

hyogo times

February, 2008



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On the cover...



Myrie Eaton and Luke Leyow sent in their photos from the Naked Man festival in Okayama prefecture. Known as Hidaka Matsuri, men dress in tabi and fundoshi and battle for possession of a series of sticks, with the winners taking home cash prizes and the promise of fertility over the coming year.

Photo by Luke Leyow. Cover photo by Myrie Eaton

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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, photos, 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:

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<http://hyogoajet.org>

From The Editor...

Welcome to the new-look *Hyogo Times*!

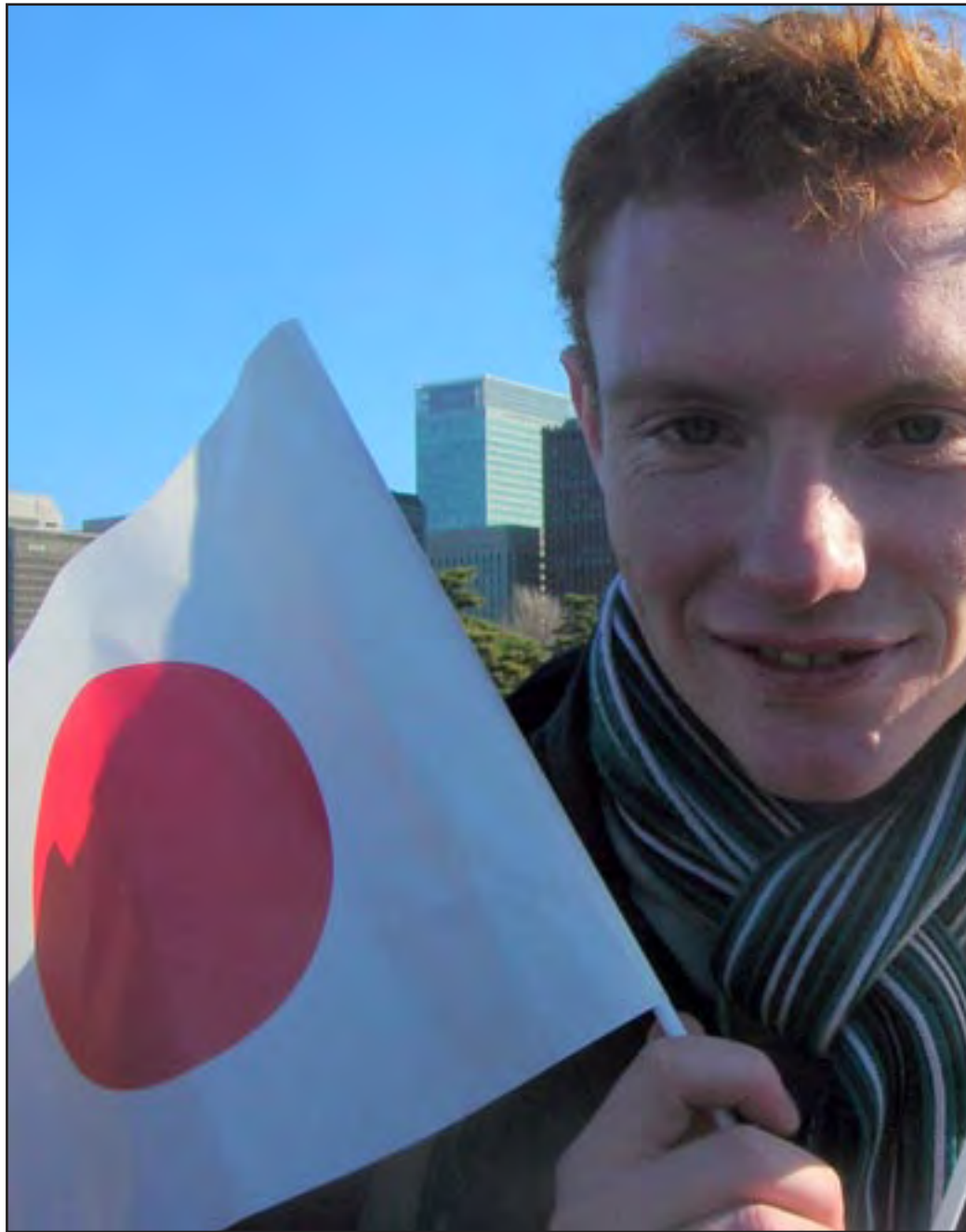
Ok, so maybe it looks the same as the last one, but there have been some massive changes in the *Hyogo Times* team. The talented Tori has retired as editor and I have been lucky enough to take her place. Tori's shoes were too big to fill (something which never happens in Japan!) by myself so I've got the wonderful Emerald Huang as deputy editor to help me along.

This issue also sees us welcome some wonderful new writers (virgin writers if you will) to the team. We've got MacKenzie with relationships, Jojo with cooking, Stealth Gaijin with Life as an Asian JET, Caoimhe with a poem that will touch your heart and wonderful articles from Rupa, Jar-ryd, Alison, Joy and Erica. To complement these we have the wise words of our regular writers — Paul, Jeff, Brandon, Angela, Graham and Tori.

Being only a first-year JET, I am still only learning how to survive in Japan (I only learnt last week that sticking bubble-wrap on your windows keeps your room much warmer!).

However I feel that I should share give you my top tip for Japan. This would have to be to forget all embarrassment (though avoiding old men who want to give you back massages would be a close second — story another time). We are all gaijin and no matter how hard we try we will make a fool of ourselves at some stage. If you are too worried about looking silly you'll miss out on so much.

In one of my first classes I sang a song to my class and as some people will confirm, my voice has been known to curdle blood. They laughed and laughed. The rest of the class was brilliant and since then they have



always been a wonderful class to teach. In another time and place I would have been embarrassed, but in Japan people laugh at me all the time. They laugh when I try to post letters, when I try to use chopsticks, when I offer people miso soup instead of water. Everything I do is funny so I can either worry about it or just sit back and enjoy the fact that I am currently the funniest person in my town.

Anyway that's my little tip for the future. I'm sure you'll find plenty more in the writings of this month's contributors. Happy reading!

—Kevin

and from the PR...

Herro once again everybody, and I hope you are enjoying the bitter cold that has most people confined to their kotatus! I have found that people tend to become a little (note the exaggeration) negative this time of year towards their jobs, Japan, and even Japanese house designers.

Why does everyone get so down? What is so bad about this season? I, for one, am having a great winter! The more I thought about it, the more I realized that we need to settle this once and for all: Is winter in Japan as horrible as everyone says? You know what that means... IT'S DEBATE TIME!

Having studied debate extensively in Kobe last month, I think you'll find that my logic is flawless.

"Does Winter Suck?"

Statement for the Positive Side:

I think everyone can safely agree that winter in Japan sucks. Every day we all wake up to a house that is the same temperature as outside. My clothes feel like they have been in the freezer. I used to do this to my friends at slumber parties! Why am I being pranked by Japan??? The fact that we have to choose at school between being slowly poisoned by carbon monoxide in the warm staff room or being anywhere else in the school and feeling like an Eskimo fur trader is just absurd!

Statement for the Negative Side:

Have you ever heard of "Culture Shock," or *karu-cha shokku* in Japanese? The Japanese people have simply chosen to remain more in touch with nature and live their lives so that they truly feel as if they are a part of each very important season! In your foreign countries you all try to disguise each season, pretending it isn't really happening. Well they don't play that game in Japan. Winter is here, baby, and it's right in your face!

Questions from the Positive Side:

"Have you ever seen frozen toothpaste?"

"Don't you have a microwave?"

Questions from the Negative Side:

"Did you know that Japan has four seasons?"

"I am very, very, very aware."

Rebuttal From the Positive Side:

Culture shock!? What is so difficult about putting insulation in houses? Have you ever tried to have "romantic time" in the cold? Staying warm has been one of the primary goals of the human species



since Prometheus gave us fire! Why should we fight the desire to stay warm?

Rebuttal From the Negative Side:

It's all about choice and freedom. Who are the house builders to assume that you want to stay warm? That is a personal choice, and to take it away would be an insult! You pay to stay cool in the summertime, now you get it for free and you complain! Put on some more clothes and learn to appreciate everything about all four of Japan's unique seasons!

Closing Statements From the Positive Side:

Winter sucks!

Closing Statements from the Negative Side:

Winter rocks my socks!

Well there you go, now with all the facts in front of you in clear debate form, you are able to decide for yourself how you feel about winter in Japan! Hope to see you all at the Naked Man Festival in Okayama!

—Brandon

The toilet from Hell

Life as a first-year JET

By Rupa Patel

Like any first year JET, I was feeling a bundle of emotions on the Shinkansen as the Hyogo ALTs made their way to Yashiro where we would be taken to our new home for the next year.

Travelling from fabulous Tokyo to the middle of nowhere Yashiro, I began to realize that when the Japanese say *inaka*, they really mean *inaka*. After a very long trip to Japan, listening to the annoying screeching of the Yashiro cicada, I was ready to go to Awaji and settle down. I was lucky to share the journey to Awaji with another ALT, Amar, who would be working at my school.

It was a big relief when she was just as shocked as I was when we got our placement. There were hills and greenery that stretched on for miles and miles. Despite being far away from the hustle and bustle of the city life I was so used to, I was thinking about all the positives and was desperate to see my flat.

I finally got dropped off to my teacher accommodation in the evening. It was like an oven but with a pungent musty smell that was coming out of the toilet and making its way through the floorboards and into my bedroom.

I opened the toilet door and shut it as fast I could. Just the sight of the toilet, the scarlet red walls and the hundreds of little flies shooting out from inside the toilet was enough to make me feel sick. My predecessor told me that the toilet was bad but I didn't imagine that it could possibly be this bad. It was a septic tank in which you go in, put the plug connected to the toilet into the socket and then twist a dial that generates foam, (it was meant to keep

the smell down). The flush was a hosepipe attached to a tap. You must then take out the plug to avoid the toilet being flooded. A complicated process and unpleasant for something all westerners feel should be a simple and comfortable process.

To my disgust, there were also cockroach traps placed all over the flat. There were easily ten in each room. I was slightly confused by the entire thing as my predecessor had told me that he rarely saw bugs.

Despite all this I decided that I would stick it out. This experience is only for one year and I must embrace the situation because culture and everyday living was inevitably going to be different here.

Although I tried making the place feel like home, it didn't feel like one. Every evening after work I would make sure that I had something planned to prolong the dreaded return to the "bug shack." All of August and September, I and the other ALTs on the island would get together a few times a week. We would go to the beach after school or go for dinner to escape from the shock we were experiencing.

Looking back on it all now, I cannot believe all the energy I spent on avoiding my apartment. Sometimes I would go for really long walks with a friend in the intense heat of the Japanese summer just to avoid going back



The move toilet...

to my apartment.

Weeks passed and I saw cockroach after cockroach all over my flat: in the genkan, climbing up my kitchen wall; under my bed; running out my wardrobe and even baby ones in the shower.

I was still putting up with them until one day I was taking a shower early in the morning when this huge hairy brown spider with white spots jumped from the bath tub, (which was 4 feet below my shower,) flew towards my chest and hissed at me.

