

winter issue - japan - travel - food - love - events - english - culture - life

hyogo times

February
2007

Food: Sauey
Chocolate Pudding

Kobe hotspots:
Japan's dating city

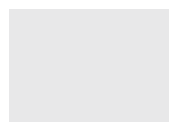
Kansai events:
Upcoming AJET
& Kansai events

Travel:
Okayama's naked men
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<http://hyogoajet.org>

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inoshishi

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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, poetry, prose, and any ideas to contribute or improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community.

Submit by the 15th of each month to:

submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com

<http://hyogoajet.org>



from the editor

They say that charity, along with many other things, starts at home. It was therefore heart-warming to see so many JETs making themselves at home in Ryan's Irish Pub after mid-year conference in support of an upcoming Habitat for Humanity trip...though perhaps a little worrisome that so many people consider a bar to be "home" if the mantra is true! Regardless, as one of the team members who will go on the build to the Philippines in March, let me say thank you to all of you who came, who bought t-shirts (due only to my fabulous coercion skills I'm sure!) and of course, a gigantic thank you to all the bands who volunteered their time and rocked our night. THANK YOU!

Also, another big thank you to all of you who stopped me at midyear to pass along your comments regarding the new look and feel of the Hyogo Times – knowing that people do actually read this makes me feel a lot more motivated! The comments have generally been very positive and I have in turn passed them along to our incredible design editor, Karen...whose role unfortunately seems to get a bit forgotten at times! However, if you like what you see here, it's all Karen, so please pass your compliments along to her too! We work together as the brains and beauty of this operation (I'll leave it to you to figure out who's who!), but the new HT wouldn't be what it is without her. And of course, it goes without saying that this paper would be nothing without all the wonderful contributors!

So...moving on... though I must admit that I was not looking forward to mid-year conference – having heard nothing positive from JTEs or ALTs – I found that I actually enjoyed the two days. Sure, some things were repetitive, some things even seemed pretty pointless, but it was really nice to see a lot of the people who I have not had the chance to talk to since Yashiro, and even to talk to some very funny and interesting Japanese teachers.

It was encouraging to see everyone looking so healthy, happy and raring to go...yeah, yeah, bring out the violins, I know, but these kinds of sentiments don't pass through my black heart very often so let me have the moment! Of course, now that I know everyone is doing so well, there is no excuse for your genki selves not to submit a little something to the Hyogo Times! Come on people...anything is great – fiction, classifieds, opinions, helpful tips, travel reports, letters to the editor...just email it to us at submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com by the 15th of every month – you can even do it anonymously if prefer!

Okay, that's the end of this somewhat wishy-washy, very unRobin-like editorial...I don't know what's come over me today...Have a fantastic February and hope to see you in Okayama checking out the Naked Men! I know I'll be there...

submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com



from the PR



Now that we're all back and looking to the future, you might want to know what is going on in the AJET calendar: first up, we have the Yuki Matsuri trip from the 9th-12th/13th of February, closely followed by the Okayama Naked Man Festival on Saturday February 17th, with belated Valentine's Day celebrations coming up on Saturday March 3rd. Look out for photos of these events. Of course, snapshots from the Naked Man Festival will come under close scrutiny from the female committee members – what we do for censorship, eh?

That about covers the events for this month, but here's a little something to consider for the upcoming year: have you ever wished that you could be part of the AJET committee? Well, as of March, we are looking for people to replace the majority of the committee. It's been brilliant, but sadly the positions up for grabs include my Prefectural Representative role, as well as events co-ordinator(s), charity events co-ordinator(s), secretary, HT editor, HT designer, Tajima representative and Awaji representative. We are also looking for an additional webmaster and perhaps an arts production co-ordinator. If there are any other areas or interests you would like to see and/or represent yourself, then e-mail me at pr@hyogoajet.org. Details will be posted on the yahoo groups and in the next issue of the Hyogo Times, so don't worry; you won't miss your chance to get involved.

Well, that's it from me. Have a great February!

It's already a month into the new year, but it's never too late to say

"Happy New Year!"

So, how was it? Did you go anywhere nice? Did you get a tan? Did you come back carrying a back-breaking amount of omiyage? Did you spend New Year's Eve in a nice sterile airport? No? Just me then... At least most of my break was spent indulging in the tropical beaches and exotic cocktails of Thailand. That should be enough to see me through the last part of winter, and through to the next holiday. Well, here's hoping anyway!

Fi X



brenda mckinney

kobe: city of hearts

With spring knocking on the door, I wanted to dedicate this month's article to advice on where to go with that special someone. While there is definitely a lot going on in Kansai with Kyoto, Himeji, Osaka, AND Nara all within reach, I'm going to focus on Kobe since it's more central to all of us in Hyogo.

Did you know that Kobe is actually known as the "dating city?" More than to Kyoto, Japanese couples flock to the city for its charm and scenery. It's time you learned that there is more to Kobe than just the sake breweries, Chinatown and old foreigner's settlement... Here are some tips:

Harborland: Also known as Kobe's port area. Start with a walk along the harbor. The fascinating earthquake memorial park (with preserved damage), gorgeous scenery and random pirate and space-like water vessels are good conversation starters. Work your way over to Mosaic mall where you can catch a movie, don costumes for your purikura and enjoy a romantic dinner with the best views in town! I recommend the Brazilian restaurant on the 3rd floor (note: it's all-you-can-eat meat, so steer clear with vegetarians!) Most of the buildings in the area also have restaurants in the top 5-10 floors where you can sit down at an izakaya and dine leisurely while overlooking the beautiful, million-dollar view. A ride on the Ferris wheel and stroll along the white-lighted boulevard also make for romantic activities. To see the port from another

angle, consider catching an evening cruise, which leave from the port, are generally an hour long and not too expensive.

Rokko: Mount Rokko is actually a chain of mountains cradling Kobe. It is a popular spot for tourists and couples. While the beautiful fall foliage is long gone, I still recommend taking a scenic trip on the cable cars. It makes for a great opportunity to cuddle up – be sure to console your date if it starts to swing a bit! The views are stunning.

It is also possible to hike up, and the mountains have some great running trails if you are both active, but watch out for wild boars! The Mt. Rokko Snow & Ski resort (with the artificial white stuff) is open until late March if your sweetie misses white winters or you both like to ski. Once at the top, you can also catch another cable car over to the Arima Onsen. Just beware that the cable car schedules to Arima and up the mountain differ, and are susceptible to change each season. Once there, walk around to enjoy the old world atmosphere, or check out the 'awesome' mixed onsen at an old school ryokan (Japanese-style inn). There is also a farm-like area at the top where you can walk around and see animals.

Closer to sea level, Rokko Island is also quite romantic with gardens, a view of the city, the Kobe Fashion Museum and many small shops.

Kitano: Like Nagasaki, Kobe has many remnants from the European traders that settled here in the 19th century. Kitano is probably the most famous area for this. The foreign houses (mostly old consulates) are fun from the outside, but probably not exciting enough to pay the high ticket fee for. Instead, head north from Sannomiya (past Bennetton) and enjoy a stroll along the mountainside at night. You can see the whole city and the neighborhoods are amazingly artsy for Japan. One Kobe resident noted the area as a date hotspot due to the quiet and peaceful ambiance, compared to Sannomiya's heavy rush of foot traffic, and for the plethora of quaint little cafe bars and fancy European restaurants. One suggestion from a friend is to simply grab a drink, dine on Italian or Danish delights and then roam through the streets a bit more, ending in the cute little park near the consulate area that serves as a great vantage point for the city. The tranquility and class will blow you – and more importantly, your date – away.

Cultural Activities: Kobe might be small, but it has a mighty cultural scene! Kobe's foreign roots still linger, giving it some of the best international cuisine in all of Japan! The city also boasts tons of museums, many of which showcase traveling exhibits. Kobe City Museum, site of the recent D'Orsay exhibit, displays traveling exhibitions for most of the year. March 15th marks the opening of Kobe Kacho-en, a 10-acre theme park featuring exotic birds, fish and plants on Port Island, near the airport and not to be confused with Rokko Island. This and Oji Zoo (near Mt. Rokko and bigger than most zoos in Japan) offer great places to enjoy a walk while escaping the bustle of the city streets. For an escape in central Kobe, pop over to Ikuta Shrine, near Sannomiya, and head northwest to the mosque to share some great Middle Eastern food: sometimes eaten with the hands, it makes for good feed-each-other food! Lastly, karaoke in Japan is arguably cultural and accessible pretty much everywhere. And what isn't romantic about belting out cheesy love songs...or resorting to song if the conversation starts out on an awkward note? Conversely, opt for the sexy duets (everyone is a sucker for Grease's 'Summer Nights') and you'll have him or her singing to you in no time.

