

Hyogo Times

OCTOBER 2009



Budget Best Bets

CROWN ROAST OF FRANKFURTERS



Weight Watchers® Recipe Ca

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Cover..... "Yokai Purikura", by Chip Boles

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 20th of each month to:
publications@hyogo.ajet.net

Visit us online at:
<http://hyogoajet.net>
Or on Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=127124836488&ref=ts>

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



BY MATTHEW STOTT

As I sit here at ten minutes to four on a Wednesday afternoon, willing the sentences to snake their way across my page because I really don't want to be spending any more time on this issue, a typhoon approaches. Or so they tell me. Outside, it looks like

any other rainy day, thick with white cloud . . . Awajishima a blurry silhouette in the distance. But a typhoon is coming. The words themselves seem to invest the air with a magical electricity. I don't know what to expect, other than wind and rain, and probably, they say, a few power outages. Classes were cancelled for the last two periods today; they'll probably be cancelled altogether tomorrow. Outside a hiss. Heavier rain. Yesterday on a teacher's laptop screen, a blue slug slinking across the Pacific towards southern Japan. It's probably nothing.

At least when the typhoon passes, it will definitely have marked the end of summer. Starting next week, Japan turns beautiful again, just like in the coffee-table books in Junkudo. From my brief experience, October and

November are simply perfect for hiking through the mountains of Hyogo, be it Mt Shosha in Himeji, the alps of Suma, or Kobe's Rokko Mountains. In the grounds of the Shosazan Engyoji Temple complex, there is a grove of maple trees, whose autumn leaves set against a brilliant blue sky on a clear day comprise a sight not to be missed. Alternatively, you could tackle the old fisherman's route from Ashiya Rock Garden to Arima: a solid day's hike with onsen to reward you at the end. Just keep an eye out for the wild boars.

The change in the weather also heralds another much anticipated period on the Japanese calendar: nabe season! If you haven't sampled this magnificent dish (of which there are many varieties), it is time to befriend a JET with a portable gas burner if you don't have your own, or maybe even an electric nabe which can be purchased from Jusco and all fine purveyors of household goods. Because that's what nabe is all about: friendship, community, altruism, the tribe gathered round the warmth of the communal stewpot. If you have the good fortune to live in the vicinity of a Gyomu Supaa, you and a whole tribe of your friends can eat quite cheaply.

OK, onto matters editorial. As a coda to last month's election-themed issue, Colin Fukai surveys the future of

Japan and Japanese politics under the new Democratic Party regime. Sarah Lewis takes a closer look at that icon of Japanese cuteness and pencil cases across the country: Kitty-chan. We meet yet another Hyogo JET alumnus (and former editor of this very publication, no less) who has gone onto bigger and better things, and shares how the JET experience has helped her in that regard. Andrew Tamashiro brings us his regular Ramentary, this time from the city of Fukuoka, while Emma Nicoletti shows how you can save yen in the kitchen and still eat like a shogun.

And you may have noticed that we have a special guest layout editor this issue. Jeff isn't leaving us, but stepping into his shoes for this issue is Chip Boles—designer of many an astounding Hyogo Times cover. Welcome aboard!

Well, it's beginning to look ugly out there. If you're reading this, it means you weren't blown away to Tokyo or Oz or Kansas, so please enjoy the October issue. (And don't forget to leave feedback on the discussion board on the Hyogo Times Facebook page!)

Matt

BY KYM FARRANT

Happy October! You might ask, "Why so happy, Kym?" Well, for many reasons Mr. Hyogo. Firstly, can you see that? . . . yes . . . YES! That IS in fact me arriving at school NOT covered in sweat and NOT being a big shiny-shiny face all day long (happy days). October has brought a drop in temperature, and for once the complaining English lady is actually happy about the weather. I can't wait for winter this year...I'm already like a 5 year old child high on Christmas chocolate.

The second reason is, despite the random cases of swine flu and typhoons disrupting my lessons, I feel fully settled into the school term. I hope the newbies out there also feel like they're finding their feet. I can see this year shooting by so I'm trying to make a "things I must do in Japan before I leave" list. For Silver Week (as previously recommended in the Hyogo Times) I went to Shoudo-shima, a small island on the inland sea between Kagawa-ken and Hyogo/Okayama-ken that is famous for its olive groves. I have to say I highly recommend it. It was just beautiful and was just like being in Greece. If I had more time I would have gone to the island next door, Nao-shima, which is famous for its art and architecture. I recommend going to these islands when the weather is warm and sunny. For the winter months, try one of the Okayama International

Villas (Google is your friend).

My final reason for being happy is HALLOWEEN. In England I never really celebrated Halloween, but since being in Japan I've been fully exposed to this holiday. There are various small parties going on around Hyogo. As for the actual day, many people are first heading to The Polo Dog in Kobe (which usually has many Japanese people in fancy dress . . . and sometimes give out prizes), and then off to Osaka for an all-nighter . . . ultimately ending up at Sam and Dave's.

Anyone interested should just turn up in their best horror gear. This year I'm choosing between Sookie from True Blood (thnx to peoples' look-alike suggestions), some kind of dead Japanese thing or a black cat. *Sigh*, my imagination has been sucked away; I'll probably end up buying one of those all-in-one Pika-chu costumes. I know some people have started hand-making or even getting a tailor to make their costumes. So don't waste time . . . and bigger (i.e. more extreme) is always better :-P

On a HAJET note . . . Is anyone interested in organizing an event for Christmas? Maybe a pub quiz? Or a Hyogo-ken-wide Secret Santa? Please drop me an email (pr@hyogo.ajet.net) so we can get planning.

Kym xxx





50 ESSENTIAL JET EXPERIENCES

BY KEVIN SHANNON

Create a staff room enemy

Have something unidentifiable placed in front of you and eat it anyway

Wear pink toilet slippers

Get drunk and sing karaoke with your co-workers

Drink “1-cup” sake

Realise it is awful

Use a squat toilet

Do all-night karaoke and emerge bleary-eyed into the daylight

Have a “This is sooo....Japan” moment

Accidentally insult somebody when speaking Japanese

Fall over in the classroom and be laughed at by your kids

Laugh at orientation when repeatedly told that Japan has four distinct seasons.

A year later tell the newbies the exact same thing

Play the conbini game (ask the Design Editor for details)

Regret it the next day

Pretend you don't understand Japanese to avoid getting in trouble

Make a brilliant lesson plan and have it go horribly wrong

Meet some great JETs

Meet some really weird JETs

Curse at a Japanese person in English

Have a Japanese person curse at you in Japanese

Go onsen-ing with your co-workers

Climb Mt Fuji

Befriend a random elderly Japanese person

Become addicted to Facebook



Acquire at least one annoying Japanese habit

Find one Japanese food you like

Find five you don't

Follow a Japanese TV show

Stay in a love hotel

Hate Japan one day

Love it the next

Do purikura

Have an inter-JET romance

Ride the Shinkansen and marvel at its speed

Ride a local train and marvel at its “speed”

Curse those JETs who speak better Japanese

Look down on those who speak worse Japanese

Hate the disgusting summer humidity

Reminisce fondly about it in winter

Fall in love with your kotatsu

Hanami fun

Wear a kimono/yukata and feel special

Take a side on the foreign guys dating Japanese girls debate

Have a Yasuhiro story to tell

Learn to automatically adopt the Japanese two finger pose for photographs

Embarrass yourself at sports day

Really miss something random from home

Write a pointless article for the Hyogo Times

Feel strangely proud when it is published

Name: Megan Miller

Age: 31

Placement school/s and location in Hyogo/Japan while on JET:

Akashi Shimizu Koutou Gakkou – ALT from 2000-02. Lived in Uozumi-cho at Green Eito IV – anyone there now in my old apaato? Served as Hyogo AJET Rep. Was editor for Hyogo Times once or twice, too!

Current occupation & jobs held since leaving the JET programme:

~ Risk Engineer in Property Insurance for 4 years, Underwriter of large Construction Projects for past 2 years (including Yankees Stadium and new World Trade Center 7).