All wet and covered in shampoo, I ran out the shower screaming. I have never been so afraid of an insect in all my life. Saying that I'm not the biggest fan of them is a bit of an understatement, but this was the last straw, I couldn't live there any longer. I contacted Kate (an ALT who is brave

enough to deal with bugs) and later on that evening she came to mine to get rid of the spider.

The look on her face confirmed that I wasn't overreacting. It took a can of bug spray, two pans of boiling water; half a bottle of bleach and some broom action to get rid of the monster. I told the girls on the island, (who were and still are my saviors) and they all encouraged me to move. I wasn't sure because these things are easier said than done. I had to muster the strength to decide whether I could go through with moving. I thought about it long and hard and it was the one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life.

The next day I told my go-between that I had to move. She wasn't helpful and said that I should stay for a bit longer. I was adamant that I had to move and asked her if she would ever live in a place like that. I was really annoyed when she confessed that she was offered the same flat to live in when she came to the island but she was so put

off by the toilet that she had to find somewhere else.

The second thing that shocked me was when she said that the building was to be demolished by the end of 2008! I was taken aback and said that I couldn't carry on living the way I had been and that I needed a new place soon. I said that I would pay whatever I had to in order to feel comfortable and relaxed in my own home.

The school wasn't happy but agreed to let me find a new place on the condition that I paid for all of the rent and key money. I thought things would get easier in September but with school events like Sports Day and the *enkai*, all the teachers were too busy to look for a place for me. I told myself that I must be patient because this would take a lot of time but a month passed and nothing changed.

My evenings were still spent with other ALTs, which was great but I felt it was time that I found somewhere for myself where I would feel comfortable having people over and not be spending every evening trekking across Minami Awajishi.

Things were getting worse towards the end of September — no sign of moving, the bug situation getting worse with the sighting of a *mukade* and then fifteen centimeter mushrooms started growing in my shower. Like many of the awesome people on the island, Amy let me stay at her place for a few days. Even though it was a good 8-10 kilometre bike ride from my school, I took up the offer and biked to and from work to hers. The teachers thought I was crazy but they were start-

ing to realize that I wasn't happy where I was living.

Everyday I had new stories to tell my JTEs at school. Then one day, much to my surprise, my *kyoto-sensei* told me that he found a place for me and took me to see it that same day. It was a palace and I decided that I had to move that weekend. I was ecstatic. Finally I had a place in which I could do things I take for granted back home; sleep, shower, eat and just chill out without being on bug patrol.

My school was helpful in finding the flat for me but it was the help of the ALTs that made moving so much easier than I thought it was going to be. The girls would take carloads after work and invite me over for dinner because I would be so tired from going to school and unpacking. I am so lucky to have made such wonderful and caring friends in Japan and without their encouragement, help and friendship, I would still be living in that bug shack waiting for any opportunity to escape it.

After signing the contract for my new apartment I had to go through all the formalities again like changing my *gaijin* card, sorting out bills and even opening a new bank account. The school shocked me when they said that I needed to take a couple of hours of *nenkyu* to do all this. I was stunned and politely refused as this situation was hardly my fault. The teachers were kind enough to make the exception and after all the paperwork was done I felt a huge weight off my shoulders.

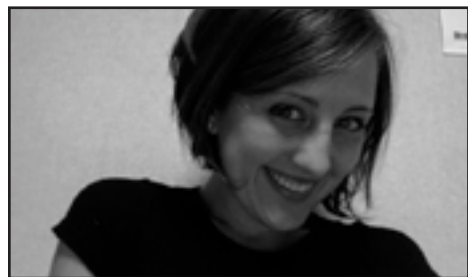
For anyone who isn't comfortable in their place, I recommend making that move. I'm not saying that it is easy, but being comfortable in your own home is important. I know it is tough when you are in another country, where the culture is so different and you do not want to inconvenience people, but sometimes you have to do what is best for you and stand your ground.



...and post-move toilet. Can you see the difference

Love and Relationships:

Changing of the Guard



Hello Hyogo! It's hard to believe it's been a year and a half since I first started writing for the Hyogo Times, but a lot has certainly happened in that time. I plan to still submit a piece or help out here and there, but it's come time to pass on the baton (or dildo, as an old editor of mine would encourage me to write) to a new dating guru. It gives me great pleasure to tell you, however, that this

newbie is a great fit and an amazing woman for the job. I am looking forward to reading her dating articles in the upcoming months as much as you all are!

Thanks to all of you that have given me ideas and inspiration (ahem) and just remember to get out there, be your best self and work it.

xo, Brenda McKinney

Building a better you to better attract

By MacKenzie Roebuck-Walsh

In the month of Valentines Day, right before spring fever begins, we all find ourselves pining for someone to warm our hearts (or at least our beds!) We look everywhere — strangers on the train; that cutie behind the Starbucks counter; “Mmm what about the tall one in the corner of the pub” — but the one place we don't look enough is in the mirror.

The best way to maximize your sex appeal and enjoy a romantic relationship is to maximize your self-esteem. No one will ever know you better than yourself (although our mothers can come scarily close), so take sometime this month and rejuvenate the inner marvelous you! Once you've given yourself the unconditional love you deserve, I think you'll find the days of looking are over — soon others will be flocking to you like fresh powder on the slopes of Hokkaido.

Often we are quick to knock ourselves down. You know the scenario: a friend comes up to you and says, “You are really looking great.” Now what do you do? More often than not we say, “Well thank you but actually I still need to loose a bunch of weight and I'm having a bad hair day.” Next time, and every time after that, meet the compliment with the thanks it deserves.

Two years of my college career

were spent living in a four-storey mansion with 47 other girls in our early 20s. Our meal topics usually focused around the latest gossip, boys and of course how many calories we were consuming at each moment and how fat we could potentially be getting. Me being me, I wouldn't have any of it — frequently taking seconds at dinner to prove my point... At 21 we may never look better, so baby we better live it up and enjoy who we are.

Only a year later, I can say I honestly do look better because I've continued to develop my confidence and I see myself as an intelligent, outgoing and attractive person. As for the girls who ate half a bagel with no spread, they are still eating like nit wits and feeling two feet tall because they just never got it. Getting a partner isn't about being a Size 2, it is about knowing and loving yourself so much so that others just can't help gravitating to your happiness. So here are a few tips on loving yourself the way you should.

Use rose colored glasses

Walking into a room of 50 people, most of us are inclined to find fault with about 45 of them — often these faults are a reflection of our own insecurities. Try scoping out the next room of strangers you are in and find something positive about each of them. The next time you see a



New relationships guru MacKenzie friend from college or high school, think how great they are looking instead of calling your best friend up 20 minutes later and saying, “God so-and-so sure is looking a little flabby.” By being positive about others you will naturally be more positive about yourself.

Make a list and check it twice

Sit down with a group of friends and a nice bottle of red. Put your iPod on shuffle and start listing all the things you like about yourself. After a song or two put your list aside and start on a list for each of your friends. When everyone is done collect the lists about you and make a master list. Post it near where you get dressed

and remind yourself everyday that you are special and that the most intelligent and glamorous people in the world (we are obviously talking about your friends!) think so too.

Express Yourself

Show yourself off by using body language to communicate how happy and confident are. Whether sitting or standing, hold your head up high, roll your shoulders back and squeeze in your abs. Taking a ballet or yoga class helps your mind unwind and your body straighten-up.

Smile

It's a bit of a cliché to talk about a simple smile brightening another person's day but it truly does. Smile often and wide. As they say in Steel

Magnolia's, “It increases your face value.”

Hidden Helpers

The next time you hit the town slip into a pair of sexy underwear or even just a cute matching set. For the men, a pair of silk boxers will keep you on the prowl all day.

Finally kick the guilt

Loving yourself is not being vain. It does include certain vanities, but not the kind you should be ashamed of. If you are single and ready to mingle take a day off of the hunt in February and spend an entire 24 hours with your favorite person (you). Do all your favorite things — read a good book, take a bubble bath, go to a play, go to the park... whatever tickles your

fancy. Take yourself on your dream date.

Throughout the month keep a diary of what makes you happy and what does not. Try new things and routine ones while honestly recording how you feel about them, then stop doing anything that brings you down and focus on what takes you to a higher level. At the end of the day, you are the only person in this world you can control, so enjoy yourself and the rest will fall into place.

Next month we'll be heading in a racy direction with “Some Like It Hot.” As a new writer for this publication I'd appreciate your feedback. If you have any questions or comments please contact me via Facebook at anytime.

Kansai Concerts

March Listings

4TH	Ian Brown 6,500 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. Big Cat, Osaka	10-11TH	KT Tunstall 6,500 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. 10th @ Bottom Line, Nagoya 11th @ Big Cat, Osaka
5TH	Broken Social Scene 5,800 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. Club Quattro, Osaka	11-12TH	Celine Dion 6,000 - 15,000 yen Kyocera Dome, Osaka
6TH	R&R Circus Tour (J-Rock) feat. Laughin' Nose / SA / Cobra 3,000 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. Big Cat, Osaka	20-21ST	Jimmy Eat World 6,000 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. 20th @ Club Quattro, Nagoya 21st @ Namba HATCH, Osaka
10-11TH	ASH 6,300 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. 10th @ Namba HATCH, Osaka 11th @ Club Quattro, Nagoya	25TH	The Pigeon Detectives 5,500 yen, doors @ 6 p.m. Club Quattro, Osaka

Ironie Chef

By JoJo Jackson

Insert witty pasta headline here!!

I love cooking. At home in New Zealand we had a big veggie garden that produced far more food than we could possibly eat. Conveniently, our neighbours had a small boat that they took out fishing, so often we'd swap them a bunch of Italian parsley, some courgettes and newly dug spuds for some fresh cod.

We also visited the local Farmer's market most Saturday mornings in search of free range meat and eggs, locally produced cheese and olive oils and organic veggies.

In fact most of my waking hours were spent thinking about the next meal I could create using the assortment of produce that was readily available on our back doorstep, literally.

Since moving to Japan I have felt uninspired, dispassionate and just generally apathetic towards food.

This is completely out of character and is mainly because Japanese supermarkets usually



stock only Japanese products, my Japanese cooking ability is limited and I can't read any of the labels! Add to that the cost of fruit and veggies and to me, a pretty dismal picture emerges.

But when I was asked to write something here I started getting all excited again. Food memories came flooding back in and I realised that it is possible to create

interesting and healthy non-Japanese food even with the limited ingredients found in Japanese supermarkets.

So I've decided to share my ideas with you beginning with this very tasty pasta dish. This pasta dish is so simple and quick to prepare. It is also versatile. Any combination of green veggies work — I recommend trying peas, char-grilled courgettes and spinach.

You can also substitute the lemon for pesto, which you can find in Bon Marche. The parmesan is very important in this recipe so get the best you can find. Costco has big, good quality blocks for 1,200 yen (they last ages!). What ever you do DON'T use the powdered stuff in a can!

Adjust the amounts accordingly to the number of people — the below is loosely based on 2 servings. I often make extra and take it to school for lunch.

