

Hyogo Times



july 2008

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On the cover...



Cover art by Chip Boles

Chip Boles is back this month with another great cover for the *Hyogo Times*, this time featuring our host nation's leader — if he were a fan of purikura.

“I thought that Mr. Art Director Morrice had a great idea whe he suggested, ‘You know, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda doing his stone-sober face in a purikura booth pic covered in kawaii might be fun. He looks so dull and boring in every pic I’ve ever seen of him.’

“I though him being in black and white might emphasize the effect.”

Hyogo Times Staff

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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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Visit us online at:

<http://hyogoajet.net>

From The Editor...

Hello and welcome to your favourite (only) JET newspaper!

As always, this month serves up a variety of topics from both new writers and old favourites. My top tip for a read this month would have to be Jojo's fabulous four recipes. Those dishes sound mouth-watering and I think everybody should give them a try... especially if you live near me!

I'm sure you've already noticed the awesome cover designed by the talented Chip Boles (damn him and his talent — I drew a dog on the board and the students guessed a cow, a sheep and a mouse before guessing a dog). It is marvellous to have Chip on board with the *Hyogo Times* and I hope he inspires some of you to send in some drawings of your own. If nothing else I know that everybody is now going to check the cover out even if they ignore the rest of the paper!

This month has been a special month for two reasons. First it was the month that the *Hyogo Times* made headline news all across Japan. Well... maybe not 'headline' news, but we were featured in a (colour) article in the second largest national newspaper in Japan — the *Asahi Shinbun*. With a readership of well over 8 million people it was quite an achievement for the *Hyogo Times*. Check out Page 28 for more details.

The second reason this month is special is because it is my last month as editor. Next month I will be replaced by the beautiful and talented Ann Chow who will hopefully be able to take the *Hyogo Times* to places I never could.

Before I leave, I must thank all the different people who have helped me over the last six months. Firstly, thank you to all the regulars who are the backbone of the *Hyogo Times*. Without them the *Hyogo Times* would be long dead.

Secondly — a big thanks to all those people who were brave and generous enough to sit down and write an article for the paper. If you aren't one of the more than fifty people who have submitted to the *Hyogo Times* in the last six months, make sure you do in the next six months!

A special word of thanks goes to Jeff Weese, who has not only been our ever reliable travel writer (definitely check out some of his recommendations!) but has also



worked tirelessly to raise funding for the *Hyogo Times*. It was solely through his efforts that we were ever able to publish the paper and the lack of recent publication has nothing to do with him.

Finally, I must thank Jeff Morrice who is the real genius behind this paper. The beautiful design, layout and general feel of the paper are all his doing. The paper will survive without me, but not without Jeff.

OK, so my advice is given and my thanks are done so I'm off. What awaits me I don't know but I'm sure it'll be fun. I've had a wonderful time here and am sorry to be going. I hope you have enjoyed the *Hyogo Times*.

Goodbye and good luck!

—Kevin

And From The PR...

G'day Hyogo-ites, and welcome to July! I hope that the rainy season didn't put too much of a dampener (haw haw) on your early summer social calendars, and that you're looking forward to getting hot and sticky for the rest of the summer!

Along with crowd favourites like the start of the official Japanese beach and air-conditioning seasons, mid-summer also brings heaps of funky events like cultural festivals, beach parties and beer gardens. That's right — pretty much anything that involves drinking and generally having fun in the sun!

I was thinking about all these crazy goings-on of summer recently, and realised that I'd almost totally for-

gotten just how lucky we are to have so many cool things going on here in Japan. So I took some time to think back to what I've seen and done here over the past 11 months, and was totally blown away.

My little trip down memory lane really proved to me that while, yes, there are less positive aspects to JET, there is far more good than bad. And, best of all, Japan has the ability to continue to surprise, amaze and amuse us at almost every turn.

A classic example of this was the new brand of bottled fruit called 'Dole' that appeared in my local supermarket recently. For the benefit of the non-Aussies, the word 'dole' means unemployment benefits in Australia.

Just the brand name itself is funny enough, but when I saw the giant advert hanging above the bottles I couldn't help but laugh my arse off. It had a guy's face on it with two big banana 'horns' coming out of his ears, making him look like a total idiot. To irate taxpayers in Australia, that's the exact stereotype of the kind of person who would be on the dole, and the kind of thing they would do instead of looking for work. It's great that something so normal in one country can be so amusing when you look at it from a different cultural perspective.

But it's not all about laughs. For example, Japan boasts some of the most amazing media and design in the world, particularly in anime and manga. One of my favourite animes, *Ghost in the Shell*, is so good that I've just started watching the series again for the third time.

And this is all without mentioning the ultimate — Japanese hospitality. Probably thanks to living in an inaka paradise, I've been really lucky with this. I've often walked into a local bar or restaurant and suddenly found myself at local events (go random fire festivals!), in random people's houses (w00t! expensive sake!) or at crazy, random parties (mostly for people I barely know).

I think the best thing about all of the above is that it's often just so simple, natural and unexpected, but leaves you feeling awesome and totally unable to be anything else but happy. As I mentioned before, there are bad things about JET and life in Japan, but personally, I think there are a whole lot more good things waiting for you just outside your door.

And all you have to do is open it and step outside...

—Daniel



Hyogo PR unmasks the Stealth Gaijin at Yukata Matsuri!!!



The Mile High Club: A Farewell to Japan

Love and Relationships:

By MacKenzie
Roebuck-Walsh

As the airlines ratchet up the cost of additional baggage, how much excess can you afford? Emotional baggage, that is. Like your favourite jeans that must fit in come hell or high water, the emotional baggage of past lovers can never leave you. However, in today's world, where good mates are as scarce as economical transport, its time to cut back on how much we carry with us for the long haul.

Of course you can't go anywhere without at least a carry-on full of the essentials (even with nude vacations becoming wildly trendy, in most destinations you will still get arrested for meandering in the buff!) Likewise, we can never fully discard those who have been in our lives... even if it would be much easier to move on without them. Wear a little less — yes. Get rid of — no.

The baggage is important; it

protects us from repeating the same mistakes, helps us to learn more about ourselves and leads to wiser decision making. The difficult part comes in choosing what to keep and what to leave behind. Unfortunately, after a few burns we all become a little disillusioned and start to assume the worst in people. While it is important to learn from your past experiences, becoming the cynic only hurts you more.

Horror stories abound for all of us. That one bad relationship or all those blasé ones that had you running for the door before you even knew who was really knocking. Try to separate the unsavoury behaviour and quirks that you don't want from the excellent traits any lover of yours must now possess.

Each person that comes into our lives helps us to shape who we are — but if/when they disappear, remember not to chip away at yourself and use the broken pieces to erect a barrier. Instead improve who you are and who you are look-

ing for. What were your past lover's best qualities? What did you like most about yourself when you were with them? Start looking for people who bring out these positives plus that little something extra that puts a twinkle in your eye and butterflies in your stomach.

Growing up, I watched *Cinderella* over and over again, transfixed by the idea of a Prince Charming who would dash into my life while I was scrubbing the floor (bussing tables in our restaurant) and love me forever. We would run off together and live happily ever after.

To this day, I still watch *Cinderella* every time I kiss another frog who does nothing but croak afterwards — not because I still believe true love is as easy as fitting into a shoe (though I have been much more successful in my love affair with shoes) but because I do not want to forget the idea of love and passion.

So when I pack my bags for the next trip, I'll leave the bulky

stuff in the recycle bin: hurtful actions, annoying habits, pure crazy behaviour; and pack the more light hearted memories: smiles, intellectual stimulation, naughty habits. The light luggage is what I'll carry with me while I'm looking for that person who can make me laugh until I cry without actually making me cry.

Love is hard work. The important thing is not to find a partner who makes your life easy and sunny — *Cinderella*-style with birds singing and magical godmothers — but someone who you can share a partnership with, someone to help you work through life and all its obstacles. Someone who will on occasion even throw you a few curve balls to keep you on your toes.

In fact, if you get lucky maybe you'll find someone who will stack their baggage on top of yours and you can shove the whole pile into the hall closet where it will stay as

a gentle reminder. Always a part of your life but not costing you that extra 75 bucks each time you embark on a new adventure!

