Welcome to the 2006 edition of the JET Streams newsletter. This newsletter is distributed once a year to all Alumni who request it, as well as to all JET participants completing their tenure in the given year. It is a forum that allows people whose lives have been touched by Japan and the JET Programme to stay in contact with the development of both the JET Programme and the JET Alumni Association. On behalf of CLAIR, I would like to send out a big otsukaresama to the participants just finishing the Programme this summer. Thank you for your hard work and good luck in your future endeavours. Also, thank you to all of the JETAA chapters and members who have contributed articles for this issue. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Jason Pickens - CLAIR JETAA Liaison (jet-aa@clair.or.jp)

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

The JET Programme was started in 1987 with the purpose of increasing grass-roots international exchange and mutual understanding between the people of Japan and of other nations. It aims to promote internationalization in Japan’s local communities by helping to improve foreign language education and developing international exchange at the community level.

This year, 2006, marks the 20th Anniversary of the JET Programme. The success of the Programme has been made possible by the determined efforts and commitment of those who choose to come to Japan as JET participants, as well as the warm support of the many bodies, organizations and individuals involved and connected to the Programme. Over these 20 years, changes in socioeconomic circumstances have brought about changes to the role of the Programme as well as to the role of JET participants however the Programme has seen significant growth from its original 848 participants from 4 countries in 1987 to 5,508 participants from 44 countries in 2006.

No matter where you go in Japan today, you will find ALTs enthusiastically instructing children in foreign languages, CIRs actively promoting international exchange in their communities, and SEAs increasing international understanding through sports. The number of people whose lives have been both touched and changed forever is countless.

The JET Programme is still today one of the World’s largest international exchange programmes, and maintains its excellent reputation both within Japan and abroad. We sincerely hope that all who have participated in JET, as well as everyone who has had interaction with JETs will take these experiences, memories and friendships, and continue the strong ties between Japan and the world.

Future Editions of the JET Streams Newsletter

In order to reduce the massive expense of distributing the JET Streams newsletter to 10,000 households worldwide by post, and also to reduce the number of Alumni who are not reached after moving house, etc, the JET Streams newsletter has been distributed for the first time this year via email to JET Alumni who have registered their email address with CLAIR. As there are many for whom we do not have email contact details, a hardcopy has still been produced this year and delivered. Beginning next year however the newsletter will be distributed solely by email. Please take this opportunity to update your contact details, and particularly your email contact details through the link in the JET Programme homepage at www.jetprogramme.org. Also if you know of other JET Alumni who do not currently receive the newsletter, but would like to, please direct them to the JET Programme homepage where they can also change their preferences and have JET Streams delivered to them.

The JET Programme Survey

As of 2006, the JET Programme Survey will also be held online rather than in hardcopy. CLAIR greatly appreciates the honest feedback from participants and hopes that it will provide insight into how the Programme is viewed by participants, how successful it is, and what areas there are for improvement. The survey will be available from mid-late August at www.jetprogramme.org/e/jetsurvey/2006survey.html. Partial results from the 2005 survey are included on page 10 of this newsletter.

New Look to the JET Programme Homepage (www.jetprogramme.org)

Recent evaluations of the Programme and the upcoming 20th Year Anniversary have repeatedly raised one issue: the current promotion of the Programme both inside Japan and out. As a first step to further increase promotion and raise the image of the Programme, CLAIR has decided to revamp the JET Programme homepage. The new homepage will not only look and feel different, but we hope it will be easier to navigate and find information.

The first stage of the homepage revision will be released to coincide with the 20th Anniversary events in Autumn 2006, with new features including a search function, streaming video and more to be released in the months thereafter. We also welcome feedback in our hope to improve it further, so check out the new site, and let us know what you think.

Membership Count and Developments

Membership in the JET Alumni Association currently stands at 19,700 members out of a total of approximately 40,000 former JET Programme participants, stretching across 50 regional chapters in 15 countries worldwide. In order to maintain strong connections between former JETs and Japan, CLAIR encourages former JETs to become active at the local chapter level. JETAA chapters around the world hold events in connection with their local Japanese communities, and as such, it is an excellent way to continue enjoying a connection with Japan and its culture. If you would like to find out more about your local JETAA chapter and become more involved, please contact your regional chapter representatives.

A list of representative contact information can be found on pages 15-16 in this issue and links to chapter homepages can be found by accessing the JETAA website at www.jetalumni.org.
New JET Programme Logo

CLAIR would like to congratulate Cathy Baranenko (formerly Cathy Leung), former Saitama JET participant (2000-03) from Canada.  Her submission to the JET Programme 20th Anniversary Logo competition was chosen from among 150 entries received.  Beginning with the new JET year, the logo will be used for a variety of promotional events and purposes.  CLAIR would like to say a final thank you to everyone who submitted an entry.  All submissions will be viewable online at the JET Programme homepage in the upcoming months.

Updating Your Contact Information

At CLAIR, we would like to keep the most current contact information for all former JET Programme participants in order to encourage continued communication between JETs and Japan for the purpose of increasing the impact the Programme has on improving internationalisation in Japan.  Providing us with your most recent contact information will allow us to notify you in the event that any JET-related events are held in your area.  CLAIR treats the confidentiality of personal information very seriously, and any information provided will not be disseminated outside of CLAIR without permission.

Profile and address updates can be sent directly to CLAIR through the JET Programme homepage.  The JETAA Membership and Entry Update Form is located under the “Information for Former JETs” section of the website.  Please note that an email address must be registered in order to receive future editions of the JET Streams Newsletter.

Request for Chapter Volunteers

With recent changes to membership level requirements associated with forming new alumni chapters, and considering the increases in the number of new JET Programme participant countries sending smaller numbers of JETs, there are more and more countries with sufficient numbers of former JETs to justify establishing formal JETAA chapters.  However, making contact with former JETs in those countries who are interested in starting a new chapter is often difficult.  Often they do not know about JETAA or do not know the rules and procedures necessary in forming a chapter.  In an effort to establish contact with JETs who have returned home after their tenure on the Programme, CLAIR, in cooperation with JETAA International, would like to make a general request for volunteers to help begin the process of forming chapters in countries with sufficient numbers of former JETs to justify new chapter organisation.  If you are a former JET participant living in one of these countries please contact the CLAIR JETAA Liaison at (jet-aa@clair.or.jp), for more information about how to start a new chapter in your area.

Resources for New JET Alumni

There are many resources that JET alumni can take advantage of after their tenure on the Programme.  First, all alumni should check the JETAA International homepage (www.jetalumni.org).  This site contains important information that can help former JETs with their transition back to life in their home countries or to life in other parts of the world.  Resources that can be found on these pages include employment and teaching resources, information about Japan, links to all chapter homepages, chapter event information and newsletters, and reports of the current changes occurring organisationally within JETAA International.  In addition, be sure to check out the JETAA Job Guide at http://chengo.com/job/ for more information on career planning and employment.

Pension and Tax Refund Information for Former JETs

Every year, CLAIR receives numerous calls from former JETs regarding the process by which they can file for and obtain refunds of the money they paid into the Japanese national pension fund over the course of their time in Japan.  In order to provide the most up-to-date information about how to apply for the pension and tax refunds, CLAIR has included a page on the JET Programme website detailing the refund procedures and associated contact information.  This page can be accessed by going to www.jetprogramme.org and clicking on the Pension and Tax Refund link under the “Information for Former JETs” section.  Please keep in mind that there are time limits on pension and tax refund applications of 2 and 5 years respectively.  We encourage you to access this information and apply for your refunds early in order to avoid the possibility of being denied funds to which you are entitled.

A Word From the AJET Chair

Dear JETAA Members,

On June 15th, the 2006-2007 AJET National Council officially began their one-year term.  My name is Rosalyn Adams and I have replaced Froilan Vispo as the National Chair.  I am heading into my third year as an ALT in Kumamoto Prefecture and next year I will join the growing numbers of JET Alumni.

As I plan my last year here and my future outside of Japan, I am becoming more aware of how AJET and JETAA can benefit from each other.  The National Council is committed to improving the personal and professional lives of all participants.  As JET Alumni, you are in a unique position to provide support to current JETs in ways that AJET may not be able to.  In turn, AJET is able to increase awareness of JETAA and its resources amongst returning JETs.  With continued communication and cooperation between AJET and JETAA, we can carry on the important work of improving the JET Programme and lives of its participants.

This coming year, AJET will organize the AJET Career and Education Fair at the Returner’s Conference.  We will invite companies, recruiters, colleges and universities to discuss employment and education opportunities with returning JETs.  We held this fair for the first time last February and received an enthusiastic response from conference participants.  Please contact us if you are interested in being a part of this event.

AJET and JETAA have a long history together.  JETAA was originally started by AJET before being officially adopted by CLAIR.  I hope that our relationship with JETAA will continue to strengthen and grow.

Please refer to the National AJET website, www.ajet.net, for more information about us.  I look forward to communicating with you throughout the year.

Yoroshiku,

Rosalyn Adams

AJET National Council 2006-2007

AJET National Chair: chair@ajet.net

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Yoroshiku,

Rosalyn Adams

AJET National Council 2006-2007

AJET National Chair: chair@ajet.net
When You’re A JET, You’re A JET All The Way

“"You’re moving to Japan? Why?” I can still hear the wonder in the voices of my friends and family as I prepared to embark on my JET Programme adventure nine years ago. Their bewilderment was understandable; having grown up in Kentucky and gone to college in rural Indiana, most of my peers had a fairly localized view of the world. Japan seemed like another planet to many people. Nevertheless, I would venture to say that my apprehension upon returning home from my four year stint in Japan.