~ Currently serving as President of JET Alumni Association of New York (www.jetaany.org)

~ Started small non-profit, Charity Chic, to help children in Africa (www.charitychic.org)

~ Pursuing MBA at New York University

Highlight/funniest part of your JET experience:

Helping my favorite English Club student take the #1 prize in our local speech contest. Singing “Jingle Bells” – a cappella and with a cold – for kindergarten kids and their video camera toting parents. Being interviewed on TV, in Japanese!

How the JET programme has benefited you career-wise:

The JET program made me comfortable with public speaking and really sharpened my communication style, which is very valuable in the work place. However, the program has had a much larger impact in my personal life than my professional life. Particularly, being part of JETAANY has created tremendous opportunities, such as hob-nobbing with the Japanese Ambassador and other high profile Japanese business people in New York, being the 1000th visitor to the Consul-General's residence in Chicago and ending up in the newspaper, and making some of



the best friends I have ever met. Being President has also afforded me great leadership training.

What transferable skills JET gives you:

The ability to work with different types of people and to understand differences in culture and how they play out in the workplace and beyond. A respect for opinions, attitudes, and behaviors that may be in polar opposition to my own. It has also helped me to be able to relate better to my future Korean in-laws! The cultures are very different of course, but there are some close similarities.

What advice you would give to current JETs for getting the most out of the JET experience in order to further their career afterwards:

Be nice to people. You never know when you are going to need someone's help, and the more people you can count as friends the better off you will be. It's amazing what you can accomplish and what doors can be opened just by being nice to someone.

Network. But have the skills to back it up. It really is about who you know – but that's just your foot in the door. Once you are in you have to be able to do the job for which you were hired.

Travel as much as you can while you're in Japan! You might not have the time (or yen) when you come home...

Any tips for job hunting after JET:

The JET Alumni Association in the area you want to live and work is your best friend!! Stay connected and meet as many people as you can. If you know what you want to do, be persistent, volunteer in that field if you have to. If you don't know what you want to do, give yourself time to figure it out before you jump into something – but not too much time. We're talking months, not years.

Would love to hear from all of you Hyogo JETs, so please feel free to email me at president@jetaany.org. We can feature you in our magazine too. Enjoy yourselves!!





Men are from Mars, Miyuki is from Venus: Japan after the 2009 Election

By Colin Fukai

Japan is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world and this summer held no shortage of seismic events. Yet the biggest shockwaves arguably came from the recent lower house elections, held on August 30th. In an overwhelming landslide Japanese voters, fed up with political and economic stagnation, tossed out the ruling center-right Liberal Democrats (LDP) in favor of the center-left opposition Democrats (DPJ). It is only the second time since 1955 that the prime minister will not be an LDP member. Japanese and foreigners alike are wondering what this dramatic shift will mean for the world's second largest economy, long struggling with economic decline.

The DPJ manifesto lays out their five main campaign promises: (1) spending and bureaucratic reform (giving lawmakers more direct control over implementation), (2) child rearing allowances, (3) pension reform, (4) shifting more power to regional governments, and (5) strengthening social safety nets. Some

promised goodies include: abolishing highway tolls, reduced gasoline taxes, "effectively free" high school, and a lump sum child birth benefit of 550,000 yen followed by 26,000 yen per month until the child finishes junior high school. (Sorry, doesn't look like they promised to give ALTs raises.)

More important than pledges is the man the DPJ has chosen to be the next prime minister: Yukio Hatoyama, an insider with deep roots in Japan's political tradition. His grandfather was the very first LDP prime minister in 1955, and Hatoyama himself was a former LDP member who bolted from the party in the early 90's eventually landing with the DPJ. The Democrats are a semi-eclectic mix of political faiths ranging from disaffected LDP defectors to socialists. Hatoyama is known as a quiet, non-dogmatic and highly adaptable political leader, but with power at his fingertips he may be ready to assert himself and Japan.

In a recent New York Times

editorial, Hatoyama unleashed a sternly worded critique of American-style laissez-faire market capitalism which he declared was "void of morals or moderation". He pledged to reduce Japan's greenhouse emissions 25% by 2020. Japan may also end its naval refueling support of American-NATO military operations in Afghanistan. These dramatic actions, untypical of a Japanese prime minister, have caused ripples well before the Hatoyama cabinet is due to assume the reins of power.

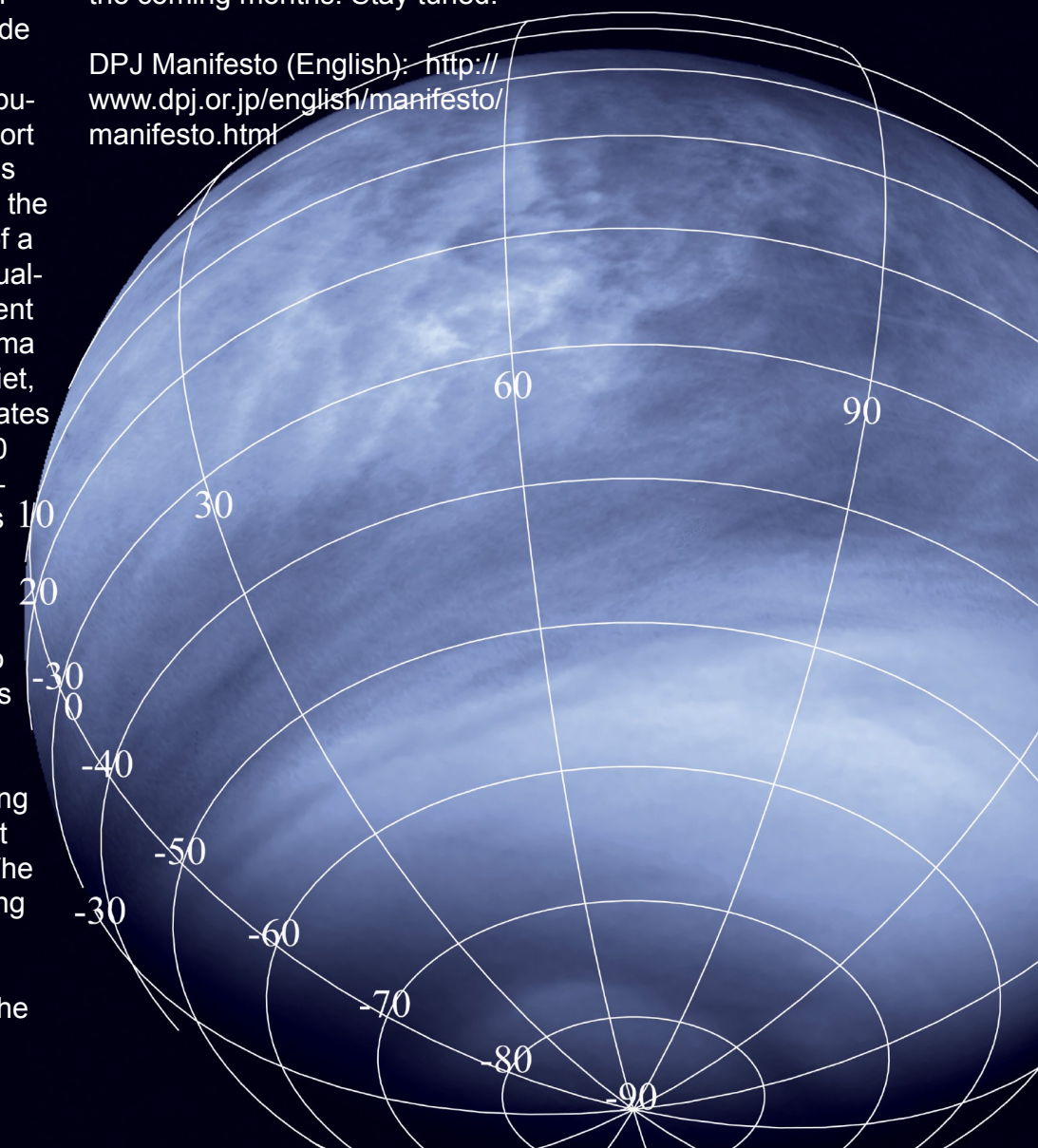
Though more stoic and reserved than quirky and charismatic PMs of the past, such as the Elvis-crooning Junichiro Koizumi or the kanji-mistake-prone Taro Aso, Hatoyama has managed to raise eyebrows both at home and abroad. His fondness of speaking in almost ethereal terms – he once said "politics is love" and that humanity needed a "cosmic consciousness" – earned him the nickname "space alien". His wife, an alumna of the Hyogo-based Takarazuka Revue, made headlines of her own when she claimed in a book

