Welcome to the June edition of JET Streams. We have recently been hearing of the many activities that some of the JETAA chapters are involved in and we wish you luck with all your events. JETAA now boasts over 5000 members or about 40% of all those who have participated on the JET Programme and this number is expected to grow with the addition of this year’s non-renewers. We hope that you will welcome the new members to your chapter and use their energy and ideas to further expand your region’s activities.

News about the JET Programme

It is a busy time right now for the JET Programme. In July around 2,700 new participants will be arriving in Tokyo for the orientation at the Keio Plaza Hotel. These new JETs will be joining the 2,600 or so renewers for this year bringing the total number of participants for 1997-98 to around 5,300. Everyone at the three ministries and CLAIR is eagerly awaiting their arrival and we are pleased to see a continuing expansion of the programme.

With the increase in participant numbers, the programme is also seeing an increase in the number of participating countries. New CIR positions have opened for nationals from Argentina, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Mongolia and the Ukraine. ALT positions have opened up for nationals from South Africa. JET is becoming an ever bigger and more comprehensive international exchange project.

As you may have read in the January edition of JET Streams, 1996-1997 was the tenth year of the JET Programme. Apart from the celebrations and symposium in Tokyo there have been many opportunities for those involved in the programme to reflect on the aims and achievements of the past ten years. For example many articles have appeared in national newspapers. The general opinion seems to be that the JET programme has fulfilled some of its aims but that the time has now come to reevaluate its purpose and the ways that best use can be made of its huge human resources.

On page 3 of this edition you can find the winning entry for this year’s annual JET Programme Essay Competition. From this year the competition will be first announced in the June edition of JET Streams in the hope that more alumni will use their knowledge and experience of the programme to write original and well-thought out pieces for the competition. The winning essay is read every year by many ministry and embassy officials as well as JET participants and alumni and so it is an excellent way to air your views and provide opinion which could well shape the future of the programme. Please read the announcement on page 8 and start thinking about your own submission this year.

JETAA Survey

For those of you who left the programme in 1995, two years have elapsed since your participation on JET. Every year CLAIR sends out a survey to JETAA members in order to gather information on the sorts of experiences JET participants face on leaving the programme. The data collected is invaluable to many people including current JET participants who are eager for up-to-date news about what awaits them; those involved in the recruitment process so that they can provide accurate information to potential participants about post-JET opportunities; the three ministries and CLAIR to know what ex-JETs are doing; and JETAA members themselves who can compare experiences.

If you received a copy of the survey along with this newsletter, PLEASE take the time to complete it and use the International Reply Coupon to send it back with your candid comments. All replies are confidential so you do not need to write your name anywhere.

If you wish to inform us of a change of address please do it on a separate letter or postcard.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Any JETAA members who wish to share their experiences are invited to write to us at the address below.

Send all correspondence to:
CLAIR: JETAA Liaison, Shin Kasumigaseki Building, 19F,
Kasumigaseki 3-3-2, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan. FAX: +81-3-3591-5350

JET Streams is printed on 40% recycled paper
These poems were written when I was trying to come to terms with all I had lost by leaving Japan. JET was the best experience of my life and I found little in my old life which satisfied the person that I had become - life back home seemed constricting, mundane and conducive to personal growth. I had gained a wealth of insights and experience during my time away, but had nowhere to channel these things.

I sat in a park during cherry blossom time and realised that none of the kids kicking footballs or lone dog-walkers could share in what these trees symbolised for me. I was homesick for smalltown Japan and sought connection by sitting under the tree, trying to catch the blossoms that pirouetted down in the wind. If this was a fairytale, a huge gust of wind would have swept me up under a magic carpet of pink blossom and transported me to the life I had left behind.

A second best solution was to connect through writing and let my feelings of loss, frustration and lack of direction gush forth from my pencil.