That's all my advice for this month but for those of you with your mind in the gutter I hope you enjoy these quick tidbits on the article's title in its most daring sense:

- ♦ The first member of the Mile-High Club is thought to be Lawrence Sperry during a flight in 1916.
- ♦ An Airbus A380 operated by Singapore Airlines offers double beds in their first-class cabins but, due to lack of sound proofing, they request that no club members (or hopefuls) take the opportunity to fornicate on their flights.
- ♦ Legality is dependant on visibility of the deed and the country's flight space you happen to be occupying — France, South America and Antarctica are the safest bets.
- ♦ You can actually charter flights for the express purpose of a little

nooky... but isn't the whole point the thrill? If you need a plane to make it hot... well, that is another article.

This is unfortunately my last article as your love and relationship writer and I'm sorry to be leaving this wonderful paper. I did what I could in a brief space of time and hope you've all enjoyed my articles. I'm returning to America to find someone to love me like fireworks; but in my pursuit of Mr. Roebuck-Walsh I would still love to answer any questions you have or hear your stories! Keep me posted via facebook! Thank you for taking time to read my column. Goodbye and *Ganbatte!*

P.S: I hope you all get to use my favourite Japanese phrase in its ideal context before you leave Japan. This phrase is, of course, the "Easy Tiger!!!" translation of "*chotto matte*" (see Page 131 of the *Lonely Planet Japanese Phrasebook!*)

Bar Trinity

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Special Discount for
AJET Members

WhyNot Japan
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¥3000 (2500 WhyNot Members)
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(Electro & House)
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(Drum 'n' Bass)
July 31 - Yukiko Kohrogi
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TEL: 078. 333. 1286
SUN-THURS: 19:00-2:00 FRI/SAT: 19:00-5:00

The Fantastic Four



By Jojo Jackson

This hot weather makes eating a big meal seem like an arduous task. Lately, I've taken to making a variety of little dishes and snacking on them though the evening. Some of which would be perfect if you were having friends round for a few drinks and you wanted to impress them with your culinary prowess! This month, instead of formal recipes I'm just going to throw out a few ideas to get your imaginations going.

Warm quinoa salad with cherry tomatoes, roasted aubergine, basil and parsley

Quinoa (keen-wah) is a grain that originated in South America. The Incans referred to it as "chisaya mama" or "mother of all grains," and it certainly is. It is an unusually complete food containing: fibre, phosphorous, magnesium, iron and 12-18 per cent protein — making it very good for us non-carnivores.

On top of all that, it's delicious! It fluffs up like couscous but has a slightly chewier texture and nutty flavour. To cook it, rinse well and add twice as much water as quinoa before boiling for around 15 minutes. After all that build up however, quinoa is relatively difficult to find in Japan, but hey you're not going to live here forever! I've found it in health food stores before but failing that, brown rice works well in its place.

Instructions:

Cook the quinoa or brown rice. Roast or fry the aubergine with olive oil, salt and pepper. Cut some cherry tomatoes in half. Roughly chop some basil and parsley. If you can find a soft crumbly cheese like feta, shankleesh or goats milk cheese (ha ha!) then throw some in too. Or just ask friends going overseas to smuggle some back into the country for you. Mix it all together with a splash of olive oil and season again if necessary.

Pea, mint and fresh mozzarella bruschetta

This takes no time to prepare and is lovely and summery-fresh. Frozen peas work just fine. If you can't find them I suggest frozen broad beans with their skins re-

moved or edamame.

Defrost the peas. Using a mortar and pestle smash up some mint. Add peas and continue bashing. Then add a good lug of olive oil and some parmesan cheese. Season and mix well.



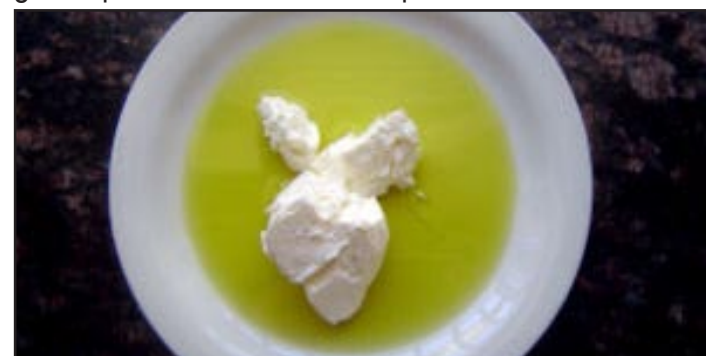
Toast some nice bread. Cut a garlic clove in half and rub the toast with it. Rip up some fresh mozzarella and put a bit on each piece of toast followed by a dollop of pea mixture.

Smashed chickpeas with cumin and chilli

This is sort of a take on hummus and goes nicely with crudites and toasted bread. Smash up cooked chickpeas with olive oil, lemon juice, whole dry-fried cumin seeds, garlic, chilli and some salt.

Labneh

Labneh is strained yogurt that is traditionally used in the middle-east. I was introduced to it by my dear friend Carol. It's really versatile, being equally delicious in sweet and savoury dishes. It takes zero effort to make and is nice to have kicking about in the fridge. Line a sieve with a clean tea towel and fill with plain unsweetened yoghurt. Let stand in a bowl overnight. The whey will drain out leaving a more solid kind of yogurty cheese. Mix in a bit of olive oil and salt. Use it as a dip for veggies! Spread it on bread! Dollop it on dahl! Whatever!



Stealth Gaijin

Life as an ASIAN JET

Walking on any city street in Japan, one will see beves of beautiful women and scores of good-looking men. Sometimes you see the opposite: a walking fashion mistake in hooker heels or a person with a hairstyle that literally reaches new heights.

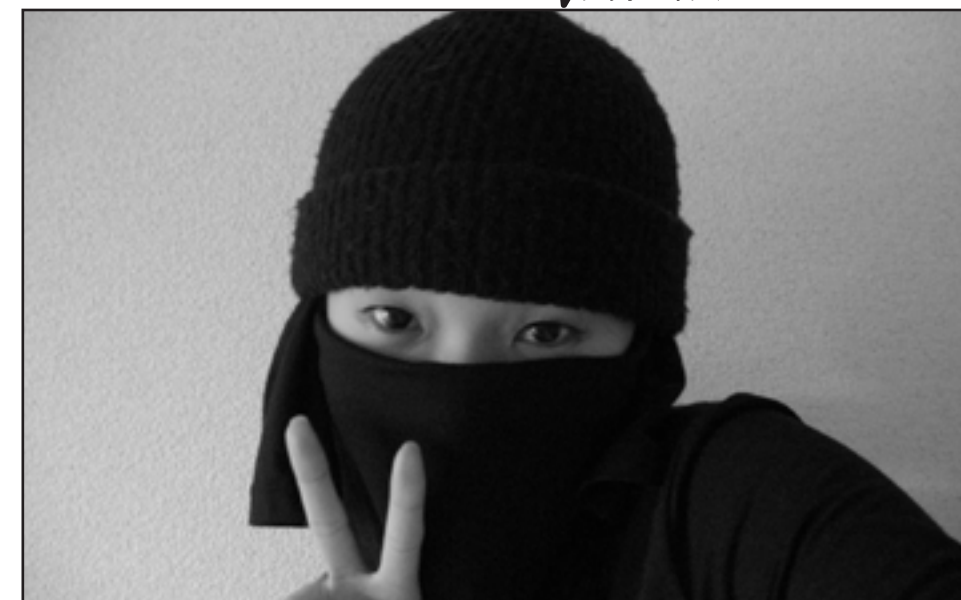
Some of these people are blessed with natural good looks and we lesser mortals hate them for it. But what is the standard for beauty? I know the cheesy answer is that it's in the eye of the beholder. I was just told I'm beautiful today by an elementary school girl, but I'm sure the teacher back in the staff room who has a thing against people of Chinese descent would disagree.

In most fashion magazines in the US, makeup tips are generally for the caucasian, hispanic, or black woman, with very rare instances where makeup tips can be applied to asian faces, particularly eye makeup. That's when stealth gaijins like me can be grateful for Japanese magazines and their fashion and makeup tips.