Ingredients:

- 250g pasta (any shape)
- 100g green beans
- 100g snow peas (mange tout)
- A good lug of olive oil (don't be shy!)
- Juice of 1 lemon, zest of half a lemon
- Big handful of fresh basil (roughly chopped)
- Half a handful of fresh parsley (roughly chopped)
- 100g freshly grated parmesan
- Salt and pepper to taste (but remember the parmesan is quite salty)

To prepare:

- Cook the pasta to *al dente* (so it is firm but not hard.)
- While the pasta is cooking, steam the beans (4 mins) and snow peas (2 mins). Make sure not to overcook them, they should still have their crunch.
- Drain pasta and return to pot. Add the steamed greens, lemon juice and zest, olive oil (to loosen and coat pasta) and parmesan. Mix well.
- Season. Taste.
- Add herbs last, mix again.

Stealth Gaijin

Life as an **ASIAN JET**

"Are you the tour guide?"

"Can you tell me how to get to..."

"What's it like to have gaijin friends?"

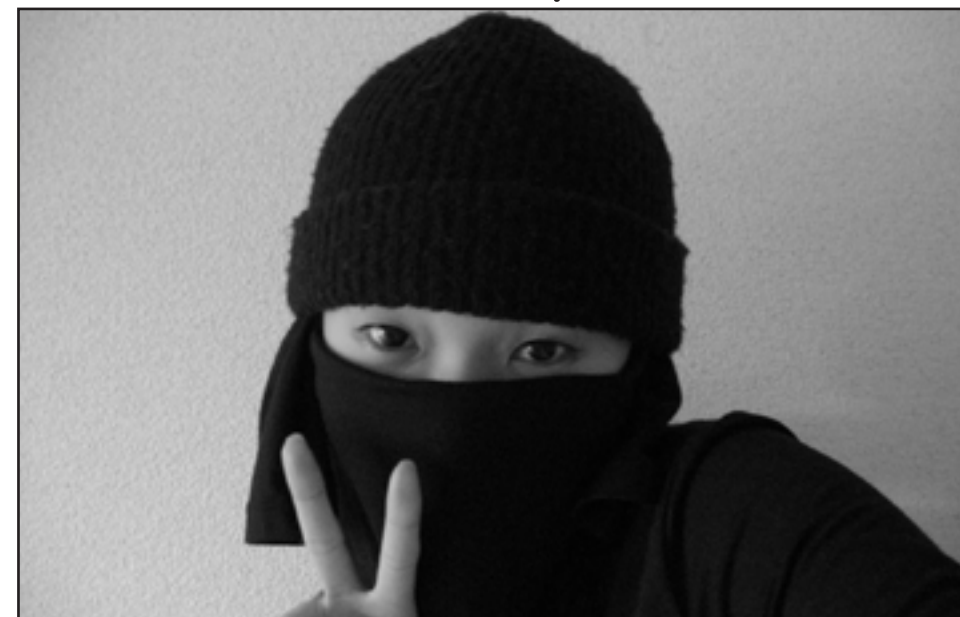
"Wow, you speak English really well!"

"You're the ALT? But you're Asian!"

Alright, I'll admit — not all of those have been said to me. Only four out of five (you can probably guess which one wasn't!). But many other great phrases, all worth their weight in gold, make up for the one not actually said to me. In any case, that's the kind of stuff I deal with on a daily basis. Welcome to the world of an Asian JET. Or the world of a "Stealth Gaijin," as I have been called (I wish superpowers came with the name.)

Unlike many other JETs, I do not get stalked by the friendly neighborhood obasan in the supermarket, desperately avoided on trains, or get death-stared at in general. Why? Because I don't look "different." However, with this great power, (yes, I'm quoting Spiderman's Uncle Ben) comes great responsibility. Actually, I wouldn't term it responsibility so much as a whole set of other problems...

I go to the supermarket quite often but I still don't understand the checkout girl when she asks if I want a bag. Mostly, it's because she's not asking if I want a bag. That would be too simple. She asks, "Do you *not* want a bag for that?" It's sad I understand enough of what she says to know she's asking about a bag, but I definitely do not know enough Japanese to answer. Yes, I do not want a bag? No, I do want a bag? I can barely string together Japanese vocabulary with verbs in the correct



The Ninja of the foreign invading force, Stealth Gaijin sneak in Japan undetected.

tense, let alone do it when someone asks a positive question with a negative inserted into it. (Usually I need the bag and she gives up and hands it to me when I stare back like an airhead. You'd think after months of this, she'd catch on...)

I don't go shopping very often back home, but in this country, it's hard to avoid (mainly because I think Japan is one giant shopping mall). It just so happens to be sales season in January so I have been out looking for some necessities. Once I am irasshaimase-d the hell out of it, the salesperson (usually a girl) will proceed to tell me how great the product I am looking at is or that it's 50 per cent off the price tag. That's fine and all... if I understood any of it.

Like many other JETs, I have also ventured out to tourist destinations here in Japan. Generally, I've gone with friends who happen to be more gaijin-looking than I do. And like other JETs, I will obviously speak in English when talking to them. (Why else would we be "Eigo no sensei

desu?")

This brings me to a time my [gaijin-looking] friends and I were waiting for a bus heading back to the train station from a tourist spot. There was this lovely woman with her father in the line (queue, for you Brits) who turned around and said to me in wonderment, "Eigo wo jouzu desu ne!" My friend said next time that happens I should just agree, thank the person, and look super-smart and cool. Pity I can't carry on a conversation in Japanese because that would blow my cover...

So there we have it — insight into the world of a Stealth Gaijin or rather, insight into the world of this particular Stealth Gaijin. I can't say it is horrible blending in sometimes, but oh do I wish they would stop staring when I open my mouth and it's not an Asian language coming out.

Well, actually, they also stare when an Asian language other than Japanese comes out (especially at school!) but let's save that story for later, shall we?

Travel Japan

The grand temple complex of Nikko

By Jeff Weese

Nikko is one tourist destination in Japan that is not to be overlooked by Japanese or foreigners! It is one of the most important and impressive temple complexes in all of Japan and is known for exquisite colors and amazing detail.

Some of its shrines date back as far as 767! The temples and shrines of Nikko are considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site and should be high on your list of places to visit before leaving Japan.

The temple of Rinno-ji was built in 782 and was shortly followed by Chuzen-ji in 784. From these two temples, Nikko expanded to eventually include several other grand temples and shrines and also the Mausoleum of shogun Tokugawa and his grandson.

All of the temples do require admission, but you can buy a



combination ticket for just over 1000yen that gives you access to Rinno-ji, Toshogu, and Futarasan-jinja to name just a few. If you want to venture out further, there are many other temples and shrines to see in

outlying areas as well as beautiful products of nature like Lake Chuzenji and Kegon Falls. There are also several good onsens to relax in after a day of walking around! Famous onsens such as Chuzenji Onsen or Yumoto

Onsen are a bit of a distance, but there are local ones as well such as Nikko Onsen. Your feet will appreciate these onsens after a hard day walking!

Food and Accommodation To see all that Nikko has to offer, you need a good two days. There are a few different budget accommodations to choose from, but Turtle Inn (tel.



it is served in Nikko is a bit different...give it a try!

Getting There

Getting to Nikko takes a bit of time from Hyogo, but is not too painful. You can choose how you get to Tokyo (Shinkansen, airplane, or night bus) and then take the Tobu railway's Nikko service from Kurihashi station in the Tokyo area. Train fare will

cost about 1700yen and it will take 2 hours...so bring a good book! 0288-53-3168) comes highly recommended with overnight stays costing around 4000yen. Ryokan meals can be hit and miss, but the sukiyaki served for dinner is pretty tasty! For other meals, there are several convenience stores (come on...this is Japan...of course there is a

convenience store!) and a few restaurants on the main road. One Nikko specialty to try is yuba. It is the skin of tofu, I know that doesn't sound very appetizing as is, but it IS a specialty there and it actually is quite nice! Yuba is the same stuff that dim sum is wrapped in, but the way

cost about 1700yen and it will take 2 hours...so bring a good book!

The sacred temple complex of Nikko is a good distance from Hyogo, but is worth every kilometer traveled and yen spent! Take advantage of it while you can...don't miss Nikko!



Bar Trinity

Sundays - Guinness ¥600
Special Discount for
AJET Members

WhyNot Japan
International Party Feb. 8
¥3000 (2500 WhyNot Members)
All You Can Drink

Feb 9 - The Funk Train
(Live Event)
Feb 16 - "Blouser" Art Show
Feb 29 - Boogie Night

TEL: 078. 333. 1286
SUN-THURS: 19:00-2:00 FRI/SAT: 19:00-5:00

Politics with Paul

IRELAND — WHY YOU SHOULD CARE! By Paul O'Shea

I'm taking a break from Japan this month, for several reasons, not least of which is that, while we all live in Japan, most of us have little or no interest in the nation's politics. For example, can you name one political party in Japan? Can you name the prime minister? Can you name any previous prime ministers of Japan, ever?

The truth is for most Westerners, Japanese politics in the post-war era are less than enthralling. I mean, the biggest story in the news these days is a debate over a petrol levy — should it be removed?!?

So, today I'm going to do a favour for all those non-Irish JETs (there are a few out there somewhere!), and briefly tell you a little about the recent history of the Green Island. This may be the first in a series exploring the JET participant nations, or it may be a one-off — it depends on whether something interesting happens in Japanese politics anytime soon!

Anyway, while Ireland is an international minnow, it is famous beyond its size. However, unfortunately, it is still deeply misunderstood — another JET recently asked me if Ireland was an independent nation!

Ireland is in fact a republic, and thus completely independent in a way that Canada, Australia, Jamaica, etc are not. These countries are part of the British Commonwealth and can sing *God Save the Queen* as they all share said lady as their head of state.

The island of Ireland is comprised of 32 counties, 26 of which constitute the Republic of Ireland, and six which make



particularly the 17th century) had seen a large number of Scottish and English settlers displace the native Irish in the north of the island. The focus on the north during the previous centuries was a result of the fact that it was the Irish from the north who resisted the English rule the strongest.

The partition of the country in the 1921 Independence Treaty divided the island into two distinct political entities, but it also divided the people of the new free Ireland. Many were unwilling to accept the situation, and shortly after independence the newly formed state was torn by civil war. The Irish Civil War, between Pro-Treaty and Anti Treaty sides was in fact bloodier than the War of Independence, and politically it has had a massive impact on the Irish political landscape.

Most European countries have a Labour/Social Democrat party, and a Conservative/Christian Democrat party, as their two largest, but Ireland, sadly, still has a system along pro/anti-treaty lines. The result of this has meant that Ireland spent the second half of the last century morally mired in the 1950s, as both major parties — Fianna Fail (Anti-Treaty) and Fine Gael (Pro-Treaty) were deeply Catholic and conservative.

The Nationalist (or Catholic — the two are often interchangeable in discussions on the North) minority were left to fend for themselves by the new Irish state. Through intimidation, gerrymandering (rearranging electorate boundaries for political gain) and weight of numbers, the new Northern Irish parliament was

up Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a completely separate country and is a part of the United Kingdom.

The modern state of Ireland came into being in 1921, following the brief but bloody war of Independence against the British who had ruled Ireland. To give some perspective, 1,300 people died, relatively few in terms of independence movements. However, the Independence Treaty that was signed with the British did not mean a unified island republic as dreamt of by the rebels.

Rather, the six counties of Northern Ireland remained a part of the UK because the majority of the population of these counties wished to stay with Britain (the majority being called Unionists).