that her spirit had been taken to Venus on a U.F.O. and that she met Tom Cruise in a past life, when he was Japanese. Of more earthly concern is how Hatoyama and the DPJ will make good on their ambitious slate of campaign pledges in the midst of a deep, worldwide economic recession and a rapidly ageing Japanese population. The electorate's support may also be tepid. Numerous analysts have observed that the election results were more of a protest against LDP ineffectualness rather than embracement of the DPJ platform. Hatoyama will enjoy majorities in the Diet, but nearly half of the candidates who won seats on August 30 are freshmen with no experience. Time is also not on his side. Upper house elections are scheduled for next year and an impatient public will soon have the opportunity to hand Hatoyama's Democrats their first report card.

Author Ryu Murakami, musing on the elections which swept Hatoyama to power, said, "The Japanese people are realizing that no government has the power to fix their problems." They can no longer expect the government to merely build

infrastructure and ensure everyone has a job. "Hard choices" will have to be made. This is probably the ultimate reality of political change in Japan. We will all see what those choices and their consequences are in the coming months. Stay tuned.

DPJ Manifesto (English): <http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/manifesto/manifesto.html>



FRISBEE

FUN

BY EMMA NICOLETTI



In Japan, summer and sweat are synonymous. I tried to fight it in my first year, but holding the towel to my brow was just too bothersome. By my second summer I'd embraced the sweat, and thought to encourage its onslaught by playing fast-paced games of frisbee! And where better to play frisbee than at the beach, with its wide open spaces and cool—albeit dirty—waters.

Unfortunately, the sports fairy didn't touch the Nicoletti gene pool. Consequently, I like to play basic rules frisbee with either my 100 yen shop-, combini- or toy shop-purchased frisbees. Basic rules frisbee involves one player throwing the frisbee and another player catching it—pretty basic, huh? How can such a simple activity keep me, a thrill-seeking Perthite, enthralled for hour upon hour? I put it all down to umeshu, kakigori and the awesome JETs and J-friends I play with. What's better than being cheered on by your mates as the frisbee which left your hand heading east, has effortlessly glided into the grip of the person immediately to your west?

I live in Tarumi, so not only am I treated to a spectacular view of Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge, but also an array of local artificial beaches. I have wiled away many a sunny afternoon at Okura Kaigan (at JR Asagiri station), and Maiko Kaigan (at JR Maiko station). The latter has a BBQ rental area: a BBQ makes a nice end to an afternoon of frisbee. Also, away from the beach, frisbee fun is to be had at Waku Waku Land in Ako (take a bus from JR Ako station) or in front of Himeji castle in Himeji. However,

by far my favourite frisbee spot is Suma Kaigan (at JR Suma station or 5 minutes south of Sanyo Suma station). Among its draw cards are its wide pebble-filled beach and barely-clothed babes bouncing to the massive boom boxes. Also, as it's in the bay, it doesn't suffer from strong winds which can put even the most skilled players off their game.

A few more considerations to ensure you have a great time at frisbee are remembering to bring the following: beach shoes (I cut the soles of my feet something shocking last year); sun cream (despite Japan's sun not yeilding the same rate of skin cancer as Australia's, it can leave a nasty burn); booze or water (I use umeshu to quench my thirst); snacks (frisbee is hungry work); and a slew of your best friends.

I'd just like to make a note about that last point—your best friends. I love playing frisbee with all my “J” friends—JET and Japanese. I find that sometimes connecting with the young teachers at school is difficult, especially if their English is only as strong as my Japanese. Playing frisbee together takes away the pressure of having to communicate with words and replaces it with communication via gestures and giggles. I've found that it's a great way to build relationships through shared experiences rather than spoken words.

So, if you have a free afternoon, why not get your mates together and play a game of frisbee?



Kobe Pearl Candle 2009. On the evening of August 22, thousands of handmade candles, each featuring messages written by local children, lined the shores of Azur Maiko (Maiko Beach). Why? Because it's Japan!

Photos by Emma Nicoletti



The Feline Eunuch

~Reading Kitty-chan~

By Sarah Lewis

Hello Kitty, or Kitty-chan, is one complex kitty. While most of us know her as simply an icon of cuteness, there has actually been debate on the social impact of her existence. Whether she's exploiting the human need for communication, or opposing ideals of feminism, little Kitty-chan is more than meets the eye.

Hello Kitty, whose full name is Kitty White, was born November 1, 1974 near London, to parents George and Mary White. She has a twin sister, Mimmy, whom you can tell apart by their bows: Kitty wears red on the left, while Mimmy wears yellow on the right. Her favorite things are candy, stars, and goldfish. She is in third grade, blood type A, "weighs the same as three apples and stands five apples tall." Kitty-



chan's hometown was chosen as London due to a fascination at the time with Anglo-culture, including books by authors such as Beatrix Potter and Lewis Carroll.

Kitty-chan is partially a product of kawaii culture which appeared in Japan in the 1970s as a result of an influx of adolescents with disposable income. Kawaii culture has since become more than a fad, ultimately evolving into a major aesthetic value in Japan, permeating all facets of society from music, to business and advertising, mannerisms (high-pitched voices and "ditsy-ness"), and even the porn industry. While many foreigners define kawaii as simply "cute," in Japanese it actually carries a much broader connotation. "[A] survey . . . in 1992 revealed a number of other terms associated with kawaii, including: childlike, innocent, naïve, unconscious, natural, emotional contact between individuals, fashionable, associated with animals, and weak." Other definitions of kawaii include small, pastel, round, bewildered, non-sexual, soft, dreamy, and loveable. Another interesting quality of kawaii is the fact that it typically does not directly imply Japanese culture. Rather, a character is preferred to be "culturally odor-

less," which helps to increase its overall appeal both within Japan and worldwide.

Kawaii though she may be, Kitty-chan is not without scandal. Kitty-chan by design has no mouth, and Sanrio's diplomatic, official explanation offers that (supporting her ideal, non-cultural identity) Hello Kitty has no need for language limitations, as she speaks from the heart. However,



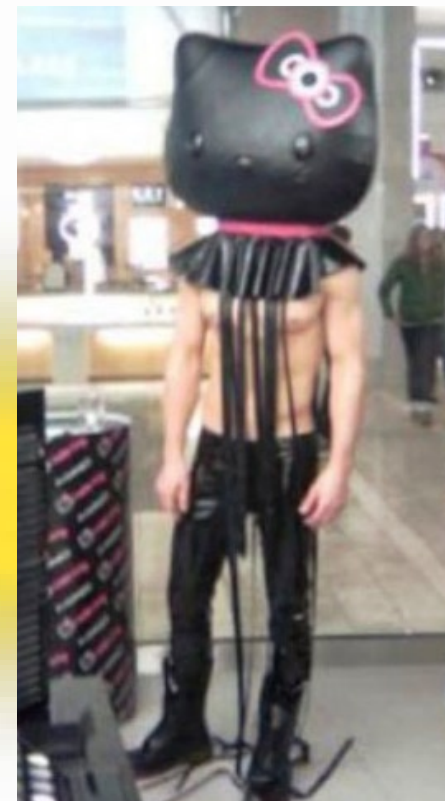
because Kitty-chan has become a symbol for adolescent girls, many feminists worry that the absence of a mouth "perpetuates the submissive female archetype," particularly the stereotypical Asian woman who is compliant and non-verbal in social situations.