Except that it's too often that I see a girl in Japan teetering down the street in shoes of questionable fit, wearing what could be misconstrued as a tent, with four layers of foundation, five coats of mascara, fake eyelashes, and lips with such a full pout that they have the dreaded "trout lips" syndrome.

Furthermore I don't think that what is done in Japan can possibly be seen as attractive. I know Japanese guys who say that they never, ever, want to see their girlfriends without makeup because they don't know how she looks without it, so that also feeds into why the women continue to wear such ridiculous amounts of skin-suffocaters. It's a vicious cycle, ne?

Then there's the great eye debate. This is where Asians have a desire to



Stealth Gaijin — missing crucial flaps of skin above their eyes, so sadly can't beautiful.

make their eyes more Western-looking (meaning a visible epicanthic fold) while some Western women want more of a slant to their eyes because it looks exotic.

In the US, Asian women want that visible eye fold because the standard of beauty is one of Caucasian women. Therefore the idea arises that Asian eyes with their slant is not good enough to be attractive. Now that standard of beauty has traveled to Asia and everyone wants what they don't have. I suppose that's always the case.

However, if you don't want to do anything as drastic as getting cut and sliced open with a knife, the eye fold can be made very cheaply with minimal pain. Even at the local 100 yen shop, you can find eyelid tape and eyelid glue/putty plus applicator stick to make that desired eye fold. There are even websites that show you how to apply the stuff. Lucky you if you don't stick the applicator into your eye by accident!

Many magazines here promote fitting into a specific lifestyle, be it the *gyaru/gyaruo* or "Gothic Lolita" types. I've always wondered why women

seem to wear less in the winter than they do the summer — it's from the magazines! You know what I'm talking about — summer clothing layered to the nth degree with sun/UV protection or winter mini-shorts with knee-high boots and nothing between the skin of their legs and the winter cold.

On the streets of Japan, someone like me stands out because I don't dress in the typical Japanese fashion. However, due to my stealth, I don't stand out as much as I possibly could. I end up being one of the oddballs who doesn't dress according to modern Japanese rules because I'm not afraid to show some skin but I also don't look like a hooker with a bad tan.

I went to work once in a skirt that reached my knees, but didn't cover them. I was told it was a mini-skirt so I had to re-educate them on what a real mini-skirt is. I've seen my students outside of school wearing questionable clothing choices. I have to question if what they're wearing has enough material to be considered clothing.

As my JTEs say all the time — that's all for today!

Why I came to Japan:

By Catherine Reid

People often ask me “why did you come to Japan?” It is a question I answer differently each time depending on my mood, the kind of day I’ve had, the weather or even who has asked me the question. It is not a simple one-sentence answer, nor is there just one answer.

Life is a journey, but I don’t see why we should have to travel on the same path for the whole journey. So, when an opportunity arises to change paths, alter the journey, why not jump at it?

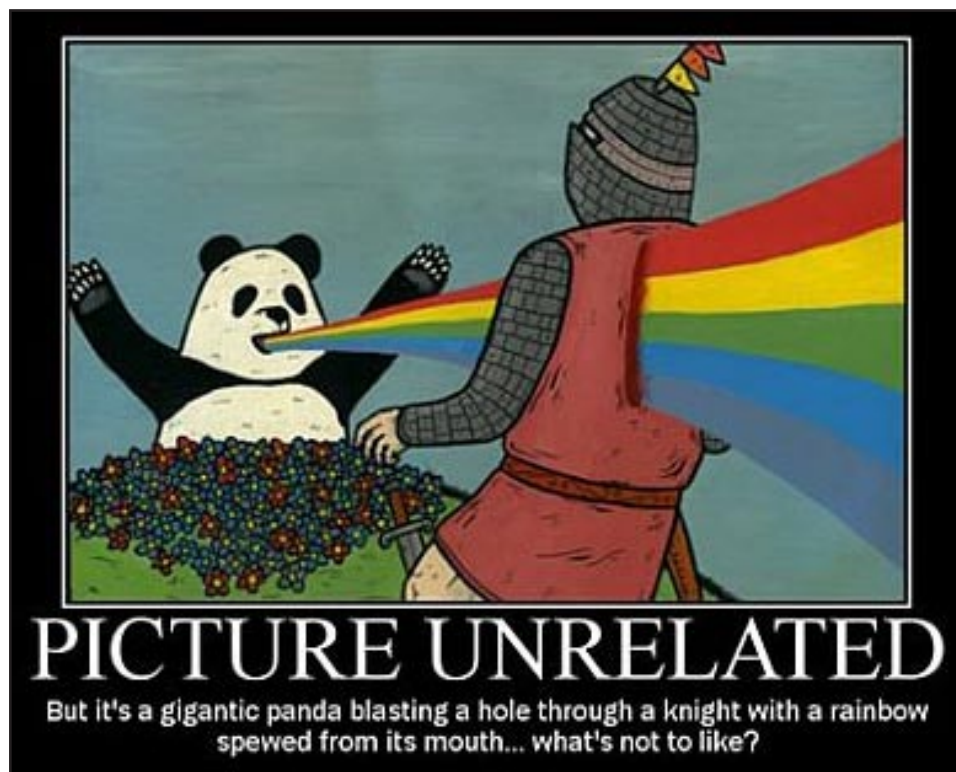
Coming from Australia, “The Lucky Country,” I realize just how lucky we Aussies are. I have taken every opportunity presented to me to travel overseas and see what other people’s life journeys are like, compared to mine.

I am not rich, but compared to what others have or, more correctly, don’t have, I am extremely rich, healthy and very, very lucky. I have a loving family, many close friends, a roof over my head each night, warm clothes, plenty of food and access to clean water, education and medication. I know that seen through the lives of others I am very fortunate.

Coming to Japan has allowed me to see how Japanese people live. I can share in their happiness and sorrow, their highs and lows, their families, and their friends. Everyone you meet throughout your life journey becomes part of it, whether in a large part as family members, lovers or friends or in a small part as classmates, co-workers or teachers.

In return for them sharing a part of your life journey, you also share in part of theirs. In Japan, I have met and am still to meet hundreds, possibly thousands, of people. It’s

Life Journey



hard for me to imagine just how many of these people will influence my life journey and me theirs. Will I learn from them? I hope so. Will they learn from me? I hope that too. I want to be part of their lives, and they part of mine and that is one of the reasons I came to Japan.

Having been born and raised in Australia I have led a rather sheltered life in respect to history and culture. Australia as a nation is only about 200 years young, so it lacks the history and culture of many Asian countries, including Japan. It’s difficult for us to imagine life existing for thousands of years.

But in Japan I can see temples built a thousand years ago; participate in cultural festivals celebrated centuries ago by Japanese ancestors; visit castles and villages where famous warriors lived and died during the feudal era. I cannot experience these things in Australia and that is another reason for coming to

Japan!

Living in Australia is easy. I can speak the language. I can read the language. I can listen to the radio or watch TV and understand it. I can communicate easily, without even thinking about it. I like life to be a challenge! In Japan, I can’t speak much of the language. I can’t read much of the written word. I can’t listen to the radio or watch TV properly.

Studying a language is interesting. It can be difficult. It can be frustrating. But, is it challenging? Yes, it is. And it’s another reason I came to Japan.

Life in Japan is different. The lifestyle is different, the education system is different, the health system is different and the language is different. However one thing I’ve learnt from my life journey so far is that although people everywhere look different, deep down we are all essentially the same.

Fishing villages and boys schools

By Sarah Macapagal

When you are accepted into the JET Programme, you begin to wonder where in Japan you’ll go. For a while you’re stuck in a kind of limbo, wondering what kind of school you’ll be placed at and where you’ll live.

“Watch, I’ll be sent to an all-boys high school in a fishing village,” I’d say jokingly to my friends and colleagues.

As time passed I learned that I would be living and working in a large city. However it is a spread-out city running along the coast. Towns and villages are separated by rice fields and mountains and fishing is an important part of daily life. Nearby there is even a high school devoted to teaching students about fishing. It isn’t quite a fishing village but it isn’t too far off.