The previous centuries (though par-



Ian Paisley, the pope-denouncer himself, showing an unorthodox amount of crotch and a fun gang sign!

overwhelmingly Unionist and Protestant (again the two usually interchangeable).

Faced with severe, institutionalised discrimination for jobs, housing, schools and everything else, a civil rights movement sprung up in the late sixties, and marches and peaceful protests took place across Northern Ireland. However, the police (manned almost completely by Unionists), the army, and paramilitary Unionist groups attacked and killed protesters and innocent civilians.

The Irish Republican Army (the group who led the Irish to victory in the War of Independence), who had been derisively referred to as IRA "I Ran Away" due to their lack of activity in Northern Ireland, began to make a comeback. Nationalists, particularly young working-class males with little or no opportunities, flocked to the IRA and its political wing (Sinn Féin) during the seventies and eighties.

In the following two-to-three decades the "Troubles," as they have come to be known, really kicked off. Thousands of people died in indiscriminate bombings, shootings and kidnapping as the IRA and other paramilitary nationalist groups fought against paramilitary unionist groups.

Skip ahead thirty-odd years to 1998, and you have the IRA cease-fire and the

landmark Good Friday Agreement, which set out power-sharing frameworks between unionists and nationalists in the Northern Irish government. The current situation is that things are very slowly moving forward, and a return to violence seems less likely with each passing year. However, the effects of the Troubles are far-reaching.

The country, particularly the working-class, is deeply segregated along ethnic/religious grounds. The identification with religion has left its mark: the current First Minister of Northern Ireland, Ian Paisley, is an Evangelical Christian who founded his own church, and opposes, among other things, gays, alcohol and the Catholic church — during an address to the European Parliament by Pope John Paul II, Paisley started shouting "I denounce you as the Antichrist" and held up a placard bearing the same denunciation.

Moreover, the economy is in poor shape, and the British are losing interest in continuing to finance the province.

Down south of the border in the Republic, things have changed dramatically. The Celtic Tiger economy (named after the Asian Tiger economies of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore) has boomed, seeing huge increases in

wealth in the Republic. The country went from economic basket case to an international role model in the space of only a decade.

The resulting wealth helped liberalise the people — divorce was legalised, the power of the church waned, and society in general has relaxed. Emigration, which had been a major factor in Ireland's fate for centuries, stopped, and economic migrants actually began coming to Ireland, despite the bad weather and the high prices.

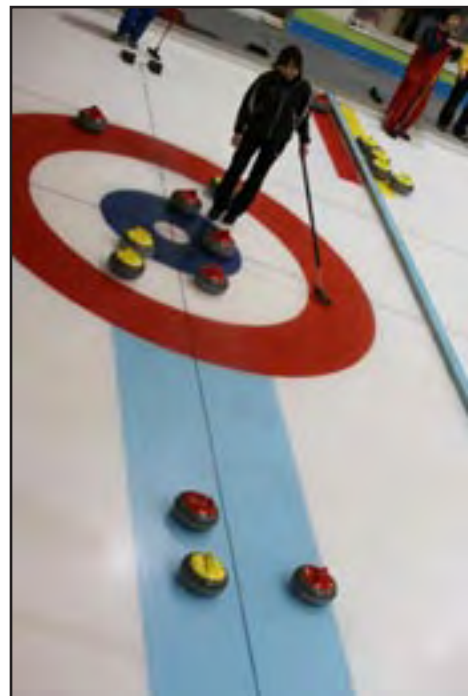
As you can see from this all too brief outline, Ireland is an interesting place. There is so much I haven't had time to discuss — why did the South's economy boom (many factors), how likely is the unification of Ireland (not going to happen anytime soon!), why are Irish people so cool (a complicated one, that), and where did we hide our Lucky Charms (for the record, we don't have Lucky Charms, and I'd never heard of them before I came to Japan!).

Next month, we might see a return to J-politics, if something interesting happens. If not... well, if anyone has any requests as to which JET participant-nation you'd like me to cast my myopic gaze upon, email me at sheabie@gmail.com.

Better Know a Ken: Hokkaido

By Caroline Lyster

Part 2 in our ongoing 47-part series highlighting the lives of JETs living in other prefectures. Yes, we blatantly stole the idea from Stephen Colbert's 434-part *Better Know a District*. If you know someone living in another ken, have them send in their story and pics to submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com.



My name is Caroline, and I live in Hokkaido. You know where that is, right? It's that big island just off the end of Honshu. You just keep going north after Aomori... yeah, that's the one.

I live in a town in the northeast called Tokoro. Tokoro is a fairly small town of only about 5,000 people, of which I am the only foreigner. Because it's so small it doesn't

have a train station, and the nearest one is in a city half an hour away. From there it takes five and a half hours by train to get to Hokkaido's capital of Sapporo.

Living in a place like Hokkaido isn't really a big change for me as I'm originally from Canada, specifically Edmonton (for any of you who might know where that is). Just like Canada, we're a big northern place with not a lot of people. And, just like Canada, there's more to Hokkaido than snow and ice!

That being said, snow is a very important part of life up here because we're covered in it for six months, so I might as well start with the current season.

The most famous winter event in Hokkaido is the Snow Festival in Sapporo, held this month in February. The main streets of our capital are filled with giant, elaborate snow sculptures. If you ever decide to come and see it, make sure you book early — the population of Sapporo more than doubles during this one week in February!



Another attraction (in my area no less!) comes around the same time year in the form of drift ice on the Sea of Okhotsk, which is sea

ice that drifts all the way over to Hokkaido from Russia. It can be seen along the coast from the end of February until April, and you can ride an icebreaker ship from the nearby city of Abashiri to get a closer look at things.

One of the main attractions during Hokkaido winter is (of course) snow sports. Since we have lots of mountains and lots of snow, ski hills can be found in almost every little town. Whether you choose to strap your feet to one board or two, most of my friends here on the island take part in some kind of downhill activity.

There's also snowshoeing, which is less well-known but just as fun. If you've never done it, imagine strapping two tennis rackets to your feet and going tromping through the forest, in four feet of snow and sub-zero temperatures (yup, this is what we do for fun up here).

There are indoor winter sports as well. One is a game known as curling. Have you ever heard of it? If you have, GREAT! If not, I'm not surprised. It's recently gotten more attention through its status as an official Olympic event, but it's still one of those sports (like golf) that aren't all that much fun to watch on TV.

Anyway, my town (Tokoro) is the proud home of the largest curling hall in Japan. The Olympic team trains here, and my town has proudly exported more than one Olympic team member. I've curled with some of them since I've been here (and had my ass thoroughly whopped in the process). Anyway, when I arrived in Tokoro, the question on everybody's mind was whether or not I would participate. I decided to form a team: Team English. Made up of ALTs from the area (most



of who have never curled before in their lives) it's a great way for us to get together in the dead of winter and have some fun. We've even won a few games!

So what happens when the snow melts? There's just as much to do in the spring and summer as there is to do in the winter.

For starters, many towns host different sorts of races and marathons during the warmer months of the year. Tokoro co-hosts an annual marathon around Lake Saroma where participants have a choice: they can either run 90km or bike 150km. The marathon starts at one end of the lake and goes all the way around to the other, and then even a little bit farther, with cities on the other side of Tokoro being the finish line of the respective races (the bike finish point being a bit further).

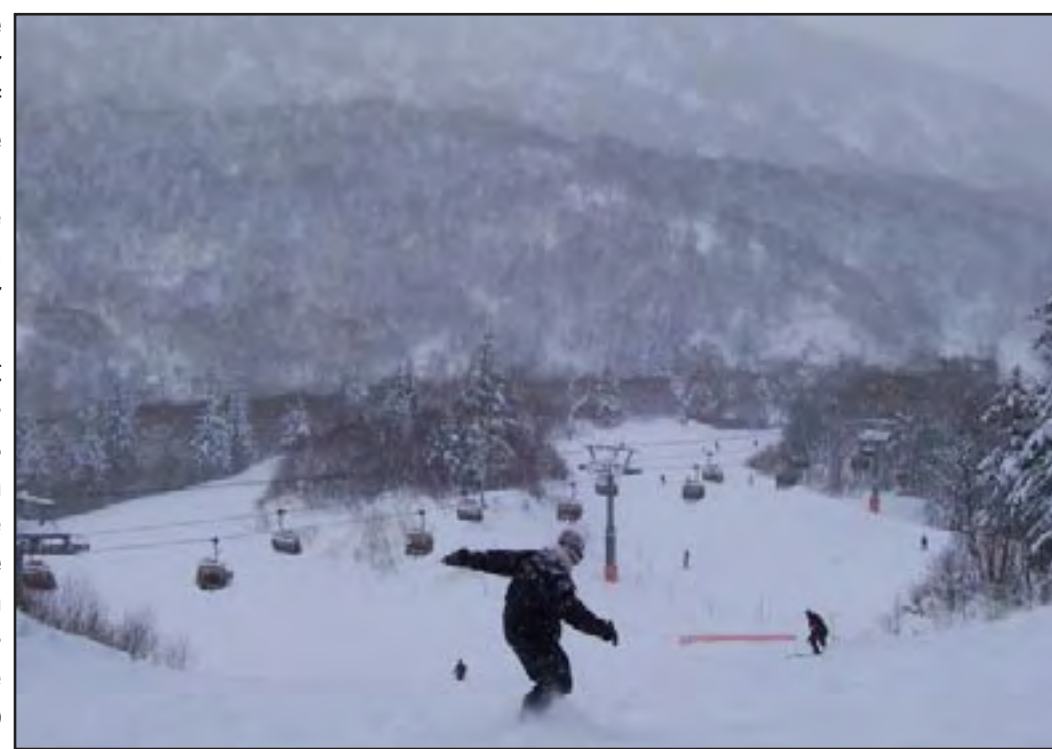
Hokkaido might be a very large place, but it doesn't have that many people. The upside to this low population density (similar to Canada, again) is that there is a lot of wilderness to explore. Whether you want to hike through the mountains or bike in the countryside, there is lots to do. The weather is great for camping in the summer (although you're likely to get eaten alive by mosquitos), and there are many great campsites on the island.

And of course, year round, there is always partying to be done. Although I would say the definition of "party" in Hokkaido is pretty wide...

More often than not, our parties are simply small gatherings of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time. Phone calls might go out on a Saturday afternoon, and anyone who is available comes out for dinner/drinking, and likely karaoke (since I've been here I have developed some mad karaoke skills).

These might be better qualified as "get-togethers," and account for the bulk of Hokkaido socializing. Other such "get-togethers" include small planned ahead partying, such as birthdays or holiday parties. What they have in common is just being a smaller party between close friends.

Fewer and farther between are those huge parties attended by lots of people. The best examples of these are the welcome parties organized by Hokkaido AJET. Because Hokkaido is so freaking huge, our welcome party situation is most definitely plural with four parties to be exact. These four welcome parties are in September/October, and are held in different areas of the island so as many people as possible



can get out to party, and so that we can all get a chance to see parts of Hokkaido that aren't our own. They are held at campsites (cheap accommodation, and less chance of being too loud for the neighbours) and offer people a great chance to meet other ALTs on the island (old and new alike).

Other big parties include the HAJET enka's which take place at the fall and winter meetings, as well as at newbie orientation and our mid-year conference in December.