However, Kitty-chan is not necessarily meant as a model for feminine behavior, but simply represents what it is to embrace kawaii. Nature itself knows how



to use kawaii ideals to their full potential. It is thought that babies evolved to be cuter versions of their adult counterparts because something about the proportions and other visual aspects of cute, such as being small, helpless, and weak, make us instinctively want to care for them. In this sense, Kitty-chan's cuteness is attributed to our instinctive need to care for her. A clever move on the part of the creators, as caring for Hello Kitty ultimately involves buying her merchandise.

The feminism argument also forgets that, while Kitty has no mouth, she is not without personality. Sanrio characters differ from other well-known characters



in that they begin their lives as simply a logo. However, Sanrio dutifully assigns personality and background to each character, which not only is useful in making the characters more endearing, but does, in effect, give them a voice without them needing to speak. Sanrio gives them certain traits as a foundation for fans, from which their own thoughts and activities can be projected onto the character, much like a cartoon doll.

This brings us to another interesting interpretation of the missing oral cavity, involving the human tendency toward communication. Facial expressions originated as a necessity of cultural interaction and survival, and as such, we are biologically wired to want to understand any expression, however vague it may be. We put faces on inanimate objects from a very young age as a way of understanding and relating to the world around us. As a still cartoon, Hello Kitty further beckons our understanding because her blank expression has no context. When she is placed in a setting, it is usually a very generic one (sans-culture), and we see no variation in her countenance over time. It is important to note that facial expression not only implies how a person feels, but also gives us information about the state of our environment, since when we are close enough to see a person's face, we are certainly close enough to be affected by the same factors that are affecting them. Because of this, silence inevitably adds intrigue. Kitty-chan in a sense joins the ranks of the Mona Lisa who, because of her speechlessness and ambiguity, practically begs the audience to interpret and understand her. While she does not have a mouth, Kitty does have most of the facial features needed to be involved in non-verbal communication with her audience. The fact that her



advantageous in that the viewer can thus project his or her own feelings onto Hello Kitty, making her more relatable to a wider audience: yet another accidental marketing ploy.

Whether Kitty's mouthlessness should be attributed to conspiracies of a male-dominated culture or sub-conscious non-verbal communication, it is quite possible that it is simply a bunch of gaijin projecting gross misinterpretations upon what is merely meant to be an example of kawaii ideals. Either way, Hello Kitty has helped promote a culture of consumerism and relaxation, and simply makes Japan a happier place to live. Our need to over-interpret Kitty-chan is more than likely a testament to her international appeal, and the fact that we can't get enough of her. A concrete statement of our need to over-analyze Kitty-chan is best illustrated by the fact that no one has thought to investigate a rather troubling predicament that plagues many male cartoon characters. Because, while it may be true that "Hello Kitty has no mouth...Winnie the Pooh has no pants."



Best of the Block October 2009

By Brandon Kramer and Matthew Stott

Hey ya'll!

Has everyone already thought of this year's Halloween costume? As we begin saying goodbye and good riddance to the heat and humidity of the summer, it's time to start gearing up for more fall activities around the block. It's the perfect time to travel with the cool, refreshing breeze blowing and the leaves beginning to change. Here are some events happening around the block to get you out of town seeing new places and meeting new people!

~Shiga~

ShigaJET Halloween Party (October 31)

Why not head out of town this Halloween? Meet new people and use the holiday as an excuse to go see the beautiful Hakone Castle! With a costume contest, great music, and an open invitation, this will definitely be a great event to be at! Check out the website and let them know if you plan on going!

<http://shigajet.eslwell.com/events/2009/10/2009-ajet-halloween-party-madness>

ShigaJET Book Swap (October 25)

Avid reader? If so head out to Shiga AJET's book swap on the 25th!

<http://shigajet.eslwell.com/events/2009/10/book-swap>



from school. Watch people dressed in costumes from Kyoto's long history parade the streets with shrines.



<http://www.kyotoguide.com/ver2/thismonth/jidaimatsuri09.html>

~Kyoto~

Two great festivals for the price of one!

Jidai Matsuri (October 22)

There's always a festival happening in Kyoto, but October 22 is the festival jackpot! If you are able to get off of work on October 22 their annual Jidai Matsuri could be a great break

Kurama Fire Festival (October 22)



If you make it out to the Jidai festival, head out to Mt. Kurama for the Kurama Fire Festival. This festival looks really exciting if you can manage to get out there. Apparently the whole mountain looks like it is on fire!

http://www.pref.kyoto.jp/visit-kyoto/en/info_required/traditional/kyoto_city/18/

For more information, check out:
<http://samuraidave.wordpress.com/2007/03/20/japanese-fire-festival-on-kyotos-mt-kurama/>

That's it for this month, now go out and explore our neighboring prefectures!

-Brandon

Editor's supplement: If you're feeling particularly bohemian this month, or at least loath to venture beyond the prefecture's borders, there are a couple of interesting happenings in our own ken.

~Hyogo~

Nada Fighting Festival (October 14 and 15)

Armies of bamboo-wielding and portable-shrine-bearing Nihonjin will do battle on the streets of Shirahama, Himeji City. This is going to be bigger than the Battle of Helm's Deep. The only question I have is: why haven't I heard of this before? LET'S FIGHTING LOVE! (N.B. The festival falls in the middle of the week . . . sorry, folks.)



http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/in-depth/history/traditionalevents/a56_fes_nada.html

The 32nd Annual Tamba Pottery Festival (October 17 and 18)

I once tried my hand at pottery-making in Tamba, quickly discovering that this is an art best left to those with basic motor skills and a much keener eye for the aesthetic. Tamba pottery has been honed for eight centuries by the same family, and the Tamba pottery industry is one of the six oldest in the country. Come to Tamba Dento

Kogei Kouen on October 17 and 18 and see the masters at work.



<http://www.tanbayaki.com/img/32toukimatsuripanhu.pdf> (Japanese)

The Change in Belgian Art from Symbolism to Modernism (October 31 to December 13)

At some point it appears that Belgian Art changed from Symbolism to Modernism, and starting from October 31st, the Himeji Art Gallery will tell the story. Unlike other exhibitions I've been to in Kansai, this one is very reasonably priced at only ¥500. Himeji Art Gallery is a striking landmark located to the east of the Castle and the zoo: about 25 mins walk from the station. Time to don the beret and sound off like you know what you're talking about. Gauloises optional, but no smoking inside the building.

<http://www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/new/index.html>

Matthew Stott

TRAVEL JAPAN: CYCLING THE SHIMANAMI KAIDO

BY AIMEE AHMAD

PHOTOS BY
GORAN SELETKOVIC

It was 6:45am, on an early Saturday morning – and there I was already sweating in the humidity of a warm July day on the platform of Shin-Osaka station. I was going to take the Shinkansen down to Onomichi to embark on an epic bike ride across 7 bridges, a distance of approximately 70km. 70km --- sounds alright ... right??

I first heard about this bike trip from some fellow JETs. They called it the “7 bridges bike ride” – utilizing the “Shimanami Kaido”; an expressway linking Honshu to Shikoku across the island-dotted Seto Inland Sea- starting from Onomichi in Hiroshima-ken to Imabari in Ehime-ken.

They said it was one of the most memorable things they had done in Japan, so we decided to give it a go ourselves.

So on the first day of the summer holidays, we boarded a Hikari Shinkansen for Fukushima (1 hour), after which we changed to a local train (20 minutes) for Onomichi.

At Onomichi, we exited and made



our way to the bike rental centre, where we rented bikes for 1500yen each – 500yen per day, and 1000yen for a deposit. If you returned the bike to the same bike rental centre, you got your 1000yen back. But if you were doing the 70km ride one-way, dropping your bike off somewhere else – you forfeited the deposit.

After filling in the paperwork and picking out our bikes, we were finally off! If you’re renting a bike at Onomichi, you’ll probably end up skipping the first bridge, like we did – instead taking a short 2 minute ferry across the water. The trail is well-marked with little green boxes with arrows on the roads at each intersection. You don’t really need to know Japanese to be able to follow the route, though it might help with conversing with the people at the bicycle rental terminals.