"Will I fit in? Will I still get along with my friends? Will I understand American culture? Will I be able to find a job?" Questions like these were, I admit, stressing me out as I left Japan and returned to my home in the United States.

Undoubtedly, many of you have the same fears and concerns right now. If you’re anything like me, knowing that others are in the same situation will help immensely. Possibly my biggest piece of advice to you is to get involved with your local chapter of JETAA. Other JET alumni can provide an incredible network of support, advice, and friendship. Reflecting back on your reasons for going to Japan in the first place, as well as your reasons for leaving now, and how the experience has changed you can help as well.

For me personally, I honestly say that my decision to move to Japan after graduating from college was probably the best decision of my life. My time on JET and my career since then have led to my dedication to public service and international exchange, and I currently find myself in a job that combines the two. Having started my JET career as an ALT in a small town in Hokkaido, I had then the opportunity to change to CIR for my third year. After my three years living in Hokkaido, I moved to Tokyo to work in the JET Programme Management Department at CLAIR in Tokyo. Since I spent four years living in Japan immediately after graduating from college, I had no idea what to expect next. I was a bit of a drifter and self-described lost soul for awhile. I spent several months traveling on my way back from Japan, as so many JETs are prone to do, and then I moved back to my hometown in Kentucky to take advantage of the free room and board generously provided by my parents. I knew perfectly well that I did not want to stay there, though, and I quickly grew restless. I found that, while my friends and I still cared for each other, we had all changed over the last several years, and we no longer had as much in common. I wanted to live in a more international and cosmopolitan city, and I wanted to follow the only career path I knew – that of international education and exchange.

It was at this point that I decided to move to Washington, D.C., after only a few months back home in Kentucky. I had not yet found a job, but I was confident that I would find something sooner or later. I found a temporary job initially working for a very small non-profit organization that runs short-term study abroad programs for Japanese students. I later was hired to work in the JET Programme office at the Embassy of Japan here in D.C. One step led to another, and I now find myself working at the Institute of International Education (IIE), a non-profit organization that is a leader in international exchange for me. I manage two different programs that send full-time teachers from across the United States to Japan and Korea on short-term study tours. These programs are incredibly valuable opportunities for the teachers who participate and even for their students who learn so much vicariously, and it feels good to know that I am helping change their lives and broaden their horizons.

I could not have planned my career better. Doors seemed to open for me every step along the way. (I seriously considered returning to the U.S. after my first year as an ALT, and I cannot help but wonder sometimes where I would be today had I done so.) It hasn’t always been smooth sailing. It was certainly frustrating and challenging to move to a new city and struggle in the job market. I was unemployed for several months, and it was hard to stay optimistic sometimes. It was an important step for me to take, though, and through perseverance and a positive outlook, I got through that period, and I have landed on my feet.

One thing that has helped me adjust to Washington and find my niche is my involvement in the Japan community, including but not limited to JETAA. I knew that in this tough economy and job market, networking is crucial, and I was also eager to adjust to my new home. Elections for JETAA-D.C. were held only a few months after I moved here, and I thought holding office would be the perfect way of getting involved and giving back in a small way to the JET Programme, which had done so much for me. I became the Social Chair, and a year later I took on the role of President as well. I have now retired from both positions, but remain an active and involved member of the organization. JETAA is an excellent way to make new friends and to relive memories from Japan that your old friends might get tired of hearing about. JET alumni make a great audience when you’re telling your story about scarfing all of the *obanzai* out of the *onsen*, or being forced to sing the Carpenters in front of your *kyoukan* just because you’re the token *gaijin*.

As far as advice goes for those of you who are or will be looking for jobs, as I said before, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of networking. I encourage you all to get involved in your local communities – not just JETAA but other organizations as well. Being able to refer to someone within the organization when applying for a job will go a long way. (Never reference someone without their knowledge, though. Always ask for your contact’s permission.) Do not expect people you meet to automatically give you a job, but don’t be shy about asking for advice or information about their organization. Informational interviews are excellent ways of learning about a field that might interest you.

Research the field you’re interested in to get an idea of the level of position and salary someone with your qualifications should expect. Be sure to have several people look over your resume, especially someone who works in Human Resources, if possible. And, as obvious as it may sound, make sure there aren’t any spelling or grammatical errors in either your cover letter or resume when you apply for jobs. There is no faster way to have your resume thrown out than to submit one with errors.

My advice for readjusting culturally is similar. You do have a bumpy road ahead of you, but getting involved with the Japanese or Asian communities will certainly help. When your friends and family share your stories about Japan, try to look at things from their perspective. Take an interest in what they’ve been doing for the past few years, and then reciprocate by sharing some of your stories.

Good luck, and always remember that there are others out there in the same boat as you. CLAIR has established an incredible support network for both JET participants and JET alumni, so be sure to take advantage of it. Keep a positive outlook, be proactive, and make the most of your opportunities. I recently saw a musical in which the title character, while encouraging her friends to live life to the fullest, said, “Life is a banquet, and most sons of H***** are staring to death.” Don’t be one of them.
Is there life after leaving the JET Programme? One alumnus was doubtful, but has searched the world over from Patagonia to Iceland, working varied jobs from a fish policeman to a Paralympic double medalist, and found it staring him in the face.

Life After JET

So where to go from here? This is the question that echoed in my head in the months that preceded the end of my contract. I wasn’t too concerned, after all, serendipity carried me to Japan with the JET Programme in the first place and I presumed that chance would again cast me away on a new career. After a flurry of Programme networking and support groups, I found myself sitting on a train as it chugged out of the station. Soon I found myself back in my home country, amidst the trials and tribulations as I had upon returning to our home country.

For lack of anything better to do and with the momentum of travel I was drawn to the forests and mountains of the Andes in South America. I walked the eerily quiet walkways of the “lost city” of Macchu Pichu which had an aura not unlike temples of Kyoto. I then realized that life does not end after leaving the JET Programme.

So with no job, a feeling of disorientation in my “own” country, and a strong desire to be back in Japan, Where to go from here? resonated even louder in my head. I am not one to give in to temptations, usually. During school lunch in the junior high school staff room, I would not be the one to take the last piece of tempura though tempted I was. However, when an uncle enticed me with the notion of returning to Japan with him for a holiday, I jumped at the opportunity. We travelled all over Japan to places I didn’t get to see when I was on JET. But to cap off the trip we went to my inake placement, Bandai Machi, where I surprised the locals with a visit. I told no one that I was coming, save Mrs. Yamano, my homestay okaasan with whom my uncle and I stayed. My okaasan didn’t even know. The look of shock on Mr. Yamano’s face when he got home from work one day was priceless. He casually changed out of his office clothes then slovenly slid the shoji door open to the room in which I was sitting. He then stared at me dumbfoundedly on the edge of the tatami for an instant before reeling with laughter and repeating my name over and over. It took him 20 minutes to settle down and actually believe that I was in there.

The reaction at the junior high school graduation, for which I had timed to attend, was much the same. The students were practicing the school song last time before the graduation ceremony. Upon my entering the classroom where they were singing, again the shock of disbelief then elation flooded the room. A recorded piano from the cassette player drolled in the corner of the classroom while the students’ vocal accompaniment dropped out one by one as they burst into tears of joy. There was not one dry eye in the classroom as the usually reserved disciplining head teacher joined the rest of us and welled up on this occasion too. It was a moment that I will never forget and belongs near the top of my list of most memorable experiences from JET.

I then realized that life does not end after leaving the JET Programme. With a new found travel bug deeply planted in my head, I again came across the opportunity for travel. Upon returning back to Canada I whisked myself away to the forests and mountains of the Andes in South America. Relatives were living in Chile at the time and recommended that I join them. For lack of anything better to do and with the momentum of travel already on my side, I hopped on a plane to the bustling city of Santiago.

Before I knew it, a simple 4 week vacation turned into 4 months of exploring in South America. I walked the eerily quiet walkways of the “lost city” of Macchu Pichu which had an aura not unlike temples of Kyoto. I homestayed with families who opened their doors and hearts to me by showing and teaching me their languages and cultures. And similarly to Japan, festivals abounded with food, clothing and music pouring onto streets creating a jovial atmosphere easy to get lost in. It was like experiencing JET all over again only this time in Latin America.

Soon however it was time to trek home and again my mind returned to the question of Where to go from here? It was not until several months later that I landed a job working for a marine research company in Vancouver. I would take the job as a dockside fisheries observer, monitoring the species and amount of commercial fish catches hauled from Canadian waters. This job would complement my years working as a fisherman on commercial fish boats through high school and university. Though it was good as a temporary job and allowed me to play a part in curbing the pattern of overfishing, in no way did it provide the enjoyment that I had teaching on JET.

That enjoyment was partially filled by another opportunity that arose.
When I was a kid, unlike most of my friends who took up hockey, I took up the sport of ski racing. Dreams to race for the Canadian National Ski Team and represent Canada on the world stage have been with me for as long as I have strapped on my skis. Those dreams faded in university as my life seemed to take a turn in another direction. But the thought of racing for Canada never really left and was rekindled when an old ski racing friend of mine asked if I would consider racing again, only this time with the Canadian Disabled Alpine Ski Team. He asked if I wanted to be a guide for a blind racer.

Blind racer? I knew nothing about the sport of disabled skiing and was curious as to how a blind man could race. Preoccupations as to whether I could even ski and guide a blind man simultaneously worried me. As communication is so important, especially when leading a blind skier at speeds over 100 kilometres per hour, being able to understand how the other person thinks is key. I feel I learned how to do this when working with my students during JET. The head coach was convinced that with my previous ski racing accomplishments and time teaching/communicating in Japan, I would have no problem guiding. After a training camp in the Canadian Rockies, I too was convinced that my blind teammate Chris Williamson and I would ski well together.