Poem one

I had the fields
the clear sky
whatever identity I wanted
- all that space in which to be myself
I was at home in this land of kindly foreigners
But not here - among my own
Here I live in a bedroom long outgrown
a repressed cog-on-the-wheel in the corporate honeycomb
Moulded by all those old
preconceived packages
people have of me
- a shrivelling bud
who wishes to
burst forth
in glorious bloom

Photographs by Michael Carroll, Kyoto fu 1994-1997

Poem two

Feet pad softly in my tatami mat room
Floors warmed by soft spring sunshine
End of the day
Through the glass pane
the huge orange sunset is all mine

The stillness carries
Cicada chirp, motorbike hum
Inaka train tune
Faint murmerings of karaoke
Muted rythms of a Japanese town
A sky with endless limits
A feeling of unlimited space in my 2DK

A London park. Nine months on
Cherry petals shower down in the breeze
Can't catch them - can't be transported back
In this clashing, unrythmic city
I can't hear a cycle
Can't find my way in the patchwork maze

A big thank you to the author of these anonymous poems. Please send all contributions to JET Streams to the address on the front cover.
A total of 35 entries were received for the Fifth Annual JET Programme Essay Competition, including seven from JET Alumni. The judges awarded prizes to the following ten entrants:

1st Prize: Thomas Lechner (2nd year ALT, Kumamoto)

2nd Prize: Jeffrey Strain (ALT 1992-1995, Hyogo)

Special Prize (x2)
- Douglas Smuland (2nd year ALT, Kumamoto)
- W. Ernie McDade (3rd year ALT, Akita)

Honorary Prize (x6)
- Michael Radich (1st year CIR, Nagano)
- Andy Suess (1st year ALT, Okinawa)
- Jason Lambacher (2nd year ALT, Fukushima)
- Kristine Hrychuk (1st year ALT, Fukuoka)
- Michael Kneifel (SEA 1994-1996, Tottori)
- David Nohara (ALT 1990-1992, Akita)

The top four essays will be published in the Summer 1997 edition of the JET Journal. There may be a limited number of spare JET Journals, so if you would like to receive a copy please contact the Editor at CLAIR from August.

Many thanks to everyone who submitted entries and congratulations to the prizewinners.

This year the Essay Competition is being announced early to coincide with the June edition of JET Streams and the summer edition of the JET Journal which will be distributed to all new JETs in July. As you can see from the above results, out of the seven entries submitted by JETAA members, three received prizes. This tends to suggest that JET alumni have a good insight into the programme by the time they return home and can make an excellent contribution to debate about the programme’s aims, achievements and limitations. We hope that this year’s early announcement of the competition will encourage JET alumni to think deeply about their experiences and submit their own entries.

Please turn to page 8 for details on how to apply. Good luck with your submissions.

Making Communicative English a Reality
by Thomas Lechner (ALT - Kumamoto City)

Buzzwords ebb and flow in every industry, but probably nowhere more so than in education. The buzzword, “communicative English,” has quite a long history in the English education community in Japan. Unfortunately, good intentions, research committees and the importation of native speakers hasn’t brought Japanese students much closer to the elusive goal of proficiency in communicative English.

Why has proficiency not kept pace with good intentions? Because communicative English isn’t assessed, its objectives have remained illegitimate to students, their parents and even those teachers who champion the cause. In an age of increased academic competition, often described as “war,” anything outside of “test English” will remain frilly and not a legitimate part of school business.

Fortunately, there are indications this is changing. Ambiguous calls for improving communicative English education have been followed of late by more promising discussions of assessment of students’ communicative competence. In this essay, I will:
Demonstrate the English education communities’ call for the assessment of students’ communicative competence;
Discuss the ALT’s role in the development of communicative competence assessment;
Describe one assessment model.

Defining Terms
Before going headlong into a discussion of communicative competence assessment (hereafter CCA) I must pause to recognize the wide variety (and absence) of definitions of CCA. There is no single text or authority on it, nor any single model that is accepted as authoritative.

My constantly evolving CCA definition has roots in the “seven basic functions of language” by linguist Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1970: 145):
1. the instrumental function: using language to get things;
2. the regulatory function: using language to control the behavior of others;
3. the interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;
4. the personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;
5. the heuristic function: using language to learn and to discover;
6. the imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination;
7. the representational function: using language to communicate information."

Relevant questions in the development of definitions, assessment techniques and models are: Can our students understand and make themselves understood in English? Can our students produce English in authentic situations? Can students manipulate vocabulary and expressions outside of textbook structures? Put most simply, can our students use English as a means of communication?

