdyk's Liquor & Cheese Shop, as the Corporate Spotlight member of December!

The Surdyk family has been serving the community of Northeast Minneapolis since 1934. Surdyk's Liquor has an impressive array of wine, spirits, beer, mixers, and cigars. The award-winning Cheese Shop is connected to the liquor shop, and features over 350 varieties of cheese, prepared foods to go, and a meticulously curated selection of specialty grocery items from around the world. The store's superior service from knowledgeable staff keeps customers strolling down the aisles of this Minneapolis landmark. Surdyk's is truly a food- and drink-lover's destination.

Surdyk's Liquor and Cheese Shop started as a place to buy a snack to pair with your wine. It has grown and evolved into the extraordinary food market that it is today. You'll find imported meats, a full selection of bakery items, imported olive oils, pastas, chocolate, and more. Additionally, Surdyk's has a wide selection of *sake*.

In 2014, Surdyk's became the exclusive caterer for events at the University of Minnesota's newly renovated historic Northrop Auditorium, as well as the concessions provider, with eight bars spanning four floors of the theater, and in fall of 2014 opened Surdyk's Café, serving Northrop patrons each day.

JASM wants to welcome and thank Surdyk's Liquor & Cheese Shop for their support as Partners in Service. We are excited to continue our partnership with them in the future!

*Please thank our members with your support!*

### Corporate Benefactor Members

3M Company  
Anime Twin Cities, Inc.  
Daikin Applied  
Delta Air Lines, Inc.  
MTS Systems Corporation  
Sawai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.  
Taiyo International

### Patron Members

Dorsey & Whitney, LLP

### Corporate Sustaining Members

Deloitte Tax, LLP  
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.  
Hamre, Schumann, Mueller & Larson, PC  
Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc.  
Japan Lifeline Co. Ltd.  
Mall of America  
Medtronic, Inc.  
Metropolitan Airport Commission  
MGK, Inc.  
Naigai Industries U.S.A. Inc.  
The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.  
United Noodles

### Corporate Contributing Members

Briggs and Morgan, P.A.  
Murata Electronics/Vios Medical Inc.  
Nagomi Ya Senior Living  
Satellite Industries, Inc.  
Wanner Engineering, Inc.

### Partners in Service

JK's Table  
Kiku Enterprises, Inc.  
Minnesota Trade Office  
Origami Restaurant  
Sakura Restaurant  
Saint Paul Saints Baseball Club  
Saji-Ya Restaurant  
Suishin Restaurant  
Surdyk's Liquor & Cheese Shop  
Tomodachi  
Zen Healing Center

### Nonprofit Members

Concordia Language Villages  
Economic Club of Minnesota  
Global Minnesota  
Greater MSP  
JETAA Minnesota  
JETRO Chicago  
KCC-Japan Education Exchange  
Macalester College Asian Language & Culture Department  
Minneapolis Japanese School  
Minneapolis Institute of Art  
Minnesota Council of Teachers of Japanese  
Minnesota Orchestra  
NDSU-Emily Reynolds  
Historic Costume Collection  
UMN Dept. of Asian Languages and Literatures, Japanese Language Program  
University of North Dakota- Grand Forks  
Winona State University Global Studies Dept.



# Shinnenkai 2019

Japanese New Year Celebration

Sunday, January 27th, 2019 3:00-7:00 PM



2019: Year of the Boar!

Washington Technology  
Magnet School  
Great Hall

1495 Rice St.  
St. Paul, MN 55117



The Japan America Society of Minnesota is bringing you Shinnenkai - the traditional Japanese way of welcoming the New Year!

## Live Entertainment all Afternoon

There will be *Koto* music, Kendama, belly dancing, classical ballet, Taiko, delicious food, and much more! Activities the whole family can enjoy.

### Advance Ticket Prices (until Jan. 25, 2019)

\$13: Non-JASM Members

\$10: JASM Members

\$8: Seniors (65+) & College Students (with ID)

\$5: 18 yrs & under

Free: Children (5 yrs & under)

Family Package (Up to 2 adults and 2 children in the same household)

\$25: Non-JASM Member

\$20: JASM Member

### At the door:

\* Tickets will be \$2 extra

\*Free admission with new membership!



Please visit our website [www.mn-japan.org](http://www.mn-japan.org) to purchase tickets via PayPal now, or call our office to pay with credit card, or mail a check and make it payable to "JASM"

Japan America Society of Minnesota

Riverplace EH-131, 43 Main St. SE, Minneapolis MN 55414

Tel: 612.627.9357

[yueno@us-japan.org](mailto:yueno@us-japan.org)

JASM



## MN Grassroots Development: Winona Misato Sister City Relationship

JASM would like to introduce the many other Japan-related local groups in Minnesota to our members. This series, *Minnesota Grassroots Development*, aims to strengthen the links of the Japan-America community throughout the state of Minnesota by familiarizing members with these groups working tirelessly to bring the community together.