As a team, Chris and I had a great first season together. We won seven medals on the World Cup circuit including 3 gold, and clinched the overall title in the Super G event. We were on a roll and the biggest season in 4 years was yet to come.

We began a training program for the Torino Paralympics immediately as our first season ended. Through previous arrangements I was committed to a volunteering opportunity at a university aquarium in northern Iceland for the summer. I thought that this would put a dent in my training regime but as fortune would have it, Iceland proved to be the perfect training ground for me and my program. The long cool nights of summer were ideal for training after days at work. And Iceland is a beautiful country with lovely people, again showing me that there is life after JET.

My time in Iceland came to an end and, unlike my experience finishing JET, it was difficult to leave friends behind. This time though, I had other plans on my mind.

The ski team started preseason training in France in October. Our first races of the season were filled with excitement in Austria. Chris and I started strongly and we continued our streak skiing fast in races throughout Europe as well as in Korea and Japan. We stood on the podium in all of the races we entered and on top of the podium for six gold medals. We also clinched the overall title in all 3 disciplines, Slalom, Giant Slalom and Super G, which gave us the overall World Cup title for the year. The feeling of being world champion on a blind man’s team with Chris is a feeling only rivaled by having watched our nation’s flag rising in our honour at an awards ceremony at the Paralympics.

It was in Torino that Chris and I won a hard fought silver medal in the Downhill and a bronze in the Super G. It was then that I knew my lifelong dream of representing Canada on the world stage came true.

There is life after JET.

With these anecdotes, one may shrug them off to chance or to being lucky enough to have been in the right place at the right time. But that is exactly my point. The precious time I had on JET came to a conclusion, but not to termination. It simply paved the way for other experiences to unfold.

Now as my life twists and bends its way through another chapter I find myself worrying less and less about Where to go from here? There are always opportunities that seem to come out of the woodwork whether one is looking for them or not. And as I am certain many JET alumni have found, life may have changed after JET – but it definitely hasn’t ended.

The 14th Annual JET Programme Essay Contest Winners

For the 14th Annual JET Programme Essay Competition, a special category was opened for essays relating to the upcoming 20th Anniversary of the JET Programme. A total of 151 entries were received from current and past JETs, 26 in the Japanese Language Category and 125 in the Foreign Language Category, and after careful consideration by a Judging Panel made up of representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, a number of foreign embassies in Japan, and directors and staff of CLAIR, a total of 14 prizes were awarded to the following entrants:

Grand Jury Prizes:
Brooke Paul (ALT, Kyoto)
Jamie Williams (ALT, Okinawa)
Angela Wang (CIR, Miyazaki)
Victor Saito (CIR, Shizuoka)

Prizes for Excellence:
Jeffrey Windham (ALT, Kyoto)
Roxanna Ho Lam Li (ALT/CIR, Miyazaki)

Special Prizes:
Hudson Hamilton (ALT/CIR, Fukui)
Ryan Seebrock (ALT, Shizuoka)

Honourary Prizes:
Liu Jue (Former CIR, Hyogo, 2004-2006)
Stephen Eddy (ALT, Oita)
Paula Younger (Former ALT, Hokkaido, 1996-1998)
Martin Boutillion (ALT, Okinawa)

Congratulations to the prize winners and many thanks to everyone who submitted entries. A special thanks is also extended to the number of entrants that took the time and effort to write in a language that is not their native tongue. All winning essays have been published in the 2006 JET Journal and also appear on the JET Programme homepage (www.jetprogramme.org). The four Grand Jury Prize winning entries are included below.

A Picture is Worth Three Years

A photographic essay tells a story. It is only a piece of paper, plain white on one side, but with an image on the other side that speaks volumes. A photo recounts an event, a tragedy or a celebration, a feeling, a mood, or simply a moment in time. I have taken hundreds of photos in Japan, trying to preserve my JET experience. I attempted to capture the spirit of a summer matsuri, the calm serenity of Kyoto’s temples, the drunken hilarity of an enkai, the gambatte energy of junior high sports day, the creativity of a fifth grader’s handmade Halloween costume, and the quaint charm of my tiny village nestled in the mountains. I wanted to record the essence of these moments I lived—the events, the people, the atmosphere, and my perspective—forever enshrining them in 4 x 6 inch rectangles. Every time I leaf through my albums, I am instantly transported back to each school festival and every weekend road trip. These photos are a narration of my life in Japan, and here are the stories that some of them tell...

A Picture is Worth 3 Years

By Brooke Paul (3rd year ALT, Kyoto Prefecture)

I’ve learned a lot of things in Japan, but how to give a decent self-introduction was never one of them. Please forgive me.

My name is Brooke Paul and I’m from Kyoto prefecture. Before coming to Japan, I had escaped the rural plains of Iowa and fled to college in Washington, DC. Chock full of beer and hot to college in Washington, DC. Chock about my future after graduation, I accepted an ALT position on JET, fully expecting to move to an urban jungle in this crowded archipelago. Instead, I was placed in an area as sparsely populated as my home state—and I couldn’t be happier. I’ve passed my time here traveling, playing soft volleyball, editing the Gambatte Times (Kyoto AJETs newsletter), and visiting the kombini for matcha-flavored treats far more often than I should.

My piano teacher used to have a piece of hanging on her wall that said, “Life is like a piano—what you get out of it depends on how you play it.” I may not have perfected my self-introduction, but my time in Japan did show me that like life, the JET experience is what we make it.
A Common Pastime

Three young boys stand in front of two adults. They are completely oblivious to the "bunny ears" the adults are giving them behind their backs. It is dusk and a lighted Osaka Dome sign glows in the background, its "k" only half illuminated.

Those first couple of weeks at the Board of Education were daunting. No one there spoke much English and I knew even less Japanese. It was awkward getting to know each other, and after we had exhausted the topics of where I came from and what foods I liked, it seemed we had nothing to talk about beyond the weather: "Ato me?" "Hai. Onna yore, I mean..." No. "Hai. Simon Says." But listening sometimes eventually a subject other than the weather came up. It was something we had in common and could easily discuss, despite our lack of a shared language. Baseball broke the ice and luckily, I knew enough about it to quickly bond with my new co-workers. Within one week of arriving in Japan, Yamauchi-san had promised to take me to a baseball game in Osaka.

Sitting in the stands at Osaka Dome with Yamauchi-san and Takumasei, the discussion flowed freely. More than two years had passed since I struggled through those simple conversations with my Board of Education members. Now, munching on onigiri and sipping Coca Cola, I could chat for nine innings with the two men while enjoying the game that had initially given me something to chat about. Not only had my Japanese improved, but I now recognised that we had more to talk about than I had hastily assumed in the beginning.

Sometime in the sixth inning, a foul ball sailed into our section. We craned our necks around just in time to spot Yamauchi-san's son recovering the ball and holding it up for his best friend and Takumasei's son to see. The three boys beamed, just as American boys in their shoes would have done. Baseball is traditionally known as an American pastime, unique to my country and culture. But what began as a simple topic of conversation had grown into a shared experience in the form of a baseball game and then into a deeper realisation: America and Japanese improved, but I now recognised that we had more to talk about than I had hastily assumed in the beginning.

A ten-year-old boy stands on a dock clutching a tiny aji fish. His chubby cheeks pinch his eyes shut as he smiles. Behind him a row of adults and children tilt their fishing rods towards the sea.

It was the strangest proposition I had ever heard. The two brothers who live down the road grunted at me expectantly. All day I had been removing hooks from their catches while they eyed me in awe. They were not afraid of the fish; it was the sharp hooks that were scary. When they saw me close my hand around a squirming aji and carefully work the hook loose from its mouth, their attention was unflinching. Every fish, every time, it was the same thing. Only after the aji were swimming laps in a bucket with no hooks in sight would the boys dare touch them.

At the end of the day my neighbors were packing away their fishing rods and putting the day's catch on ice for the neighborhood fish fry that evening. I stared down at the two round faces, my own filled with puzzlement. Surely I had misunderstood them. The ten year-old craned our necks around just in time to spot Yamauchi-san's son with the day's catch on ice for the neighborhood fish fry that evening.

The plane tickets were purchased, the hotels were reserved, the sumo tickets were bought, and my nenkyu form was handed in and approved. Everything was planned and each little detail taken care of. But that fluttering feeling remained in the pit of my stomach. I was not forgetting anything; it was only the anticipation of this spring break of firsts: my first visitors from home, my mother's first trip to Japan, and my father's first trip abroad....ever. It was tricky to plan an itinerary that would offer my mother a fresh perspective on a country she was already familiar with, while not completely overwhelming my culture-shocked father.

A Daughter stands between her parents. Behind them and to their left Kiyoimizu-dera's magnificent stilted pavilion rises above the trees.

At the first place I took them was Kiyoimizu-dera, my favorite Kyoto temple and the first temple I had visited when I arrived in Japan. I wanted to share its beauty with them, its magic. And I hoped it would leave the same incredible impression on them that it had on me. When we arrived I knew immediately that I had made a good choice. My mother's face flooded with memories of visiting there with her university friends. My father snapped photos left and right, taking it all in. I led them to the temple's enormous stilted balcony with its picturesque views over Kyoto. After a long pause, I glanced up at my father, whose camera was quietly resting in his hand. There were tears glistening in his eyes. I was stunned and completely caught off guard. I asked him what was wrong. "Nothing", he answered softly. "I just can't believe I'm in Japan".