In trying to develop CCA policies, the old chicken and egg dilemma seems to apply. Which comes first, solid definitions of communicative competence and precise measures of how to go about assessment or exploratory assessment attempts that will lead to more precise definitions? At this stage, experimentation is essential in flushing out a variety of ideas, models and most importantly, ownership and commitment to CCA by BOEs (Board of Education), schools and individual English teachers. Call for Communicative Competence Assessment

One danger of believing in something passionately is the natural assumption that everyone thinks like you do. Sensing this pitfall, I was relieved to hear both Mr. Hirata (one of the Senior Curriculum Specialists with Monbusho) and Mr. Oliphant (ALT Advisor with Monbusho) speak about the need for evaluating students’ communicative skills at our recent midyear block conference. From them, I discovered Monbusho is conducting a good deal of research on the subject as well as producing numerous resources and guidelines for schools to use in the formulation of their own assessment policies.

One set of such guidelines can be found in the Chugakko Seitou Shido Noryoku Kaizen ni tsuite (Guidance on the Revision of Evaluation of Junior High School Students). The section of the guidelines that concerns foreign language education identifies four criteria for the assessment of junior high school students’ performance:
1. Interest, willingness and positive attitudes towards communicating in a foreign language.
2. Ability to express oneself in a foreign language (productive skills).
3. Ability to understand a foreign language (receptive skills).
4. Knowledge and understanding of language and culture.” (Oliphant 1996, P.2)

Monbusho has also published a resource book Communication o Mezashita Eigo no Shido to Hyoka (Instruction and Evaluation of English Aimed at Communication) which is full of ideas for BOEs, schools and individual teachers to use in creating instruction and assessment programs. Monbusho’s recognition and championing of this integral combination of communication instruction and assessment has very significant implications for communicative English indeed.

Curious to know how the teachers here in Kumamoto City feel about CCA, I surveyed the 154 English teachers of our 37 municipal junior high schools and found very encouraging support. (Appendix A) 91.2% of teachers responded yes to the question “I want to assess my students communicative competence”. 93% indicated they thought CCA is “important”. 85.1% indicated no to the question “Current grading techniques adequately assess my students’ communicative competence”. Despite the dissatisfaction with the current assessment system and desire to assess students’ communicative competence, only 17.5% indicated they were assessing them currently.

The reasons for this disparity in practice and desire can be explained by two factors. The first is simply an issue of time. 50.9% answered yes to “Due to time restraints I’m not evaluating my students’ English communicative competence”. Perhaps even a stronger factor is the uncertainty of how to assess. 73.7% responded yes to “I’m unsure of how to assess my students’ English communicative competence”. With little time to experiment with different models of assessment it’s unlikely quick progress will be made. Wait! Perhaps there is a solution!
ALTs to the Rescue

There is a group of young go-getters that do have the time to work on experimental models of assessment. A perennial complaint among ALTs is a dissatisfaction with their job due to a lack (and scope) of work. ALTs yearn for meaningfulness in their jobs but don't know where to find it. Many ALTs feel frustrated that they have been hired to help improve their students' "communicative" English only to be stymied by the realities of "test" English. ALTs can be party to solving their own problems by working on models of CCA which have the potential to change the nature of English education, and in turn their positions.

ALTs are justified in thinking that they haven't been brought here to revolutionize English education. I do feel, however, we are offering far less than we could be or than JTEs would like. Those ALTs reluctant to offer ideas or suggestions in fear of stepping on the toes of their JTEs will be surprised by the findings of my survey. 57.9% of the teachers questioned indicated they are not satisfied with the extent they utilize their ALT, versus 30.7% who are satisfied. 85.1% indicated they "think ALTs should expand the scope of their job", versus only 6.1% who don't. 78.3% indicated they "want ALTs to take initiative inside and outside of school to create projects for students".

These responses present very encouraging messages to ALTs. JTEs want us to do more but for various reasons, mostly cultural, don't ask. In a separate survey, (Appendix B) which I conducted at a recent prefectural team teaching demonstration class, 84.2% of the JTEs responded strongly agree & agree to the question "I would like to ask my ALT for more assistance (ideas) but fail to ask them." Understanding our JTEs reluctance to approach us with requests to become more involved is an important step in improving our situations. Don't wait to be asked!