Luckily for you, the city of Kobe is also hosting a 'Romantic Fair' until March 31st. A number of illumination events will be held, as well as other big events like the Mt. Rokko Ice Festival – that's right, take that Hokkaido! Check out the city's tourist website (called Weekly Kobe Fan) for more information on the fair, as well as other exhibits and upcoming events! Until next month, hope to see you around in Kobe (and hopefully with your date) and remember to send in your questions!

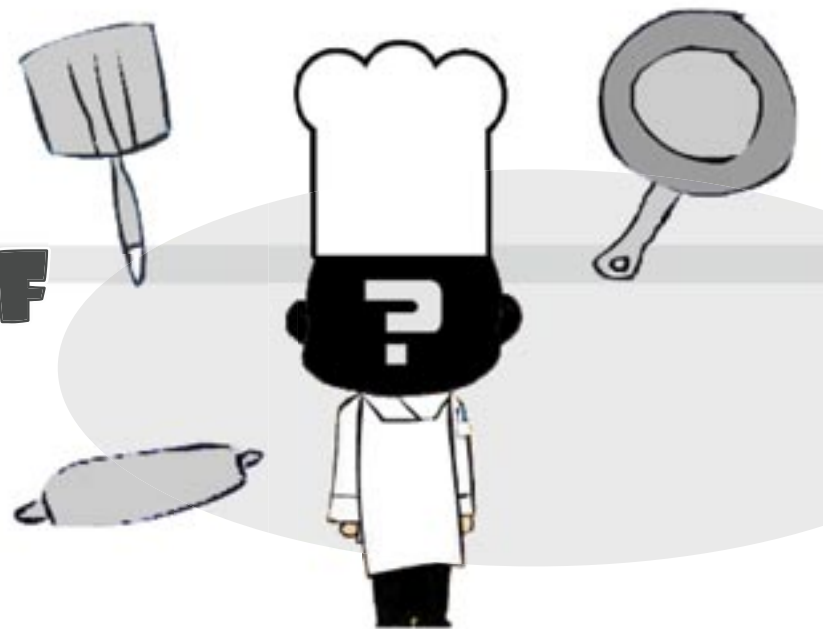
There is no instinct like that of the heart.
- Lord Byron



We all know that Christmas is the romantic holiday in Japan; however, if you spent it alone, or even if it was hot n' heavy and you are looking for more, have no fear as spring is around the corner! Each spring, a global phenomenon takes place: as the weather heats up, so does the heart and relationships seem to bud almost as fast as the plants. So, if you have done your homework and maybe gone out on a konpa or two, this might be a helpful issue for you...



IRONIC CHEF



microwaveable self-saucing chocolate pudding

makes 6 servings

Winter is officially here. And, now that you've developed a monogamous relationship with your kotatsu table, it's time to ensure that comfort food is going to make you feel better about the "gaijins get fat in Japan" myth. However, it must be said that if you're fooling yourself into thinking that it's all Japan's fault, and that the ancient washing machines have shrunk ALL your clothes, I'm also assuming that you're not re-contracting. Now, no-one can say that Ironic Chef doesn't have your best interests at heart: this recipe, like all of Ironic Chef's culinary masterpieces, is bound to result in some kind of warm and fuzzy feelings, be they on your behalf as you scoff an entire molten chocolate pudding, or the warm and fuzzy feelings that other people can provide...if you get what I mean.



This pudding, apart from the truck load of sugar that may or may not turn you into an instant diabetic, is relatively healthy, and may do something to counteract the huge amounts of carbs that you're all eating to make yourselves believe that you're really not cold and lonely and a mere shell of your former selves. Use low-fat or skim milk, and it'll be just as tasty. Or, serve it defiantly with ice-cream.!



ingredients

For Pudding:

- ◆ 1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
- ◆ 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder (like Van Houten or Morinaga)
- ◆ 2/3 cup sugar
- ◆ 1 egg
- ◆ 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- ◆ 1 cup milk (whole, low-fat or non-fat)

For Sauce:

- ◆ 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- ◆ 1/2 cup sugar
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups boiling water



method:

1. Sift flour and cocoa into a large bowl; stir in sugar and make a well in the center.
2. Whisk egg, butter (or margarine) and milk together, and pour into the dry ingredients. Stir gently until just combined, but don't beat vigorously or the pudding will be tough.
3. Spread pudding mix into a rectangular 9 x 13 inch round microwave-safe dish. Don't be too precious about what dish you use: as long as it's reasonably large, you should be fine. This can spill ALL over your microwave if the dish is too small, and as much as it would give me the funnies to have you make a disaster, it is an absolute bitch to clean up. Consider yourself warned.
4. To make the sauce, dissolve cocoa and sugar in the 1 1/2 cups boiling water. Gently pour over the back of a dessert spoon (remember how to make layers in cocktails? Do the same thing here) all over the pudding mix.
5. Cook on HIGH for 10 minutes. Test, and if not ready cook for a further 2 minutes or until a knife comes out clean when inserted into the pudding (not through to the sauce at the bottom).

Note: Ironic Chef takes no responsibility for burns encountered by a misunderstanding of the above text and the warm and fuzziness that will ensue should you coat yourself in pudding. The warm and fuzziness will soon give way to burns and non-stick bandages. But hey, you might hook yourself a cute nurse.



graham neubig

When Disaster Strikes

Although Hyogo has bounced back splendidly in the twelve years since the quake, thanks to the efforts of citizens of Hyogo, Japan and the world, much of the damage could have been prevented and many lives could have been saved had the residents just been properly prepared. Even though it's unlikely for an earthquake to happen in the short time that most JETs will be here, taking the following precautions might prevent a tragedy in the case that an earthquake does occur.

◆ **Know Your Evacuation Area:** After an earthquake, you should make your way to an evacuation area, so knowing where it is in advance is important. You can ask your supervisor or someone in your neighborhood where to go. If you don't know your evacuation area, making your way to the nearest school is probably a safe bet.

◆ **Know Your Contacts:** After an earthquake, you should know who you need to contact to say that you're OK, and to get information if you need help. You should contact your supervisor at work and your parents. You may also contact the PAs, and we may contact you directly while trying to confirm the safety of all the JETs in Hyogo. Also, get to know your neighbors, if you haven't already.

◆ **Secure Your Residence:** Large appliances

should be secured with earthquake proof bars, cabinets with latches, and windows with shatter-proof glass.

◆ **Prepare Supplies:** Supplies should be kept in an easy-to-reach place that won't be buried after an earthquake. Good supplies to keep include: drinking water, food, a fire extinguisher, a flashlight and batteries, money, a first aid kit, copies of ID and passports, a lighter and candles, work gloves, and a blanket. If possible, they should be stored in a backpack or bag that will be easy to carry around.

After an earthquake, it is essential not to panic. Knowing the following steps by heart will assure that you know what to do after a quake occurs.

- ◆ While the ground is still shaking, take cover under a sturdy desk or table.
- ◆ Be prepared for aftershocks, and know where you will go if they occur.
- ◆ Switch off gas cookers, hot plates, or other appliances that may cause a fire.
- ◆ Open all doors to ensure that they don't get jammed shut by aftershocks.
- ◆ Wait for aftershocks to cease, grab an emergency bag filled with the above listed supplies, and get to an evacuation area.
- ◆ If you are driving, do not brake suddenly, but pull over to the side of the road calmly.

◆ If you are walking, try to get to the middle of the nearest road so you aren't hit by something falling from nearby buildings.

In Hyogo, there's a web site that offers disaster information updates in English. If you sign up now, you can have updates sent either to your mobile phone or computer email (needless to say, mobiles will probably keep working during an earthquake, computers will probably not). The address is <http://bosai.net/e/>

Also, each major phone company has a disaster message board where you can post your current status for anyone who knows your number to see. For more information see the following sites for your company:

◆ **Docomo:** <http://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/english/info/disaster/>

◆ **Softbank (Vodafone):** https://mb.softbank.jp/scripts/english/disaster_message/index.jsp

◆ **au:** http://www.au.kddi.com/english/message_board/index.html

Some of these precautions are free and easy, others will take some time and/or money, but by taking these basic measures, you will greatly increase your chances of safely surviving a large earthquake like the one in 1995.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hyogo PAs at hyogo_pa@yahoo.com

Few people in Hyogo could have predicted the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that devastated the region on January 17, 1995.

For years, they had watched the eastern Japan region get hit by quake after quake, aware of the disaster, but far separated from the damage that the people in the East were so accustomed to.