We had been expecting to be riding on the expressway itself the whole way, perhaps in a special lane towards the side. Instead we found ourselves on a separate cycling route altogether that utilized the bridges, thereby taking you on a ‘tour’ through or around the islands. You cycled

through rice fields, along the coast, past beautiful little beaches, through little towns – and then over each of the bridges connecting the islands. Having come from the city, the change in scenery was definitely refreshing.

Overall it took us 9 hours from JR Onomichi all the way to JR Imabari station. That included several stops for lunch, drinks, as well as a swim. According to official websites, you can complete the ride in four hours if you’re a keen cyclist. At any rate, the main bicycle rental terminals are open from 7am to 8pm so most people make the ride in a day.

Luckily, after two years spent in Japan where I had to cycle to school everyday, I found the day after to be relatively pain-free! (I never thought I would say this but thanks, daily bike rides!) If there were any drawbacks to the ride, they were the killer ramps leading up from coast level to bridge level, as well as a few hills along the way, but for the most part – if a girl like me from the flat plains of Western Australia can do this, so can you!

If you are worried about your level of fitness, or would just rather take

things easy and make a weekend of the ride, then there are plenty of options for you to stay overnight on one of the islands.

~
“OVERALL IT TOOK US 9 HOURS FROM JR ONOMICHI ALL THE WAY TO JR IMABARI STATION. THAT INCLUDED SEVERAL STOPS FOR LUNCH, DRINKS, AS WELL AS A SWIM.”
~

For more information, check out the following websites:

<http://www.city.onomichi.hiroshima.jp/english/kanko/shimanami/shimanami.html>

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3478.html>

<http://www.sunrise-itoyama.jp/rentaQ&A.html>

Approximate costs:

If you decide to take the Shinkansen to Onomichi and then ferry it back overnight from Imabari to one of the ports in Osaka – it’ll cost you around 15,000yen.

You could also Shinkansen it both ways Shin-Kobe ↔ Onomichi, doing the bike ride one way and then taking a bus from Imabari back to Onomichi: that’ll cost you about 20,000yen.

If you’re thinking of doing it, a few tips:

- Book a bicycle in advance – you can call or fax one of the bicycle rental terminals.
- Rent a bike with a basket at the front for your stuff; if possible a mountain bike with gears as that helps a lot.
- If you’re fair-skinned, watch out for sunburn and get that sunscreen on!!
- If you have time, *hit up famous Dogo Onsen* in the neighbouring town of Matsuyama afterwards – nothing beats an onsen post epic bike ride!



GETTING TO KNOW RANDOM JETS



Paul Schuble

~The Basics~

Please call me: You'd be doing me a favor if you would call me either Paul or Schuble. Not both.

School and Location in Hyogo: Itami Senior High School.

How we know you: With a little bit of luck.

Birthday: 2/21/86

Born and raised: Long Island, New York.

Family: Little sister, mom.

University and Degree: Villanova University, double major in Accounting and International Business.

Other jobs that you have had: Uni-

versity Writing Center tutor, receptionist, big brother.

Travels: Canada, Puerto Rico, a few places in Europe, here and there around Japan.

Hobbies: Movies, music, Japanese, games, reading, blogging, amateur photography, traveling, racquetball.

Staying another year? Probably not, but I'll be back. I always am...

~Favorites~

Food: Only one? Uh...uh...Sushi-taco-pizza?

Sports: Baseball,

soccer, racquetball.

Music: I keep an open mind, but mostly rock or classical.

Shop: Barnes and Noble.

TV Show: Right now I'm on an Upright Citizens Brigade kick.

Movie: I dunno, maybe The Princess Bride? It's got it all – action, romance, comedy, revenge, and a slew of great quotable lines.

~Random Trivia~

Most Proud Achievement: Surviving this long...

Best life experience: Living in Japan, I suppose.

Motto to live by: "Wherever you go, there you are."

I remember when... Life was much simpler.

What are you drinking? 100% Fruit Mix.

Who would you like to meet? My

future wife.

Why should we elect you President of the World? Because I say so? Best thing about Japan so far? The people.

If it was my last day on earth I would... Probably do some serious praying.

Interesting Fact about me: I was on Japanese TV once. Also I am awesome at both Japanese and chopsticks.

~Teaching~

My top tip for teaching: It's ok to be nervous at first – your students will be, too. Just be yourself. Unless you're an asshat – then be someone else. Am I allowed to say "asshat?"

When the class is TOO QUIET I... Try to make them laugh by doing something silly or stupid. As a teacher, sometimes you have to be a clown.

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? Sure. As long as they're learning, why not? Plus I like to buy people's affection.

Funniest Story involving a student: Don't know about funniest, but my favorite is one time some students asked me about things in Japan that surprised me. I mentioned how I found it really weird that an advanced country like Japan would still be using (and producing) squatter toilets. One kid told me (with a straight face) that it's the reason why Japanese are such good athletes – because they have strong knees from using those toilets. I immediately called BS on that on.



~The Basics~

Please call me: Sarah (or if you're from the South, Say-ruh)

School and Location in Hyogo: Suma Tomogaoka High School in Suma, just west of Kobe.

How we know you: Facebook. I take lots of jumping pictures. Birthday: April 30

Born and raised: Born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Amish country), raised in Towson, Maryland which is a suburb of Baltimore.

Family: I'm the oldest of 5 kids, although I am the only one from my parents' marriage so my siblings are spread out between two houses. I have three sisters and one brother. My brother is adopted from the US and my youngest sister is adopted from Guatemala.

University and Degree: Winthrop University in South Carolina (about 30 minutes south of Charlotte, NC); BA in Visual Art (my specialty is figure drawing), Minor in Math

Other jobs that you have had: I am a bit of a Renaissance woman: secretary, machinist/electrical assembly at a machine shop, piano teacher, math tutor, string quartet, day care assistant, cashier at Panera Bread, waitress at Ruby Tuesday and Cheesecake Factory Restaurants.

Travels: Beijing, Mexico, Costa Rica, Bermuda, various parts of the US, studied abroad in Japan (Kansai Gaidai) in 2006...I just graduated from college though, so don't worry... there will be much more to come.

Hobbies: Drawing, painting, piano, guitar, violin, spontaneous travel, learning about everything.

Staying another year? More than likely.

~Favorites~

Food: Buffalo wings, yakitori, anything pasta/noodle/seafood related.

Sports: Frisbee (trying to organize a team in Kobe, so holla if you're interested!), swimming/surfing/body boarding, running.

Music: Anything and everything.

Shop: If there are clothes, shoes and accessories involved, I like it. Hundred yen stores are pretty awesome as well.

TV Show: Grey's Anatomy, Family Guy.

Movie: Silence of the Lambs, Love Actually, Donnie Darko, Thank You for Smoking, Across the Universe, Everything is Illuminated, Lost in Translation, Hero, Yes Man, Hide and Seek, Ocean's Eleven, Dirty Dancing, Wizard of Oz Etc...

~Random Trivia~

Most Proud Achievement: I got an A in my 11th grade AP Calculus class with Ms. Barnes a.k.a. the Calculus Nazi. If you were in that class, you would understand.

Best life experience: Walking on the Great Wall of China—the non-touristy part, so we were in the middle of nowhere and it was just incredible.

Motto to live by: 'Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.'

I remember when... I was working at this restaurant and a woman got mad because she didn't like her salad so she flipped over-and broke-a solid marble top table and ran out of the store screaming that she's not an aggressive person.

What are you drinking? At the moment, Apple Tea. Later, beer.

Who would you like to meet? The guys who wrote "Jizz in my Pants." They seem like they'd be fun.

Why should we elect you President of the World? Because I am open minded and fair, but I can be mean if I have to. Best thing about Japan so far? Ridiculous,



Sarah Elizabeth Lewis

nonsensical English.

If it was my last day on earth I would... have a gigantic party on the beach and make sure everybody I ever knew was there.

Interesting Fact about me: In high school I used to read physics books for fun.

