

Japan America Society of Minnesota



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

April 2019 Vol. 29, No. 4

Recap: Sake Tasting



On March 14, JASM held the Sake Tasting event in cooperation with JETRO, Japan External Trade Office at Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia). After JETRO's Business to Business event, "Sake Math," more than 60 people arrived for the sake tasting. It began with a warm greeting by Rio Saito, JASM executive director, and by Ken Kasahara from JETRO. Then Chris Griese from Sake Story taught us a "Sake 101" course.

Chris Griese, Sake Story

After attendees learned to better appreciate the art—as well as the science—behind brewing sake, guests were invited to taste 25 of the finest sake. Five sake distributors were represented at the event: Maverick Wine Company MN, Winebow, New France Wine Company, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits, and The Wine Company. Delicious food was provided by JK's Table. Throughout the event, attendees were free to sample each type of sake, ask questions to the sake experts, and relax and network with one another in the Mia foyer.

Here are some attendee comments:

"The lecture on the process, history, and serving interested me. I have enjoyed drinking sake in local Japanese brewery/restaurants. I learned some new things too: sake is sometimes served cold, and nigori sake has a cloudy appearance (and is delicious). It was great to hear that the best brewers are women, and that breweries in Japan use rice grown locally. All the details about the process were fascinating. The five sake vendors at Mia were busy serving and describing each beverage. All of them were well-acquainted with their products and were enthusiastic (plus had great personalities). This gave us a chance to taste and enjoy the varieties described in the lecture." by Louise I.

"I had so much fun at the event! It was a great blend of learning about the complexities, history, and nuanced flavors of sake, as well as socializing with the diverse group of people in attendance! The classroom session was informative, and the speakers and sake distributors were incredibly knowledgeable about the history and craft of sake production, which is clearly their passion. I learned so much about the types of sake, and which varieties I enjoyed drinking the most. I also love this group of people! They are super fun and entertaining to socialize with. We 'compared notes' about our favorite sakes and why, and chatted about Japan and Minnesota. Amazing fun time! The food selection complemented the event perfectly. I very much look forward to attending the next JASM event." by Steven K.

More pictures to see on the last page.



Ken Kasahara, JETRO

Upcoming: J-Quiz Winners' Trip to Washington D.C.



J-Quiz Winners' Trip 2019 participants

Most exciting for the J-Quiz winners is the trip to Washington D.C. that is coming up in April. The winning students came to the JASM office on March 27 to meet the other participants and learn what to expect on this trip with their parents and guardians as well as their teachers. This year the Shakopee High School students who narrowly lost at the tie breaker at J-Quiz decided to go to the National Japan Bowl as well.

The students will have the opportunity to participate in the National Japan Bowl, a two-day competition that brings more than 200 students together from around the nation to test their knowledge of Japan. They will receive questions pertaining to Japanese language, culture and customs. This national competition also contains a conversational portion which tests competitors' ability to communicate orally in Japanese.

After the competition, they will have the fun opportunity to explore Washington D.C. and attend the Sakura Matsuri, the National Cherry Blossom Festival, on April 13. The festival is a huge celebration of Japanese culture that features groups from both the United States and Japan performing dances and playing music. There are exhibitors of Japan-related businesses and local vendors offering Japanese/Asian food.

Through generous donations from sponsors, JASM is able to provide the J-Quiz winners this fun and memorable experience visiting the nation's capital and competing at the National Japan Bowl.

We wish all the students success and a lot of fun in D.C.!



Image from <https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/>

Letter from JASM President



JASM members, family, and friends:

こんにちは, and welcome to April! Winter was a bit late in making itself known this year, and it seems to be dragging its feet on its way out as well, but now we are well on our way into spring! I hope everyone weathered the extreme winter conditions with as much patience and humor as they could muster.

*Elizabeth Fehrman
JASM President*

Here at JASM, we're in full swing with our early year activities. Back in February, we teamed up with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the JET Alumni Association to host a first-of-its-kind Minnesota-Japan Forum. After hearing about all the great work our Japanese community is doing, we wanted to see what we could do to create an event specifically to support and connect the great variety of Japan-related organizations to one another. I was thrilled to see so many engaged groups from across the state; I can't wait to see how the event grows and evolves into something even bigger and better next year!