Speaking of HAJET, they organize another neat little thing that goes year-round, and offers ALTs a chance to party, meet others, and see the prefecture: the HAJET musical. Once a month rehearsals are held from October through to April, with performances held in May. This year's production is *Oklahoma*, and past year's offerings have included *Peter Pan*, *Grease* and *Guys and Dolls*. Giving an Oscar-worthy performance isn't the point — rather the objective is to get out of your cold, isolated Hokkaido house and see some of the rest of this island we call home.

And that's Hokkaido in a nutshell. A pretty big nutshell, but as condensed as I can make it. As you can see, living up here in the frozen north is pretty similar to living in the south with the rest of civilization.

So, if you're ever looking for something fun to do, feel free to come up to Hokkaido. There's a lot to do, and you'll always be able to find somewhere to stay. One of the true advantages in living up here is that JETs have some pretty sweet houses!



Getting to know some random JETs

- ❖ **Name:** Brad Morrison
- ❖ **Please call me:** after 10 am.
- ❖ **School and Location in Hyogo:** Mikage Senior High School, Eastern Kobe.
- ❖ **How we know you:** You probably don't.
- ❖ **Birthday:** 12/03/80
- ❖ **Born and raised:** Mostly in Nova Scotia, Canada, but I have lived all over Canada.
- ❖ **Family:** One father, one mother, one older brother.
- ❖ **University and Degree:** BSc (Biology) Dalhousie University, PhD (Biology) The University of Melbourne.
- ❖ **Other jobs you have had:** Tim Hortons, Visitor Services at a National Park, forestry researcher.
- ❖ **Travels:** UK, Switzerland, Czech Rep, Germany, Austria, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, The States, Fiji, every province and territory in Canada except Newfoundland.
- ❖ **Shumi wa nan desuka:** reading, gym, photography, hanging out with friends drinking a couple of beers.
- ❖ **Favorites:**
 - Food:** roast duck, gyoza, Szechwan food.
 - Sports:** Is sleeping a sport? Seriously, cause I'm really good at it!
 - Music:** Taiwanese pop (Wang Lee Hom, Jay Chou), Alternative (Green Day, Good Charlotte)
 - Shop:** Anywhere where I don't have to buy XL. Damn you skinny Japanese people!
 - TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy. Yes, there I've said it. Judge me if you will {Ed. note — we are Brad!}.
 - Movie:** Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Iron Giant.
- ❖ **Most Proud Achievement:** My PhD.
- ❖ **Best life experience:** Living in Australia for almost four years.
- ❖ **Motto to live by:** Have fun
- ❖ **I remember when...** neon bike shorts were cool.
- ❖ **What are you drinking?** Umeshu, and beer... lots and lots of beer.
- ❖ **Best thing about JET so far?** Being in Japan and



living 10 mins from Kobe, 20 mins from Osaka and 40 mins from Kyoto.

- ❖ **Why should we elect you King of the World?** "I'd do away with all the cars and the bars and the wars and make sweet love to you!! Joy to the world..."
- ❖ **Funniest story involving a student?** Maybe not really funny but there is the girl at my school in third year and whenever she comes into the teachers room and walks past my desk she always screams "HELLO TEACHER!" at the top of her lungs and all the other teachers around my desk jump. She is certainly memorable...
- ❖ **My biography will be called:** The Adventures of Princess Firebucket
- ❖ **My top tip for teaching:** Discipline in a fun way. When students don't do their homework I make them sing a song. They hate being singled out and having to sing in front of their peers. Since I started doing this almost every student has always finished their homework.
- ❖ **When the class is TOO QUIET I...** do a little jig. If they know that you are willing to be stupid in class they start to loosen up.
- ❖ **Bribery for students...YAY or NAY?** Oh yeah I'm all for it. I just wish they would start bribing me... come on kids, teacher needs a new pair of shoes!

- ❖ **Name:** Emerald Huang
- ❖ **Please call me:** Emmy
- ❖ **School and Location in Hyogo:** Kakogawa Nishi SHS, Kakogawa
- ❖ **How we know you:** Probably because I'm the Assistant Editor now for HT or because I danced and screamed "Y'all be jealous of me!" next to my Elvis Kyoto sensei during Yashiro!!!
- ❖ **Birthday:** February 16th.
- ❖ **Born and raised:** Taipei, Taiwan
- ❖ **Family:** Mom and Dad both professional writers and newspaper editors, one older sister and one younger sister who also does editing for Business news...
- ❖ **University and Degree:** University of Toronto, specialized in Spanish and majored in Cinema Studies. Also spent 2 years studying Architecture but...instead of drafting and building models, I spent all my free time traveling to see and appreciate beautiful architecture around the world.
- ❖ **Other jobs you have had:** I have worked at architectural firms, tour com-

panies, arts & crafts shops and restaurants (both in the kitchen and as a hostess). I was also self-employed as a henna artist!

❖ **Travels:** Umm...I don't want to seem like I'm showing off, but I have been to quite a lot of places around the world... something like 40 countries in 5 years. When I had my interview for JET, the interviewers actually asked me about how I managed to do that when I was a university student! I developed a great passion for seeing the world since my first trip to Brazil 6 years ago...and that passion only got stronger and stronger!

❖ **Shumi wa nan desuka:** Well, before I started traveling, I loved doing art. I remember I would spend 6 or 7 hours to make a little birthday card for someone I cared for dearly. I also love photography.

❖ **Favorites:**

Food: Anything delicious and sexy looking! It doesn't have to be gourmet, but it definitely needs to have 'love' in the cooking process.

Sports: I haven't done much sports.

However I enjoy climbing mountains and running. I also like to try and improve my snowboarding skills.

Music: psychedelic rock, bossa nova, acid jazz, house, tribal and world music. I have started learning Shamisen (3 stringed Japanese guitar) at my school and did taiko drum workshops for two years in Canada.

Shop: My friends cannot believe how long I spend looking and reading the labels of almost every item in supermarkets...one night I couldn't sleep and guess where I went? MAXVALUE! (It's a 24hr supermarket and I went at 2 am

and stayed for an hour)

TV Show: Family Guy

Movie: Another difficult one to answer so I'll just name a few... {Emerald actually listed over 30 movies, so it's been edited for length. Let's just say she likes movies! — Ed.}

❖ **Most Proud Achievement:** Traveling overland in Africa for four months through 11 countries, aged 22 and alone!

❖ **Best life experience:** My 6 years of university life.

❖ **Motto to live by:** "It is only important to love the world, not to despise it, not for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect." By Hermann Hesse

❖ **I remember when...** I woke up on a wooden boat, puked a few times and then realized I was looking at a sky full of stars, in the middle of the sea between Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

❖ **What are you drinking?** Indian Chai. I made sure I used the right ingredients and the secret recipe!

❖ **Best thing about JET so far?** Taking the job as a Assistant Editor for Hyogo Times.

❖ **Why should we elect you President of the World?** Please don't! If I was, people probably would catch me cooking in my office with a hotplate under my desk.

❖ **Funniest story involving a student?** One wrote about how in Australia Christmas is in the summer. So he wrote: "I wish Santa could visit me on his surfboard."

❖ **My biography will be called:** What should I eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner today, tomorrow and the day after?

❖ **My top tip for teaching:** Be funny.

❖ **When the class is TOO QUIET I...** do the Japanese comedian dance "O-Pappi!" or get students to start clapping their hands and sing Happy Birthday to me.

❖ **Bribery for students...YAY or NAY?** Yay! I especially love to throw a bunch of candies at them and watch them jumping into each other and falling!



Earth! Wind! Fire! Water! HEART!

By
Tuwhakaroa Biddle

Call me a pessimist but it's not really that hard to see that our world is turning to shite. Kwame, from Africa, in 1990, summed it up by saying "Our world is in peril..." It might be from a cartoon and originally said 18 years ago, but God is it relevant today!

They say that what we watch while growing up affects the person we become — the argument these days being that violence in the media causes violence, etc etc. Whether it has been proven or not, it doesn't seem unreasonable to assume that it does have some affect. So how has the media we've grown up with affected us or in what ways could it have affected us?

Look at the generations ahead of us — is it not technically their fault that all that is bad, is? You could say that they inherited the problems but that's no excuse for them getting worse. Look at the shows and media of their youth — shows tended to focus on family values (Happy Days anyone?) and enjoying life, especially after the Second World War. You could say that the attitude of "take nothing for granted" made people take everything for granted.

Look at the generation after us. Everything I've read about them isn't particularly encouraging. They are often described as being apathetic and selfish and it's not surprising. Look at the shows they grew up/are growing up with! All the shows focus around self-satisfaction and being better than others, and not for the greater good, so to speak.

Take *Pokemon* for example: Ash had to deal with a lot of obstacles, and he had friends to help him but he always made sure they knew they would never be as good as him. Ultimately the show was about him imprisoning



Tu is a little torn over the morals today's cartoon fans are learning from TV.

animals and using them to fight so that he could be the greatest Pokemon master. He wasn't really helping anyone but himself, and it wasn't about Good and Bad because his rivals wanted the very same thing — they were just willing to get there via different means. Shows like *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *Cardcaptors* follow the exact same formula.

In the interests of not being labeled a *Pokemon* basher, let's bash *Bratz*. They don't have their own cartoon so it's a little off-topic, but they have an animated movie so in my books that qualifies them.

These dolls have been a huge success worldwide despite the fact they are hoes. These dolls are how I imagine the Pussycat Dolls looked

while they grew up. When children are watching cartoons, ads for these dolls, their movie, their CDs, even their music videos come on exposing them to toddler, tween and even pet dolls wearing makeup and sporting lingerie.

"Mummy when I grow up, actually make that right now, I want to be a materialistic hoe like *Bratz*." This can't be good, but maybe my opinion will be different when I'm a dirty old man.

I have seen on TV and read articles about how it's going to be our

generation's responsibility to save the world. It's our generation that has entered the workforce and will be in positions of power when the shit will supposedly really hit the fan. That's a



Yeah, we turned out OK...

lot of responsibility, especially when we will be supporting a retired, voting population out numbering us 2 to 1 (or even more) who obviously have different ideas about everything.

Look at the shows we watched growing up and it's easy to see that they all had one thing in common — morals. I suppose any show from any period has morals, morals which were applicable more so at that time. You could say that the moral of *Pokemon* is self-esteem and self-belief, which is good for you but is it any good for everyone else?

The shows we watched and love were true battles of good versus evil, they were about being better people by being a better person.

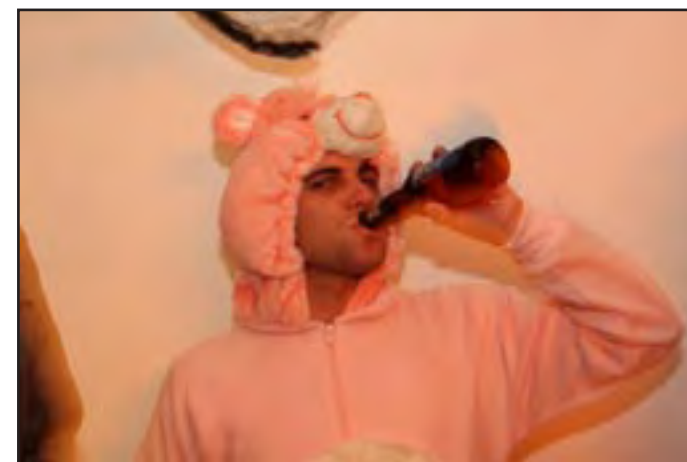
For example, *Captain Planet*. The Planeteers and the product of their teamwork, the big Captain P, came up against various villains who embodied all that is wrong with the world. Verminous Skumm represented poor

sanitation and urban sprawl, Hog-gish Greedly was industrialisation and greed and Dr. Blight was technology and unethical scientific experimentation, to name a few.