~Teaching~

My top tip for teaching: Encourage the kids to try, because I'm pretty sure most of them know more than they think. I've noticed a lot of the teachers just let the kid say 'I don't know' and then move on, but when I tell them to just give me whatever answer comes to mind, they usually get it right.

When the class is TOO QUIET I...

mean ALT mode: turn the assignment into a test and tell them if they don't raise their hand, they get a zero.

nice ALT mode: either pick up my own energy and pace, which seems to make them pay attention, or just turn the assignment into a group game.

Funniest Story involving a student: There is this kid who's not in any of my classes and whenever he comes into the classroom after I finish teaching, he always says 'Ostukaesama!!!!' and salutes or shakes my hand or some other random non-Japanese gesture.

Hyogo FOR DUMMIES

In the middle of a stinking hot day in the summer of 2007, I first entered the reinforced-concrete box that was to be my home. I hadn't expected much, but as it turned out I got a lot—it's just that I didn't want most of it. Let me describe the problem areas.

The kitchen dining area.

In one corner stood a good-sized fridge and a microwave sporting the nuclear symbol. Next to that some pine green shelves with a rice cooker, rusted and burned grill toaster and broken crockery on it. In the far corner a table finished in bright red Laminex. And on the other wall a buffet filled with broken plates, rice bowls, burned pots and mismatching chopsticks. Covering the floor was dirt-encrusted beige and brown checkered lino; covering the walls, grease encrusted wall paper; and hanging from the ceiling a plastic grime-encrusted light shade.

The tatami rooms.

Beside the window stood a huge ready-to-broadcast-Japanese-only-programs television, replete with aging VCR. A tiny bookshelf thick with dust. Half a brown velour settee and a futon bed. In the other tatami room was a desk with a dangerously wobbly leg, two huge wardrobes and a fold-out bed.

So, how did I turn this rather humble and overcrowded apartment into my much-loved home? Well, the answer is with a little cash and a little time.

First, I packed all of the broken plates, chipped cups and mismatched chopsticks in a box and deposited them on the side of the road on non-burnable rubbish day. Kobe now has the clear-

plastic-bag system; however, if you are unsure whether or not you can put something out, simply wrap it in newspaper before putting it in the bag (the rubbish collectors will take it—trust me). The velour settee and broken appliances met the same fate; however, I needed to get my go-between to ring the local counsel to organize a pick up time, and I needed to pay a small fee for the service. I have heard that the cost is considerably higher for refrigerator and microwave removal.

Second, I put the TV and VCR into the fantastically huge futon cupboards. And I also managed to fold up the single bed and fit it in the cupboard too. Suddenly there was room to move in my apartment!

Third, I got to cleaning all those hard-to-reach places, and voila! all those re-shined surfaces started reflecting light all over the place and creating an even more spacious feeling.

Fourth, I went about refurnishing the house in a way that suited my needs. I didn't come to Japan wanting to decorate my apartment, so gradually over time I have added to my furniture collection by acquiring furniture from other people, finding things hidden in the depths of the futon cupboard, and occasionally buying new things. I was lucky enough to find a great low table with collapsible legs in the futon cupboard; you can find these in most department stores for around 2,000 yen, and I acquired a friend's Ikea Ponag chair for the cost of delivery (new from Ikea it costs about 5,000 yen). Luckily, the apartment came with the convertible futon sofa bed: if you don't have one and don't like sleeping on the floor, I can thoroughly recommend it for comfort and convenience (you can buy one

• Making a Home for • Yourself in Japan

by
Emma
Nicoletti

new from around 15,000 yen).

Finally, I added the finishing touches by paying a visit to my local shopping mall and, of course, Daiso. I bought a mat to cover some of the worst damaged lino for 700 yen, a table cloth to hide the red table for 400 yen, a vase and some dried-wood decoration (cause I'm girly) from the Daiso, strung up some bamboo curtain to hide the mouldy window and hung a massive furoshiki I got as a present over the grease stained wall. In the tatami rooms I covered all the worst damaged wood surfaces with place mats courtesy of Daiso, and covered the walls with interesting post cards, pictures and posters (I ordered some of the posters from Amazon, and the others are art exhibition posters I took from train stations).

Now when I come home from a "hard" day at work and flop in my Ikea chair, I look around my little apartment, my little part of Japan, and sigh, "Home!"



ARE

The constant crashing
of the waves onto the shore
have always seduced me
When I close my eyes
it feels like they ARE
coming straight at me
I love the ocean
because it is so large
Seems to have all the answers
hidden deep like treasure

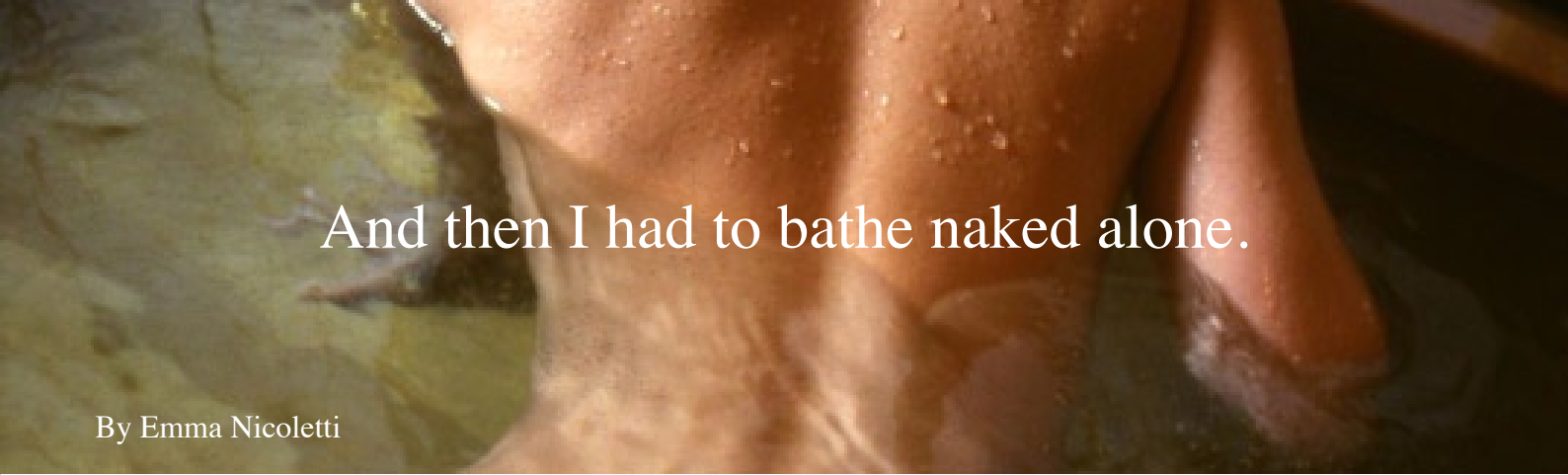
The cool wind muffles my ears
and caresses my face
Like a mother’s hand
would her child
I love the scent of the sea
so soft, so familiar.
The incessant waves ARE
like a pulse; my heart beat

I am in love with her.

The colors, the colors ARE
Just as soft, pale when it counts
Muted where it’s supposed to
Never too much
Selfless; giving of its beauty
Which is boundless and eternal
Barely there blue,
grey hints under the clouds,
the sand , like skin
The water, grey green,

A mix of the tall grass
and the grey shirt of the small girl
running along beside it
She’s almost camouflaged
Her dad plays with
her sisters who ARE
in pink and orange
Beautiful
Are these the colors of love.
I hope they ARE.

(Esperanza Urbaez)



By Emma Nicoletti

It’s after 9 pm. The air is still warm. I can see some grey clouds in the dark sky. The wooden scoop becomes full and more hot water tips into my tub.

XXX

It is Saturday night the week before. We are on the roof of Sogo at the Welcome Party. I’ve already had too much umeshu. Chip and I converse:
Chip: I haven’t been to an onsen in more than a year.
Emma: Really, I love onsen-ing. I’ve been at least 3 times in the last month. Twice in the week before I went to Australia . . . and there, unfortunately, I had to bathe naked alone . . . and just last Thursday night.
Chip: “I had to bathe naked alone.”
That’d be a good title for an article in the Hyogo Times. A good hook .