A single week in Japan had four seasons. I heard this statement countless times after arriving here. At first, it seemed a ridiculous thing to say because I had always lived in places with four seasons. But as summer gave way to fall, I began to understand just how seriously the Japanese take their seasons, and it did not seem like such a silly thing to say anymore. All around me the changes in temperature and natural scenery were celebrated with special seasonal cuisine, leaf-watching weather reports, and mimoji sightseeing tours. I witnessed a deep appreciation for the magnificent colours and the crisp air and a sense of relief that the scorching summer had passed. The change in seasons brought a renewed interest in visiting temples and gardens, a desire to rediscover old places painted a new color by Mother Nature. This enthusiasm for nature was foreign to me in the beginning. Although I had lived with these seasonal changes all my life, their true beauty was virtually unknown to me. I had considered them insignificant or unworthy of my attention, if I had considered them at all. Now I look forward to spring or fall as I would to a reunion with loved ones, and summer and winter greet me like old friends. After I leave Japan, I know I will take time to experience the seasons and welcome the temporary changes and added beauty they bring to familiar surroundings. When I gaze up at fall's dazzling leaves, I will smile quietly to myself because I no longer take them for granted.

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I visited home several months after my parents' trip and was surprised by the amount of attention I received. My brother asked about squat toilets, my young cousins were eager to know just how big sumo wrestlers really are, church acquaintances told me how lovely Kyoto's gardens looked in photos, the local Rotary Club invited me to speak about Japan at their weekly meeting, and strangers I ran into at the farmers' market commented on my stay in Japan after passing by my father's booth. It was as if I had lobbed a stone into still water. What began as a single little ripple in Mizuho's Oboso River had grown larger and larger, crossing the Pacific Ocean and reaching the banks of the Missouri River in Iowa. Before my parents' visit I was convinced that the JET experience was mine alone. However, it is transcending borders, raising awareness, heightening curiosity, and influencing people thousands of miles from here. The JET Programme has, of course, left an indelible mark on me, but the waves it has created are shaping people at home as well. I just can't believe I'm in Japan...and they're in America.

Reshaped the way I thought about my JET experience. I came to Japan with the naive belief that I would deeply affect others with my presence, acting as a catalyst for change. I would make a brief appearance, instantly internationalise my small town, and stir things up a bit before going home again. In the back of my mind, I knew life in Japan would change me too, but I certainly expected my experience to be insular—a couple of years that would impact the people I encountered in Japan and me only. I never imagined the effects of my JET experience would be so far-reaching and profound.

Sharing One Foreignness with Another
By Jamie Williams (1st year ALT, Okinawa Prefecture)

"The students are aliens!!" "What?!" Thrown, I turned to my JTE amused and at the same time utterly confused. Granted, after six months in Okinawa, I was willing to believe that perhaps it was true that the students might have crashed down to Earth from elsewhere in the universe, especially considering the daily barrage of blank and curious eyes as they glanced at me from behind the glass windows of the third floor office. The incessant parade of "hellos" and "goodbyes" which met me at the door in the morning and then guided me home later only seemed to cultivate this notion. Not to mention the fact that after months together our students didn't seem to be able to decipher many aspects of Japanese, let alone English. The students are aliens. Thinking on it, I recalled, yes...just yesterday I spotted a student hobbiling about the halls with wavy, dark rods protruding from her head (and to think I had audaciously alleged that I was the lone alien invading this school!!)

"The students are aliens!", she repeated, smiling. "They aren't even Japanese yet". Then, the images of little antennas and green globulous bodies swimming beneath the skin of the students easily faded from my mind as I realised what she had meant: our junior high school students were—still in many ways—untaught, unlearned, un-Japanese. The thought triggered an internal paradigm shift on the level of personal understanding: all the conversations in the lunch room with the students about eating a particular type of food, even in the wake of incessant in-class repetition of "I like natto" and "I don't like natto" suddenly seemed to make sense, reconciled by means of this one simple statement which in many ways extended itself as a remark on the universal foreignness of children. This was an idea long since lost to me, as I had willingly cast off my childhood memories of the past and fallen in line with the illusions of adulthood. Or had I?

For a moment after laughing at the joke, there I sat in the office, reflecting on this new awakening, this new consciousness. At first, I thought about the previous six months since becoming an ALT, the moon parties, the gift of star-shaped sand, the discovery of melon sodas, the first attempt to play sanshin, the first English lesson, the twelve hours spent drinking and eating with teachers at an izakaya, the first attempt at trying to call home on a green phone, the first matsuri, the first night alone on the other side of the earth. And suddenly, I wasn't reminiscing about six months but I was imaging instead twenty years of memories, twenty years of the JET Programme.

Twenty years ago, the JET Programme was established with the intent of "increasing mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the people of nations" (Handbook 2005). In 1987, when the programme was first initiated, only 4 countries were represented, amounting to no more than 848 participants in total (JET website). Today, however, there are nearly 6000 individuals who can claim the JET experience as their own and 44 countries are represented (JET website).

I looked away from the computer screen and the JET Handbook in front of me, my eyes glancing in the direction of the chattering and occasional joyous scream coming from the hallway outside of the office. "Twenty years ago..." I pondered the past. Twenty years ago, I was just a little girl of three, one of my JTEs would have just started teaching English in Okinawa, there was still a Soviet Union, the world's population finally reached 5 billion and the JET Programme was beginning. I read on. "...your role will be similar to that of an ambassador...you will have many opportunities to learn about Japan (its culture, language, people, etc) as well as share a bit about yourself and your country to the people..." (Handbook 2005).

The daily transmission of a MIDI rendition "of Moon River" charmed my quixotic senses away from my reading. Awakening from my musing, I realized it was time for lunch. Moments afterwards, I find myself once more fulfilling my position as the foreign anomaly and this time it was all because of a slice of fruit.

Sitting amongst an energetic and rambunctious audience of junior high first year students donned in black and blue uniforms, I watch curiously, chatting occasionally about how "yummy" the sakana was today and reflecting on this new awakening, this new consciousness. At first, I was willingly cast off my childhood memories of the past and fallen in line with the illusions of adulthood. Or had I?

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there are more people from more places, places perhaps some students have never dreamed about, but the adventures of yesterday's JETs are analogous to the moments of here and now, and the experiences of today are still as new to me as the day the first 848 JET's discovered them, even despite my having heard the stories of those before me.

So, the JET Programme was more than just stories, more than just students being inaugurated into the first-year students' cool hair club or being told how well you use chopsticks, or learning how to withdraw money from the bank. No, there was something deeper, more profound, something life-changing.

For some time I pondered this. What was it about the JET Programme? How did the program survive twenty years? How will it survive twenty more? Then one morning while I sat in the third floor office after class, I settled on a simple conclusion: it is easy to get lost in English. I mean it is easy to get lost in language. It is easy to believe that teaching your language to someone will be as simple as a one-to-one translation. But the reality of language is that it is never divorced from its context. The older JET, the younger JET, the vegetarian JET, the Gay/Lesbian speaking JET, the JET of African descent, the JET of Asian descent, the JET, the married JET, the JET with children, the non-native English-speaking JET, the JET that works at night, the JET that works at weekends. What has connected twenty years of JETs and what will continue to connect those in the future, is the undeniable satisfaction feeling felt from the experience of sharing: of sharing one foreignness with another, of understanding one culture for another, of understanding one language for another.

But, what about exchange? That was something else entirely, wasn't it? No one says, "I'm an ALT. I exchange". I looked around the office. "Oh, I'm an ALT. I teach English". But I thought to myself, "Don't they mean exchange? That was something else entirely, wasn't it?"

I'm an ALT. I teach English".

"Here. Here". JET was the acronym for Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme. "JET Programme".

"Wait a minute...", I had an epiphany. I flipped through the pages of the JET Handbook searching for the full name of the programme, Taxes...Introduction: The JET Programme.

The feeling was powerful. And tomorrow it will always be just as powerful. Then I wondered, "Had there been something I had done that had been this shocking, this eye opening, this enlightening to someone else?". Yes, the orange. The Stares. The last six months, the last twenty years had been full of these moments. Whether you call it exchange or grassroots internationalisation was not the most important issue. What has connected twenty years of JETs and what will continue to connect those in the future, is the undeniable satisfactory feeling felt from the experience of sharing: of sharing one foreignness with another, of creating and proliferating mutual understanding.

夢を叶えたウエルネス国際交流コンサート

「コンサートをしたいと思います。」ニュージーランドのJETの面接で私には答えなかった言葉だった。「私は小さい頃からピアノを弾いているので音楽への興味を生かしたいです。」えらそうに言ったけれど、本当はその時、前の質問にうまく答えられなくてパニック状態になっていた。そこで「もし今イベントをやってほしいと言われたら何を」の質問に、答えをそうだと言ったのだった。

夢を叶えたウエルネス国際交流コンサート

著者紹介

私は台湾で生まれました。小学生の時「いつの日か海外で暮らしてみたい」と思っていました。そして13歳のとき、ニュージーランドに移住しました。中学生の時「いつか外国語が流暢になるようになりたい」と思い、高校生の時に日本語を勉強を始めました。勉強を始めてきたとき、私は「いつか日本語に留学しよう」と決めました。そして大学の時に交換留学を1年間東京に来ました。その後「いつか日本に住み、そこで働きたい」と思うようになり、宮崎県南部のBETとなりました。もう少しの道の途中で何度かつまずくこともありましたが、私はいつまでも夢を追い、それを実現してきました。次の夢はまだ見つかっていませんが、残りの日々を夢追い続けることに費やしたいと思っています。

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こうして国際交流として、私は日本に来た。ある日、仕事で何かするつもりはなかったと考えていたとき、ある事が起こった。まず、友人が「コンサートをしたい」と言いました。そこで「私には答えなかった言葉だった。」えらそうに言ったけれど、本当はその時、前の質問にうまく答えられなくてパニック状態になっていた。そこで「もし今イベントをやってほしいと言われたら何をしますか？」の質問に、答えをそうだと言ったのだった。
食わず嫌い

ヴィクトル・サイトウ（2年目 CIR、静岡県）

著者紹介
ブラジル国サンパウロ市出身。好きな作家:新渡戸稲造、東野圭吾、貴志裕介、他多数
趣味:スポーツ観戦好きな球団:広島カープJETプログラム小論文コンテスト入賞！?