At the end of every episode there would be a public service announcement where they would show you how to put what you have learnt from this episode into practice. It's amazing to think that this type of programming and thinking once made money.

Look at the *Care Bears* — they live a happy life in Care-a-Lot, but when the Care Meter gets low (this means people are caring less) they go on a mission to encourage caring. I will admit that their need to inspire caring is a little self-serving as they will die if the Care Meter drops to 0 but isn't it a noble cause all the same? They were saving a species and making the world a better place.

Considering the state of TV and the ideals of youth today it might seem like a good idea to bring back the positive influence of the shows we enjoyed but would they care? The *Care Bears* made a bit of a come back last year, but they were probably more of a commercial success than a moral one and I would go as far to say that young people today



Now that's a Care Bear Stare!

probably just laughed at the wishful thinking of it all.

Apart from the fact that the cartoons of yesteryears probably don't have the same appeal or commercial value they once did, there are possibly other reasons they haven't been brought back. I watched an old episode of *Captain Planet* a few weeks ago and was quite surprised by the political incorrectness of it. Perhaps political correctness is more important than helping children understand the value of recycling? Also they could be a little violent, but who wouldn't punch Megatron?

There are obviously always exceptions (you could say the *Smurfs* were pro-communism) but do we remember the exceptions? It is easier to see the good the *Smurfs* stood for rather than the communistic ideals they might have.

Name a cartoon or show from our childhood that didn't promote morals or understanding. I certainly can't and that's probably a good thing. Maybe subconsciously we have, to an extent, been morally prepped for the task at hand. When I think about cartoons today it's saddening that children who try to emulate Ash Ketchum will never be content with life or any good for the world as a whole because they will never "catch 'em all."

They will never be able to help anyone else because they will always be trying to help themselves.



Oh no she di-in't!!!



Everybody was snowball fighting

By Jarred Tucker

Yukigassen (雪合戦) is a sport based on the traditional game of snowball fighting. From a westerner's standpoint it shares many similarities with skirmish/paintball, having a defined field, barriers to hide behind, and a flag to protect. The sport has a long history in Japan and the winners of each prefecture tournament face off in a national tournament held in Hokkaido each year. For those of us living in Hyogo, the prefecture tournament was held at Ojiro Junior High School (美方郡香美町小代区) Feb. 2-3 this year.

The locals here in Tajima have been putting in a team for the past 6 years and though not even once successfully making it through to the second day, have always

managed to have fun and enjoy the sport and interaction with the Japanese players who come from all over Hyogo to compete. This year we are really hoping to put a few runs on the board and will appreciate any support we get. Hopefully by the time this is published we will have successfully triumphed in Hyogo and be moving on to the national championships!

Diary of a Snowball Buff:

This year our team was told we need two qualified referees on the team in order to compete. So the other day myself and another Tajimite took ourselves to a half day training camp. First up was a test. 80% was the pass grade but the organisers seem to delight in repeatedly telling us that they would not fail anyone

After finishing the test and getting our photo taken, we popped up to the gym for a bit of a practical examination (of the fun kind!). All the people there were split into teams and took turns umpiring each other. For me and my friend (who also had real experience) it was no problem. What I was really looking forward to more than anything else was a chance to play the game and finally when our turn came around, I was pumped. Most the other people around were not very experienced yukigasseners so as I put on my forward jersey and waited for the starting whistle, I knew what had to be done. When the whistle blew I went running straight for the centre barrier and safely slid to a stop un-hit. From then on it was just a matter of picking off the rabbits one by one. Having successfully whittled down the opposition's numbers, a smart chap from behind bolted forth and took their flag giving our team victory! Letting out a triumphant yell, it was then I looked around and realised that not everybody else was taking the game as seriously as I was...oops!

Rules of Yukigassen

- Each team has 7 players: 4 forwards and 3 backs.
- Each game has 3 sets, each 3 minutes long.
- The winner is the team that wins 2 sets.
- To win a set you must:
 - Get your opponents flag;
 - Hit out all the opponent's players;
 - When time runs out, have more players remaining.
- You are out if:
 - You are hit with a snowball;
 - You step outside the field boundaries
- If the game ends as a draw, a 'Victory Throw' takes place where team members take turns trying to hit a cute snowman off his stand, kind of like a penalty shootout in soccer.

English Sensei Spirit

Our monthly guide to better lesson planning

By Angela Nicholson

Got a few lessons to use up? Have freedom in planning your classes? This is an exercise I did with my first year SHS English course students, but really you could adapt this idea and cater it to different levels of students in Senior High school. This might be a bit above JHS level but that's for you to judge really. This exercise is a great introduction to speech writing and because they can choose their own topic, should hopefully hold the students' interest.

I'm sure for most of you the concept of show and tell is well known, so I won't bore you by explaining every little detail of it. However, here are some basic steps:

Tell you class what the assignment is. They can choose their own item for show and tell but it must be something that they can either bring to class or bring a picture of. (My students tend to be very indecisive so I give them 5 minutes max to choose an item and then I make them all tell me what their item will be. That way they are not fluffing about all lesson switching items. If you would like to know more about tradition Japanese things then this is a great lesson to get the students to introduce their culture to you. Just tell them that their item must be

something Japanese).

Hand out a simple worksheet that you have pre-written. On this worksheet you should have some key questions to get them started, and to give them some direction. The 5 question markers (who, what, where, when and how) are a great place to start.

Get the students to start writing and then presto! They have a presentation.

Ok, ok... so I know it's not as easy as that but it is a good way to start them off on small speech writing projects. In my case we gave the students the first lesson to prepare and write their speech. The second class was for finishing their speech and practicing presenting it – making sure they can pronounce the words, giving them tips for eye contact etc. And on the third lesson they presented. One last note of importance, please make sure that you actively participate in these classes. You can help motivate the kids and get their creative thoughts flowing, probably a lot more than your JTE can. Look at what they have written and ask them small questions to get them to write more. It is often easier for them to answer a question than it is for them to think of writing that information down on their own. Show that you are interested in their topics and what they have to say, be positive and most importantly, have fun!

This lessons idea came from Edo-chan's Three Wise Monkey's website, <http://www.edochan.com/teaching/>

An Ode to Chu-hi

*Chu-hi, Chu-hi is so great
It has so many flavours.
Made from ferment of potatoes
It's a drink that all should savour.*

*Hot or cold, with ice or straight
From Japan, you must admit
This drink from a can, a bottle or tap
Is one, once you start, you can't ever quit!*

*Imagine my surprise, when the other night
At the bar with Gabby, Tu and Paul
When I asked for my Chu-hi, calpis, lemon or lime
She came back with a mix of them all!*

*This opened new doors to my world with Chu-hi
As before it was one or the other,
But now, can you see why this drink must be
Brought home to my friends, sister and brother*

*Now not all is great as problems arose
When Clayton put them all to the test
He asked us to choose between chuggability and percent
Which flavour we all thought was best.*

*I had a hard time as I do love them all
So asked for 'another drop' to be sure, to be sure.
However my plan had flaws and didn't help our cause
As one by one we all fell to the floor*

*Even with this mountain of chu-hi we drank,
With heads thumping and a mouth that was dry.
There still is no beer, spirit, ale or wine
That'll ever be better than my dearest Chu-hi!*



Drunk salaryman loves chu-hi!!

Dying in Koh Phangnan

By Amy Baker

Most people visit the beautiful island of Koh Phangnan in Thailand for its magical sunsets, relaxing beaches or crazy full moon parties. I however, spent most of my time in Koh Phangnan's wonderful little "Thai Inter Medical Clinic" where the doctors are warmer than the shining sun above.

Not 24 hours after arriving on Koh Phangnan from Bangkok, we made our way down to the south end of the island towards Haad Rin where the Full Moon Party festivities were under way.

Feeling a little tired and light-headed while getting ready for the party, I figured I had just gotten a bit too much sun. After all I had just spent my first full day at the beach. As we headed down to Haad Rin in an open-air taxi cab, I felt increasingly worse with each bump or pothole we sped over. When it came time for dinner, I had to give away my Pad Thai and spring rolls to hungry friends. I just didn't think my stomach could handle it.

I had been looking forward to the Full Moon Party for as long as I could remember. Ten thousand crazed, drunken tourists dancing on a beach — what's not to love? Unfortunately for me, I made it onto the beach for a total of ten minutes before I violently started throwing up everywhere.

Crowd goers must have assumed I had already drunk my body weight in alcohol. As I stood



there, wondering what I had eaten earlier for lunch, I got my second huge wave of nausea and bolted back to where the cabs were parked.

As I asked if anyone would be so kind as to accompany me back to the hotel, everyone kind of looked at each other hoping someone else would volunteer so they would be able to stay and experience the party in all its glory. Lucky for me, a fellow Awaji-nite and close friend, Amar Johal became my saving

grace that night. The cab ride home was a blur, as my fever got increasingly worse, and trying to not throw up out the back of the cab became an impossible mission. Arriving back at the hotel was all I could focus on. I longed for a bed, privacy and air conditioning.

Once we got back, I immediately crawled into bed and passed

out. Throughout the night, I would wake up in a bed full of sweat, vomit to the point of crying, and then fall back asleep. This happened about every half hour and Amar was always there rubbing my back and encouraging me through the whole ordeal.

The next morning, once my other friends had arrived back at the hotel, everyone agreed that what I had was not food poisoning or sun stroke, but in fact something worse. Days later, when I asked Amar to describe how I looked that night/morning, she uttered a single word: Death.

Wearing my pajamas and makeup from the night before, my friends more or less carried me over to the "Thai Inter Medical Clinic" where the doctor immediately sensed something was wrong. When he told me that he would have to check my blood, I looked around my surroundings noting a small, but relatively clean clinic but then remembering I was still in a country whose

medical care system I knew nothing about, and could potentially be dangerous. Crying like a baby for the hundredth time that day, my friends calmed my nerves by promising to make sure every needle was clean and that the doctor would continue to be very professional.

I was immediately connected to an I.V. with a saline solution drip, and given antibiotics. I spent half an hour in the hospital, and afterwards the doctors called me a free cab to go back to the hotel to rest. I felt lucky to have found this clinic and was looking forward to my next visit (Note: nothing in Thailand is ever free.)

After each 30 minute drip, I felt increasingly more alive and by the 3rd day I was ready to go!

Although most of the time in the hospital was a blur, I do remember seeing lots of motorbike accidents, where tourists had seriously injured themselves by falling off or crashing into another bike. I was also fortunate enough to meet a Swedish traveler who had also had a kidney infection earlier on in the week and promised me I would feel better soon and that the staff at this clinic was the best! This was enough for me to stay motivated and to try my hardest to get better.