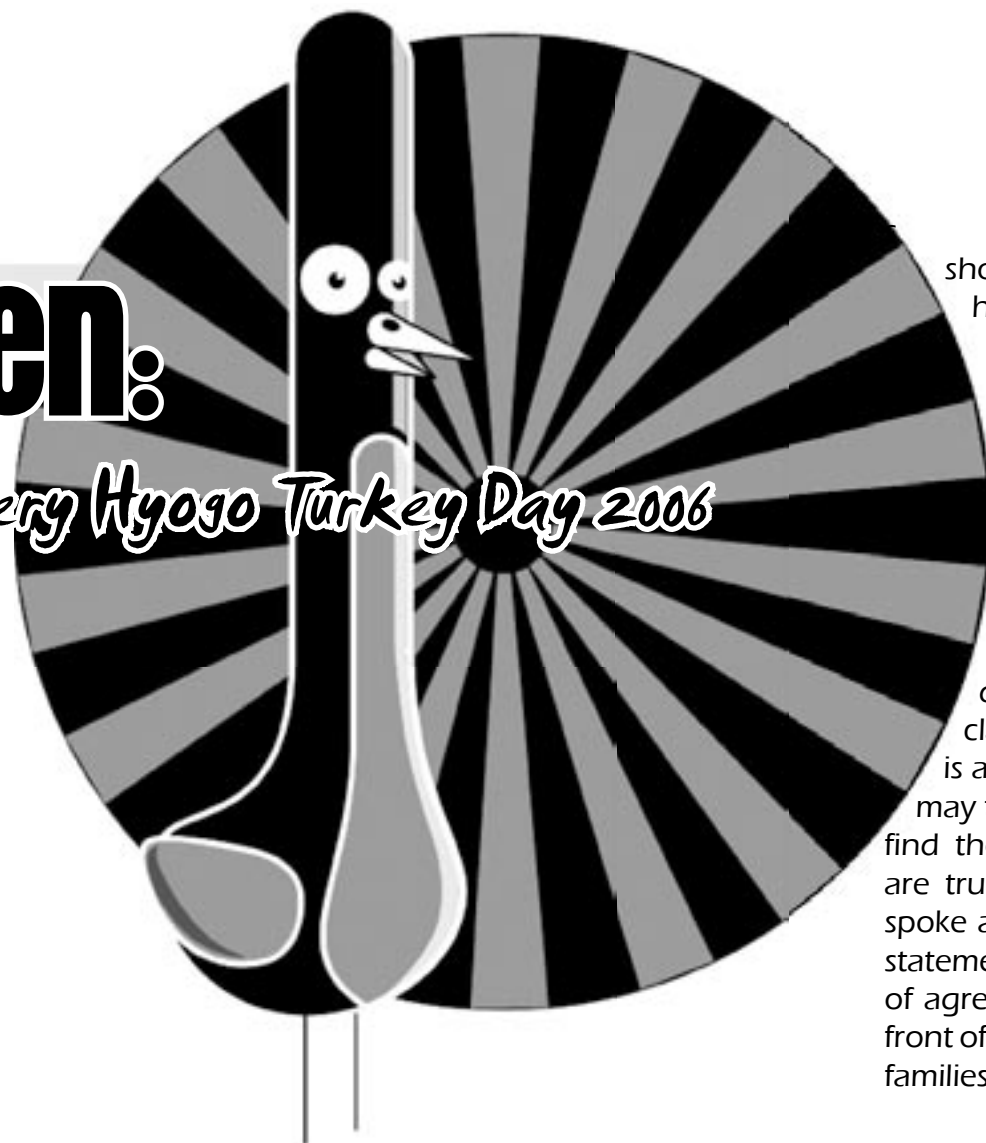
But on that fateful day, Mother Nature reared her ugly head in the form of a magnitude 7.8 earthquake with an epicenter under Awaji Island. The entire region was shocked by the damage which left over 6,000 dead, 40,000 wounded, and 300,000 evacuated from their homes. Estimates predicted the monetary damage caused by the earthquake to be approximately ten trillion yen.

report on hyogo ajet events:

Thanks [★]given:

A Very Hyogo Turkey Day 2006

amanda brown



showed up to partake in this awesome holiday centered around eating. The people at my table were mostly American, however, and spurred on by a tradition that holds to most families before digging in to the feast before them, we shared with the table what we had to be thankful for.

Thanksgiving is an odd holiday to explain to my students, since the day they equate it to is just another phantom day in November when they don't have class. But at the heart of it, Thanksgiving is about family - whatever shape your family may take, and wherever in the world you may find them - and about looking at things that are truly good in your life. As my tablemates spoke about what they were thankful for, each statement got nods and murmured sentiments of agreement: our health; our jobs; the food in front of us; our families at home and our adoptive families found in Japan of new friends.



"Thanksgiving," says the textbook my first year students use, "is the beginning of the holiday season in America." My JTE asked me why this is, and I told him that before we fling ourselves into the fray of Christmas, with the giving and getting, it's important to see what we already have.

Restaurant Info

Blue Plate is not just a Thanksgiving destination - you can eat there any time of the year. A 5-course lunch is from 1200yen, and a 5-course dinner starts at 1500yen! Crisp salad, delicious fresh-baked rolls, savory soup, wonderful main dishes (Jeff recommends the pastas), mouth-watering dessert, and after-dinner coffee. A total steal!

Centrally located and a 5 minute walk from Himeji Station, you can find Blue Plate in the Miyukidori covered walkway, just underneath the Subway sandwich shop.

Gluttony may be one of the seven deadly sins, but on Thanksgiving in America, it has another name: tradition. Along with a smorgasbord of foods - turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and more fruit pies than you can shake a stick at - Thanksgiving traditions extend past the dinner table and into napping on the couch, watching college football, tolerating family members as best you can, and teetering on the edge of the full-out plunge into the holiday season.

This was my second Thanksgiving away from my family in Minnesota and I was determined to make it a bit more traditional than the first, which was spent at the local KFC (the closest thing to turkey) with my Australian friend who was a bit more bemused than anything. Happily, the Japanese holiday of Labor Thanksgiving Day landed on the same day as American Thanksgiving (the former is always on the 23rd, while the latter is the fourth Thursday in November, so a line-up is not always assured), and I managed to get on the list for the Thanksgiving dinner at Blue Plate in Himeji.

While I like to think that I'm good with a train schedule, I'm also notoriously scatterbrained and would lose my toes if they weren't attached to my feet. As such, I misread the schedule and arrived at Himeji Station a half hour late. Thankfully, Blue Plate is a piece of cake to find (see below for more info), and I scooted into a cozy downstairs room packed with the warmth of friends and excited chatter over the meal to come.

And the meal- oh man, The Meal! This was not a strange Japanese interpretation of what Thanksgiving should be: the roast turkey, front and centre of the impressive buffet spread, was enough to bring tears to my eyes. Salads, mashed potatoes, stuffing with water chestnuts, pastas, even a mini taco bar with tortillas and toppings (hey, turkey isn't everyone's favorite), and a host more dishes had the buffet table groaning under the weight. The serving staff had more food cooking in the kitchen as we heaped plate after plate full of food, ate our fill, and then returned for seconds, thirds, and extra helpings of desert.

The attendees were not only Americans, but curious folks from many other countries who



Who's who in Hyogo

tori lowe

The Basics...

Name: Stephen Harvey

Please call me: Steve

School and Location in Hyogo: Himeji: currently Shikama Higashi JHS, but soon to be Ootsu JHS

How we know you: Umm... I'm a JET and I have been to a few Hyogo JET events

Birthday: November 3

Born and raised: Born in So Cal, raised in So Cal and Washington State. I identify with Washington more than Cali though.

Family: Just my parents, grandfather, two uncles, an aunt and two cousins

University and Degree: Cal Poly SLO, Journalism
Other jobs you have had: Swim Instructor, Lifeguard, Pool Manager, Bagger, Checker, Freelance Journalist ... not in that order though.

Travels: Been to a couple different states, Canada, Mexico and now Japan ... yep not all that well traveled!

Shumi wa nan desuka: Umm ... Hai! LOL.

Favourite...

Food: Mac and Cheese

Sports: Triathlons

Music: Techno

Shop: Hot Topic

TV Show: Lost

Movie: Matrix

Ice cream: Cookie Dough

Soft Drink: Dr. Pepper

Hard Drink: Long Island Ice Tea

Most Proud Achievement: Eagle Scout

Best life experience: Coming back to Japan

Motto to live by: Just Do It! ... gotta love Nike.

I remember when... I was a wee young lad and I thought it'd be cool to try and burn down my parents house...I was a pyro even before I joined scouts! I was also about 5...

What are you drinking? Green tea

If you were a crayon... I'd be mauve, just cause I like to say it.

Why should we elect you President of the World? I will kiss your babies if you don't! That, and I feel that there isn't enough nap time and recess in an adult's daily life.