We have a few flagship events over the course of the year, and J-Quiz is definitely one of them. This year was the first time I had the chance to participate as a moderator, and I had so much fun! The energy in the room was incredible, and it was so inspiring to see the next generation of Japan enthusiasts learning so much and sharing their hard-won knowledge. Congratulations to the winning teams at all levels, and best of luck to the winning Level II, III, and IV teams at the National Japan Bowl competition in Washington, DC.

We had a number of successful events in March, as well, including another Know-Me-Kai networking session and our highly-anticipated Sake Tasting. I hope all the attendees at those events found them enjoyable and engaging.

Finally, as the seasons are slowly changing here in Minnesota, so too are we beginning to change little bits and pieces of JASM. We want JASM to be as effective as it can be for the Japanese community, and we're starting by trying to make ourselves visible and accessible to as many people as possible. We're just making small changes right now: changing the delivery format of the Tsushin, for example, to make it easier to find and share, and participating in some Japan-related events that we've not been a part of in the past, to introduce who we are and what we do to a wider audience. I hope you'll join us on this journey toward becoming a better JASM for all.

In the meantime, please keep an eye on our calendar and on your inboxes for our upcoming events!

Until next time,

Elizabeth Fehrman



Upcoming: New Member Social

In April, JASM invites new JASM members to our New Member Social to thank them as well as provide an opportunity for them to network and meet others in our community. This year it will take place on Tuesday, April 23rd, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

This is invitation-only event and registration is required. The new members must have received the invitation. Please let us know if you are a new JASM member and haven't received an invite yet by emailing jasm@us-japan.org or calling us at 612-627-9357.

We encourage you to bring along your friends who are interested in or considering becoming a member of JASM in the future. You can learn more about JASM membership and mingle with other members, JASM staff, and Board Members!



Attendees of New Members Social 2015

amazon smile

Membership News

Thanks to the following new JASM members:

April Dennison, Christine Faust

Thanks to the following new Corporate members:

Twin Cities Aikido Center
Arctos Law PLLP

Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:

Katherine Meyer, Walter Enloe, Peter Hill

Thanks to the following renewing Corporate members:

Naigai Industries U.S.A., Inc.
Saint Paul Saints Baseball Club
Mall of America
Winona State University Global Studies Department
Minnesota Trade Office

Recap : Japanese Product Design Lecture with JETRO



Japanese Product Design Lecture Attendees

quality of life through Japanese Design.” Japanese philosophy may come from ancient Japan; however, it can still be applied to the current time and culture.

The program started with opening remarks by Tsubasa Hashimoto of JETRO Chicago, followed by Rio Saito of JASM. The keynote speaker was Keiko Matsuura, Design Coordinator of JETRO, who touched on the history of Japanese design. She also talked about how young professionals prefer well-designed tools these days. The next speaker was Joao Paschoal, a designer from Field, Inc. who resides in Gifu and works at Futada Pottery. Paschoal introduced contemporary pottery design, based on Japanese traditional design and created by using computer technology. The last speaker was Susan Brouillette, the founder and owner of Umei in Northeast Minneapolis. Umei is a boutique in Minneapolis that specializes in Japanese kitchenware, especially “donabe,” pots made out of a special clay for use over an open flame in Japanese cuisine. The talks were followed by reception where the speakers and other participating distributors shared their products with the participants.

JASM would like to thank JETRO Chicago for organizing this interesting event.

Here is a comment from attendee Sheila Asato, Visual Artist and Dreamworker at Monkey Bridge Arts:

“What a delight! Events like this are exactly why I became a member of Japan America Society of Minnesota. It was fascinating to hear stories of how the beauty and wisdom of Japanese craftsmanship continues to grow through modern industries such as lacquerware, cutlery and pottery. In particular, I was impressed by the international creative team from Futada ceramics (<http://field-jp.co.jp/>). They showed a video of their creative process, which goes from work created by traditional master craftsmen to mass production through state-of-the-art technology. Their graphic designer, Joao Paschoal (Brazil), spoke in-depth about the challenge of translating the subtle beauty of painter Shinya Shibata’s (USA) marks into computer graphics, which could then be applied to ceramic forms created by ceramicist and designer Yu Kidokoro (Japan). The final member of their team, industrial designer Nana Tatebayashi, helps pull all these disciplines together to create products that are not only beautiful but imminently functional. Their beautiful dishes can even withstand conveniences of modern life like automatic dishwashers. I look forward to visiting their factory when I am in Japan this summer.”