I also learned that Sakuragaoka High School was to be my base school. It was a former all-girls school with a student body still more in favour of the girls than the boys.

In addition to Sakuragaoka I would also be teaching at two other schools, one of which was a technical high school. I was told that my techni-

cal high school was very different from Sakuragaoka because there were many boys there.

I imagined a scenario similar to my base school except with a few more boys than girls but when I actually went there I was really surprised.

The very first class I taught at Taira Technical High School (or Heiko as it is also called) was a second-year class of forty boys.

I was warned that they were very “genki” and I could already hear them before I got there. They were loud, cheerful and clearly curious about me. I guess they knew that there would be a new ALT, but who knows if they expected me to be Asian and female.

I must admit that I was just as curious about them because I didn’t know what to expect either. It was a little strange to look out into a sea of black military style uniforms and short hair cuts. I had never visited or taught a class without any girls and it felt different. I half expected Yamaguchi Kumiko’s class from the popular Japanese TV drama *Gokusen*, but here were a group of happy smiling boys, some awake, some sleepy and

all with black hair. {Editor’s note: for more information about Gokusen see Tuwhakaroa’s article in the March issue.}

That day I learned that the entire school consisted of a little under 900 students. Of those students, a mere 36 were girls. THIRTY-SIX girls in the ENTIRE school spread out amongst three grades! Most classes in the school consisted entirely of boys. Some classes had one or maybe two girls, with the largest number of girls in one class being around five or six. I had gotten my “allboys’ high school.”

I was told that though any junior high school student is welcome to apply to Heiko, most of those who do apply are mainly boys. I’m told the reason that not many girls go to the school is simply because it’s a technical high school. The specialized classes like electronics, robotics and civil engineering perhaps don’t interest girls as much as what they can learn at a commercial high school.

It’s a shame really as Heiko is one of the most interesting schools I’ve ever worked at. It’s really cool seeing specialized classrooms filled with machinery, electronics, and computers. The civil engineering students even built some small bridges at the back of the school.

Heiko is a good school. The students are bright, cheerful, creative, friendly, and kind. Very genki. The students are happy to see me and their other teachers. They listen (most of the time), participate in any activities I create (most of the time) and their attitudes towards English are positive (most of the time). I wouldn’t trade them for anything.

I joked about being sent to a “fishing village” and an “all-boys school” but I’m happy to be living in my city by the sea and to be teaching at Heiko.





Judging China

By Rupa Patel

For most senior high ALTs, February to early April brings about a strange period in the school year — no classes, no marking... not much to do in general if I'm being frank!

To alleviate us from boredom and explore other parts of this great continent, fellow JET Amar and I planned a trip to Hong Kong, China and Macao. As soon as the trip was booked our teachers tried to discourage us from going to our chosen destination, China.

The China-Japan conflict has lingered on for years and still persists

today, even in your average staff room. We were warned about many things, things that when you travel anywhere you must consider, but also those fundamentally politically incorrect things that shouldn't cross the mind of somebody who lives in a nation that considers itself 'liberal.'

Everyone is entitled to an opinion, but generalizations about a country which a lot of my colleagues haven't visited are not fair. We were warned about 'the Chinese' and told to be careful. We took this all with a pinch of salt and much to our pleasure we found that every experience we had only proved our teachers wrong.

Firstly we were told that China is a dirty place. Shanghai wasn't as clean as Hong Kong, but was definitely cleaner than other countries in Asia like Thailand, Cambodia and India. Also, the trains to and from Shanghai were amazing, and clean (with the exception of the toilet).

Admittedly it was

chaotic for about 30 minutes before the departure as so many passengers tried to get their belongings on the train, but as soon as they were on the atmosphere was calm and it was relaxing 21-hour train ride. The metro system was great too. Easy to find your way around (no loop lines) and clean.

Secondly we were told that people in China are rude. Despite not speaking Chinese, the people were kind and attentive to our needs — much like the people in Japan. On one occasion we were trying to get to the Bund and a busy lady actually walked us to the stop we had to get to and gestured that we had to get to the next stop.

We were also told that the Chinese people are cunning and sly. To show this isn't the case I'll tell you about the scariest and most exhilarating incident of the trip.

On a mission to escape a couple



of rich Italian men that wanted more than tiramisu for dessert, we ran to the first taxi we could find. In my very poor Chinese accent I told the taxi driver we wanted to go to Huangp Road — the place where all the bars are. I even pointed at it on the map and showed him.

Fifteen minutes later we were on the motorway heading towards the airport. After screaming "No, *dame!* Turn around," and gesturing madly the taxi driver finally stopped. He didn't understand much but he did understand *denwa* — so he called an

English-speaking friend. We told her that after all this excitement, nerves and slight fears for our lives, we just wanted to go back to the hostel which was on Jingshaji Road.

We start driving again and a while later the driver says "Jingshaji Road." Amar and I looked at each other, white in the face because the man was actually going to drop us off in the middle of nowhere — Jingshaji Road stretched out for easily 7 km.

We tried pointing at Jingshaji Road on the subway, hoping the man

we finally got to our destination the taxi driver only took a half fare of 50 RMB.

One thing that did strike me about China was the warmth in the way people interacted with one another. One day we took a stroll through a park in the French Concession area and a warm glow radiated from the locals. We saw people playing cards in the parks, smiling and just enjoying the pleasant afternoon. It was comforting and a pleasant change from what I have seen in Japan over the past eight months.

After a blissful yet energetic ten days in China, our travels came to a sad and abrupt end. I disgusted many people at my school by being honest about China. I loved China and want to go back one day because there is so much more to explore.

I am not saying that China is the safest, cleanest, nicest place in the world, (it may be to some), I am simply saying that you should not judge a book by its cover: live it, learn it.



A Hairdressing Saviour

By Jeff Weese

Why would you call a hairdressing salon Lovely Jubbly? Well every time Ayame (the heroine of this hairdressing story!) created a masterpiece during her training at the Vidal Sassoon Hair Academy in London, her instructor would praise her by exclaiming "Lovely Jubbly my dear!"

According to Ayame, this mentor played such an important role in her becoming who she is today that when she first opened her salon she just had to name it in his honour.

These days the much-travelled Ayame is a scuba diving lovin', lookin' for a boyfriend, hair cuttin' machine who just can't wait to get her fingers working in your hair! From her studies abroad she has acquired an amazing level of English and also a tremendous knowledge of Western styles (and that is very hard to come by in this country folks!)

Ayame knew from the early age of 10 that she wanted to be a hair stylist and followed her dream from Kobe to London to Tokyo to London again, and is now in the Himeji area with her own salon... Lovely Jubbly.

Not only do us *gaijin* get the full-service treatment when we walk into Ayame's salon, but as foreigners we also get the added bonus of her using exclusively foreign products on us!

Plus, as a JET, you will also receive 20% off on all services! 20% off! Ayame offers a wide range of services from cuts to perms to traditional Japanese kitsuke and she is also qualified and trained to do colour tone and colour



Uh... If that's what you want to look like, sure, Ayame can even do that.

analysis if you want to make sure your hair matches your skin tone! That's more than I ever knew you could get done in a salon! Maybe that's just not something they offer at Supercuts when you get your \$9.99 haircut?!?!)

Do you want to take advantage of this right now? Need Ayame to squeeze you in next week? If you have a handle on basic Japanese, you can ring 079-233-1186 and speak to any of her staff (they can only speak a bit of English) or if you would feel more comfortable sorting all this out in English, it is best to email Ayame at ayame@lovelyjubbly.jp and she will get right back to

you. Next time you need a snip (not the snip) just give Ayame a call and let her work her magic on you!

You can access the salon itself by getting down to Himeji and hopping on a Sanyo (not JR... across the street under the Sanyo Dept. Store) Ltd. Exp. or normal train and getting off at Shikama station. Turn left out of the ticket gate, right at the road and it's on your left just a few blocks down!

You can find more information on the Lovely Jubbly website at <http://www.lovelyjubbly.jp>.

Now there is definitely no excuse for looking shabby at the next Hyogo AJET event!

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JETs!