食わず嫌い

食わず嫌い

先日、友人と静岡県下田市へ遊びに行った。下田は伊豆半島の南に位置し、美しい海と瑞々しい緑に囲まれた県内屈指のリゾート地である。夏になると、きれいな海や熱い砂浜、はたまた一夏の思い出を求める観光客が殺到すると聞く。首都圏から比較的近いというのも人気の理由のようだ。しかし、我々が訪れた冬の下田は別の顔を見せてくれた。閑静で歴史を感じさせる街並み、伊豆半島ならではの美味しい魚介類、ゆったりできる温泉。たった一泊二日の旅行だったが、ずいぶん癒されたものだ。そして、たくさん考えさせられた。

初日はあいにくの雨で、予定していた観光もできずに早々と旅館へ向かった。その夜、我々は豪勢なごちそうを前に、ちびちぶ日本酒を飲んだ。私は、大好物のテキラやタコスを持参しなかったことを激しく悔いた。卓上には立派なカワハギの刺身が置かれていたが、残念ながら私は生の魚肉を食べる気にならなかった。

日本酒を飲みながら、刺身をガツガツ食べる友人の姿を見つめていた。古武術を習うアメリカ人の彼は、実に日本の文化(特に食文化)に馴染んでいるようだ。ナマコまで美味しそうに食べている。ふと、私の猪口が空になっているのに気付き、彼は見事な酌の動作で酒を注いでくれた。あっぱれ。

あわびやサザエなどが豪華に盛られた鍋を囲んでいると、旅館のおやじが「おごりだ！」と一升瓶を片手に現れた。ひととおり本日の漁の話を聞かされると同時に、特にカワハギをモリで獲ったエピソードは、血中アルコール濃度が上がるたびに繰り返された。1854年の下田に、ペリー提督率いる黒船が停泊した。初めて目にする船の模型やその製造技術の高さに日本中が震撼し、国内では開国するかしないかで揉めたらしい。やがて、日米和親条約が結ばれ、下田は開港場となった。日本で初めて、欧米人と民間人が暮らしを共にしたのがこの下田である。日本の国際交流の原点であるこのまちに、私はJETプログラムの国際交流員として訪れたのだ。

「ファースト・コンタクト」とでも呼べる日から、既に152年が経った。それが人類の歴史の中で長いか短いかは別として、最も変動が大きかった時期であることは確かだ。安政、万延、文久、元治、慶応、明治、大正、昭和、平成と年号や時代は変わり、世界は幾つもの戦争を経験した。不毛な争いで愛するものを失った母親や子供たちが、日本や世界中で涙を流した。

道徳や倫理でさえ時に忘れられるほど、激しく移りゆく時代の中で我々は何を学んできたのか。いくら通信や移動技術が進歩しても、国や地域ごとの考え方、生活、言語などの違いは完全に消えることはないだろう。しかし、世界が狭くなるにつれて、違う国や地域の人たちが同じ空間で生活することが増え、だからこそ、異なる文化や言語の理解が大切なのではないか。

言語はまだしも、文化を理解するのは非常に難しい。あまりに異なる文化だと、人によっては「食わず嫌い」をしてしまうからだ。かくいう私も、2年前に日本を訪れるまでは、なかなかこの国の文化を理解できなかった。情報はある程度手に入ったのだが、それを受け入れることを拒否していた。しかし、JET参加者として日本の国際化に努めていくうちに、自分自身も異文化に親しんでいった。

これがJETプログラムの大きな徴であると思う。後でわかるかもしれないが、初めは友人やスタッフから「食わず嫌い」を言われていた。しかし、実際にこの国に身を置くと、反対に「食わず嫌い」はなくなってしまった。現在では、JETプログラムを経た私たちは、異文化を理解する能力を身につけたと言えるだろう。

食わず嫌いに、水のように入る。色や香り、まわりの状況に応じてその味を変える約束だ。だからこそ、食わず嫌いは魅力的だ。日本の食文化をより深く理解することで、より良い世界を創り上げることができるはずだ。
2005 JETAA Survey Results

AS A JET PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

How many years were you on the JET Programme?
- One year: 107 (29%)
- Two years: 145 (40%)
- Three years: 106 (29%)
- Four years: 4 (0.1%)
- Five years: 1 (0.003%)

AFTER LEAVING THE JET PROGRAMME

Did you experience reverse culture shock after leaving Japan?
- Yes: 212 (58%)
- No: 19 (5%)
- Not certain: 38 (10%)
- Still living in Japan: 12 (3%)

If you answered “YES” to the above question, when did this occur?
- Within the first two months: 127 (56%)
- Within two to six months: 69 (31%)
- Within six months to one year: 26 (11%)
- After one year: 4 (2%)

Do you still keep in contact with those people you met while on the JET Programme?
- Yes, fellow JETs or other non-Japanese friends: 327 (88%)
- Yes, Japanese friends: 283 (76%)
- Yes, Japanese co-workers: 230 (62%)
- No: 8 (2%)

How have you sustained your interest in Japan?
- Through the study of a Japanese cultural or martial art: 79 (21%)
- By working in a Japanese company: 30 (8%)
- Still living in Japan: 19 (5%)
- Not applicable: 52 (14%)

Have your perceptions of Japan changed as a result of your experiences on the JET Programme?
- Yes, positively: 126 (35%)
- Yes, negatively: 3 (0.85%)
- Yes, both positively and negatively: 218 (61%)
- No: 6 (2%)
- I don’t know: 2 (0.5%)

REGARDING THE JET PROGRAMME

Would you recommend the JET Programme to a friend?
- Yes, absolutely: 310 (84%)
- Probably: 47 (13%)
- Unlikely: 6 (2%)
- Not sure: 3 (1%)

Do you feel that you contributed to the aims of the JET Programme?
- Yes, I think my presence made a positive impression: 251 (68%)
- Yes, but with reservations: 98 (27%)
- I’m not sure: 7 (2%)
- I don’t feel that I made a significant impact: 7 (2%)

Have your experiences on the JET Programme contributed anything to your perspective on life? (multiple answers)
- Yes, an ability to see beyond stereotypes: 232 (63%)
- Yes, an increased international outlook: 319 (86%)
- Yes, a wider circle of friends and increased social skills: 253 (68%)
- Yes, better personal qualities: 274 (74%)
- Yes, an interest for life: 152 (41%)
- Other: 29 (8%)
- No: 5 (1%)

Did you pass any recognized Japanese language tests while on the JET Programme?
- Yes, Proficiency Test Level 1: 18 (5%)
- Yes, Proficiency Test Level 2: 42 (11%)
- Yes, Proficiency Test Level 3: 61 (17%)
- Yes, Proficiency Test Level 4: 24 (7%)
- Yes, other: 6 (2%)
- No: 214 (59%)

YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES

How long did it take you to find a satisfying job?
- Within a month of job hunting: 68 (19%)
- Up to six months: 55 (16%)
- Six months to one year: 74 (21%)
- Up to two years: 64 (18%)
- I have not yet found a satisfying job: 69 (19%)

What did you do in the interim between completing the JET Programme and starting your current occupation?
- Travel: 150 (40%)
- Search for a job: 176 (47%)
- Investigate study opportunities: 76 (20%)
- Work part-time: 131 (35%)
- Study: 107 (29%)
- Relax: 127 (34%)
- I started this occupation immediately: 42 (11%)

FOR THOSE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

In what ways, if any, has the JET Programme assisted you in finding employment?
- By providing me with international experience: 162 (44%)
- By providing to my employers that I have initiative and other life skills: 167 (45%)
- By instilling in me a new confidence and public-speaking skills: 119 (32%)
- By developing my Japanese language skills: 50 (13%)
- By providing me with experience in functioning within an actual work environment: 82 (22%)
- By developing other practical skills: 148 (40%)
- By allowing me time to think and evaluate my options: 74 (20%)
- I am not certain: 18 (5%)
- I do not feel it has helped me: 23 (6%)

Do employers look favourably on the JET Programme experience?
- Yes: 152 (52%)
- No: 8 (3%)
- Only if you use it to develop your skills: 26 (9%)
- They do not seem to have heard of it: 51 (18%)
- I do not know: 53 (18%)

IF YOU ARE A STUDENT

To what level are you studying?
- Masters: 78 (60%)
- Doctors: 17 (13%)
- Teaching certification: 16 (12%)
- Other professional diploma: 7 (5%)
- Other professional degree: 10 (8%)
- Language School: 1 (0.8%)

Are your studies related to Japan?
- Yes: 13 (11%)
- No: 73 (65%)
- Partially: 27 (24%)

ABOUT THE LUMP-SUM WITHDRAWAL

Approximately how long did it take for the lump-sum withdrawal payment to reach you?
- Less than 1 month: 10 (3%)
- Between 2 and 4 months: 182 (54%)
- Between 4 and 6 months: 107 (32%)
- More than 6 months: 39 (12%)

JETAA

Are you active in your local JETAA chapter?
- Yes, I am a member and actively involved: 24 (7%)
- Yes: 14 (4%)
- Yes, I am a member but not involved: 140 (40%)
- No: 110 (30%)
- No, but I would like to be: 77 (21%)
- I’m not interested: 77 (21%)

Our Favourite Comments from the Surveys

“I think if I had the opportunity to continue in the position I was in, that I definitely would have.”