For those who have a sincere interest in more challenging work, spending more quality time with students, and giving communicative English a real shot at survival should consider putting together a CCA model. One need not create a whole new entrance exam system. Start small. First try to put something together for the English club. Those at a base school may want to talk to their JTEs about conducting interview tests. Those that have done so have marveled with the improvement of not only the students' communicative skills but also their "test" English scores!

The key is to start moving communicative English, the frilly ornament, into the respectable light of assessment and thus legitimacy. Students, their parents and subsequently their teachers will not buy into communicative English without the intrinsic motivation of assessment. We can and should play a major role in this movement.

I've been working on my contribution to CCA for about a year. I had the opportunity to debut my concept for a city-wide (37 junior highs) English communication contest, the English Olympics, at the Kumamoto Prefectural English Research Meeting this past October. The idea for the English Olympics came partially out of a dissatisfaction with recitation contests and my philosophical base in practical applications of education. The English Olympics is an extracurricular English communication contest in which teams (schools) compete against other teams. Unlike "test English" the quality of English is secondary to the quantity of English the student can receive and produce. Assessment thus leans very heavily towards the "effectiveness" of communication rather than "correctness".

Like the Olympics name would suggest there are a variety of events within the contest. The current contest model consists of five events: interview; gesture; shopping; telephone and scene of a crime. In the contest debut, two teams of 13 members competed against each other. Any number of combinations is possible, including more events.

The objective of the first event, interview, is to assess the student's ability to engage in basic English conversation. Students are initially asked a variety of warm up questions (about the student's family, etc.) and gradually more difficult questions requiring students to give and follow directions, use selected words and phrases in a sentence, and describe things. Students are judged on the quantity of questions they can respond to in a given time as well as subjective measures of quality of answers and understandability.

The objective of the second event, gesture, is to assess the student's ability to communicate beyond the boundaries of spoken language, which is particularly useful when traveling in a foreign country. In the contest, two teammates work together. One is the story teller and the other is the story interpreter.

Five minutes prior to the event the story teller receives a simple story written in English. In front of the judges the story teller gestures the story to their teammate. After the appointed time the interpreter tells the story in English to the judges. The judges use a check off score card, each detail worth one point. (These points are underlined.) Here is an example from the contest debut. I was playing tennis in the rain, slipped on the painted line and fell down. I hurt my knee and ankle. I couldn't play tennis for a long time. (Ueda, Lechner 1996: P.8)

The idea of this event is to isolate gestures in order to force students to focus on the fundamentals of communication. I was pleased not only with the students ability to communicate solely through gestures but also their recognition of how important gestures are in communication.

The third event, shopping, is also a teamwork event in
which one student is a clerk and the other a shopper. Five minutes prior to the start of the event the shopper receives a shopping list with 10 items. The students participating in the debut contest received the following list: Shopping List: dictionary, refrigerator, stamp, knife, salt, mirror, canoe, trophy, flashlight, shovel (Ueda, Lechner 1996: P. 10) One catch, the shopper cannot use the name of the item they want but must describe what they want. The clerk asks questions about the items, such as: use; color; shape and other descriptive features. The pair are judged on the number of items the clerk can guess as well as the quality of questions and descriptions.

This event is particularly practical as foreign language learners often run into situations in which they do not know a word. Rather than passing on the word or idea it would be better if they describe what they mean or want. Likewise, when Japanese are speaking to a foreigner in Japanese and use a word the foreigner doesn't understand the first reaction is to reach for a dictionary. This makes for a cumbersome conversation and when a dictionary is not available can often kill a conversation. Rather than look up why not describe the word in Japanese? This practice of breaking down a word or idea into its basic parts is a very valuable skill in cross cultural exchanges.

The fourth event assesses the student's ability to engage in one of the most difficult mediums in which to speak a foreign language - over the telephone. In the debut contest, the student spoke to one of the judges (me) separated by a partition so we couldn't see each other. Below are the directions the student had to follow: You are visiting the U.S. during summer vacation with a group. Your friends and you want to order pizza. As the best English speaker call the pizza shop and order a large New York Pizza. One student in your group doesn't like onions, so order the pizza with no onions. You also want to order two Cokes, two Fanta Orange sodas and two orders of garlic bread. You want to order with a $10 traveler's check. Use your own name. You are staying at the Davis Hotel in Room #503. The telephone number is 462-5430. (Ueda, Lechner 1996: P. 12) As in the other events the underlined words are check points worth two thirds of the score. The remaining third was based on more subjective measures like understandability and voice quality.