By the end of the whole ordeal, I was thanking my lucky stars that I had found this clinic amidst the chaos/dirtiness/sleaziness that is Koh Phangnan. The friendly doctor who was always patient with my 101 questions, the

funny nurse who always asked me to go "pee pee!" in the cup or the receptionist who would always greet me with "You look better. You drink soon and go crazy. Okay?" — without them I would have been absolutely terrified.

When everyone was with their friends or family on Christmas, I was at my home away from home — the "Thai Inter Medical Clinic" where I not only felt welcomed, but loved!

I don't try to erase those four days from my memory, but rather I cherish the people I met during this time and am glad that it has made me a stronger and braver person. I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared shitless, but as a wise man once said: "All's well that end's well!"



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Gobble gobble, Turkey Day!!!

...wait, what?

By Alison Lonnen

Editor's note: You may think this is a bit late, but the Hyogo AJET Thanksgiving Feast was so special that even months later people still reminisce about it. To add to their fond memories and serve as an early reminder for next year's feast, we have gotten a Alison to share her experience.

Experiencing the Feast

As a new JET and an Australian expatriate, I wasn't at all sure what to expect when I arrived at the annual Hyogo AJET Thanksgiving Feast, but it turned out to be a very memorable evening, full of fun with friends and amusing cultural exchange.

The feast took place at the Blue Plate Restaurant in Himeji on Saturday, November 17th 2007. When all the participants had successfully found the restaurant and gathered inside we kicked off the festivities with a few words about Thanksgiving holiday traditions. This was followed (in true Japanese style) by the holding of a Janken competition to see which table would get first dibs on all the delicious Thanksgiving food.

Although I had been forewarned by some concerned American friends about the amount of food I would see at such a Feast, the number of delicious dishes still delighted and amazed me.

The massive turkeys took pride of place as centerpieces, and they were surrounded by candied yams, roasted pumpkin, stuffing, mashed potatoes,

peas, ham, curried mince, salad, macaroni and cheese, beef and vegetable stew, custard and pecan pie, and apple and apricot pastries.

As you can imagine, it didn't really take us much time to take our places and get stuck into the (very) oishii food.

The evening was an unqualified success and a good time was had by all. A huge thanks must go first of all to the staff of the Blue Plate Restaurant for their excellent food and service on the night.

Secondly to Jeff Weese, Amy Piesse and all the other Hyogo AJET members who gave their time and energy so generously in organizing such a wonderful evening. It was greatly appreciated by all who attended.

Happy Thanksgiving! ...albeit a few months too late!



Some truth Tu it

By Tuwhakaroa Biddle

I supposedly have a way with words, so I'm told, although I personally feel that my vocabulary is probably the worst in the world, my spelling is worse still and having very little idea of how grammar and tenses actually work my sentences probably are textbook wrong. Even so when asked to write for the Hyogo Times I was faced with a hard question: What to Write?

I don't know about you but I am quite possibly the most indecisive person you will ever meet or not meet. I am the last to order at a restaurant, never know which beer to drink so usually work my way through the list, I can't even decide how to cook my eggs (maybe Beth should decide for me). I put it down to the fact that I'm a Gemini but that's an easy excuse because I actually think astrology is bullcarks. What to write?

I figured that the only people reading this are Jets anyway so writing about my experiences at school or out amongst the natives are rather redundant as in most cases you have all experienced the same to some degree and lets face it school days are rather mundane.

I also don't think I'm interesting enough a person to write about myself and I'm not so self involved to think that even if I did write about me any of you would actually read it and give a damn (I wouldn't so I wouldn't expect anyone else to). What to write?

Things I write off the top of my head tend to be kind of dirty, a little wrong and occasionally somewhat offensive (read my FaceBook poems if you don't believe me) and therefore aren't necessarily suitable for wider circulation. Even if I do write something it is usually because I am bored, in a bit of a spastic mood and therefore only really do it to amuse myself. Nonetheless I don't really make that much sense even to myself. What to write?

When it comes to anything I'm a big believer in the moment or relevance. For example nothing overly wonderful or dreadful has happened recently that I think merits discussion or even mentioning for that matter. I like watching TV shows that are topical, they are relevant now, as they tend to interest and amuse me the most. I however wouldn't actually know where to start if writing about something that is relevant mainly because I wouldn't be able to decide what is and



make it appeal to the many – but I suppose with a marketing degree I should be able to do that right? What to write?

I asked myself: What do I think other people would be interested in reading about? This possibly comes down to plain cluelessness but I don't know and I wouldn't want to presume/assume anything about anything. I then thought: What do I like to read about? I don't actually like reading anymore but in the few and far between times I do I either like it, am impartial or don't like it but I couldn't tell you why in any case. What to write?

How about I write something about nothing? Without even trying I guess I have. Something not necessarily relevant, something rather self involved, something I presume people might read, something some kind of decision making was required for and something about absolutely nothing. I suppose I must of done something right if anyone has made it this far and if you have lets be friends we obviously have nothing in common. What to write next?



You don't know Hyogo

By Graham Neubig

Test how much you know about our lovely prefecture with these trivia questions!

Q1: Which of these famous Japanese movies takes place mainly in Hyogo Prefecture?

- a) Seven Samurai: Akira Kurosawa's famous story of 7 samurai who come to save a rural village from bandits.
- b) Battle Royale: A film by Beat Takeshi about a radical program to restore discipline in schools through combat.
- c) Nobody Knows: A Cannes Award-winning film about four children who were abandoned by their parents and forced to live on their own.
- d) Grave of the Fireflies: An animated film about two children who lose their parents in WWII, called one of the most powerful anti-war films ever made by Roger Ebert.

Q2: On the Jan. 10 every year, thousands of people gather at Nishinomiya Jinja in a celebration of which God?

- a) Izanagi, the god who created the Japanese archipelago.
- b) Ebisu, the god of good fortune and successful business.
- c) Amaterasuomikami, the god of the sun.
- d) Indra, the king of the gods.

Q3: Toyooka, the largest city in northern Hyogo, produces 70% of Japan's...

- a) Downhill skis
- b) Handbags
- c) Springs
- d) Pencils

Q4: Which of the following Japanese celebrities is from Hyogo?

- a) Author Haruki Murakami
- b) Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda
- c) Soccer Star Shunsuke Nakamura
- d) Actor Ken Watanabe

Q5: Which of the following major companies is based in Kobe?

- a) Kitchen equipment company Hoshizaki
- b) Tractor company Kubota
- c) Sports equipment company Asics
- d) Electric device company Panasonic

Answers:
 (1) d. The story was based on the author's experience in the fire-bombing of Kobe.
 (2) b. Nishinomiya Jinja is headquarters for over 3,500 shrines devoted to Ebisu throughout Japan.
 (3) b. Woven willow baskets were a traditional industry in Toyooka, which evolved to make handbags to keep up with the times.
 (4) a. He was born in Ashiya city, and outlines his life in the semi-biographical "Norwegian Wood."
 (5) c. The headquarters are based on Port Island, off the coast of Kobe.

Wheel of Jeopardy!

Time for the H.T. Quiz — ridiculous and ridiculouser!

By Joy Feddes

1. Why am I writing for the Hyogo Times?

- a) Because the reputation of this fine bit of media is so esteemed, I consider myself blessed.
- b) Because of flattery. I'm vain and fall for anything that the editors say to woo me into writing.
- c) I'm doing my bit to make the world a brighter place. What have you done lately?

2. All you got for Christmas was:

- a) Figgy pudding!
- b) Well, you really wanted a crab, or was that crabs? Did you get crabs?
- c) A kid from your elementary school gave you her two front teeth. Boy aren't you lucky!

3. Your apartment most closely resembles:

- a) An icebox.
- b) A shoebox
- c) Your Box?

4. Did you give omiyage to your staffroom after your last trip?

- a) Yes I did, I buying friends with omiage!
- b) Hell no. Charge me 2000Yen/month for instant coffee that I don't drink, and you get nothing!
- c) I did, but then I ate it.

5. You went to the Kobe mid-year conference and learned:

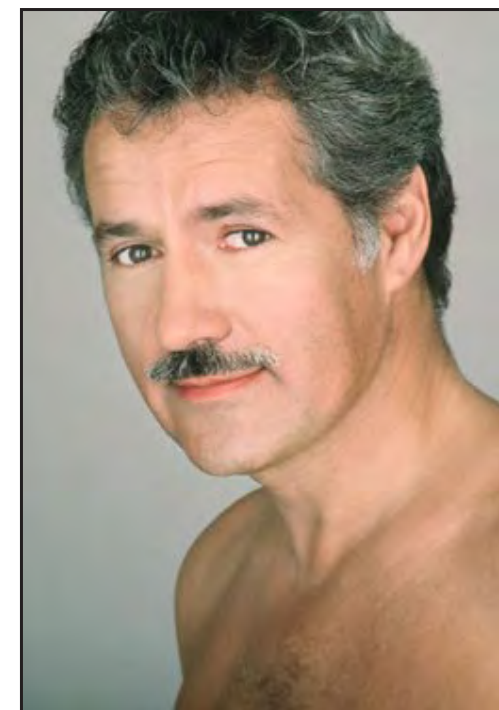
- a) That you can't understand simultaneous English/Japanese conversation.
- b) That your two most favourite words are *nomi* and *hodai*.
- c) Romantic time in the car, eh...

6. You have decided that next year:

- a) You are going to recontract. Because you love the money, I mean sleeping on the floor and teaching. Yes...you love teaching.
- b) You are getting the 'ell out of here. No more shoebox icebox living for your box.
- c) You will steal a small Japanese child and raise it for your own.

7. Last night:

- a) I put a wig on you when you were sleeping
- b) You realized that your kotatsu is like a pre-made fort and you made a nest under it
- c) You finished reading Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" and promptly went to his grave and kicked the tombstone for making you suffer through it.



Shirtless '80s Trebek approves this quiz.