Here is a comment from attendee Susan Brouillette, home & design shop, UMEI:

“My small world here in Minneapolis became bigger when Tsubasa Hashimoto at JETRO Chicago and Rio Saito from JASM invited me to be a part of their program at the Mia a couple weeks ago which talked to “Enhancing Your Quality of Life through Japanese Design”. I learned lots from the JETRO design coordinator Keiko Matsura, who has been instrumental in helping several small to medium sized Japanese manufactures launch into the US market. And I was wowed by the design and manufacturing process from the ceramic team at Futada, a ceramist located in Gifu.

I was also able to share a bit of my journey from living in Japan; falling in love with Japan, it’s people, the food, it’s culture - those little plates I couldn’t get enough of and my journey which lead me to open up a little shop so I could share with guests here my favorite items from Japan and around the world. Each item I choose has the idea of experience behind it. Life is short and the experience should be treasured.

The experience with the JASM and JETRO was such a gift for me, I met a bevy of interesting new people who share my passion of Japan. I look forward to joining JASM and building my community. I look forward to meeting you all someday and hearing about your different experiences”

Please thank our members with your support!

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Save the Date: Harukaze, July 28, 2019



Momokusu Iwata (left) and Toshiaki Oikawa (right)

This year's Harukaze "Spring Wind" concert will be held on Sunday, July 28th at 3:00 pm in Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University in St. Paul. Join us at this unique shamisen concert! Momokusu Iwata, Toshiaki Oikawa, and local Minnesota artists will be performing pieces together to present an exciting cross-cultural experience.

Shamisen is a traditional Japanese three-stringed instrument. It is usually plucked with a *bachi* (pick). It was historically played during the telling of folk tales, and now is also played in pop, rock, jazz, and dance music.

Momokusu Iwata

Born in Osaka, Japan, in 1993, Momokusu has been playing the shamisen since a young age. In February 2017 Momokusu and Hibiki Sawada released their band's first album, "Tokyo Futari."

Toshiaki Oikawa

Born in Saitama, Japan, in 1994, Toshiaki has played the piano since he was two and has been composing music since the age of six. He played his first solo concert in April 2018 and currently plays throughout Japan with various Japanese artists.

Harukaze

**Sunday, July 28, 2019
3:30 PM**

**Hamline University
Sundin Music Hall
1531 Hewitt Ave, St Paul, MN 55104**

Tickets will be available at a later date



Momokusu Iwata
YouTube Page

MN Grassroots Development: Duluth Sister Cities International

The history of the Duluth and Isumi-shi (Isumi-city) relationship begins with a bell. The ancient (1600s) temple bell was taken from Ohara-machi after WWII and, because the naval ship that carried it to America was the USS Duluth, it was given to the city of Duluth in 1945. The bell sat in Duluth's City Hall until a visiting Japanese guest noticed it was from Ohara-machi and set in motion the events that led to the bell (now known as the Peace Bell) being returned to Ohara-machi in 1954, with great ceremony.



Citizens of Duluth work to construct a tower to hold the replica temple bell, now referred to as the Peace Bell, in Duluth's Enger Park.

In the late 1980s, the Mayor of Ohara-machi contacted the Mayor of Duluth and suggested creating a sister city relationship based on the connection via the bell. The sister city relationship was formalized on October 3rd, 1990, and since then there have been regular adult delegation exchanges, student exchanges, and numerous Duluth teachers who have lived in Ohara while teaching English.

Early on, Ohara cast a bell that was a replica of the one returned, and presented it to Duluth as a gift of thanks. A special tower was built in Duluth's Enger Park, and the bell was hung in 1994. A Japanese garden was then built surrounding the Peace Bell Tower and dedicated in 2010. Both the bell and the garden are jointly maintained by Duluth Sister Cities International volunteers and the City of Duluth.

In 2005, Ohara-machi merged with Isumi-machi and Misaki-machi to create Isumi-shi (Isumi-city), but in honor of the original relationship with Ohara, Duluth still uses a composite name when referring to our Japanese sister city – Ohara Isumi-City.