The fifth and final event of the contest, Scene of the Crime, involves six members from each team. Three play burglars and the other three witness a crime the burglars commit. The hall where we conducted the contest was set up like a home with three distinct rooms marked and decorated. The living room had various electronic items such as a TV, VCR and CD player as well as furniture. The bedroom had a bed and a night stand. The kitchen had a table, sink and refrigerator. Ten minutes prior to the start of the event each burglar received their own directions like the following in a room filled with various costumes and other props. (Ueda, Lechner 1996)

Burglar #1:
1. Put on the rainbow wig.
2. Put on the yellow rain suit. (pants and jacket)
3. Put on the sunglasses.
4. Go to the second floor.
5. Wait outside the hall.
6. When you hear the whistle....
7. Enter the house through the kitchen window.
8. Take a Coke from the refrigerator.
9. Open up the Coke and drink.
10. When the judge tells you go to the middle of the room.

The burglars were judged on the accuracy in which they followed the written directions. Two of the witnesses were subjected to questioning from detectives (the JTE and 1) and another filled out a police report. All three witnesses were judged on the quality and quality of their descriptions of what they saw. The event was really enjoyed by both the contestants and the teachers watching the demonstration.

The response to the English Olympics has been very positive. In a survey conducted at the demonstration class, 90% responded Strongly Agree & Agree to the question "I like the English Olympics concept." 86% indicated Strongly Agree & Agree to "I would support this contest in my school, city or prefecture." JTEs commented that they particularly like all four skill areas being tested (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and that the majority of the content of the contest came from the textbooks. Many offered their assistance in preparing for the 1997 Kumamoto City English Olympics to be held next November.

I am thinking about including more events to involve more students. One possible event is an extemporaneous speech contest in which students receive a topic in the morning and have several hours to prepare a speech using a variety of resource materials, but no support form English teachers. In the afternoon, they would give their speech and respond to questions from the judges. In the spirit of the other events, preference will be given to the amount of relevant information produced more than grammatical quality.

Another event idea is an English karaoke contest. This event more closely reflects the recitation contests with which I have philosophical problems. However, I feel the fun value, as well as the importance of music in studying a foreign language, outweigh the negative aspects of simply memorizing.

On the auspicious occasion of the 10th anniversary of the JET Programme, a prime time for reflection and contemplation, ALTs should be encouraged to take a more thoughtful approach to their jobs. ALTs must take more responsibility for their job satisfaction and become self-starters. JTEs are waiting for our initiative. Unfortunately, they
have a difficult time asking for help. With caution, cooperation and sensitivity we can start to make more meaningful contributions in our jobs.

Getting started is easy. Communicating your ideas with your JTEs and amongst other ALTs is an important first step. Your JTEs may very well have ideas for a contest, interview test, or some other form of assessment they would like to try. If this is the case, your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Other JTEs may not have any specific ideas but be sold on the idea of CCA and be open for your ideas and assistance. This is a good chance for you to use your creativity! Some JTEs may not be interested at this time and may resent your involvement. These teachers are best left to their opinions. They may change heart someday and become one of your best allies so don’t write them off completely.

Again, we needn’t bother ourselves with the pressure of creating elaborate projects. Start small, and if possible work with other ALTs and JTEs. Try to create a network of teachers that can share information. I hope we can create a nationwide publication dedicated to sharing job-related issues not only for ALTs but also JTEs. In this publication, we could report projects we are working on for all to learn from. Just as including JTEs in midyear block meetings and the like has been successful so too will their involvement in a professional publication. This could go a long way in bringing ALTs and JTEs closer together professionally.

The English education community is calling for CCA and needs assistance in getting programs off the ground. ALTs have the time, resources, and freedom to play a big role. Assessment of communicative skills will bring more legitimacy to communicative English and thus the JET Programme. Let’s get started!