“Please continue to keep me in touch with Japan, I intend to go back next year—life moves fast and it’s easy to get side tracked. Regular info is invaluable.”

“Thank you for doing this survey. I loved the JET Programme and I highly recommend it to any young person I meet!!!”

“Thank you for your time and effort to keep past JET participants connected with each other and their contracting organizations. I hope the JET Programme will continue to benefit both the participants and the people of Japan.”

“JET was a wonderful time in my life. I remember it fondly and think of it often. I always tell stories about Japan.”

“I had a really great time in Japan and would do it all again in a heartbeat!”

I had it arranged before I completed the Programme

Our Favourite Comments from the Surveys

“The JET experience will be something I will cherish forever. It was 3 years that I grew as a person, it was a bit hard but I learned so much about myself. It was a great experience.”

“I think if I had the opportunity to continue in the position I was in, that I definitely would have.”

“Please continue to keep me in touch with Japan, I intend to go back next year—life moves fast and it’s easy to get side tracked. Regular info is invaluable.”

“Thank you for doing this survey. I loved the JET Programme and I highly recommend it to any young person I meet!!!”

“Thank you for your time and effort to keep past JET participants connected with each other and their contracting organizations. I hope the JET Programme will continue to benefit both the participants and the people of Japan.”

“JET was a wonderful time in my life. I remember it fondly and think of it often. I always tell stories about Japan.”

“I had a really great time in Japan and would do it all again in a heartbeat!”
JETAA Chapter News

**Australia**

**AU1 Sydney Chapter**
JETAA Sydney has a very active and set schedule of events which we hold each year. We try to maintain a variety of social events, which includes our big Christmas bash at the end of each year. We thank the Japanese Consulate & CLAIR Sydney for their active involvement with JETAA Sydney and for the great relationship we have built.

This year has been excellent. Social events have all been a success, and our preparations for the Predeparture Orientation and JETAAi International Meeting amongst the other events are all coming along very well.

Our chapter has approximately 300 members whom we stay in contact with via email and have this year implemented a quarterly Newsletter system. Previously we published two bi-annual Newsletters. The additional of quarterly newsletters will sent via e-mail.

The majority of last year’s committee retain their positions, with the addition of two new Year of Exchange (YOE) Members. In one word, our committee this year is best described as “excellent”.

Upcoming events to be held by the Sydney Chapter include a Shabu Shabu Trivia night, Returnees Reception, Yukata Training, Careers Night, a Hanabi Party and of course the Christmas Party on the 25th. JETAA Sydney is also the host for the JETAAi International Meeting to be held in November.

**AU2 Victoria/Tasmania Chapter**
The Victoria and Tasmania chapter has approximately 260 members and hosts a range of activities including:

- Autumn day/weekend trip (Olesen in 2006)
- ‘Diners Club’ evenings monthly
- Orientation Seminar lunch
- Hanami Picnic
- Japan Careers Seminar
- Bonenkai/Xmas Party

The chapter also provides information to assist members in job finding, as well information about Japan related cultural and sporting groups. For more information check out the website at www.jet.org/melbourne/

**AU4 WANT-Western Australia/Northern Territory Chapter**
JETAA WANT has ramped up its activity to concentrate on increasing participation of community and alumni in its events. The results have been fabulous, with increased turnouts and a growing community atmosphere.

Some of the events we held over the past six months have been:

- The NabeRama…a massive turnout that crammed tables of hungry JETs in for a night of feasting and fun
- Hyogo Cultural Centre Careers night…President Dave Byatt joined a panel of presenters to spread the word on the JET program, speaking to a full house of interested Japanophiles
- JET Returnees Sundowner…loads of yummy nibbles and a loaded bar to welcome our returned JETs and new Alumni
- Japan Festival JETAA stall…Dave and Jen Byatt set up a swanky JETAA stall at the Japanese School of Perth’s Cultural Festival, adding a JET flavour to the afternoon of performances, food and PET bottle rocket launches
- JETAA quiz night…our annual JETAA quiz was a sell out. Held at the residence of Consul-General Ariyoshi, the night’s prizes included a joy ride donated by JETAA Treasurer, Tony Rikkers, Manager of Flight Club.
- Annual foreshore picnic…our annual celebration of spring, held on the banks of the beautiful Swan River
- A “Memoirs of a Geisha” dress-up movie night, with all proceeds donated to Japan Festival
- A beer and gyoza stall at the annual Canberra Nara Candle festival. It was a huge amount of work but thanks to great participation from our JETAA members and some wonderful Japanese volunteers it was a huge success and we are looking to do the same this year.
- Our bonenkai – a BBQ held in conjunction with AJS
- A Shinnenkai held at Wasabi Teppanyaki. Great chefs, great people, great food, great night!

**AU5 Canberra Chapter**
JETAA Canberra has been quite busy since August and will continue to be very active throughout the Year of Exchange.

Some of the events we held over the past 6 months have been:

- Welcome back drinks for returning JETS
- A monthly ‘oshaberikai’ which is well attended by both returned JETS and Japanese ALTs working in Canberra
- Our annual Hanami picnic. A relaxing afternoon with a pot luck feast, some cricket, a frisbee and even some sunshine!
- Participation in the AJS – JETAA Softball Competition with our team placing 2nd
- A beer and gyoza stall at the annual Canberra Nara Candle festival. It was a huge amount of work but thanks to great participation from our JETAA members and some wonderful Japanese volunteers it was a huge success and we are looking to do the same this year.
- Our bonenkai – a BBQ held in conjunction with AJS
- A Shinnenkai held at Wasabi Teppanyaki. Great chefs, great people, great food, great night!

**AU6 Queensland Chapter**
The Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association (Qld) Inc. has a strong committee working towards the chapters objectives of promoting the JET Programme, supporting new and returning JET participants, and creating links between Australian and Japanese communities in Queensland.

The Chapter was incorporated in October 2004, and continues to have a strong membership. JETAA Qld maintains a website and online newsletter (www.queensland.jetalumni.org), and events for members have included Hanami events, photo exhibitions, a sushi making course, and Christmas celebration. Queensland was also the venue for the October 2005 regional conference.

**Brazil**

**BR1 Brazil Chapter**
The JETAA Brazil Chapter has 54 members. Brazil participates in the JET Programme with CIR’s and SEA’s and is expecting to have Portuguese language ALTs in the near future. JETAA members support the Japanese Consulates and the Embassy in recruiting, selection and orientation of new JET Participants. Most of the activities are centered in the Japanese community associations like Cultural Centers and Kenjinkais, as well as with former participant associations of Japanese Government Scholarship Programmes.

As 2008 commemorates the 100th Celebration of Japanese Immigration in Brazil, getting involved with these activities will be the main focus of members throughout the country.

Contact Cristina Sagara at crisagara@hotmail.com or crisagara@jetprogramme.org.br, or visit www.jetprogramme.org.br for more information.

**Canada**

**CN1 Ottawa Chapter**
The JETAA Ottawa Chapter has a membership of around 300 alumni. We’re a very active chapter, engaging our members with a monthly event. Our Executive Council meets on a monthly basis to plan the regularly scheduled events, as well as to plan our participation in various community and Embassy of Japan events. Furthermore, we are continually forging ties with Japan and Japanese oriented organizations to promote communication and a greater sense of community.

In addition to our regular monthly events, some of the activities we are engaged in this year include a calligraphy desk at the Canadian Tulip Festival, a pre-departure cooking class for the new JETs, pre-departure seminars, our second annual Natsu Matsuri (last year’s festival drew over 140 people from various organizations in the area), a welcome back seminar for the returning JETs and our second annual Networking Wine & Cheese. These events are enthusiastically attended by our membership and by members of the Japanese community, as well as by the local community whenever possible.

Any and all JET Alumni coming to Ottawa our most welcome to join us!

Contact: Jessica Sellars (President)
Email: jetaaottawa_president@yahoo.ca
Website: http://ottawa.jetaa.ca

TBA: A massive public exhibition of JETAA photos to celebrate the Year of Exchange
CN2 Toronto Chapter
JETAA Toronto continues to strongly support two Japan related organizations, JAVA (The Japan Visitors Association) and CJST (The Canadian Japan Society of Toronto) by holding events in conjunction with these two organizations and having them participate in our Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO or P-Dot) for new JETs. In our PDO we have attempted to reduce duplication with the Tokyo Orientation and focus on issues that have been suggested by recent returnees. JETAA Toronto also continues to host a Career Day for returning JETs in the (our) fall.

CN3 Montreal Chapter
Montreal is pleased to have had a nicely mixed turnout of alumni and Japanese students studying in Montreal at its events to date, and hopes to maintain this for future events also. Events have included onsen visits, as well as hiking events, and of course the big Weekend Orientation for new JET Programme participants.

CN4 Manitoba-Saskatchewan (Winnipeg) Chapter
As a relatively new and invigorated executive, we are looking forward to organizing many fun events for the alumni in our area. Throughout the year, we will hold cuisine nights, movies nights, Japanese conversation nights and many other shindigs to allow alumni to network. As well, we will volunteer in the Japanese Pavillion at Folklorama. In conjunction with our Pre-Departure Orientation for new JETs, we will hold a Natsu Matsuri complete with taiko drums, dancing, martial arts, and a Photo/Art exhibit of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre on June 10 and 11. In our usual August tradition, we will be entering a boat in the Canadian cancer society Dragon Boat races. Email manasketjaas@hotmail.com for more information on current events. We welcome new members and encourage returning JETs to volunteer for our executive. We also welcome new returnees to our annual year end enkai.