8. I just want you to know:

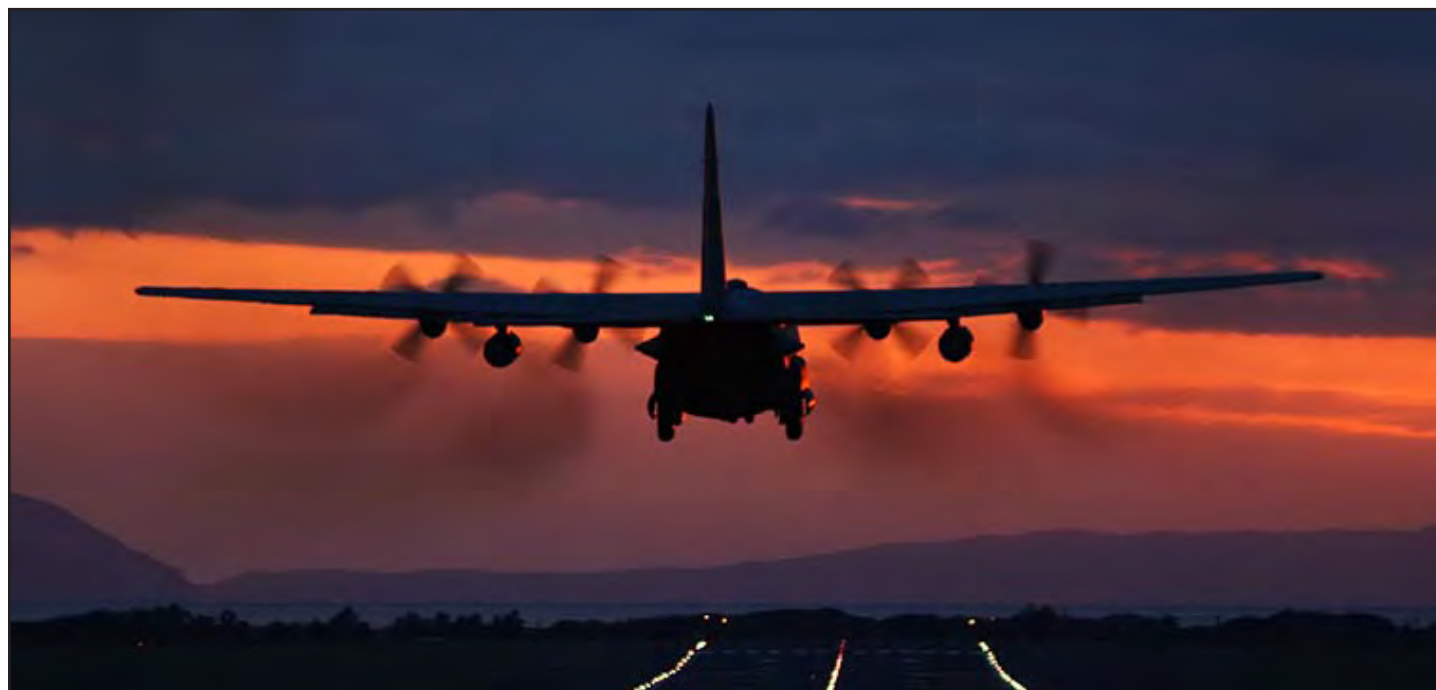
- a) It ain't where I been, but where I'm 'bout to go
- b) You've got it goin' on
- c) The cleaning song at my school is partly in English, but I have no idea what they are saying. That can't be a good sign.

What your answers mean:

Mostly A: You are a stunning creature with a small dan-druff problem. Get that fixed. Also, buy me a latte. Make sure you spend time outdoors this month and get your vitamin D up! But stay away from Sunny D... that stuff's garbage.

Mostly B: You are an extrovert, trapped in an introvert's body. Shut your freaking gob banana! If a stranger offers you candy, take it. Hello, free candy! Go teach a kid the word "verbal" and get a good laugh.

Mostly C: I see you looking at me, wondering what's in store, what gem of wisdom awaits. I know you read A and B and just want to pick the best one. I can tell you that you have nice eyes. Make sure no one gets lost in them, or they might get mad, and that can't be good.



You dont have to go home, but you can't stay here

An anonymous submission from a JET who chose not to recontract detailing their reasons why.

Teaching

I got into teaching because it is rewarding and I like getting to know students. I also love feeling like an active member of the school community. Here I feel like an outsider all of the time. I only talk to a few teachers on a regular basis, some of which are leaving in March when the school year switches over.

I know a lot of it has to do with the language barrier because I can't speak Japanese and that's my fault, but I don't feel like a part of the school staff. I don't feel included, important, or valued.

In class, the students are UN-BEARABLY quiet. With a few exceptions, they don't want to speak English. Most don't want to study English and aren't excited to be in class. They are extremely shy, not willing to try, and overall frustrating to teach. It takes them a whole minute just to say

ONE word sometimes, or after I call a student's number, it takes a minute for that student to raise their hand.

It isn't rewarding, it isn't challenging, and it isn't fun. It's tedious, boring, and I don't feel like I'm making a difference at all. Also, when I teach with some JTEs they don't discipline the students at all. If I say "Be quiet" and the students continue talking and the JTE doesn't step in, it is really frustrating. I have a VERY hard time talking when students are talking, and it's something I definitely refuse to do in America. But here, they don't see me as a figure of authority, more like a guest in the classroom.

Professionally

I feel like my masters degree in education is going to a waste here as teaching in an American classroom is completely different from teaching in Japan. I'm not using things I learned as a masters student and I'm probably slowly forgetting a lot of it too.

It won't be easy to go back and get a job teaching biology in America

now, and another year in Japan won't help that. I'm also out of touch with biology. As it is, I haven't taken a biology class in three years because I finished that degree pretty early. I wanted to get involved in the biology classes here, but I can't understand what's going on, and they can't understand me, so it seems like it is more trouble than it's worth.

Location

While Awaji is a beautiful island and it is luckily in the Kansai area, it is still far from Kobe, Osaka and Kyoto. On the weekends, I feel like I have to leave the island just to get a break from my apartment and school. It costs \$20 one way to get to Osaka, and then once I get there I have to find a place to stay.

So Awaji can be a cheap place to live, but being the antsy social butterfly that I am, I am willing to pay to leave the island as much as possible. I'm not saving as much money as I thought I would because traveling off the island every weekend adds

up. I feel like my life in Japan pales in comparison to other JETs who live near a train station or near a bigger city, or at least don't have to cross a body of water to get to a Starbucks or an English bookstore.

My Apartment

My apartment is old and dirty and it seems unhealthy to be living in it. It has old tatami, bugs galore, an ancient shower, it smells bad, it has poor circulation and poor heating/cooling systems and many other problems. Also, it's so dark outside even though I have asked twice for the school to fix the lights.

Social Life

Social life on Awaji basically consists of occasionally having dinner with people, and maybe going to karaoke on someone's birthday. We are all spread out and it takes forever to get anywhere because of traffic, slow drivers and one-lane roads.

There's basically only one bar where we've ever all been to together, and we eat at the same places all the time. Effectively, social life is almost non-existent.

JET Program

While it would be difficult to do, I think the program needs to become more standardized. It isn't fair that some ALTs teach five classes a week and others teach 20. It isn't fair that some ALTs can take nenkyu whenever they want and others can only take them when there's no class. It isn't fair that some ALTs have nice apartments and some live in shitholes.

While we shouldn't compare our situations to others', it's hard not to when you are living in a foreign country and everything is new and most of your friends are other ALTs experiencing the same things. They are also cutting senior high school ALT numbers by 50 this year, so some people that do re-contract might have to move apartments or schools or even cities.

Japanese culture

While I can appreciate tons of amazing things about Japanese culture, there are some things that really bother me.

It is so frustrating that the communication is indirect all the time, no matter what. It's hard never to be able to get a straight answer or an honest answer, and it's hard to be looked at like you are a crazy person when you say something direct to them.

It's hard not to understand and not to be understood. It's also hard to not form very close relationships with Japanese people like I would with people at home. Japanese people don't hug when they haven't seen each other in a long time, or when they are saying goodbye. They aren't passionate about their relationships and their lives. Everything is so... formal. And cold. I see myself enjoying a culture that is loud and loving and not shy about how much they love life.



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Hyogo AJET Elections

The AJET Committee — Who are they and what do they do? **Charity Committee**

The charity committee is a sub-committee of HAJET and basically open to be shaped at your will. In the past, the committee has hosted various events, including pub quizzes and concerts, with proceeds going to various charities around the world. We have long-standing relationships with several organizations and schools, including Habitat for Humanity.

The basic premise is just keeping Hyogo Jets informed about volunteer opportunities or chances to give to charity. This year we had two co-chairs, but it can be done by one person or with a friend. But the most rewarding part about this post is the ability to work as a team as an HAJET committee member, serving your fellow JETS and the great feeling and experience that you gain from giving joy and hope to others who are in need of it!

Brenda and Kelly

Webmaster

Hi! I'm Colin Fukai, the Webmaster of the Hyogo AJET Committee. Basically, I'm responsible for implementing and maintaining the web presence of HyogoAJET: www.hyogojet.net. Our web site is unique among AJET sites in that it can be directly edited by everyone (Wikipedia-style), so if you have useful information to share please add it! My goal is to make the most interactive and useful resources possible, easily available to all Hyogo JETS!

Colin Fukai

Events Co-ordinator

Hi, I'm Amy, and I've been responsible for some of the fantastic events that you've attended over the past 6 months or so - beer gardens, white water rafting, hiking days, ski trips etc. My job involves organising people, places and cheap booze and making sure that venues will still have Hyogo Jets as patrons even when the event is over.

If you've got any suggestions, criticisms at all for any future events or stress-relief massage vouchers that you don't want to use, please email me at hajetevents@gmail.com. If you're interested in running your own event for Hyogo Jets, HAJET may be able to provide some funds to help you out - shoot us a proposal and we'll chat.

In a couple of months, I'll be looking for someone to take over this position, so if you're interested, and enjoy sending many, many emails and being super-involved (or being very good at delegating), it's certainly a worthwhile challenge to take on.

Amy Piesse

Secretary

Essentially the role of the HAJET secretary is an easy one. In this position all you need to do is email the committee before meetings and write up an agenda, take notes at the meeting and then type up the minutes and email them to everyone.

Keeping the committee informed is your main job but if you want to help other members of the committee then you can also do that. You can make your position whatever you would like it to be.

Elections for the new HAJET committee will be coming up in the next couple of months with the hand-over normally happening in March. If you are interested in the secretary position and have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me at hajetsecretary@gmail.com

Angela Nicholson

Hyogo AJET Treasurer

The Hyogo AJET Treasurer's primary duty is to maintain the Hyogo AJET account (through postal savings) in an accurate, timely, and professional manner.

This includes, but is not limited to; committee payouts; events/promotions/trip financing; processing new and renewal membership; co-creating a budget with the rest of the committee; managing other income; keeping the books/accounts up to date and submitting quarterly reports to the block representative.

The Hyogo AJET Treasurer should have excellent communication skills as they will always be communicating with the committee on budget issues. They will also constantly be in contact with the payees and recipients in regard to furikomi details.

The Hyogo AJET Treasurer will also have to have very good time management skills. Submitting quarterly reports, communication with payees and recipients, and money transfers all must be done punctually.

Robyn Bailey

Hyogo Prefectural Representative

This job is mostly what you make of it, like most on the committee. Your main responsibilities will include:

- Staying informed on everything that is going on in the committee, and making sure that the committee keeps each other informed.
- Turning in Quarterly Reports to National AJET along with the Treasurer's Report
- Serving as the main point of contact for National AJET, other AJET chapters, the Hyogo BOE, and any outside organizations.
- Running the monthly AJET meeting and keeping it moving efficiently.
- Leading the yearly membership drive.
- Anything else you want to do. The possibilities are endless.

This job is a lot of fun, and you get to meet a lot of awesome people and have a lot of input on a lot of awesome events. If you have any other questions feel free to email me at hajetpr@gmail.com.

Brandon Kramer

Hyogo AJET Committee Elections

These will happen by email in early Late February/Early March. All positions open up every year for election so if you want to be a part of this organization, definitely think about running.

It is a lot of fun and it is a great way to meet lots of people, organize great events, and help the Hyogo JET community stay in touch!

The positions available are as follows:

Prefectural Representative
Events Coordinator
Charity Coordinator
Treasurer
Secretary
Awaji Representative
Tajima Representative
Kobe Representative

There are also a few appointed positions available, such as Advertisements and Promotions Chair and Librarian if you are interested.

For a more detailed explanation of each position's responsibilities, please email Brandon at hajetpr@gmail.com and he will put you in touch with the current office holder.