Bibliography


Monbusho Chugakko Seito Shido Noryoku Kaizen ni tsuite (Guidance on the Revision of Evaluation of Junior High School Students).

Monbusho Komyunikeshon o Mezashita Eigo no Shido to Hyoka (Instruction and Evaluation of English Aimed at Communication). June, 1993


Appendix A

Results of Kumamoto City Jr. High English Teachers Questionnaire
32 of 37 Schools = 86.4%, 114 of 154 English teachers = 74%

(DA = Didn’t Answer)

1. I want to evaluate my students’ English communicative competence.
   [YES=104(91.2%), NO=7(6.1~0), DA=3(2.6%)]
2. I’m unsure of how to evaluate my students’ English communicative competence.
   [YES=84(73.7%), NO=26(22.8%), DA=4(3.5%)]
3. I think evaluating my student’s English communicative competence is important.
   [YES=106(93%), NO =4(3.5%), DA=4(3.5%)]
4. Due to time restraints I’m not evaluating my student’s English communicative competence.
   [YES =58(50.9%), NO=47(41.2%), DA = 9 (7.9%)]
5. Current English contests adequately evaluate my students’ English communicative competence.
   YES = 26 (22.8%), NO = 66 (57.9%), DA = 22 (19.3%)
6. I would like my students to participate in a contest that evaluates their English communicative competence.
   [YES=81 (71.1%), NO=17(15%), DA=16 (13.9%)]
7. I’m interested in playing a role in organizing a English communicative competence contest.
   [YES = 31 (27.2%), NO = 63 (55.3%), DA = 20 (17.5%)]
8. ALTs should play a major role in organizing a English communicative competence contest.
   [YES = 67 (58.8%), NO = 31 (27.2%), DA = 16 (14%)]
   [YES =12(10.5%), NO=97(85.1%), DA=5(4.4%)]
10. I’m satisfied with the extent I utilize our ALT.
   [YES =35 (30.7%), NO=66 (57.9%), DA = 13 (11.4%)]
11. I want ALTs to take initiative inside and outside of school to create projects for students.
   [YES = 87 (76.3%), NO = 20 (17.5%), DA = 7 (6.2%)]
12. I think ALTs should expand the scope of their job.
   [YES =97(85.1%), NO=7(6.1%), DA=10(8.8%)]
13. I currently evaluate my students’ English communicative competence.
   [YES = 20 (17.5%), NO = 87 (76.3%), DA = 7 (6.2%)]
14. For those who answered "yes", how do you evaluate?
   For those who answered "no", why don’t you evaluate?
15. What words come to mind when you think of “evaluation practical English communicative competence”?
THE SIXTH JET PROGRAMME ESSAY COMPETITION

PURPOSE
The Essay Competition seeks to promote a deeper and more thorough analysis of the JET Programme, to encourage a more thoughtful approach to the improvement of the programme and to inspire current and former JETs to further develop international exchange and foreign language education.

ENTRANTS
The Essay Competition is open to all current JETs and members of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA).

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Entries will be accepted from Tuesday 4th November, 1997 and must be postmarked by Wednesday, January 7th, 1998. All entries must be mailed to the following address:

CLAIR
Attn: Essay Competition
Shin Kasumigaseki Building 19F
Kasumigaseki 3-3-2, Chiyoda ku
Tokyo 100, Japan

Please note that FAXED or LATE entries will NOT BE ACCEPTED.

ESSAY TOPICS
Entrants should choose one of the following topics as the subject of their entry, but they are free to decide on their own title within each category.
1. Grass roots internationalisation at the local level
2. Foreign Language Education
3. Sports Training
4. The JET Programme experience

GRADING OF THE ENTRIES
All entries will be graded according to the following criteria (in no particular order):
* Relevance. Is the essay relevant to the JET Programme and relevant to the chosen topic? Entries which do not have an obvious relation to the JET Programme will be awarded zero points in this category and will therefore be effectively precluded from winning a prize.
* Grammar and usage. Are the grammar, spelling and syntax of the essay correct?
* Ideas. Are the ideas expressed in the essay original and well thought out?
* Expression. Does the entrant present his or her ideas in a clear, succinct and interesting way? We will be looking for quality and economy of expression.
* Overall Impression. Is the essay thought-provoking and does it leave a lasting impression on the reader?