The Winona Misato sister city relationship began in 1997 when an agreement was signed between Winona and Kogota, in Miyagi Prefecture. Kogota later merged with Fudodo to become Misato. Misato has been sending students to Winona since 1997. Winona began to send students and chaperones to Misato in 2003. The number of participants from Winona has grown from ten students to twenty-five students today. Students are 8th, 9th, and 10th graders from four schools in Winona; public school, parochial school, and Montessori. Up to ten chaperones accompany the students. Chaperones are teaching staff, parents, and community members. Our Winona group travels to Misato in April and most years are able to enjoy *sakura* (cherry blossoms). Winona students take a Winona cultural fair with them to share with Misato residents.

Misato sends a delegation of students and adults to visit Winona for five days in late October. This year, Misato brought a Japanese cultural fair to Winona to share with our community. When the Misato group left Winona, they enjoyed a visit to the Eagle Center in Wabasha, a Timberwolves game, and a visit to the state capital.

One of the most important parts of the relationship is having students and adults participate in a home stay for up to four nights. Friendships are formed and maintained through social media. Home stays occur in both cities and are always a highlight.

Winona is fortunate to have a strong connection with Winona State University (WSU). WSU students from Japan are active in training meetings, and they help Winona students with pronunciation for their speeches in Japanese while in Misato.

This very positive sister city relationship will continue to evolve in ways that citizens of both communities will benefit from.

By Joe Lepley, *Winona-Misato Sister Cities*



Students from Winona and Misato celebrating Halloween

## Tom Haeg's Book Review

*The Fall of Language in the Age of English*; Minae Mizumura, Columbia University Press; English translation by Mari Yoshihara and Juliet Winters Carpenter; 2015 (English Translation), 221 pages.

*"The sky is falling, the sky is falling!" - Chicken Little*

As a young boy reading the Chicken Little fable, I recall its moral: don't assume illusory conclusions without proof. In the end, Chicken Little and all the farm animals who unwittingly relied on inept reportage were devoured by the fox.

*The Fall of Language* is an ardent attempt by an acclaimed Japanese novelist in the non-fiction demesne to argue that English as a universal language is destroying Japanese classic literature. She hastily cites co-conspirators to this plot, our usual suspects: the internet, globalization, Japanese shame after WWII, bilingualism, ideogram tension, colonialism, academic egalitarianism, (did I mention Columbus?), China, et al. Quite a conspiracy except, well, there is none, even while conceding that English language universality is just an accident of history sans *deus ex machina*.

Her thesis lacks objective analysis. She simply relies on random anecdotal hunches that Japanese classic literature is no longer relevant as it was in the good old days (read: when she was growing up long ago). Maybe; I don't know for sure. But nostalgia is waiflike and is not probative. Did she cite Ministry of Education studies to demonstrate the decline? No. Did she recite figures from prominent Japanese publishers to bare the economic demise of books published and sold? No. Did she interview professors from leading Japanese literature departments? No. Did she conduct surveys of Japanese millennials' reading habits? No. No studies, no figures, no interviews, no surveys.

She annoyingly tries to gain the reader's sympathy by playing the victim card. She frequently reminds us about how difficult it is to be a writer (okay, just try assembly work): her ill health, daily meds, caring for an elder parent, flying coach, and the list goes on. How this makes her more believable is questionable. And she demonizes native English speakers as a privileged caste. No one should feel defensive speaking one's native tongue. Privileged? No. While I understand her anti-Anglophone slant, her persuasiveness is lacking.

Then, the obvious contradiction. She opposes egalitarianism in Japanese schools, which arguably encourages bilingualism to dilute classic literature. But, she later says: "Acquiring a foreign language should be a universal requirement of compulsory education." So which is it?

Agreed: the Japanese language is singular in the world, mixing thousands of ideograms (foreign and domestic) with two phonetic sets of kana to create a worthy notation method unlike no other. It is a wonderful language, the literature is enriching and the culture enabling both is a treasure. But, if there is a decline, please, don't proclaim its untimely demise unless the sky is truly falling. I reckon it will remain up there for some time, thank you.

By Tom Haeg

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2018 has come to an official end! Where has the time gone? I would like to begin the New Year by thanking all of my family, friends and clients.

Your support means a lot to me and this seems like a perfect time to express my gratitude. There are so many people who offer their assistance at the Japanese Library or with the MN Nihonjinkai gatherings. I truly appreciate all of you who donated your time and your treasured goods for us to sell at our events throughout the past year. And to my clients: thank you so much for your business. I hope you are loving your new home and "Making all your dreams come true!"

By Yoko Breckenridge



Wishing you Health and Happiness in the New Year ahead!