Do you have an alibi for the Fire Extinguisher Incident at Yashiro? Yep quite a boring one so I won't share ...

Best thing about Japan so far? Being able to see porn, condoms, alcohol and snacks all in a row along the side of the road!

Other interesting trivia:

I can curl my tongue into a U and then flip the tip up to make "bowl." My real name is Inigo Mantoyo and you killed my father! Oh, and my favorite color was pink until junior year of high school.

My top tip for teaching: Have fun!

When the class is TOO QUIET I... make faces at the "trouble makers" in the class and they generally make the class more genki.

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? YAY!

Stephen Harvey



The Basics

Name: Thomas Hjelm (That 'j' is silent folks)

Please call me: Thomas, Tom, Tommy, Hjelm, Hjelder, to-masu(-sensei), toma or tummai are all names I have answered to before.

School and Location in Hyogo: Ibogawa Jr. High School, Tatsuno

How we know you: From this survey!

Birthday: November 6, 1980

Born and raised: Born in Peoria, Illinois (Go Bears!). Raised in Arlington, Texas.

Family: Parents, three crazy brothers, 2 beautiful nieces, dog (Phoenix) and cat (Caesar).

University and Degree: University of Texas (Austin), BA in Religious Studies. After JET I want to go to grad school.

Other jobs you have had: I was a computer programmer for 1 week, then I quit and changed my major. I used to work in a bakery making donuts, muffins and bread. I worked at the university cafeteria for a couple semesters too, as well as grocery stores and CiCi's Pizza.

Travels: Canada, Mexico, Japan, (South) Korea and Thailand (twice). Next up is Indonesia!

Shumi wa nan desuka: I like to play the guitar, travel when I can, and read about history. I think I want to start taking piano lessons here soon.

Favourite...

Food: In Japan my favorite food is sashimi even though I can never remember the names of the fishies I eat. In general, my favorite food is Thai food, specifically green curry. My ultimate favorite food though is steak!!

Sports: I don't play much, but I'm a big fan of MMA and American Football. I like to hike in the mountains from time to time.

Music: solo piano (Satie, Ravel), some jazz, Slayer. Various others: Radiohead, Jeff Buckley, Tiamat, Frank Sinatra, Eric Johnson. As far as Japanese music goes, I like Shiina Ringo/Tokyo Jihen.

Shop: I'm not much of a shopper. I end up in Tower Records a lot lately... And Yodobashi Camera. MUJI is also a great, great store.

Thomas Hjelm

TV Show: The Simpsons and CSI

Movie: Fight Club, Reservoir Dogs

Most Proud Achievement: nothing special, finishing college maybe?

Best life experience: this moment right now is the best one, right now ☺

Motto to live by: Be nice to other people.

I remember when... I had a metal band in junior high. We played Slayer and Metallica covers without a drummer...God we sucked. I had long hair back then, but now it's all gone!

What are you drinking? Lots of Coca-cola. It's my one guilty pleasure.

If you were a crayon... I'd live in a box!!

Why should we elect you President of the World? Half of the world budget is going to be used to augment the salaries of Hyogo JETs.

Do you have an alibi for the Fire Extinguisher Incident at Yashiro? I was asleep in my room. Also, I'm terrified of fire extinguishers, and wouldn't dare touch one.

Best thing about Japan so far? 9pm 300-yen steaks at MaxValue!

Other interesting trivia:

I don't really have any bizarre talents. Umm.. my grandfather was the artist who drew the original Mr. Peanut logo for Planters.

My top tip for teaching: Just have a good time. Occasionally (but not too often!) say something Japanese so that the kids can laugh at you. In my limited experience, I've found that the kids are much more open to learning if they are in a good mood.

When the class is TOO QUIET I... call on somebody whose name has easy kanji.

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? Hell yes! But don't do it every time or there will be a rebellion that day when you forget to bring the chocolate.



lorna young

life as a
first year jet

Gaijin in the Capital

AEverybody remembers those jetlagged, hazy days of Tokyo orientation. Those of you lucky enough to come from Australia will remember a hotel full of sleep-deprived zombies, while the rest of us will remember you as the smug Aussies who didn't have to use matchsticks to keep their eyes open through the speeches. I'm sure we all remember (or are trying to forget!) what seemed like endless hours of lectures taking precious time away from our desperate attempts to see snatches of Tokyo. The knowledge that we would be whisked far away from the capital in a few short days, forcing us to cram full our already busy days, hung heavily over our heads. Personally, I remember the initial bus ride to the hotel: how being in Japan had not quite sunk in and how my first wave of excitement came from seeing the Disney fairytale castle from the road.

Last month I decided it was high time I revisited Tokyo with a few of the Aussies I was so jealous of back in August. This time, however, it was to be a trip where I would be wide awake to enjoy myself and take in the experience – a trip where I could spend less time listening and more time seeing the city. Not to mention attempting to quell my appetite for Disney and theme parks along the way!

The plan to be wide awake was slightly compromised by the decision to take the overnight bus from Osaka. Sleep deprivation was not helped by the sadistic bus driver who seemed

to take pleasure in periodically morphing the bus from a freezer to an oven and back again.

So again we arrived at Tokyo at the crack of dawn feeling dozy and dazed, but this time the Aussies were feeling it too; had I been less sleepy, I might have had the presence of mind to take pleasure in that. Lonely Planet had assured us that the ungodly hours of the morning were a good time to visit Tokyo's famous fish market, so backpacks and suitcases in tow we set off to find it. The excursion was highly amusing but not at all what we had expected. The entire place was deserted due to the national holiday. What we witnessed was an eerie, empty, fishy smelling building which made us feel like gaijin idiots.

Surely, we thought, a visit to the famous Sony building would salvage our morning. Yet again, though, we were let down by what turned out to be a glorified electronics shop. However, the experience was worth it just to hear the geeky American teenagers, who were waiting to get inside, being told that the Play station suite was closed. Our morning was finally saved by the 'all you can eat' cake shop opposite the Sony building. God bless Japan!

Stuffed and ready for more sights we moved on, and I can only claim delirium from lack of sleep in defense of our Ninja antics in the Imperial palace gardens. Honestly, you'd think they would have better security.

Later, while half of our party collapsed at the

hostel, the hardcore sightseers headed to Tokyo tower through the rain for a neon encrusted aerial view of the city. Gaudy as the tower looks from the outside; the visit was the highlight of what seemed like a comically disastrous day.

We woke the next morning as excited as children at Christmas, and readied ourselves for our date with Mickey. We arrived at Disneyland before the gates opened and were greeted by lines full of Japanese people already wearing their Disney costumes. Those who were ultra fashion conscious even had Mickey ears to match their leopard print coats!

A little piece of advice for the day: if you ever start to feel old, take a trip to Disneyland. I can't imagine a more perfect place to regress: the four of us were complete children all day! It is a great place to watch young-at-heart gaijins pouncing on Mary Poppins, hijacking photos with Donald Duck, waving madly at people dressed as Christmas trees, and staring intently at a perfectly alabaster Alice in Wonderland amidst the crowds of Japanese. Disneyland was enchanting and exhausting but we had no time for rest: we had plans to take on Disney Sea the next day!

Disney Sea was populated by children of an older generation, due to the large number of thrill rides. The lack of small people made us take our merriment all the more seriously. That day we had our Minnie ears on and our elbows out – and in the crowds we really needed them!

Again, I didn't recognize the gaijins fawning over the statue of Eric from the little mermaid, but they seemed to be enjoying it and inspiring Japanese onlookers to indulge their inner child.

The three and a half hour queue for the Tower of Terror vouched for its being the newest attraction in the park. We sneakily managed to get a fast pass, and the ride was as fabulous as our terrified and ecstatic faces showed in the ride photo. Whoever thought of dropping people down a lift shaft for fun was a very clever person.

As with Disneyland the day before, we left the park after closing time and wearily sought our beds, knowing we were heading back to reality and some real Japanese culture the next day. We all slept as soundly as Snow White in her glass coffin that night.

After an indulgent extra hour in bed, we set out to witness the wide spectrum of Japanese culture in Tokyo. We started at Asakusa temple and the bustling, historical shopping street leading to it. The temple was memorable simply due to its cavernous size and the haunting sounds of the priests praying as we wandered around. The surrounding area had the electric buzz of a city plucked out of time and, even with so many jostling people, there were no feelings of insecurity.

We visited some older parts of the city that we would have never discovered were it not for our brief and pleasant rickshaw ride. We were




tucked up warmly, seated on heating pads and waved at by the locals as if we were gaijin royalty. One shop owner even rushed out to give us a free sample of his sweets!