SUBMISSION FORMAT
Entries must be typed, double-spaced and be between 2,500 and 3,500 words in length. Entries should include bibliography, references and footnotes and the results of both primary and secondary research where relevant. The topic of the essay (one of the four categories listed above) must be written clearly at the top left of the front page.

Entries which do not abide by this format will not be considered. Entrants are welcome to submit supporting illustrations and/or photographs with their essays. Entries must be material not submitted to any other publication or organisation.

Each entrant may submit only one essay. Each essay must be written in English or Japanese; for those persons whose native language is not English and who wish to write in their native language, please provide an English or Japanese translation. Please note that all entries become the property of CLAIR and will not be returned to entrants.

PRIZES
A maximum of ten prizes will be awarded:
First prize ¥100,000
Second prize ¥50,000
Special prize(x3) ¥20,000
Honorary Mentions ¥10,000 (book coupons)

The Essay Competition Committee shall award the prizes, and reserves the right to not award prizes should there be no outstanding essays. Members of the JETAA who are resident overseas will receive the equivalent amount in foreign currency should they be awarded a prize.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PRIZE-WINNING ESSAYS
Winners will be announced in the 1998 April issue of the CLAIR News and the July 1998 issue of JET Streams - the JET Alumni Association Newsletter. The winning essays will be published in the Summer 1998 JET Journal which is distributed to Programme participants, host institutions, the three Japanese ministries and the participating countries' embassies.
US1-Washington

The JETAA Washington DC chapter elected new officers in March. The president is JoAnna Phillips.

The Ad Hoc Committee, is organising a Money Management Seminar scheduled for July. Members of JETAA will learn about various investment and saving strategies at a three day seminar featuring a professional financial planner.

The co-chairs of the Athletic Committee, are forming a JETAA softball team which will play against other teams of Japan-related organizations during the summer.

Career Night, an annual event held every fall, is being planned. Members of JETAA serve as panel members and discuss their current occupation and job-search strategies. A keynote speaker, typically someone prominent in the Washington DC Japan circle, then addresses the group.

There is a quarterly newsletter, features of which include restaurant reviews, book reviews, reminiscences of Japan, and a calendar of Japan-related activities in the area.

The chair of the Silent Auction Committee, is soliciting donations for a year-end silent auction which will benefit the Sharon Moskowitz Memorial Scholarship. Sharon was a member of JETAA and was murdered in Washington DC in January. Her family established a scholarship fund in her memory.

The chairs of the Social Committee have held several very successful restaurant hopping outings. They also organized hanami at the Jefferson Memorial in April. A croquet tournament is being planned for the near future.

The Volunteer Committee recently participated in DC Cares, an annual day long volunteer event which helps to spruce up areas in the DC region. The JETAA team was responsible for painting the interior and exterior of a local school for the blind. They also participated in a hands-on demonstration of aids for the blind.

AU5-Canberra

This year has been very busy for JETAA Canberra as we become more involved in the selection process of JETs leaving from Canberra. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Embassy of Japan and especially Mr. Yoshihisa Nagayama (First Secretary of Cultural Affairs), who have supported and encouraged JETAA to have an active role in this selection process. In January, two of our members assisted in the reading of all Australian applications for JET 1997. In February, another two members were a part of the interview panel that helped to select successful applicants. JETAA will be a part of the pre-departure orientation program presented by the Embassy of Japan in Canberra. We will also be conducting informal pre-orientation sessions including some Japanese language classes.

We have had two social gatherings this year. In February, JETAA members and Embassy of Japan staff and families, gathered for a sporting match and BBQ. In May, we held a dinner at a local Japanese restaurant to which ex-JETs, Embassy staff and new JETs attended. Both events were very successful and the feedback from people who attended has been very positive. Another social event will be held to welcome home returning JETs in October.

The newsletter is being produced on a regular basis and we would like to encourage any ex-JETs or current JETs who would like to contribute to the magazine to do so. We include articles on recent events, up-coming social events, sumo news, letters from JETs, puzzles and general news.

Please contact Cherie Whitby.