For appointments, contact Ayame at
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THE PLACE TO GO FOR HAIR...

Just 5 minutes from Himeji on the Sanyo line at Shikama Station! Lovely Jubbly is where it's at for perfect style, Western products and extraordinary service... all in English! What could make this a more enticing deal?

How about a 20% discount on all services!*

*products not included



Visit the Hyogo Times online at: hyogoajet.net/wiki/Hyogo_Times
Send submissions to: submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com

Inspired by Buddhism

By Sian Bowman

Yesterday a Buddhist monk said to me, “as a flower blooms, the world comes out from within it.”

For me this image conjures thoughts of a beautiful flower shyly poking out through luscious green grass in a meadow. As each petal unfolds to embrace the tinkering rays of the sun, it slowly begins to bloom. The flower glows as it embraces the sun and it slowly becomes stronger and sings its name in the soft breeze of the meadow.

This is creation. Just as the birds sing and the dew drops glisten on the falling leaves the little flower contains the essence of life in its delicate form.

I tried a little meditation in the company of some monks not so long ago. It was my first time to sit with the intent to meditate, and as I breathed in and out and thought of the fireflies we had just seen outside by the river, I felt strange. How fast should I breathe? Am I sitting right? Can the monk tell that I’m not meditating at all but just sitting in the temple, a fake, worrying about my inability to meditate properly?

Finally I began to relax and just sat there thinking freely and enjoying the sweet scent of the incense. I realized meditation is just a way to relax and appreciate living and the wonders of the world. So it didn’t matter if I couldn’t meditate in the Buddhist temple because I have had my own way of meditating for years even if I never realized it.

It happens when I do art. I lose myself in the process and pass away hours in my own little world where I am happy and content.

In my art practice I want to draw my environment freely and react to my surroundings so that the art becomes a record of that particular moment for me. I want to learn more about poets, artists, singers and writers, and think about how out of life grows creativity. I am interested in the power of creativity and the power of the imagination to weave new realities and to extend ones limits beyond the constraints of society.

Living in Japan this year has made me think a lot about education and I am really interested in thinking about how creativity,

in all its senses, can be incorporated into schools to encourage learning. So many students who find it difficult to concentrate on studying desire spontaneity and I think if their energy was fueled in a creative way, learning would become so much more fruitful.

Looking back at my own experience of education, in which I stuck so tightly to deadlines and trained myself to do whatever was necessary to achieve the goals the school set for me and the ones I set for myself, I think I lost a little part of myself on the way.

This part, which has the confidence to think freely and draw from imagination, is what I want to explore now. Before JET I would never have had the courage to do so but now I do. I thank JET for this and can’t wait for the next chapter of my life to begin.

Love and happiness!



Simple advice: Do More

By Adrian Palinic

Three years ago, back in Canada, my friends shared the same concerns as I did: *Can Adrian really stay in Japan for 12 months? Can he survive the earthquakes? Can he eat the food? Can he teach English? Can he communicate? Or more relevant to my guy friends: Can he finally communicate with girls?*

Well, to answer these questions: No, I have been here for more than one year. Yes, I have survived several earthquakes, none bigger than my first of about a Level 5 magnitude. Yes, the food here is great! Sure, I can teach English, but my ability to speak it may have degraded. Yes, I have been able to communicate in both English and Japanese. And as for communicating with girls, I’ll just say that there is always room for improvement.

The start of my Japanese experience may not have been great, but after surviving a tedious flight, sleep deprived nights, a sleep-excessive orientation, a long trek to your designated prefecture, losing your bags, meeting your supervisor, saying *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* in five varying levels of incorrectness, eating individually wrapped senbei crackers, finding your bags, and plopping down in your strange Japanese apartment, things can only get better... right?

Things did improve for me, at least initially, as I began to settle down in the countryside of Japan. In the first few months I began Japanese lessons, coached a junior high school student to the English speech contest finals in Tokyo, traveled around Japan with friends, climbed Mt. Fuji, drank at school



drinking parties, partook in judo, joined a men’s basketball league, drank some more, bought a car and attempted to teach English.

Sometimes, the isolation ate at me, the language limped off my tongue, and the rock star persona I had initially embraced faded to bitter glares. After a while, I felt alone. I thought of boarding the first flight home at times. I didn’t want to deal with the differences anymore. Nothing was easy. Nothing was fun.

But a good network of friends helped me combat these times when I longed for home. Friends, both Japanese and foreign, inspired me to experience more of Japan.

We invigorated each other by exchanging experiences we’d had in Japan, both good and bad, and luckily the good outweighed the bad. We found that having an open mind and the willingness to do more kept us happy.

I did more. I took up Japanese sign-language to communicate with deaf students. I organized a cross-cultural event in my city to promote

relations between local ALT’s and the surrounding community. I took road trips around the country, including an epic two and a half hour speed record drive from Aomori to Fukushima.

I tried cooking the Japanese foods I enjoyed. I tried eating the Japanese foods I thought I hated. The point is I tried. And because I tried, I have enjoyed being here for almost three years.

Now, the hardest thing left to try is leaving. Yes, I’m excited to return to my family and friends in Canada, but I’m also sad to say goodbye to Japan. I can always return for a visit, but after you live in a country for an extended period of time, there is always a different atmosphere when you come back for only a short stay. Everything is familiar, yet you feel less connected — that’s why cherishing your time here is so valuable.

So, before you start worrying about packing luggage, shipping boxes, giving gifts and saying goodbye, make the effort to do more.

Better Know a Ken: Kumamoto

By Kitty Bourke

Part 7 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.

The moment I found out that I would be situated in Kumamoto, which lies on the hot and oh-so-sticky Kyushu, I did the usual google searches and overloaded my brain with online images and information about my new home. But the one thing that stuck in my mind at that time was the fact that outside the city bounds is the world's largest active volcanic caldera.

When I moved here however, I was relieved to find that Mount Aso (the said volcano) is well outside the city, about an hour and a half by car! Needless to say, my initial fears evaporated and I have visited the (at the risk of sounding American) "awesome" Mount Aso a total of four times in the past year, twice being forced away from the summit because of dangerous gas fumes!!

I have seen Mount Aso in all seasons, the most memorable



The crater of Mount Aso volcano

being winter. The caldera and the turquoise gases within is all the more shocking with a snow-speckled rim.

That is something I truly love about this part of Japan. It is so lush in terms of nature and so ex-

treme in terms of weather. Right now, I am experiencing my first ever rainy season! As an Irish girl, hailing from Limerick, I am not new to heavy rains or the term "when it rains, it pours," but I must say Asian rainy seasons take the biscuit!

Here it not only pours, it roars. And when it isn't raining, summer cicadas can be heard reclaiming every bush, tree and shrub. Local people claim that Kumamoto prefecture is the hottest and the coldest prefecture in Japan. Although I have not lived elsewhere in Japan, the extremes I have experienced here are pretty incredible.

The most pleasant of months are October with its yellow- and red-leaved trees lining the city streets and March because of the short-lived beauty of pink cherry



blossoms that bring people together under their branches for picnics, parties and dates. And when it gets cold during the winter, an ice rink opens for three months, which allowed me to try ice skating for the first time, providing my new friends with much entertainment!!

The city of Kumamoto is not huge, but what it lacks in size it makes up for with character. It has numerous packed retail-lined arcades, countless restaurants for all your dining, drinking and karaoke needs and, most notable, non-stop cultural events. I have not been left wanting here in Kumamoto.

To be honest, my problem generally revolves around having too much to do. Festivals and parades are frequent and spectacular. Japanese people as a nation do not do celebra-

tions half-hearted, and Kumamoto is no exception. The castle park holds regular musical events, as well as an annual firework display. Kumamoto is in particular known for its Horse Festival, which is a crazy, loud, day-long event held in September, where adorned horses are ushered by hundreds of traditionally dressed people making music and noise and chanting and banging drums. It begins at 6 a.m. and ends around 7 p.m. It starts, coincidentally, on the street outside my apartment building (which was a bit of a shock to the system!!), progresses through the downtown area and ends at the city's oldest shrine.