After our ride it was our turn to rush as time was not on our side. We left Japan's pleasant past and perused its peculiar present in Yoyogi Park. The bridge just outside the park was populated with teenage misfits in gothic costumes, primped, preened and waiting for the intrigued public to take their pictures. They seemed to love the attention from the onlookers, and in a way it was pleasing to know they were enjoying getting gawked at. Wide eyed and wide mouthed we crossed the bridge in a race against the clock, having to pass up the offer of a 'free hug' from another bridge dweller.

The train was a thing of beauty to us after the tiring weekend. Yet another of Japan's wonders: the Shinkansen, fast and comfortable with a constant and cozy temperature. How glad we were that it was not the overnight bus.




Japan just wouldn't be Japan without...



kaila krayewski

Gigantic cars: Why is it that in Japan, the people are smaller, but the cars are bigger? Vans aren't mini here; they're more like the size of semi-trucks. With the exception of JETmobiles, err I mean kei-cars, even regular cars seem larger than normal—those boxy machines that look like vans, but usually contain one only person...often with a ridiculous amount of stuffed animals in the front window.

Horking: It does seem to be mostly the men who do this, but that doesn't make it any more acceptable. It doesn't matter WHAT country you are in, a hork is a hork is a hork. Why can't they just blow their nose or spit discretely like the rest of us? Instead they have to make some big production about it, letting the whole world know: 'Guess what everybody! There is a disgusting amount of mucous in my throat!' Is it really necessary?



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JAPAN: travel review

jeff weese



okayama

Doesn't this weather just make you want to get naked and run around a temple and through an icy pond, all to fight for a stick? Apparently this does sound enticing to many Japanese (and a few foreign) men.



In Okayama, the weekend of February 17th is better known as Hadaka Matsuri, which literally means "Naked Festival". Participants and spectators come from the far reaches of Okayama and neighboring prefectures to partake in the near-nakedness – or observing of the near-nakedness.

The run down of the festival is this: people cram onto trains and buses to Saidai-ji Temple in the late evening, and arrive to crowded streets, the Eyo Winter Fireworks display over the banks of the Yoshii River and the welcoming beat of Taiko drums. Let your nose lead you to the abundant food stalls where you can feast on the usual festival fillers like grilled squid, hot dogs, and yakisoba. While the food warms you up in the sub-zero degree weather, the runners (participants) have their warm winter attire replaced with a little cloth to cover their bits and a nice healthy string up their arses, or what the Japanese would call a *fundoshi*. Following this

is a warm up (though I'm not sure it actually warmed anyone up!) of running around the temple grounds several times as well as through an icy pond. Finally, the main event welcomes thousands of men to the front of the temple where they scramble to be in a prime position for midnight when sacred sticks are dropped from above. Well, calling it a scramble could be deceiving...with so many men and so few sticks, there is crushing, falling, and suffocating...but apparently there is still something that brings the same men back year after year! The festival is considered to be a distinguished cultural asset by Okayama Prefecture as it dates back to the Eisho Era (1504-1521) when priests distributed amulets – which eventually became wooden sticks – to the people. The *shingi* (wooden sticks) are meant to bring luck to the bearer for an entire year...now who wouldn't want that? If you need visuals, you can find videos of the festival on YouTube.

If you've made it all the way to Okayama, you might as well make a weekend out of it right? Besides the near-naked men, there are a few other things to see and do in Okayama. For starters, have you ever heard of "The Peach Boy" or "Momotaro"? It's an ancient Japanese legend where a boy born from a peach goes out and fights crime... well, there's more to it than that, but I don't want to give away the story! However, the legend is strongly linked to Okayama, so you can pose with Momotaro and Okayama Castle in the background to make a memorable photo. On the same grounds as Momotaro, you will find one of the three most scenic gardens in Japan. Korakuen Garden means "Garden of Pleasure After," and winter is meant to be one of the best times to visit to see the red-crested white cranes. At a cost of only 350 yen to enter, it would be a shame to miss the miniature maple forests, lotus pond, and hidden teahouses.

If the cold weather makes you yearn for the warmth of the teahouses, save your urge to be cultural for a tiny little tea house just outside the garden's South exit. It clings to the edge of the hillside, looking out over the river with the stunning black Okayama Castle once again in the backdrop. The sweet *amazaki*, a by-product of sake, is served with ginger and makes a very fragrant treat on a cold winter's day.



opposite & above: Hadaka Matsuri (Karen)

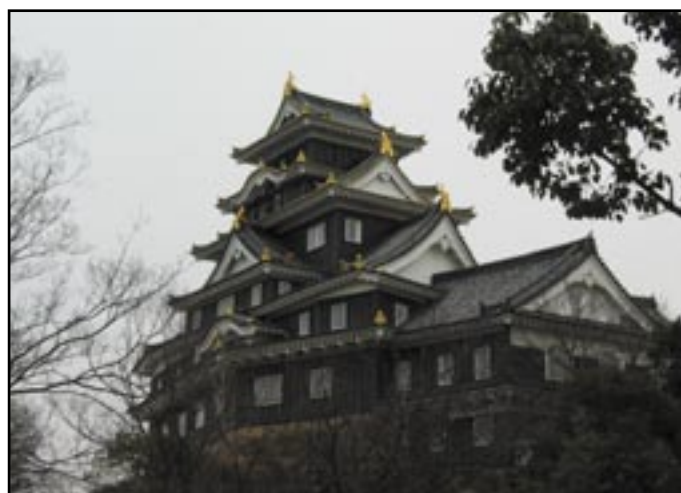


Saidaiji Kannon-in Temple (Jeff Weese)

Just across the Moon Viewing Bridge from Korakuen Garden is the 1966 reconstruction of Okayama Castle, commonly known as Crow Castle. Don't let the reconstruction or elevator deter you from entering; it is one of only two castles in Japan that are painted a striking black color. There is a museum in the tower that documents the castle's history, as well as an opportunity to dress up in traditional costumes. Entry will only set you back 300 yen and the castle is open from 9am to 5pm.

Getting to Okayama can be a long journey on local trains taking 1 ½ hours from Himeji (there are no rapids...damn JR), so I would recommend taking the Shinkansen which will whisk you there in a mere 21 minutes. It is worth the extra 1500yen! For sleeping, Okayama Seinen-Kaikan, tel. **086-252-0651**, or Matsunoki Ryokan, tel **086-253-4111**, are both reasonable options. If the city is not your thing, or if you are looking for a more relaxation and retreat type accommodation, the International Villa Group in Okayama has some amazing locations with ridiculously cheap prices! The only downside to the Villas is transportation, but if you can sort it out, I highly recommend it! You can find more information about the different properties at <http://www.harenet.ne.jp/villa/>

That's it for Okayama but keep your eye out for Hyogo AJET and/or Okayama AJET specials for the weekend of February 17th! Happy travels!



top->bottom: Momotaro (Jeff Weese)
Okayama Castle (Jeff Weese)
Korakuen Garden



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Kobe Regatta & Athletic Club
Founded 1870



kaila krayewski

Naha★

Japan's Southern Paradise



Day 1

My friend Laura brought along a bottle of champagne and we toasted to our trip to Okinawa in always classy plastic cups on the ferry ride from Awaji Island over to Kansai airport.

We ate some yummy Chinese food, bought some English magazines (2000Y for a Cosmopolitan!), and then spiked Starbucks mochas with some Baileys I had brought in an empty honey container; again, classy. The flight over went fairly quickly.

When we got off the plane, the warmth was instant. I couldn't get over how much a difference 10 degrees makes.

The airport was filled with colourful exotic flowers. It was like someone was saying 'welcome to paradise'.

We hopped on the handy monorail (the track goes over top of the city, and looks like a rollercoaster) and headed to our hostel.

A Japanese friend of ours had helped us book

a hostel called Cam-Cam. It wasn't something you could find in the Lonely Planet. We paid upfront—3200 yen each total...for four nights. That's 800 yen a night – unbelievable! But we're not talking about rooms here...there was one room, and two huge, three-story bunk beds. We were shown our beds—on the top bunk. We were, in fact, supposed to share a bed. We were actually only given one sheet. Nevertheless, we were ready to party. So we threw on some makeup and hit Kokusai street – Naha's entertainment hub.

Since it was a Wednesday night, it wasn't so busy, and we started out at a Canadian bar called Paul and Mike's. It was neat to be in an English-speaking establishment, but the place was filled with sad-looking middle-aged men. We met this 29-year-old American named Aaron, who is an English teacher in Naha. When we decided to leave, I told him we were going to a salsa bar and that he should stop by later if he wanted...I was really just being nice.

The salsa bar, Salsatina's, was cool, but there weren't many people there. We still had a great time because of a few Japanese guys who decided to teach us some salsa. We were just leaving to find another place when Aaron showed up with his friend. We asked him where we should go next, and he offered to walk with us to this cool club he knows.