CN5 Northern Alberta Chapter
The Northern Alberta Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Alumni Association (NAJETAA) is for former JET participants living in and around Edmonton and is supported by the Japanese community locally and nationally, including the Consulate General of Japan in Calgary, Alberta. The mission of NAJETAA is to help past, present, and future JET participants with their involvement in the JET Programme. Currently NAJETAA has more than 250 members. NAJETAA produces a newsletter, Sensei-tion, twice yearly to keep our members in touch with Japan, the JET Programme, and the local Japanese community.

JETAA Alberta members enjoy 10 annual events. These include, a Japanese cooking party, Volunteer Appreciation Theme night, Japanese Community Curling Bonspiel, Weekend Orientation & Sayonara BBQ for new JETs, Japanese Spring Festival, Welcome back dinner, AGM, and bonenkai. In conjunction with the Southern Alberta chapter we conduct a Re-entry Conference for newly returned JET participants to Canada’s prairie region.

NAJETAA has a photographic collection, which represents brief moments in the larger experience of JET participants. We welcome new images and hope that the collection will continue to grow and become a valuable documentation of the JET Programme.

We always look forward to meeting newly returned JET participants and value what those who have most recently completed the programme can contribute to our organization. Visit www.najetaa.jetaa.ca to find out more about NAJETAA.

FR1 France Chapter
The group became an official non-profit organization in 2000 and since then we have been working on 3 main issues: 1) promoting the JET Programme to students 2) promoting this unique experience to French firms and local authorities 3) organizing cultural activities.

France

Germany

GR1-Germany Chapter
GR 1 Berlin welcomes home all non-renewing JETs. The National Representative for JETAA in Germany is Frank Bender. If you want to get involved in our work, please contact the German National Representative. To join the mailing-list, please contact the German National Rep (E-mail: genki-sponsor@gmx.de). For more information, check out our website at www.jetaagermany.de. Don’t forget to contact us as soon as you arrive in Germany (or before you leave the JET Programme) with a contact address, phone-number, fax-number and e-mail-address.

IR1 Ireland Chapter
Northern Ireland is a relatively new chapter in the UK. There are opportunities to meet up with ex-JETs and friends at pub nights and restaurants as well as a variety of other Japan-related cultural activities going on throughout the year. Get in touch with us to see what is going on back in Northern Ireland in JETAA.

Jamaica

Jamaica Chapter
The Jamaica Chapter has had fantastic success with previous School Visits and tries to make at least one each quarter. Other activities have included participation in international conferences and meetings, coordination of pre-departure orientation for new JETs, providing translation and interpretive skills for visiting Japanese groups, and a range of fundraising.

JP1 Eastern Japan Chapter
The JETAA Eastern Japan regional chapter covers all of central, eastern, and northern Japan including major cities such as Nagoya, Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagano, Sendai, and Sapporo.

Our chapter’s members, working in a variety of jobs, including with major Japanese and non-Japanese companies, as well as freelance and independent businesses, remain active in many international exchange activities. The Chapter serves as a valuable professional and social network for former JET Participants. We always welcome current JETs to attend. Some of our activities include receptions related to government-sponsored Japan language and international exchange programs, informal evening get-togethers, promotion and participation in events hosted by other groups and embassies, distribution of employment opportunity information and co-sponsoring events related to employment, and communication with local press on the JET Programme and JET Alumni. In 2005 our chapter also provided planning support to JETAA Western Japan for the International JET Alumni Conference in Nagoya and Kobe.

For more information about our chapter, its activities, and related information, please visit www.jetaa.com.

JP2 Western Japan Chapter
The goals of the JETAA Western Japan chapter include:

• Support ex-JETs either living in Western Japan or planning to move here.

• Providing post-JET planning resources for active JETs who plan to stay in Japan

• Support the JET Programme and the agencies that run it, including CLAIR

• Coordinate information sharing with other chapters

Website: www.jetaa.com/westjapan/en/index.html
Email: jetaawj@officers@sonayerra.com

NZ1 Wellington Chapter
JETAA Wellington has approximately 160 members in the lower North Island, with the large majority living in Wellington. We have a committee consisting of four elected positions, together with a large social committee.

As well as organizing social and cultural activities for former JET Programme participants, we work to promote the JET Programme to schools and university students, assist newly selected JET Programme participants with pre-departure preparations, and liaise with local Japan-related community groups to promote Japan in the Wellington region.

In recent years, we have made efforts to involve the local Japanese community in our social activities—this has seen us undertake quiz nights with a distinctly Japanese feel, and take groups of Japanese students on trips to places such as Kapiti Island and Kaitoke Regional Park. We have also had Japanese conversation evenings with teacher trainees visiting from Japan.

For more information about JETAA Wellington, feel free to visit our website (www.jetaawgn.org.nz) or email us at jetaawgn@hotmail.com. We look forward to hearing from former JET Programme participants who find themselves in the Wellington region.

NZ2 South Island Chapter
We have approximately 180 members, all over the South Island, and a few ‘expatriates’ in the North Island who receive our quarterly newsletter ‘JETache’ but are not official members. We liaise closely with the local Consular Office of Japan, assisting with JET interviews, seminars, orientations and similar events.

We involve as many of our members as are interested in regular social events, competitions and similar activities. We can be contacted at
UK1 London Chapter

JETAA London is the UK’s largest chapter with over 2000 members, and we continue to grow and grow. In 2005/6 we have had over 500 different participants attend at least one of our events, with both our annual ball and screening of Memoirs of a Geisha pulling in audiences in three figures. As well as our monthly bar nights and country walks, we have initiated a highly popular speed dating event and continue to host our networking evenings for JETAA professionals. Following on from the successful 2005 event, this summer we will host our second Q&A day for new JETs and their parents, and for recently returned JETs we are holding our Careers Information Day and welcome back events in the autumn. We have strong connections with the Embassy of Japan, Japan Society, JGCE and JETAA UK and work together with all of them. We are looking to firm up links with more similarly minded organizations, especially after hosting the EU JETAA conference this year which threw up some great ideas. We are always interested to hear suggestions from people moving to London, from other chapters who’d like to get in touch. Email us on our contact details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Chairperson: David Giddings

Vice Chair: Charlie Fisher

Treasurer: Ivan Chau

Communications Officer: Stuart Butchers

Lead Events Co-Ordinator: Sarah Dinsmore

Events Co-Ordinator: Pra Naranwaera

Contacts: (general enquiries) london@jetaa.org.uk

(events info) londonevents@jetaa.org.uk

UK2 Midlands Chapter

We are a small and friendly group of people meeting informally but regularly. We now have more than 400 members across a wide area of the Midlands, from Nottinghamshire to Gloucestershire and from Shropshire to Northamptonshire. The Midlands Chapter also encompasses Wales.

As well as offering a support network for JETS returning to the UK, we run a range of events, such as Japanese Cookery Days, sake and Go workshops, Taiko workshops, social pub and restaurant nights and Japanese Cinema evenings. We also hold a welcome back party for all returning JETs every year and a pre-departure event. In addition, members can take advantage of the services offered by JETAA UK, including Career Information days, social events and JETLAG, the official newsletter of JETAA UK.

Please contact Ali Bond, President, for further information.

Ali Bond at abond@jetaamidlands.fsnet.co.uk

Information can also be found on the JETAA UK website at www.jetaa.org.uk

UK3 Northwest Chapter

The North West chapter of JETAA has been up and running for many years and in October of last year Helen Coulson took over as Chair and Jouhini Ghojehvand as Treasurer/Events Co-ordinator. We have over 100 members on our database. Most of our events and meetings take place in and around Manchester, but we are hoping to organise something in Liverpool. Last year’s highlights included a trip to Tatton Park, Cheshire, where we had a guided tour of the Japanese gardens, and a Conversation Evening at Manchester University’s Japan Centre where Japanese guest speakers from the university were invited to chat with us. In November we arranged a welcome back meal for returnee JETs and enjoyed a meal at Sapporo Teppanyaki in the Castlefield area. Last November we arranged a welcome back meal at the University’s Japan Centre where Japanese guest speakers from the university were invited to chat with us.

We have hosted events such as the JETAA logo design and essay competition, hosted lectures on Japan-related topics at libraries, volunteered at Japan Centre events, hosted events such as pre-departure orientation, welcome back forum in collaboration with the N.Y.-based Japanese Consulate, annual softball tournament with NY-based Japanese communities, sending out quarterly newsletters and experimenting with new cultural and educational geared events.

UK4 Southeast Chapter

The SE chapter currently covers GA, AL, NC, SC & TN. The executives and volunteers work hard to provide a wide range of resources and opportunities for our members by creating & maintaining relationships with various organizations/groups in the area. We have a valuable relationships with our local consulate, which keeps us informed of numerous Japanese related opportunities; a local Japanese recruitment agency for professional networking purposes; various international organizations in order to offer our members the opportunity to remain in an “international” environment; non-profit organizations for volunteer opportunities, etc. Our calendar consists of 1 event per month, approximately half of which are cultural activities & the other half, solely social activities which we advertise to all of the groups we maintain relationships with. We work closely with our local consulate in assisting with interviews, recruitment & the Q&A Session for departing JETS. Our membership is at approximately 300 members. We strive to keep our events diverse so that they may appeal to the wide variety of former JETs (ex. Picnics/hikes for families, social hours for the young professional, diverse so that they may appeal to the wide variety of former JETs (ex. Picnics/hikes for families, social hours for the young professional, picnics/hikes for families, social hours for the young professional).