However if noise, all-you-can-eat and drink deals followed

by themed karaoke and arcade games are not your cup of tea, Kumamoto city is also a place you can retreat into. Within the city are spacious parks (such as around the castle and Suzenji Park — with its famous miniature Mount Fuji which is, at best, a small green mound!!); numerous art and history museums; innumerable temples and shrines; the natural spring-fed lake Ezu; and several vantage sites, most notably Mount Kimbo.

The fabulous Mount Kimbo is a spot associated locally with couples who pledge their love by placing padlocks on guardrails but even if you have no lover it will still offer you a pretty fantastic panoramic view of the city by day or night.

After 11 months of living here in Kumamoto city, I can say I have adapted quite easily to life in Japan and have truck loads of wonderful memories and anecdotes, too many to share here.

In summary, I heart Kumamoto!



Travel Japan

Ridin' the rails with the Seishun 18 Kippu

By Jeff Weese

It's July... and time for the ever-famous Seishun 18 Kippu!

This is one of the best travel bonuses in Japan, so all you itchy travelers listen up! Seishun 18 Kippu translates into something like "Fresh Youthful 18 Ticket." It is only available for the periods when school is on break because it was originally designed for those under 18 years of age. They wanted to give the youth an economical way to see Japan because many of them had never been out of their own prefecture!

Nowadays the ticket is open to anyone and it doesn't matter if you are 18 or 80 years old, and the ticket is actually five tickets! It is five one-day passes on almost any JR train in Japan. This means you have hop-on hop-off privileges and gives you the perfect excuse to get out and explore.

I know there has always been that one town that you pass every-day that looks interesting, but not



You can't use the tickets with shinkansen, but damn do they look cool!

interesting enough to get off and then have to buy a new ticket to continue your journey. Well, now you can visit it! The tickets themselves are non-personal and ARE transferable. Also, the five days do not need to be used consecutively. You can use all five days of travel

between five friends in one day, or you could be selfish and use the five days of travel just for yourself, spread out over the period of validity.

If you can't use

them all... no problem! You can sell your remaining days to local discount ticket shops or maybe even to a friend.

You have a wealth of trains to choose from while traveling on this ticket. You may use any JR local, rapid (kaisoku), or super rapid (shinkaisoku) train, but can not use the bullet train (shinkansen), express trains (kyuko) or limited express trains (tokkyu).

As for maximizing your pass by riding through the night, it is possible. Unfortunately most night trains are classified as kyuko, meaning you cannot use the ticket, but there are a few trains classified as kaisoku with which you can. The Moonlight Nagara from Tokyo to Nagoya, Moonlight Kyushu from Osaka to Fukuoka, or the Moon-

light Kochi from Kyoto to Kochi just to name a few (a complete list can be found on the JR website).

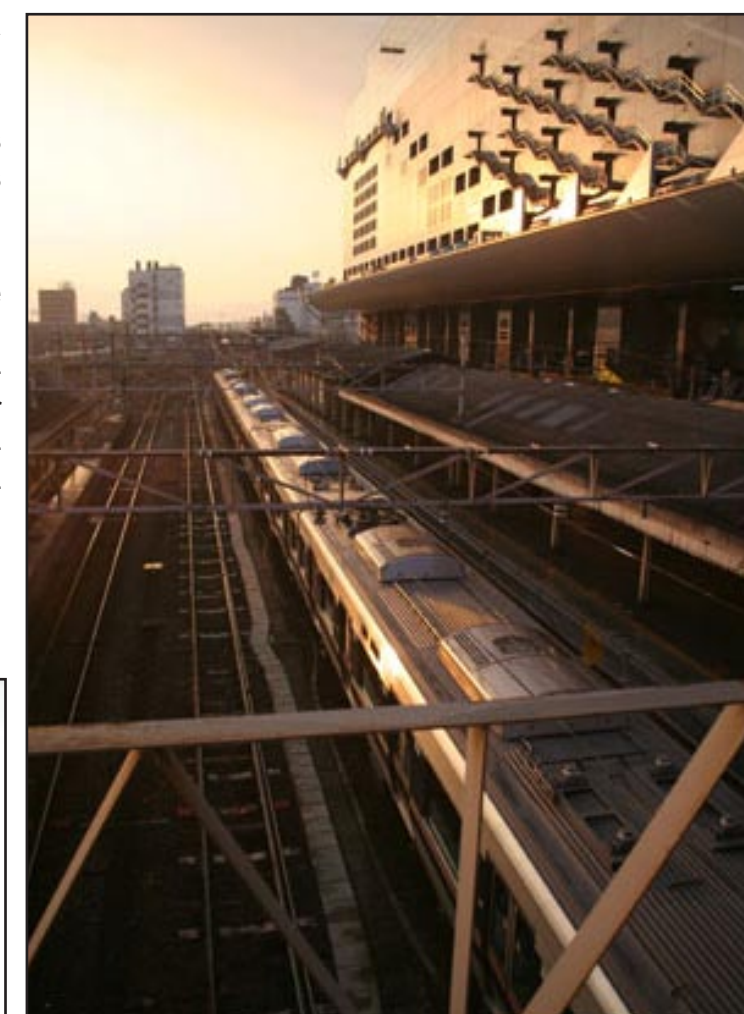
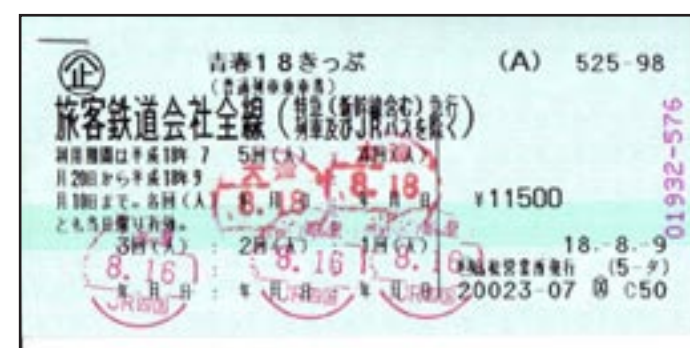
I saved the BEST piece of information for last... the price! This flexible, economical and marvelous ticket will only set you back 11,500 yen! That breaks down to 2,300 yen per day!

Just regular roundtrip travel between Himeji and Osaka will cost 2,900 yen, so you could even save money on a local trip like the one just mentioned!

Get down to the ticket window (Midori Madoguchi) at your local JR train station to purchase your pass! Purchase your ticket between July 1st and August 31st and then you have from July 20th to September 10th to explore!

For complete and official details, visit <http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/pass/seishun18.html>.

Happy traveling!!!



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Getting to Know Some Random JETs

❖ **Name:** Jessie Lee Cameron.
 ❖ **Please call me:** Jess, the Almighty JC, Dr. Feelgood.
 ❖ **School and Location in Hyogo:** Kawanishi-Meiho Senior High, in the 'burbs of Kawanishi.
 ❖ **How we know you:** The Hokkaido wheelchair fiasco?
 ❖ **Birthday:** April 16, 1984.
 ❖ **Born and raised:** Out in da booinies of Manitoba, Canada.
 ❖ **Family:** My moms and pops and an older sister in Vancouver, along with the greatest duck-dog ever and the surliest cat of all time!
 ❖ **University and Degree:** University of Winnipeg, BSc Honours 2007, Tropical Forest Ecology.
 ❖ **Other jobs you have had:** A whole lot of life-guarding and aquatic related biznatch, field assistant, bar wench and I worked in a turkey hatchery back in the day. Yeah....
 ❖ **Travels:** I've been everywhere, man. Crosse the deserts bare, man. I've breather the mountain air, man. Of travel I've had my share, man. I've been everywhere.
 ❖ **Hobbies:** Long walks on the beach, doubling dangerously on my bicycle, chasing J-boys around, conbini beer tour drinking games.
 ❖ **Staying another year?** No... but it woulda been cool. Just need to be closer to the things that matter most.
 ❖ **Favorites:**
Food: Sashimi! Curry rice, udon, salads, fish... oh... and beer.
Sports: Snowboarding, skateboarding, surfing, hockey, basketball, rugby, gator ball, drinking games...
Music: Everything. Wait... everything BUT J-pop.
Shop: ZARA! UNIQLO! FLETT'S!.