When we got there, the bouncer at the front seemed uncomfortable. Aaron looks like he is in the military and Okinawans are notoriously distrustful of military men. We asked him what kind of music they were playing that night, and he replied dance music. When I asked him if they were playing any hip-hop (my favorite), he said bluntly 'No black'. That's all. Just "no black". I'm thinking, "Can you say that?" When we inquired about what they would be playing the next few nights, he started shaking his hands in front of himself, saying "No, no, Japanese only." Can you say that??

The racism became even more apparent when Aaron tried to hail us a cab to take us to another club. We tried at least five taxis before we found one that would take us—every time Aaron leaned in to ask, they just shook their heads and said "No, no" before he could even finish his sentence. We eventually found a cab who would take

us, and we went to a really fun club filled with Japanese people, where we managed to dance until 5am.

Day 2

We woke up around 10am, after about four hours of sleep, since we are so used to getting up early. We decided to take it easy because we knew that Friday and Saturday, we would be partying hard. First thing we did was hit up Starbucks (no Baileys this time), and then we walked up and down Kokusai street.

About the weather: you how know when the sun is out and there is not a cloud in the sky, and the temperature hits about 25 degrees Celcius and there is a very slight breeze, and it's basically perfect? Yeah, it was like that every freaking day! We went to Shuri castle, because we wanted to do at least one cultural thing, and we saw some traditional Okinawan dancing. But after walking all day, I think both of us were just happy to sit down for a bit. I actually fell asleep—the dancing is very slow and relaxing.

We decided to dine at an Izakaya so that we could sample the various foods Okinawa has to offer (Okinawa is famous for its food...known for being incredibly tasty and healthy). After searching forever for a place with pictures on the menu, so that we could know what we were



Okinawa pig (Kaila Krayewski)



top->bottom: Okinawa tokashiki (Kaila Krayewski)
Okinawa salsatina (Kaila Krayewski)

ordering, we managed to find one that was serving 100 yen beers. We hadn't been planning on drinking that night, but how can you turn down 100 yen beers? I mean, you have to drink something, right?

The food was amazing, as was the local Orion brew. We made it to bed relatively early, Laura a little earlier than me, as I had a brief run-in with the biggest cockroach ever, and decided to seal everything in my bags extra tightly.

I woke up freezing as I did not have any sheets.

Day 3

We woke up at 8:30am feeling fairly refreshed (but still cold) after a long night's sleep, grabbed another Starbucks (just tea today) and headed off to catch a ferry to a nearby island we had heard was worth a visit, called Tokashiki. There, we ate some curry at what was likely the only restaurant on the island, and then hiked up a massive hill (or small mountain) to a look-out, where we chilled out for a bit, staring off at the sea.

I think it was on this day that we discovered that sheets and blankets were available in a supply area in the hostel, as were towels (we had

been sharing the same one as I didn't think to bring one).

That evening we went to Naha's famous marketplace, where we were surrounded by pig's heads (they actually had one modeled with sunglasses on, and his front hoof by his face in that infamous Japanese peace-sign pose). Ridiculous. Despite the fact that my stomach was churning from the swine head image, we decided to get some food. The sashimi (raw fish) was the freshest we'd ever tasted. It actually melts in your mouth. My dinner had some Spam hidden in it—another Okinawan specialty (rather strange, I thought...)—but this one, I left on my plate. Spam isn't really my thing.

We topped off our feast with what instantly became my new favorite ice cream—sweet potato ice cream. I never knew you could make an ice cream out of a vegetable.

Went back to the hostel and prettied ourselves up, then we hit some bars for some pre-dancing drinking. At this point, Kokusai Street was crawling with foreigners...mostly Marines. After a few drinks, we made our way back to Salsatina's. If Kokusai Street had been crawling with Marines, Salsatina's was swarmed by them: it was a club full of Marines, a few Japanese girls, and Laura and I. And damn could these guys dance! Most of them were from southern United States, where I guess salsa dancing is a part of the culture.

We barely had a chance to catch our breath between dances before we were dragged back onto the dance floor for more. I was actually stolen from partners in the middle of a dance a few times. We had no idea what we were doing, and it is very difficult to learn salsa when you are inebriated, but these guys knew how to lead, and basically just flung us around the dance floor all night. It was so much fun.

We stumbled back into Cam-Cam at about 5:30am.

Day 4

We grabbed some breakfast from Lawson's (if you can call rice balls and corn salad breakfast), and headed off to an outlet mall. It was a bit of a trip to get there and not really worth it, but I did find a cute top to wear that night, so I was happy.

We went back to the same Izakaya where we ate on Thursday, just because it was that good. The place was crowded and we had to sit at the bar. It was neat though because we got to watch the chefs make the food. I felt bad after I indiscreetly commented that the chef had hair

like my dog's (haven't you ever noticed that a lot of Japanese men have very shaggy, rough-looking hair?), and then realized that he could understand English. He was chopping right in front of us. Whoops.

We went to a bar afterwards that had been fun the night before, but this night was filled with children. It was strange because it was 10pm and hip-hop music was blaring. The kids were there with their parents at what looked like an enkai. Nonetheless, we sat at the bar, mesmerized by the music videos we never get to see anymore. I think the bartenders felt bad that the kids were there...either that or they just didn't want us to leave (we were the only other people in the bar), so they gave us free drinks.

We wanted to try a hip-hop club, because it seemed to be the thing to do in Naha on Saturday night according to the Marines, so we went to the same club that had told us 'Japanese only' a few nights before. The place had been recommended by some foreigners we met on the street – contradictions are a part of Japanese culture, I have come to realize – and this time we didn't have any military-looking men with us, so suddenly it was completely OK for us to come in. In fact, they seemed to really want us to come in!

I really wish we hadn't.

The place was filled with thugs and scantily-clad Japanese girls. It was hip-hop alright, but hardcore hip-hop. Not my style. After a bit of uncomfortable dancing on the dance floor, Laura and I realized that we might have been the only white girls in there. We promptly left and headed for trusty Salsatina's.

We got there around 3am, and we heaved a sigh of relief to see that it was a similar crowd to the night before. Tonight some of the dancers were really showing off—spinning and jumping and flying all over the dance floor. I was in awe. Once again, we danced until 5am.

Day 5

We were very sad to leave. Naha is such a fun city, and good god does it have amazing weather! But it was time, so we said goodbye and jetted back to Kansai. There, we discovered that our ferry back to Awaji had been cancelled due to bad weather (Kansai weather sucks!), so we had to pay more money to take a two-hour bus back to Sumoto. Nice welcome home, huh? I got in to my apartment at 11pm and it was freezing. I sat in front of the heater, hiding under my covers, wishing I was back in Naha.

Japan just wouldn't be Japan without...



kaila krayewski

OK-OK: Who decided that when you say OK, you have to say it twice in a row? I must hear this at least three times a day. It's quite catchy, really.

Toilet shoes: In Japan, almost without fail, when you enter a bathroom, there will be a pair of slippers waiting for you. It doesn't matter how clean or dirty the bathroom is...there they are. If you are already wearing slippers, you must take them off, and put on these new bathroom slippers, which you wear for all of two steps, shuffling your way to the toilet, which is often very confined. Before you leave the bathroom, you must take them off, putting them back in the same position you found them. This can be quite awkward, because it means you have to take them off with your back to the door, and step out of the bathroom backwards. This does not make for a graceful bathroom experience...



ESS: English sensei spirit



What with Australia Day, Valentine's Day and a whole pile of fun holidays coming up (or just passed, eh hem), I thought I would include a Holiday Lesson Plan.



You can start this lesson plan with an explanation of a relevant holiday. I wrote a short paragraph about Australia Day, and then asked some comprehension questions, which took about 15 minutes in total. I also had a 15 minute warm-up exercise, because this activity only takes 20 minutes!

I explained the worksheet completely in English, and the students had no problem following instructions (I just invented a "Tori Day", and orally completed the worksheet).

Here is an example worksheet:

Make your own National Holiday! Class: _____ No: _____ Name: _____

Holiday Name _____

Date of holiday: _____

Reason for the holiday: _____

This holiday is to celebrate _____

Special Activities

On this holiday, all people must _____

Special Costumes

On this holiday people wear _____

Other Holiday Information



Some students were really creative, and almost every student enjoyed this activity (Senior High School 1st Years).

If you have any other lesson plans, let me know! torilowe@hotmail.com.

let's enjoying fun!