XXX

Children are splashing and giggling in the shallow bath behind me. Teenagers are piled two in a tub next to me, gossip-ing about fashion or friends or boys.

XXX

It is Wednesday after Saturday night. Matt has put on the science podcast Are We Alone? The topic is “What makes us human?” Among the points considered is the phenomenon that humans can experience loneliness even if they are standing in the middle of a crowd of people.

XXX

A heavy O-baachan gets into the bath next to me. Some of the displaced water splashes into my face. “Sumimasen.” “Iie,” I say with a wave of the hand and a half-smile.

XXX

It is Thursday night. Warm water tickles our spines as we sit in the stone chair bath. We are gossiping about fashion, friends, boys, food, the future and the past. Topics seamlessly merge. Two years of friendship here in Japan and we talk like sisters. I don’t worry about offending you with either my questions or answers. And I think you feel the same. A shared happiness and fun permeates even our most serious points. Some water rico-chets off your shoulder and into my eye. We burst into joyful laughter.

XXX

Towel draped across myself I walk to the stone chair bath. The wide eyes of a young Japanese girl stare up at me. I say hello. She runs to nestle her face in her grandmother’s arm pit.

XXX

It is Sunday after the Welcome Party. It is our little group’s last chance to meet together. We play cards and take silly pictures of Goran’s after-eating-grapefruit face. Finally, Matt and I have to leave. We walk together towards the station. Three sets of green lights pass and still we linger. We are making small talk. “Would you wear shoes with points like that Matt?” “My iPhone says a bus

will come in 9 minutes to take us the 100 metres to Sanno station.” The light turns green again.

XXX

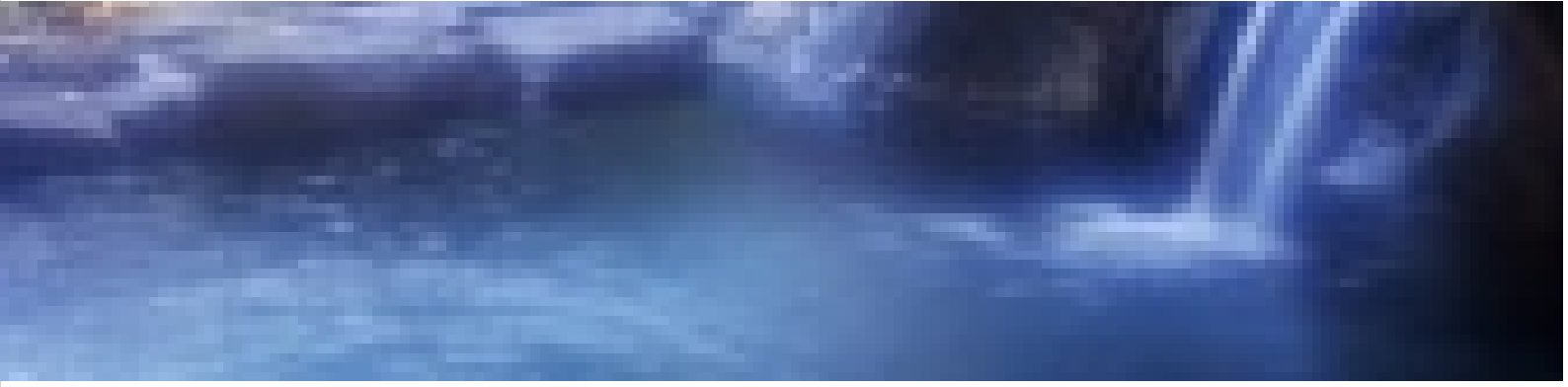
It is Thursday night. We are in the car-bonated pool. Little bubbles are covering my thigh. I like tingling sensation as I press on them with my hand. You say something like: “Who knew that the fully clothed girl who came and sat next to me in my first ESL teaching class in Perth would be sitting naked next to me 4 years later in Kobe.” I say something like: “It’s never too late to recontract. Even though a new ALT has arrived in your apartment, and your flight home has been confirmed, it doesn’t mean you can’t stay.” I am honestly hoping you can.

XXX

The light turns green again. Matt and I really must go. We give one final hug and cross the road. A train passes on the bridge overhead. I turn around and you are leaning into Goran’s arm. I suppose you are crying a little. I keep telling myself we can hang out again in a year, it keeps the tears back.

XXX

I return to the tub. I look at the clock. I realise I’ve been looking at the clock every 5 minutes, waiting for the meeting time to arrive. It will be another 20 minutes. Another 20 minutes till I have put my clothes on again. Another 20 minutes to think about how I already miss you being here. Another 20 minutes I have to bathe naked alone.





Ramementary:

By Andrew Tamashiro

KYUSHU NOODLE RUSTLIN'

For the Silver Week break, I made a long-awaited trip down to the land of tonkotsu ramen, Kyushu. Over the course of 3 days, I had 7 kinds of ramen, as well as raw horse, a horse burger and horumon nabe (but who really wants to hear about that stuff, delicious though it was?). Here's some of the better spots I hit if you have a chance.



The next day we started at Ramen Stadium 2 (the original is in Yokohama) at Canal City in Fukuoka, where 9 spots are rotated amongst some of the best shops in the country. Here's a fun fact I learned there: if you ate at 3 different ramen shops every day in Japan, it would take you 183 years (!!) to go through them all. No doubt there's some crap out there, but jeebus that sounds like a challenge. Anyway, we stopped at Murasaki Ramen (based in Kita-Kyushu) first and had the "retro" ramen and the chashu-men. They were both fantastic, full flavored and bursting with tonkotsu goodness. Aside from some above average noodles and decent pork, the highlight was the egg. A well-cooked soft boiled egg is a fantastic way to change up the flavor of a bowl after you've put away ½ of it.



First stop was Kumamoto. After the castle, we headed over to Daikoku Ramen, a place that had traffic lined up to get into their tiny parking lot. We skipped the lunch rush and headed in around 3 pm to avoid the crowd and got seated right away. The special ramen, original ramen, and gyoza were promptly brought out and we dug into some pretty remarkable stuff. Not only was the soup porky, the chashu plentiful, and the noodles firm, but there was roasted garlic bits floating about. It was easily one of the top 5 bowls I've had in my life, and I've been obsessed with ramen since my study abroad days in 03. Fantastic stuff, and worth the short drive from the castle if you're ever in the area.



After putting away a bowl each, we walked the 30 feet to the next place. Second in the Stadium was Hakata-based Gensuke, a tsukemen joint. For the same price, you could get 200, 250, or 300 grams of noodles to go with your super concentrated soup base. Despite having just finished at Murasaki, I found the tsukemen to be excellent; springy, chewy and slightly below room temperature noodles in a fishy, porky soup that contained chunks of delectably tender pork, onions, and seaweed. We even polished off a chashu rice bowl.



After some shopping, drinking, horumon nabe and walking around, we decided to hit the yatai-laden streets of Nakasu. First up was the highly recommended Ichi Ryu, a brand that boasts 3 yatai and a brick 'n' mortar operation in Hakata, and comes complete with fairly long lines. Despite it being about 11:30 at night, there were still about 5 or 6 people ahead of us. By the time we got seated, it was about midnight and I went for their normal ramen. It was disappointingly average, at least relatively speaking, and lacked the kind of punch that would live up to the hype I had found both online and through friends familiar with Fukuoka. It's possible that because of the huge numbers of travelers during that time that they were running out of soup and diluted it a bit, but either way, it was only the 4th or 5th ranked ramen on this trip alone



Next up (only about an hour or so after Ichi Ryu) was Taiho Ramen, a place that came recommended by our previous taxi driver. I tend to trust older Japanese guys, especially those in not-so-glamorous jobs, for advice on commoner food, so we had to take a taste. There are two Taiho right next to each other, but the one we went to was basically a counter that only offered ramen or beer. Well, simple though it may have been, their ramen was rather good. Straight to the point, with the same no-nonsense attitude as their hostess and with all the history that tiny cubby-hole of a restaurant packed into their soup. Great stuff.