Through this relationship hundreds of Duluthians and Japanese have experienced a new culture, have exchanged ideas and gifts, have married, have become exchange students, and have accomplished what the sister city movement was created for: demonstrating that even bitter enemies can become friends through the peaceful exchange of individual citizens.



Left: Duluth area students visiting Isumi-city during the summer of 2018 were able to practice Kanji and learn about Japanese culture through hands-on experiences.

By Gale Kerns, Chair of Ohara Isumi-City Committee

Grassroots Caravan to Faribault, MN

On February 27 and 28, Consul-General of Japan in Chicago Naoki Ito returned to Minnesota to visit Japanese companies' representatives and the city of Faribault to see the lively business development in Minnesota.

First, with the sponsorship of the Minnesota Trade Office, there was a reception in St. Paul, with representatives of twenty Japanese companies in Minnesota. JASM's corporate member representatives from Daikin Applied, Murata Machinery, Sawai Pharmaceutical, and Taiyo International attended as well. The reception was held at the beautiful James J. Hill House. Gabrielle Gerbaud, Executive Director and Chief Protocol Officer of the Minnesota Trade Office, started the short program by introducing the Minnesota Commissioner of DEED (Department of Employment and Economic Development), Steve Grove, who began his remarks with very well-spoken Japanese. After the Commissioner greeted the group, Consul-General Ito greeted the assembly. Next, Japan America Society of Minnesota's Rio Saito introduced the crowd to JASM. The program ended with the commissioner presenting a gift to CG Ito of a MN number plate with CG Ito's name on it. It was rare and wonderful occasion to see so many Japanese company representatives in one place.



Photo by Jacob Swanson from the Faribault Daily News

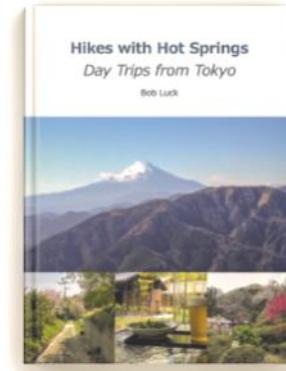
On February 28th a delegation, led by the CG Ito, visited Faribault, Minnesota to visit the facilities of Daikin Applied, as well as Sage Glass. The delegation included Ralph Infozato, JETRO; Dick Stahl, Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Minneapolis; Sarah Walbert, Minnesota Trade Office; and our own Rio Saito. The day started out by visiting South Central College, with a warm welcome from Faribault Mayor Kevin Voracek. Next came a short presentation by Daikin Applied representative Will Fort, who also was the tour guide for the Daikin facility visit.

The Daikin Applied facility in Faribault very much resembles a Japanese factory. The facility was very clean, and you can see how communication tools are used, so that different sections are communicating well with each other. Everything was labeled with pictures, like Japanese factories usually are. The highlight of the visit was to taking a group picture in front of the huge air compressor that will be used in the new World Trade Center in New York. After lunch, the delegation went back to the college to participate in presentations by CG Ito and Ralph Infozato of JETRO, and a panel discussion led by city planner Dave Wanberg about sustainability and business in Faribault. The visit ended with a visit to Sage Glass, a French company that produces electrochromic glass which maximizes interior daylight, preserves views, and saves energy by harnessing the sun's warming rays in winter and deflecting them on hot days.

Faribault is growing into becoming a major global business center. The visit closed with a very optimistic view of the future of Japanese and Minnesota partnerships and economic relations.

Tom Haeg's Book Review

Hikes with Hot Springs: Day Trips from Tokyo; Robert Luck, self-published on iTunes; 2018; \$4.99, 283 pages. Also available for Kindle.



Among the many allures of Japan is the nearness of its bucolic environment to its major metropolitan area, Tokyo. And when you couple hikes and *onsens* with access to this pastoral experience, well, you have a national treasure, my friend.

Robert Luck, a JASM board member with Midwestern roots, lived for more than 20 years in Tokyo as a corporate executive.

With that background he certainly had a heightened appreciation for those rare opportunities to flee Tokyo to experience the labyrinth of mountain trails, eventually finding repose in a soothing hot spring bath. In other words, he knows what he's talking about.