Please be inspired to send in anything amusing that you come across, such as a sign,

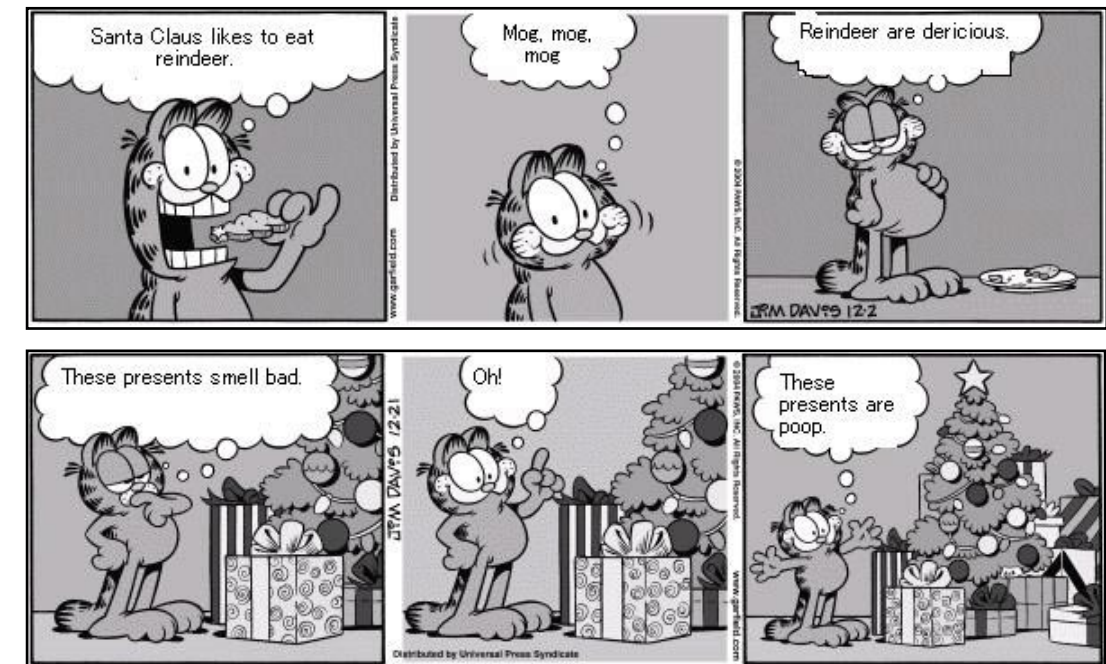
a t-shirt, an incident, or whatever.

Student submissions get some of the best feedback.

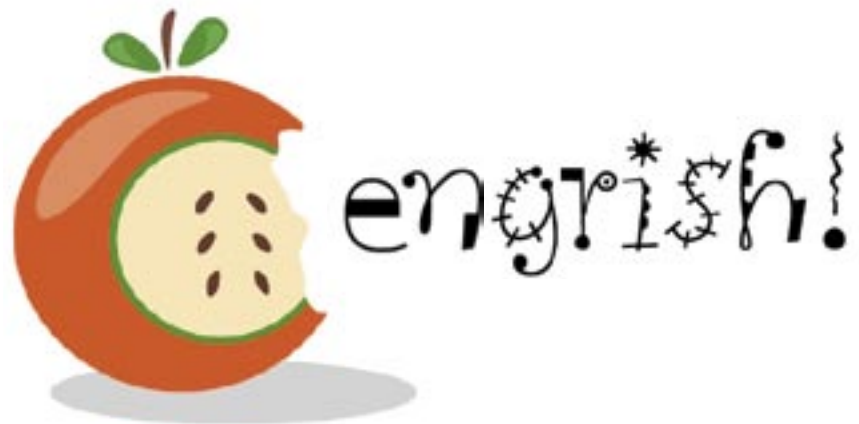
Please submit them in their original writing, warts and all.

You can send a story or a picture or both to:

submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com



top: submitted by robin crowder
a very English Christmas (1st years)
above: submitted by Mary Ellen Kennedy



submitted by robin crowder

Misplaced Dreams... My Future Job

By Ayaka, a 2nd year SHS student who clearly hasn't chosen her career path

I am interested in a picture book writer. Because when I was a child I liked it very much so I read it everyday. It gives children how to read characters. And stimulates their imagination. My mother used to tell me stories. Then I was very enjoy. I like writing short stories. For these two reasons I want to be a farmer.



submitted by brianne

LETTER To Ms. Brianne This is the first time that I give a left er to Ms. Brianne. There is already little more it until a winter vacation. The days that I spent in this junior high school were the time when I was the best. I found pleasure of one English again because Mr. Brianne came to this school. My sign of the next year "does English for a proud subject", appear, and do it. Therefore I am awarded English authorization. Homework of a winter vacation wants to aim at more tips not 2.3 laps. Next year thanking you in advance. Than two or three (student's name)



OUT AND ABOUT IN HYOGO...



habitat for humanity benefit concert



THANK YOU!

A gigantic thank you to all the Hyogo JETs who came out to support the Habitat for Humanity benefit concert on Friday, January 19th! With your donations, we were able to raise 192,921Y – more than has been raised by any benefit concert in the past three years! About 169,231Y came directly from your cover charge and donations, while about 23,690Y was thanks to the dedicated (or drunken!) souls who dug deeper into their pockets and purchased HFH t-shirts. Way to go Hyogo! Also, a big thank you to the four bands who kindly donated their evening and sang their hearts out in support of the JETs heading to the Philippines to build houses in March – naturally, we couldn't have done it without you!

THANK YOU HYOGO!



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Hematology Astrology

robin crowder

february 2007

TYPE A



Level headed and careful planning raises your status amongst coworkers and puts you in a position of power that you did not expect: use this to your advantage! The long, cold winter nights suddenly seem much shorter when a fabulous piece of news gives you something warm to look forward to.

Single As: There are many different people – err, ways – for keeping warm and your dynamic attitude this month pushes you to start trying them...a lot of them! Be careful!

Attached As: This month you are all about having the power and control, but – surprisingly – your significant other seems to really enjoy your take charge attitude.

Lucky Days: 3, 28

TYPE O



With your generally easy going nature, the amount of little things that get under your skin is surprising to both you and your friends – thankfully, February is a short month! Towards the 20th, you start to feel more like your old self, so celebrate by accepting a rather unexpected offer.

Single Os: Love may be in the air, but you are living in an entirely different atmosphere. Hold out for March – February just isn't your month!

Attached Os: Though you may be a hop, a skip and a jump away from a break up, give the relationship another go before making that final decision.

Lucky Days: 6, 21

TYPE B



Despite normally preferring to work on one project at a time, “cabin fever” makes you feel restless and you start searching for more ways to fill your free time. Good luck! A new endeavor may lead you down an entirely new life path, but be careful not to give up the well traveled road too quickly.

Single Bs: a chance encounter with an old friend or flame leads to a second, planned encounter around the 11th – one which leaves you feeling extremely satisfied!

Attached B: Don't let your restless feet walk into your love life, as a hastily made decision could leave you with regrets.

Lucky Days: 11, 17

TYPE AB



With an ever manic personality, you find your emotions and life bouncing all over the place this month. You feel slightly overwhelmed with so many things on your plate, but it will be well into March before you have time to catch your breath. On the bright side, however, this month is your time to shine...

Single ABs: Let's face it: this month you just don't have time to focus on finding true love! Don't lose heart though because somebody knows you just need a little time.

Attached ABs: In the chaos of this month be sure that your partner knows you need some time to focus on you – better yet, make sure that he or she focuses on you!

Lucky Days: 5, 18

Stop Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places

robin crowder

Are tired of wasting hours getting to know someone, only to discover that you'll never be compatible in a long-term relationship? If so, it's time to skip all the cheesy one-liners, the awkward first dates, the deep-probing questions and cut straight to the issue of compatibility – blood type compatibility that is.

Not only used for mapping out personalities, the Asian blood type theory also proposes relationship compatibility based on nothing other than the gooey red liquid coursing through our veins. Of course, when you consider that blood is what gives us life and that it comes straight from the place in our chest that gets all tingly when a special someone approaches, perhaps it's not too far out there to give blood type some consideration when it comes to matters of the heart.

According to the theory, a relationship between a type A girl and a type O boy has a 95% chance of success. A relationship between a type O girl and a type A boy, however, has only a 80% chance of succeeding. Continuing down the scale, a type B girl paired with a type O boy has 65% chance of lasting love, while a type AB girl and a type B boy have a barely 30% chance.

Next time, instead of asking “So...where do you see this relationship going?”, cut out the complicated answers and ask the important question: “What's your blood type?”



TYPE A: Ideal job: Lawyer

Love match: Type A women have a 95 percent compatibility with type O men and are least compatible with AB men.

TYPE B: Ideal job: Artist

Love match: Type B's enjoy dating around before taking any relationships seriously. There is a 75 percent compatibility with fellow B types and a low 40 percent compatibility between B women and A men.