TV Show: *The OC*. I'm a loser, I know.

Movie: Anything by Quentin Tarantino. *Reality Bites*, *Anchorman*. Will Farrel is also my saviour (slightly below Zara).

❖ **Most Proud Achievement:** I don't know... I guess completing my thesis and getting some papers published. I'm also pretty proud when I can drunkenly navigate Japan on the weekends.

❖ **Best life experience:** Probably this year in Japan. It's been fuckin AMAZING!

❖ **Motto to live by:** When in Rome, use your nenkyu.

❖ **I remember when...** you didn't need a taspo card to buy ciggies from the vending machines. Those were the good ole days... {Editor's Note: I FUCKING HATE TASPO!!!}

❖ **What are you drinking?** Asahi Talls or 400-yen wine.

❖ **Best thing about JET so far?** The food.

❖ **Who would you like to meet?** The foxy student teacher at my school. We've yet to be introduced.

❖ **Why should we elect you President of the World?** Cuz I do a mean *Me and Bobby McGee*.

❖ **If it was my last day on earth I would:** go heli-skiing.

❖ **Interesting fact about me:** I won a big elk-calling contest when I was five. No, you cannot hear me do it! {Editor's Note: those Winnipeg girls...}

❖ **My top tip for teaching:** Don't sweat the petty things. Don't pet the sweaty things.

❖ **When the class is TOO QUIET I...** act silly. Powerslides across the little stagey thing at the front of the room work well. Or just trip on it, as I do daily.

❖ **Bribery for students...YAY or NAY?** Not usually. I've done it a couple times but I like to keep it to a minimum.

❖ **Funniest story involving a student:** I noticed the captain of the rugby club had a wicked shiner. I asked what happened. He got in a huddle with the rest of the guys to figure out how to say it in English. This is what they came up with: "I did it while sewing." Huh?

❖ **Name:** Kimberley Louise Farrant.

❖ **Please call me:** Kym not キム.

❖ **School and Location in Hyogo:** Kobe Senior High School, Kobe-shi.

❖ **How we know you:** I'm the regular drunk in Sannomiya, or "that blonde English girl."

❖ **Birthday:** Nov. 2, 1985... presents please!

❖ **Born and raised:** Around the south of England.

❖ **Family:** Mum, 45, housewife. Dad, 42, gardener. Brothers Calum, 15, and Jez, 9. Sisters Bethany, 13, and Amber, 11.

❖ **University and Degree:** University of Plymouth, BSc (Hons) human biology with psychology.

❖ **Other jobs you have had:** I have an eternal devotion to the personnel department of Sainsbury's Supermarkets. I was an outdoor instructor (hiking/canoeing/rock climbing/ropes course), and I saved Loggerhead turtles.

❖ **Travels:** Lots of places (by myself) in the USA and Europe.

❖ **Hobbies:** Kendo (めん, こて, ど), hot yoga, Facebook, shopping, gaming.

❖ **Staying another year?** Yeah I am! ❖ **Favorites:**

Food: Mash potato, chocolate and okonomiyaki.

Sports: Watching football (Spurs).

Music: Any power ballads or cheesy music... and any J-pop with random English lyrics. {Editor's note - Kym went on to list a metric tonne of bands. She likes music, mmkay?}

Shop: PRIMARK.

TV Show: West-

ern: *Lost*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Heroes*, *24*, *Skins*, *American Dad*. Japanese: *Last Friends* and *Stand Up* (or anything with hot guys in it).

Movie: *Man on Fire*.

❖ **Most Proud Achievement:** Finishing university.

❖ **Best life experience:** Living alone in Japan.

❖ **Motto to live by:** "You get out what you put in."

❖ **I remember when...** It was cool to love 5ive, Peter Andre, Backstreet Boys, Nsync and 911. Also when Pringles were cheaper than a pound.

❖ **What are you drinking?** Tea... of course. Tea!

❖ **Who would you like to meet?** YamaPi (Yamashita Tomohisa).

❖ **Why should we elect you President of the World?** Because I will give you free pink kittens if you vote for me.

❖ **Best thing about JET so far?** Its fashion. I can now wear anything I want, without any worries of "does this match?", etc. Because it's Japan... anything goes.

❖ **If it was my last day on earth I would:** Have sex (he he, I've been in

Japan too long!). No... erm... seriously... I'd just walk along the beach, and then I'd pack my bags for Mars.

❖ **Interesting fact about me:** I can lick my elbow!

❖ **My top tip for teaching:** Be genki, if you pretend you're having a good time, it will be easier for the kids to have a good time.

❖ **When the class is TOO QUIET I...** make weird noises so they laugh at me, or just speak only using the words "blah blah blah." Also, I always make them stand up for talking exercises. It makes them talk much louder.

❖ **Bribery for students...YAY or NAY?** I would prefer to promote intrinsic motivation, but yes, bribery all the way! It's amazing what a few naff stickers can do.

❖ **Funniest story involving a student?** OK, this isn't involving a student but my JTE (60-year-old man). He was reading a newspaper article and asked me to explain one part of it to him. The article said, "Health care? I'm on the KY-Jelly plan. I stick it up the you-know-where."



Sweaty Summer Survival

By Myrie Eaton

“Every situation is different”...and yours could be a lot worse

I have always found that the easiest way to make things seem better is to compare them to something that is a lot worse. Sick of Japan's sticky humidity, unwelcome creepy crawlers in your house, and that permanent sheen on your face?

Just imagine what things would be like if you were teaching English in the Amazon rainforest... humidity so bad that you could actually see the drops of water in the air, hungry crocodiles eyeing you up as you bathe in the muddy river every morning, and no cheque for 300,000 yen with your name on it every month.

Suddenly your situation in Japan is looking super-duperly fantastic!

Develop a love of purikura

If you have a Jusco or some other mall in your town, make a point to spend a lot of your free time there this summer. If it's anything like mine, every single student at your school will be there the second school finishes for the day. You'll finally have time to chat with that shy ichi-nensei or take some funny purikura with the class clowns... all the while enjoying the lovely free A/C.

Become a foodie

Go grocery shopping often, and for long periods of time. Make sure you REALLY ponder what you need from the frozen food section, as you let the chilled air cool your sweaty brow. As well as saving money on electricity bills by not switching on the A/C at home, you can save money by eating out less and cooking yourself delicious meals at home with all the groceries you've now stocked your

fridge with. This also gives you the opportunity to hone those cooking skills, so you can really impress your next date with your mad skills in the kitchen, or just shock your mom when she comes to visit.

Start a fashion trend

JETs are celebrities in Japan. Work your star status, and convince your school kids that shiny is the new matte in your home country. Sweat stains are all the rage there, too.

Live out your ‘I wanna be a figure skater when I grow up’ fantasy

Forget the gym this summer, and take up skating at your nearest ice rink. You could even indulge yourself with one of those frilly sequined numbers that are so popular with the Olympians. It shouldn't be too hard to find one in your size... I've seen shiny, glittery, bow-covered outfits in numerous Japanese clothing stores!



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WHEEL OF JEOPARDY!

Time for the H.T. Quiz: Totally serial edition!

By Joy Feddes

Memories! It's been 12 months of this crazy country for me, and I've signed up for 12 more. To finish off this year, I leave you with a quiz to help you evaluate your time here — and this time, it's almost like a real quiz, and worth circling your answer to see what “mostly” you are.

Shocking, I know.

1. Right now you're:
a) Excited to read this fascinating quiz and your next year in Japan.

b) Packing up your stuff to posse out.

c) Fine thank you, and you?

2. July-August to you means:

a) Yashiro. Ouch(i).

b) Nursing my facebook addiction.

c) Sweating.

3. September-October means:

a) Sports festival!

b) My students are so kawaii!

c) Nursing my facebook addiction.

4. November-December means:

a) Why isn't it Christmas yet?

b) Uhh... they don't seem to have heaters here...

c) When UNIQLO brought out the cashmere.

5. January-February means:

a) I can't feel my toes.

b) I can't feel my fingers.

c) I can't feel my face.