Hikes is a beginner's guidebook showcasing five day-trips from Tokyo to nearby mountain trails, plus an urban visit to Yoyogi Park and Meiji Shrine. The rural hikes are to Mt. Takao, Mt. Tonomine, Mt. Oyama, the Fuji Five Lakes and the Yamanashi Peach Orchards. His advice is succinct: where to go, when to go, how to go. It includes maps, charts, and safety tips. It is richly endowed with over 225 photographs illustrating the landscape and the fellow travelers he encountered.

What I found particularly refreshing is there is no commercial taint. He does not steer you to a souvenir store nor does he showcase a ramen shop. Although he only once refers to a New York Times article for restaurant selections, our author purposely avoids picking winners and losers. When I asked how many hours he devoted to writing this book, he shamefully blushed, "too many." But this is not the point. To him, like the mountain hike, the joy of writing is in the journey.

Reader alert: do not expect a *Frommer's Guide to Japan* nor a \$39.95 plus tax facsimile. Again, this is self-published: no editor, no traditional corporate publisher, and other than his wife, Sahya, probably no spell-checker. But, that's okay, no disappointment here. It still reads well. And not a single tree was sacrificed for your reading pleasure, and indeed it was a pleasure to read. I found his recitation of facts accurate, his advice reliable and his sense of place cogent. He accomplishes this by cleverly juxtaposing text with photographs to figuratively take your hand to lead you on the trail ("...go hidari here, migi there, etc...") to make sure you will not get lost. This was a delightful touch.

Robert Luck is generously donating half the proceeds of *Hikes* to JASM. *Domo arigato*.

-Tom Haeg

A Word from Yoko Breckenridge

Spring is FINALLY here! It has been a long winter for all of us here in Minnesota.

We are now busy planning for our next event!

MN Nihonjinkai and the Japanese Library will be holding our annual Open House and Garage Sale on Saturday, June 22nd.

Our backup date in case of inclement weather will be Saturday, June 29th.



Garage Sale 2018

Please remember us as you are doing your spring cleaning! We will gladly accept donations of all sorts including housewares, collectibles, knick-knacks, Japanese gift items and clothing, electronics, furniture, baby and children's items (baby clothes are popular), games, books, puzzles, craft items, and adult clothing.

After the sale, anything we don't sell will be donated to ARC or one of our member's local church missions.

If you have items that need to be picked up, please contact Karen Harwerth, 612-747-0340 or email her at kharwerth@comcast.net. She and her husband Mike will be happy to make arrangements with you.

If you are able to volunteer to help us on the day of the event or with pricing and sorting, please let us know!

THANK YOU!!



Yoko Breckenridge
612-839-0008



Photo by
Ackerman + Gruber



Learn Japanese at the U of M!



Learn Japanese at the U of M! Open to the public Need not be a U of M student to register

Summer 2019 – registration is open through May 15

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Many time slots to choose from

Fall Semester begins on September 3

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Questions? Contact: Prof. Michiko Todokoro Buchanan
via email: buch0119@umn.edu



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Community Outreach: Anime Detour



Attendees of Anime Detour and the JASM current and former interns

On Friday and Saturday, March 28 and 29, JASM greeted Anime Detour visitors at the JASM booth in the exhibition hall of the Hyatt Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. JASM team and board members introduced Anime Detour visitors to JASM's mission and various yearly activities. Anime Detour is the biggest local annual convention for anime, gaming, and cosplay enthusiasts, drawing thousands of visitors from Minnesota and beyond. Anime Detour is organized by Anime Twin Cities, a JASM Corporate Member.



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 (minimum 2 lines)	\$10/ line

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

April

J-Quiz Winners' Trip, April 11-13, 2019

New Member Social, Tuesday, April 23, 2019

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
(Just east of Hennepin Avenue South)



For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact JASM
at jasm@us-japan.org or 612-627-9357

Doll Needs a Home



We are looking for a home for the doll, "a Boy with an Axe," approximately 16 inches in height — \$80. It is in very good condition. If you are interested in purchasing the doll, please contact us by email: jasm@us-japan.org.

Become a JASM Member online *Support our mission and become a member!*

1. Go to 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

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Name (2nd adult of a household membership) _____

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Japan America Society of Minnesota



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通信

Tsūshin
April 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)

Sake Tasting 2019