TYPE O: Ideal job: A teaching career

Love match: O women are 80 percent compatible with A men, whereas relationships with AB men would be difficult because they don't have anything in common.

TYPE AB: Ideal job: Critics or reviewers.

Love match: Type AB women are least compatible with O men and are 90 percent compatible with B men because they complete what the other lacks.

poetry and short fiction

Sakasegawa

by rrs

in the winter bleached grass

lies a crooked whisper

and night, having made its kill

caws bold and fed

the wind stands at attention

holding against the gathering

arid blue

a white pennant jet stream

for where the river was

the morning birds won't return.

Japanese culture:

st. valentines & white day

Let's giving chocolates.

On St. Valentine's Day in Japan, only women give men chocolate. It is said that Japanese women are usually too shy to express their love, and thus St. Valentine's Day was thought to be a great opportunity to let women express their feelings. This marketing tool has proven so successful that chocolate companies sell over 50% of their annual sales in the week before Valentine's Day. These gifts of confection come in two forms: "Giri-choko" (obligatory chocolate) and Honmei-choko (true love chocolate). The most popular Japanese chocolate brands are Glico, Meiji and Lotte. Women give chocolate not only to their loved ones, but to men such as bosses, colleagues or male friends in whom they have no romantic interest, simply for friendship or gratitude.

Does it sound good to you? Don't get too excited when you get chocolates from Japanese girls! These gifts of confection come in two forms; "Giri-choko" (obligatory chocolate) and "Honmei-choko" ("a true love" chocolate). Women not only give chocolates to their loved ones but also to men such as bosses, colleagues or male friends that women have no romantic interest in, just for friendship or gratitude.

The concept of "giri" is very Japanese. It is a mutual obligation that the Japanese follow when dealing with other people. If someone does you a favour, then you feel obligated to do something for that person. The average price range for giri-choko is around 100 yen to 300 yen each.

Unlike the West, sending a Valentine's cards is not common in Japan, and the phrase "Happy Valentines" is not widely used. For that special someone, women tend to give special gifts, such as neckties or clothes with the chocolates. In such special situations, the chocolates are sometimes hand made.

...and what about the men?? Exactly one month after Valentine's Day, on March 14th is a day called 'White day.' Just as with the giving of chocolates on Valentine's, the popularization of White Day is credited to a confectionery maker. A company making marshmallows launched a campaign in 1965 urging men to repay valentine gifts with soft, fluffy marshmallows. The name White Day comes from the colour of the candy, and at first it was called Marshmallow Day. Men who were lucky enough to receive gifts of chocolate have the chance to return the favour by giving the women a more expensive box of chocolates, sweets or even jewellery. Now who's laughing...

I can't wait to tell you. Sugoku hanashitai koto-ga aru-no. ♀
 すごく話したい事があるの。
 Sugoku hanashitai koto-ga arun-da-kedo. ♂
 すごく話したい事があるんだけど。
 Use this to show your excitement/enthusiasm just before saying what's on your mind, inviting your friend to ask Nani? Nani? 何? 何? "What?"

I can't think of anything but you. Anata-no-koto igai-wa kangae-rarenai. ♀
 あなたの事以外は考えられない。
 Kimi-no-koto igai-wa kangae-rarenai. ♂
 君の事以外は考えられない。

I can't live without you(r love). Anata-nashi-ja ikirarenai. ♀
 あなた無しじゃ生きられない。
 Kimi-nashi-ja ikirarenai. ♂
 君無しじゃ生きられない。

It hurts to be without you. Anata-nashi-da to tsurai. ♀
 あなた無しだとつらい。
 Kimi-nashi-da to tsurai. ♂
 君無しだとつらい。

Say you'll be mine. Atashi-no mono-to itte. ♀
 あたしのもと言って。
 Boku-no mono-to itte. ♂
 僕のもと言って。

I'll make you happy. Shiawase-ni suru-yo. ♂
 幸せにするよ。

Girls might take this as a proposal.



extract from: More making out in Japanese, Todd & Erika Geers.



compiled by amanda brown

FEBRUARY EVENTS: KANSAI

CONCERT LISTINGS:

Feb 1 - Corrine Bailey Rae
Shinsaibashi Club Quattro
Open 18:00, Start 19:00: 6000yen

Feb 5 - Snow Patrol
RESCHEDULED - Will be on April 14 (Sat)

Feb 8 - Tool
Zepp Osaka: Open 18:00, Start 19:00
7000yen, 1F Standing, 2F Reserved

Feb 13 - Donavon Frankenreiter
Osaka Big Cat: Open 18:00, Start 19:00
6000yen

Feb 14 - JET
Zepp Osaka: Open 18:00, Start 19:00
6500yen, 1F Standing, 2F Reserved

Feb 15 - A Hundred Birds Orchestra (w DJ Francois K)
Namba Hatch: Open/Start 19:00
4000yen, standing only

Feb 17 - Deftones
Shinsaibashi Club Quattro
Open 17:00, Start 18:00: 6000yen

Feb 22 - Jurassic 5
Shinsaibashi Club Quattro
Open 18:00, Start 19:00: 6500yen



Feb 23 - Yo La Tengo
Osaka Big Cat
Open 18:00, Start 19:00: 6000yen

Feb 26 - Fall Out Boy
Namba Hatch: Open 18:00, Start 19:00
6200yen, 1F Standing, 2F Reserved

March 3 - !!!
Shinsaibashi Club Quattro
Open 18:00, Start 19:00
5800yen

March 6 - Bloc Party
Namba Hatch
Open 18:00, Start 19:00
6300yen

March 12 - Converge (with Envy and Planes Mistaken for Stars)
Shinsaibashi Club Quattro
Open 18:00, Start 18:45: 6000yen

March 14-15 - Muse
Zepp Osaka: Open 18:00, Start 19:00
6800yen

March 19 - Red Hot Chili Peppers
Osaka Kyocera Dome: Open 17:00, Start 19:00
8000yen (A-class), 9000yen (S-class)

Coming soon to Kansai: (April)
Beck, Flogging Molly, Snow Patrol, Dir En Grey, Ben Kweller, Sonic Youth, and Europe (The Final Countdown!!!)

FESTIVALS: *courtesy of Japanvisitor.com*

Setsubun in Hyogo
2nd - 3rd February
Amagasaki Ebisu, Daikaku-ji, Ikuta Jinja, Kiyoshikojin, Nagata Jinja, Nakayama-dera, Nishinomiya Jinja, Harimanokuni Sosha
Throwing of beans (mame) to chase away the evil oni (evil spirits).

Tsuina Ceremony
3 February
Nagata Jinja, Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture
Seven youths dressed as demons and wielding torches dance to the sound of conches and drums.

Otomatsuri
6 February
Shingu, Wakayama Prefecture
Fire festival in which hundreds of men dressed all in white, run down the steep steps up the mountain carrying flaming torches.
Kasuga Wakamiya Festival

Saidai-ji Eyo
Third Saturday of February
Saidai-ji, Okayama Prefecture
Spectacular and atmospheric naked festival in which up to 10,000 loincloth-wearing (and sometimes drunk) men battle for sacred wooden sticks tossed into the air by priests.

Baikasai
25 February
Kitano Tenmangu Shrine, Kyoto
A tea party hosted by Kyoto maiko and geiko is held amongst the blossoming plum trees.

Hina Matsuri
3 March
Hokyo-ji Temple, Kyoto
Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival), held every year on March 3, has its roots in an ancient Chinese purification ceremony in which evil was transferred to doll surrogates (katashiro) which were then cast away on a river. Hokyo-ji is often referred to as the 'Doll Temple' due to its extensive collection of dolls.



ART&COMEDY:

Himeji Shiritsu Bijutsukan
Through March 26, Paul Delvaux et Rene Magritte, paintings by two Belgian surrealists will be displayed.

Kyoto National Museum, Kyoto
Sliding Door Panels of the Kyoto Imperial Palace
Jan 6 - Feb 18

The National Museum of Art Osaka
The Prints and Ceramics of Picasso
Jan 13 - Mar 25

CLASSIFIEDS!

WANTED: your classified ads!

Do you have something to sell? Is there something you want to buy? Do you have language classes to give up or want to take on some more? Are you looking for a language exchange partner...or maybe just that special someone?

Make sure to include not only what you are advertising but also all your contact details.

Send your ads by the 15th of every month to:
submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com

TENTATIVE DATES FOR AJET EVENTS:

February

9th to 12th – Hokkaido Snow Festival Trip
17th – Okayama Naked Man Festival

March

Elections for AJET committee (Handover in April)

To stay updated about upcoming events please join our
Hyogo Ajet yahoo group at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hyogojets/>