US14-Los Angeles

The JETAA of Southern California recently welcomed a new consul in charge of the JET Program, Consul Mitsuji Suzuki. JETAssC has been active in providing support for returnees and former JETs through their monthly gatherings which serve as venues for creating job contacts, forging friendships and reminiscing about Japan. Other activities included Christmas in April, a community outreach program for the needy and Japan in a Suitcase, a project in which JETs visited various elementary schools to talk about Japan. JETAssC members have continually been instrumental in contributing their expertise and talents throughout the JET application process, in addition to creating a Resume Bank for returnees in need of employment information and opportunities.

UK1-London

There is a new Regional Representative for JETAA in London, David Briggs. He is currently hard at work planning next year's events which will include a big careers' fair in September. The new committee is full of ideas and enthusiasm so please join the chapter and get involved.

US7-Chicago

A date was set for the Job Fair at the Japan Information Center in Chicago. It will be held November 8 from 1pm. It is hoped that several recruiters and company representatives there.

Other regular activities include a monthly operating/planning meeting where we discuss any projects we want to do. There are also social events and some philanthropic events throughout the year. Recent social events have included outings to see Japanese movies and several ice-skating parties. As for philanthropic events, the past two years there has been a team registered for the AIDS Walk.

JETAA Chicago produces a returnees guide which contains all kinds of information about the Chicago area, getting a job after JET, school information, local Japanese related organisations and supermarket, restaurant information etc. There will also be a returnees reception held by the consulate in the fall.
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*If you notice that any of the above Regional Representatives are incorrect, please contact the JETAA Liaison at CLAIR as soon as possible. It is important that we have a current contact address for someone in each region.*
Scholarship News
We have the details of a number of scholarships which are open to JET alumni. If you wish to apply to any of the below scholarships, please be sure to contact the person in charge to confirm the details.

* Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California has Master’s courses in International Public Administration, TESOL and TEFL, Translation and Interpretation and International Management and International Policy Studies. There is a half-tuition two year JET Alumni Scholarship of US$ 15,200. Information is available from the MIIS Financial Aid Office, 425 Van Buren St., Monterey, CA 93940, USA. Applications are due in February.

* The University of Hawai’s College of Business Administration and the Japan-America Institute of Management (JAIMS) offer two unique joint-venture programs to JET alumni. The Japan-focused Master of Business Administration (JEMBA) and the Japan-focused Management program (JMP) are short-term, highly intensive courses which allow graduates to gain their MBA in 12 months. Each year, at least one ¥500,000 scholarship is available to JET alumni. Japanese language ability is not a prerequisite. For an information packet, contact Mr. Yutaka Hasegawa, JAIMS Promotion Dept., toll free in Japan 0120-222-390. The deadline is usually in February.

Address Changes
If your address changes, please send your new details to the JETAA Liaison at CLAIR in Tokyo. The changes will be entered into the database and will appear in the next JETAA Directory.

Recruitment
A big thank you to all those who helped with the recruitment of the new JETs or who are helping with pre-departure orientations. The input of ex-JETs is often invaluable to those responsible for recruiting and the departing JETs themselves. When talking to the departing JETs about life on the programme, please remember that everyone’s situation is different and the new JETs may well not receive the same benefits you did. The new JETs should read their Terms and Conditions to be sure about what they can expect.

Lump-sum Withdrawal Payment
If you left Japan after November 1994, you may be eligible for a lump-sum withdrawal payment for the National Pension and Employees’ Pension Insurance. You must apply within two years of leaving Japan. You can also apply for a refund of the 20% tax which was levied on your lump sum payment. Ex-JET participants should already be aware of this. This is nationwide legislation but CLAIR does have details of it at the address on the front cover.

JET Alumni in Japan
JETAA J1 (East Japan) needs a regional representative. Volunteers please contact the JETAA Liaison at CLAIR.

US3-Boston Regional Representative
We have heard that the regional representative for Boston has changed, but we have not heard who has taken over. If you know who the representative is, please contact the JETAA Liaison at CLAIR as it is important that we have a current contact address for someone in each region in case we have mailings for the committee.

Contributions to JET Streams
JET Streams is your newsletter, so please send your contributions in to the address on the front page. Articles on any subject that would be of interest to other alumni will be considered for publication.