Our last stop before heading back to Hyogo was Daimaru Ramen. They have a branch at the Ramen Stadium, but there were at least 3 times as many people in that line as every other store represented. What awaited us were a line, a big funky space, and some fantastic ramen. I had only one complaint about Daimaru and it was that the pork was TOO PLENTIFUL. Seriously, 6 pieces cooked two different ways in my ramen, along with a full egg. I came away feeling full but my shorts were tighter than they were on the way into Kyushu, that's for sure.



If you love ramen and you ever get a chance, get your ass to Kyushu.

English Sensei Spirit:

a few suggestions for genking up a flagging class.

The Students Are Playing Pictionary

JETs who have been in the country for a while will also no doubt be aware of old faithful “Pictionary,” which operates along much the same lines as the famous board game. This is for that minority of ALTs who may not fall into the aforementioned category.

Standard Pictionary involves a board, a piece of chalk, and a noticeably uncomfortable student volunteer. You also need a list of vocabulary words, and to save general embarrassment and awkwardness you are well-advised to make sure that the students have already learned the words you have selected. (This is, in other words, a review activity.) The volunteer is shown a word, and must—without talking—then represent the word on the board in the form of a picture. The other students must guess what the word is. It really is as simple as that. While the volunteer must remain silent so as not to reveal the word to be guessed, you should let the students know to which part of speech or category the word belongs (noun, verb, adjective, adverb).

Sentence Pictionary is a variation of the standard form, only this time, as the title hints, with sentences instead of individual words. I daresay there are endless sentences you could use with this activity, provided the students are familiar with the grammar. So I’m just going to outline the variety I use in my classes: sentences in the present continuous tense. I find it’s best to start by drawing a picture on the board of an example sentence, then eliciting the sentence from the students, making sure they understand that the sentence should be in the form “S is V-ing O”. I usually draw something easy to decipher like a cat at the base of a tree watching a bird (“The cat is watching the bird”). Provided you’re willing to be creative, you can have a lot of fun with sentence Pictionary, putting monsters, cartoon characters and superheroes in mundane or unexpected situations: “Pikachu is eating ramen,” “The dinosaur is riding a bicycle,” “Kitty-chan is washing the dishes,” and so on. Don’t take muri for an answer!

-Matthew Stott

Like Shiritori for Chocolate

I’ve found two ideas that work really well.

The first is chocolate.

I gave students chocolate when they answered questions during my self-introduction. When I threw that first chocolate out to a student, it was as if a bomb had just gone off. All the students woke up and paid attention for the rest of class. I hear that only senior high schools let you give candy though.

The second idea is group games at the blackboard.

One of them is called shiritori, which most JETs who’ve been around for more than a few months would probably know about. Any sort of game where the students are divided up into a small number of groups (4-5) and have to get as many words on the board (first letter last letter of the previous word/themes like countries, animals, etc) in a timed period, gets the students really excited.

-Jonathan Shalfi



At the moment my favourite time-filler is a version of “I spy”. It’s a little hard at first for students to grasp, but after an example they quickly cotton on and start to enjoy the game, and they’re always eager to play it next lesson.

I start off with really simple rules, but as their game skills improve I add more rules to make it a bit more difficult and to hone their English skills.

First I have them read and repeat the phrase “*I spy with my little eye something beginning with ___?*”, then I show them a small example with the JTE. I usually have the JTE choose something rather simple, and I demonstrate asking ‘Yes/No’ questions to quickly figure out what the answer is.

Once they’re on a roll, I’ll progressively add the following rules. It usually takes a few lessons to get from Rule#1 to Rule#3

•**Forming Questions:** If no one asks a question within 5-10 seconds the game is over. The addition of this rule causes everyone to try to think of new questions and encourages the continuation of a line of questioning until it’s completely exhausted. e.g. “*Are there many?*” “*Are there more than 5?*” “*More than 1?*” etc.

•**Grammar:** They get 3 “lives,” and they lose one every time they ask a question incorrectly (for example, “It is blue?” instead of “Is it blue?”). If they run out of lives, it’s game over! This gets everyone thinking about the correct grammar structures and encourages group discussion. I often stop students mid-question with a sharp “What?!” when they make a mistake, and give them a chance to repeat the question correctly. The class loves it ‘cause they know something is up, so everyone tries to help the questioner.

•**Listening & Deductive Reasoning:** When they get really comfortable with the above two rules I change the game from “I spy” to “20 Questions.” I think of something and the students only have twenty questions to guess the answer. This forces them to explore new vocabulary and better ways of asking questions, and focuses their attention to question and answer detail. The students that guess correctly can be awarded points, stamps, etc. I usually have the winners choose the next guess, but I give them a time limit to come up with something, otherwise I take over again.

The game itself becomes quite addictive, and in my experience students will want to play it all the time. So now I only play it as a reward if students prove that they’ve earned it by successfully navigating some kind of mini-review test at the beginning of the lesson, or if we finish early at the end of the lesson.

-Goran Seletkovic

I SPY
~A TIME FILLER~



Kechina Kitchen:

Keeping Costs **Low** in the Kitchen

By Emma Nicoletti

Aimee's Delicious Eggplant Dish

A long time ago, in the first half of the 2009, during a magical time called Golden Week, four friends went on an adventure. Their journey by foot took them from the Seto Inland Sea, over hills and under bridges, to a town buried in a mountain called "Shiawasenomura." That's right: "Happy Town!" At Happy Town the four friends happily enjoyed an onsen, but they soon became very hungry. Unfortunately, the departure time of the last bus home was fast approaching, so there was no time to feast. Instead the four friends waited till they got home, upon which time the best of the friends, Aimee, helped them to satiate their hunger with this delicious meal.

Serves 2

200 g chicken or beef
2 eggplants
1 onion
2 tablespoons of miso paste
2 tablespoons of sugar
2 tablespoons of cooking sake
2 tablespoons of mirin
1 tablespoon of oil
cooked rice (for serving)

Start cooking the rice
Cut the chicken, eggplant and onion into small pieces

Heat oil in the pan at medium heat and cook the eggplant for about 10 minutes, adding the onions after about 5 minutes

In another pan, heat oil at medium heat and cook the chicken until it's a golden-brown colour

Mix the miso paste, sugar, cooking sake and mirin in a bowl until smooth
Add the browned chicken and miso paste mixture to the eggplant pan and bring to the boil
Simmer until the liquid is reduced by half

Serve on the cooked rice



Tonjiru – Brothy soup with vegetables

This month's second offering as also a staple from Aimee's menu. Unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to try making this recipe yet, but the store bought version I sampled at a Sukiya shop was delicious. Also, with the cold winter months knocking on autumn's door, this soup is a surefire way to remedy your icy insides.

Serves 2:

100g sliced pork (pork belly with some fat makes the soup tastier!)
½ a cup of thinly sliced potatoes
½ a cup of thinly sliced carrot

½ a cup of thinly sliced daikon
optional: konyakku (also sliced
2 tablespoons of miso
4 cups of dashi soup (or enough to cover all the meat and vegetables)--
mix one tea spoon of dashi powder to every 200cc of water
1 tablespoon of oil

Heat oil in a pan at medium heat and fry the vegetables (and konyakku) until they have softened
Add the dashi soup to the pan and add the pork
Bring to the boil and then reduce the heat

Simmer for about 15 minutes
Take the pan off the heat and stir in the miso paste (add extra miso if you want a stronger flavour)



Where in Middle-earth is this Hyogo landmark?

Post your educated guesses on the **Hyogo Times Facebook Group discussion board**.

We promise not to laugh. If you're the first person to guess correctly, we'll announce your name in the November issue.

Thanks go once again to me, the editor, for the pic. (I don't know what I would do without me.)

If you have a photo of a Hyogo landmark that is appropriate for Maigo in Hyogo, please send it to publications@hyogo.ajet.net

Solution to last month's
Maigo in Hyogo:
Suma Rikyu Kouen, Suma.