Yoko Breckenridge  
612-839-0008



## 月例日本人会のお知らせ

毎月日本語図書館で日本人会の昼食会 (Monthly Nihonjin-kai) を行っています。電話などでお誘い合わせの上、お友達やお知り合いとご一緒においで下さい。可能の方はどうぞ料理を1品ご持参願います。ミネソタ州在住の日本人達で良い事を考え、ご馳走と日本語で楽しい時間を持ちましょう。

日程：毎月第2月曜日正午より

場所：日本語図書館

(4231 Bloomington Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407)

また、毎週土曜日午後2時から、日本語図書館のお手伝いして下さる方の集まりがあります。是非ご参加ください。この図書館には、漫画や宗教誌約25000冊や約2500本のビデオDVDがあり、希望者にはセルフサービスで日本人会と同じく無料で貸出しています。お問い合わせは下記までどうぞ。

Yoko Breckenridge

Cell phone: (612) 839-0008

E-mail: [yoko@yoko4home.com](mailto:yoko@yoko4home.com)

(Nihonjin-kai monthly meeting is every 2nd Monday at noon. The meeting is held at 4231 Bloomington Ave S. Minneapolis, MN 55407).



## Trial Classes and Enrollment Interview at Minneapolis Japanese School

平成31年度ミネアポリス日本語補習授業校 児童募集

<http://www.minneapolisjapaneseschool.org/>

4月からの小学部の新入生を募集します!

クラス	対象年齢*	体験入学日	試験/面接	募集期間
小学部 1年	満6歳	2月9日	2月9日 (試験/面接)	平成30年11月1日~ 平成31年1月26日

対象年齢\*は平成31年4月1日時点での年齢

参加をご希望の方は、高田 [seito@minneapolisjapaneseschool.org](mailto:seito@minneapolisjapaneseschool.org) までご連絡ください。

### Trial Classes and Enrollment Interview at Minneapolis Japanese School

Class	Date of Birth	Trial Classes	Interview & Examination	Application Deadline
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	4/2/2012 ~ 4/1/2013		2/9/2019	1/26/2019

If you are interested in attending, please contact Aya Takada at [seito@minneapolisjapaneseschool.org](mailto:seito@minneapolisjapaneseschool.org).

# Advertise in the Tsushin!

## Advertisement Rates

Style	Size	Cost/issue
1/4 page	5 x 3.5 in	\$50.00
1/2 page	5 x 7.5 in	\$90.00
Full page	10 x 7.5 in	\$150.00
Classified	80 character line	\$10/ line (minimum 2 lines)

Ad production and design available in both Japanese and English for an additional charge. Deadline for completed ads and classifieds is the 20th of every month.

**Questions? Contact  
the JASM Office  
Tel: 612-627-9357  
jasm@us-japan.org**

## Japan America Society Calendar

### January

**Shinnenkai, Sunday, January 27, 2019**

If you would like know more information about JASM events, please go to our website: [mn-japan.org](http://mn-japan.org)

## Japanese Speaking Club

The Japanese Speaking Club is an informal meeting place for those wishing to practice Japanese. We encourage those just beginning the language as well as native speakers to gather at **Corner Coffee** in Uptown Minneapolis to meet new people, discuss experiences in Japan, or simply to speak Japanese. Come when you can, leave when you must.

**Date/Time:** Every Saturday at 3:00 p.m. (however, most people do not show up until 3:30).

**Place:** Corner Coffee  
1414 W 28th St, Minneapolis, MN 55408



*For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact JASM at [jasm@us-japan.org](mailto:jasm@us-japan.org) or 612-627-9357*

## Thank you: Betty Tisel!



*Betty Tisel (far right) with her Family in Tokyo.*

Betty has been a long-time member with us at JASM. Since August, she has been using her talents as an editor every month to make sure that Tsushin (including the Tsushin you are reading right now!) is as mistake-free as possible.

Here is a message from Betty: *"I enjoy volunteering for JASM very much. The staff, Rio and Yoko, are very kind and fun to be around. I always*

*learn new things when I work on Tsushin and am especially excited about the Grassroots project. My kids speak Japanese and hope to live and work in Japan. We were able to spend a week together in Tokyo last spring. I enjoy Japanese literature (translated), movies, and animated films, and learning about Japanese-American history and communities. Arigatou, JASM!"*

Once again, thank you Betty Tisel and our other JASM members. Your contributions to the community are what solidify the bond between Japan and Minnesota!

## Become a JASM Member online!

*Support our mission and become a member!*

1. Go to [mn-japan.org](http://mn-japan.org)
2. Click on 'Membership' at the top
3. Select your membership type and read the benefits and instructions.

You can also become a member using your smartphone!

## Japan America Society of Minnesota

- Membership Application    Change of Address  
 Tax-deductible Donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name (2nd adult of a household membership) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please make checks payable to JASM)

### Individual Membership

Patron.....	\$1,000+
Sustaining.....	\$500+
Contributing.....	\$100+
Individual .....	\$30
Student/Senior .....	\$20
Household .....	\$50
(2 adults plus children under 18)	

Japan America Society of Minnesota  
43 Main Street SE Suite EH—131  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

# Japan America Society of Minnesota



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www.mn-japan.org

## 通信

Tsūshin  
January 2019

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

*(Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to [jasm.interns@gmail.com](mailto:jasm.interns@gmail.com))*

## 2018 Annual Meeting and Bonenkai