6. March-April means:

a) Colour me happy!

b) Let's enjoying cherry blossoms! And sake!

c) I can feel my face!



7. May-June means:

a) Let's enjoying planting rice!

b) Must use up all of nenkyu...

c) Wait, where are the cherries from the trees?

8. You and the JET Programme:

a) We're totally B.F.F.s!

b) That bitch! I'll ESID you!

c) Um, I think you mean “program” and take that U out of color.

9. Next year, I hope the Hyogo Times:

a) Has more articles on how to meet my perfect J-girl!

b) Kicks it old-school and is delivered by carrier pigeon.

c) Comes with a free bucket of chicken.

What your answers mean:

Mostly As: You're staying in Japan. I know it. You can't stop yourself from doing “peaceu” in all your photos, you can't wait till you eat some more oc-

topus balls and you're in love with the lead singer of SMAP. Who can blame you? Yesterday I picked the child I will take back to Canada with me when I leave, you're lucky you won't have to steal one, you'll likely have one.

Mostly Bs: You're leaving Japan. It's been real, the sushi was nice, your chopsticks skills are up to par, but you can't wait to eat a Big. Fat. Steak. When you go home, you'll forget how crazy you went during winter, and wish that you could go back to the days of being a celebrity. But Mostly Bs, remember the winter! And send me care packages of peanut butter and steak. Onagaishimasu.

Mostly Cs: I do want a bucket of chicken...or a pina colada. Either or. Alas, I'll get neither today (I can't seem to buy any rum in my town) but maybe on the weekend. Mostly Cs, you might be Irish, you might be really into video games, or you might be on facebook right now, stalking that guy/girl from university that you once saw running naked on homecoming, but I am sure that you're a Pisces.

Once Upon A Time In Japan

The Bamboo Cutter's Tale

Long, long ago, deep in a bamboo forest, there lived an old man and his wife. Life was rather dreary and lonely for the old couple because they were poor and had no children of their own to love and care for.

One day when the old man was walking through a dark thicket of bamboo he noticed a golden halo of light shining in the darkness. It seemed to come from a single, slender bamboo plant. In all his years of cutting bamboo the old man had never seen anything like this. He

decided to cut the plant open and see what made it shine. He took his axe and felled the bamboo in one stroke and he was speechless with astonishment.

Inside the hollow stem was a tiny baby girl! She was only about three inches high and was the cutest thing the old man had ever seen. He lifted the small girl into the palm of his hand and gently carried her back to his house.

The moment he got home, he called to his wife. "Look what God has sent us," he said. "Our very own daughter!"

The old man explained the miraculous way in which he had found the girl,

and he and his wife decided to call her *Kaguya-hime* which means "Radiant Princess."

But that wasn't the end of the miracles. Almost every day from then on, the old man would come across bamboo plants that glowed with the same light. But when he cut these down there was never any little girls inside. Instead there were piles of gold coins! Before very long the couple were very wealthy indeed. And that allowed them to raise Kaguya-hime in a manner befitting a true princess.

Kaguya-hime grew very fast, sometimes as much as an inch a day. And each day she seemed more radiant and full of life. The old man watched her racing along with a pinwheel in her hand or chasing dragonflies from flower to flower, and his heart would fill with joy.

Of course she wasn't a little girl for very long. In just three months, Kaguya-hime had become a mature young maiden, so beautiful that one wondered if she could possibly be from this world. Her extraordinary beauty made any man who saw her fall hopelessly in love with her.

Word of Kaguya-hime's beauty quickly spread through the land and rich young nobleman were soon beating a path to her door to ask for her hand in marriage. But Kaguya-hime refused to see them. "I shall never marry," she told the old man and his wife. "I'll never willingly leave your side."

The old man was secretly gladdened by her words, for he loved Kaguya-hime as much as any father has ever loved a child, and dreaded the thought of losing her. But his happiness was short-lived. In the eighth month of that year a change came over Kaguya-hime. Night after night she'd sit and gaze at the moon waxing fuller in the sky. And as the moon grew brighter, the



look in Kaguya-hime's eyes grew more wistful and melancholy.

Seeing this, the old man and woman began to worry. "Kaguya-hime, Kaguya-hime, what is it that makes you so sad?" they asked.

Kaguya-hime burst into tears and laid her head on the old woman's lap. "Oh, I wish I could stay with you forever," she sobbed. "But soon I must return."

"Return?" said the old man "Return where?"

"To the city of the moon, where I was born. Now that I have grown, they'll come for me."

"What! Who? When?"

"The moon people. On the fifteenth night of this month, when the moon is full."

"But that's tomorrow! I won't hear of it!" cried the old man. "You're our daughter, and no one's going to take you from us."

He and his wife wrapped their arms around Kaguya-hime and all three of them wept. "We'll never let you go," the old man sobbed. "Never!"

The next day the old man hired a

thousand strong samurai to keep the moon people away. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder, the warriors encircled the house, and even formed a column on the roof. When the moon began to rise over the mountains that evening, they lifted their bows and pointed their arrows at the sky. The old man and woman, meanwhile, sat with Kaguya-hime in the innermost room of the house.

Once the large, round moon had risen fully, it cast a brilliant halo of light upon the samurai who let fly with their arrows. But their arrows vanished in midair and the moonbeams pierced their armour, paralyzing them where they stood.

Then from out of that unearthly light, two moon maidens appeared with a winged horse and chariot and descended towards the house. At the same time the door to the inner room slid open by itself, and Kaguya-hime rose and walked outside, as if drawn by some invisible force. The old man and woman realised there was nothing they

could do to stop her leaving.

"Kaguya-hime!" they cried, running outside after her. "If you must go, take us with you."

"I wish I could. You have no idea how much I'll miss you. Please take this as a gratitude for the love you have given me" said Kaguya-hime as she dropped a pouch on the ground. "The medicine inside will keep you from ever growing old. May you always be healthy and happy. Goodbye!"

Kaguya-hime stepped onto the silver chariot, and then the winged horse shook its mane and leaped into the sky.

Later that night, the old couple stood beside a small fire they'd built outside. The old man was holding the pouch Kaguya-hime had left them. "So with this medicine we can live forever," he sighed, looking up at the bright full moon. "But without you, Kaguya-hime, how could we ever be happy again? And what good is life without happiness?"

And with these words he tossed the pouch into the fire.



The *Hyogo Times* - Now Famous!



By Jeff Morrice

See those handsome gents up there? That's your current-but-outgoing editor, Kevin Shannon, and yours truly, trusty design editor Jeff Morrice, kicking it in the *Asahi Shimbun*! That's right, a REAL newspaper came and interviewed US about our little JET newspaper.

The *Asahi Shimbun* is the second-most circulated newspaper in the country with a readership of close to 10 million people. It can be read online at www.asahi.com, or in English at www.asahi.com/english/.

Don't ask me how this guy found out about us, but I have my suspicions my JTE was involved in tipping him off.

The interview itself was interesting, especially in what the reporter wanted to talk about. The *Stealth Gaijin* articles he found especially amusing for their premise and the title, but a certain Awaji Girl's Toilet from Hell also really tickled his fancy.

The reporter also had some interesting ideas, like charging Japanese people money to read it, packaging it as good English reading practice!

Great idea! But too much work for a two-man volunteer job.

In any case, I have absolutely no idea what the article says (damn you kanji...) but I'm sure it's all positive! More great exposure for the best prefecture of JETs in the country!

As we see our current editor, Kevin, depart for greener pastures (literally — it rains a LOT in Ireland), and our new editor Ann Chow take up the reins, we'd like to encourage you, our readers and writers, to keep sending in the great articles, opinions, pictures, stories and reviews that make the *Hyogo Times* so damn good.

We've got a new flood of rookie JETs coming in this coming month, so let's make them all feel welcome. Write up your survival guide to Awaji, or a rookie's guide to bar-hopping in Osaka. Tell us where to find the best western food in Kobe to cure those homesickness pangs or how to find the most kawaii maid cafe in Osaka. If you're interested in something, I guarantee others are too, so send it on in to submit.hyogotimes@gmail.com.

And don't forget to send us lots and lots of pictures! I love pictures!