Our activities include hiking and camping trips in the mountains of New Hampshire and the annual Blackship Festival in Newport, Rhode Island, celebrating Commodore Perry’s breakthrough visit to Meiji Era Japan. All JET Alumni returning to New England are encouraged to join the chapter. Contact president@nejetaa.org for more information.

UK5 Scotland and Northern England Chapter

JETAA Scotland has around 500 members with an active core of around 20. Our activities include hiking and camping trips in the beautiful Scottish countryside, meals and pub nights, and in the past, joint events with the Edinburgh University Japan Society.

United States

US1 Washington Chapter

JETAA D.C. provides a social and professional network for JET alumni and supports the Embassy of Japan in their administration of the JET Program. JETAA D.C. has about 480 members, and each year we have a variety of events including social activities, receptions at the Embassy of Japan, career nights, business meetings and networking events. We particularly reach out to new arrivals to the D.C. area and to recently returned JET alumni.

US2 New York Chapter

Our organization’s mission includes assisting returning JETs with acclimation to life and work in NYC, fostering education and understanding of Japanese culture, and strengthening ties between the NY JET Alumni and the Japanese community. Currently, our chapter has over 800 members and we are always looking for ways to work with Japan-related organizations in NY. Highlights: hosting events such as pre-departure orientation, welcome back forum in collaboration with the NY-based Japanese Consulate, annual softball tournament with NY-based Japanese communities, sending out quarterly newsletters and experimenting with new cultural and educational geared events.

US3 New England Chapter

New England JETAA covers Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Most activities take place in Boston where the chapter meetings are held, but activities outside of Boston have included hiking trips in the mountains of New Hampshire and the annual BlackShip Festival in Newport, Rhode Island, celebrating Commodore Perry’s breakthrough visit to Meiji Era Japan. All JET Alumni returning to New England are encouraged to join the chapter. Contact president@nejetaa.org for more information.

US4 Southeast Chapter

The SE chapter currently covers GA, AL, NC, SC & TN. The executives and volunteers work hard to provide a wide range of resources and opportunities for our members by creating & maintaining relationships with various organizations/groups in the area. We have a valuable relationships with our local consulate, which keeps us informed of numerous Japanese related opportunities; a local Japanese recruitment agency for professional networking purposes; various international organizations in order to offer our members the opportunity to remain in an “international” environment; non-profit organizations for volunteer opportunities, etc. Our calendar consists of 1 event per month, approximately half of which are cultural activities & the other half, solely social activities which we advertise to all of the groups we maintain relationships with. We work closely with our local consulate in assisting with interviews, recruitment & the Q&A Session for departing JETS. Our membership is at approximately 300 members. We strive to keep our events diverse so that they may appeal to the wide variety of former JETs (ex. Picnics/hikes for families, social hours for the young professional, picnics/hikes for families, social hours for the young professional).

Our activities include hiking and camping trips in the mountains of New Hampshire and the annual Blackship Festival in Newport, Rhode Island, celebrating Commodore Perry’s breakthrough visit to Meiji Era Japan. All JET Alumni returning to New England are encouraged to join the chapter. Contact president@nejetaa.org for more information.

US5 Mid-South Chapter

Mid-South JETAA, based in New Orleans, covers five states: AR, KY, LA, MS, and TN. Before Hurricane Katrina, our chapter was quite active, despite its small size. In line with our Mission Statement, we held three types of activities:

1. JET Program Promotion

Our chapter has assisted the New Orleans Consulate with JET recruitment in the fall and with orientations for new JETs in the spring and summer.

2. Community Outreach

In the past, JETAA members have held workshops about Japan for children, hosted lectures on Japan-related topics at libraries, volunteered at Japan Fest, and hosted welcome parties for Japanese students studying at area universities.

3. JETAA Support

To support our JETAA members, the chapter has networking socials, hosts an annual shinnenki, and sends out announcements about job openings or news on JETAA-specific activities.

Most of our events have been held in New Orleans, but we have tried to encourage our other members to stay involved by participating in JET recruitment at universities in their area or through activities that are not place-specific, such as the JETAA logo design and essay...
currency developments handled by former JET Program participants as
ALTs and CIRs. The group continually strives to promote community,
and professional, and social relationships for alumni members in the area. We
annually host a shinnenkai in January, a White Day Yakiniku and Karaoke
Party, a Welcome Back BBQ, a Career Fair, and several language practice/
social dinners.

US7 Chicago Chapter
JETAA Chicago was established in 1994 to strengthen the bonds of cross-
cultural friendships developed by former JET Program participants acting as
ALTs and CIRs. The group continually strives to promote community,
and professional, and social relationships for alumni members in the area. We
annually host a shinnenkai in January, a White Day Yakiniku and Karaoke
Party, a Welcome Back BBQ, a Career Fair, and several language practice/
social dinners.

US8 Heartland Chapter
Heartland JETAA covers 6 states in the US Midwest but receives Consular support
from the Chicago Consulate. Chapter headquarters in Kansas City, MO holds
monthly meetings and 5 Sub-chapters hold quarterly meetings. We publish a quarterly newsletter and are involved in the School Visits program. Our website is
www.heartlandjetaa.org.

US9 Texas-Oklahoma Chapter
The Texas-Oklahoma Region recently worked with the Consulate to present the
annual Q & A Session for new JETs going to Japan this year; it was a successful event. We also recently elected new officers because some of our previous officers moved out of the region. We meet monthly for a social hour at a local Japanese restaurant. Some of these meetings are used to prepare for events like the Q & A or our booth at the annual Japan Festival. At this year’s festival, we taught people how to do
Sudoku puzzles and shared our experiences on JET. At the 2005 Bonnenkai we enjoyed a Shodo lesson. Our next event will be the Send-Off party for this
year’s new JETS. Since our region is so large, we have sub-chapters in San
Antonio and Dallas.

Our current President is Kelvin Chatman. He can be reached at either of the following e-mail addresses: kelvin@jetaa9.com
KRChatman@aldine.k12.tx.us

US10 Rocky Mountain (Denver) Chapter
The JETAA chapter of the Rocky Mountains is based in Denver, Colorado and has chapters spread across Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico as well. Events include photo exhibitions, pre-departure and welcome back events, shinnenkai, and a sushi-making party.

US11 Pacific Northwest Chapter
Membership: 300 members in Washington, Northern Idaho, and Montana
Greetings from the Pacific Northwest chapter of the JET Alumni Association (PNW-JETAA). The PNW-JETAA chapter operates out of Seattle and serves over three hundred members across Washington, Northern Idaho, and Montana. The goals of the chapter include supporting JET alumni in the region and offering social, cultural and educational activities that allow members to stay connected to Japan.

Pacific Northwest JETAA Activities - Highlights from 2005 - 2006
Autumn 2005: PNW - JETAA Welcome Back Reception at Consul General’s Official Residence, Annual Career Day, Bellevue’s Aki Matsuri,
Networking happy hour, Monthly steering council meetings,
Winter 2006: Shinnenkai happy hour, Annual meeting and elections, Newsletter published in March, Assistance with JET Program interviews at the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle, Monthly
steering council meetings.

Spring 2006: Hanami picnic, Monthly steering council meetings, Seattle
Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival, Walk for Rice charity event.

Our goals for 2006-2007 include improving the chapter's website, creating a
"Welcome to the Northwest" handbook, and building stronger ties with the
Pacific Northwest’s Japanese Community.

If you are relocating to the Pacific Northwest, contact the li sersevent for
contact the chapter's listserver. PNW-JETAA's listserver is a great resource for information on Japan-related events, career and networking information, job listings, and much more. For more details on PNW-JETAA membership, please contact the JET Program Coordinator at

US12 Portland Chapter
We are about 220 members strong, and a very active chapter. Our activities include: the Annual Iron Chef competition for departing JETs, Hanamiikai, Shinnenkai, Bonenkai, JETAA job panel, Quarterly newsletter and fantastic website, Japanese lessons for outbound JETS, 3-Kaiwa monthly Japanese only nights for JETAA members and Japanese community, Mochitsuki, Mini golf tournaments, Japanese Film Nights.

US13 Northern California / Nevada Chapter
The Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association of Northern California (JETAANC), is a volunteer-led, membership-based, designated 501(c)(3) non-
profit organization open to current and returning participants of the Japan
Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. The organization serves as a support
network and resource for returning program participants during their transition to Northern California and Nevada, and also provides assistance in the recruitment and orientation for the JET Program to the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco. JETAANC publishes Pacific Bridge, the quarterly JETAANC newsletter, and The JETAANC Book List, a member-recommended media list, and members organize a variety of monthly activities, annual gatherings, and special events.
Monthly activities offer alumni the chance to meet on a regular basis in a variety of informal settings. First Thursday Nomikai allows alumni to reconnect with old friends and share a drink with new ones, and occur on the first Thursday of every month in San Francisco and on other dates throughout Northern California. The Book Circle meets once a month and offers alumni and friends an opportunity to discuss books about Japan and books written by Japanese or Japanese-American authors. The Mid-
Peninsula Meet-up Group is a Japanese language and culture circle that meets periodically throughout the year. Every year, JETAANC also hosts The Career and Networking Forum to introduce new alumni to job searching techniques, resume building skills and professional contacts. In January, JETAANC holds its Shinnenkai to celebrate the New Year and discuss organizational governance issues.

Although many activities focus on alumni, JETAANC offers a variety of programs targeting the next generation of JET participants also. Each year JETAANC members serve as JET Program Interviewers, and the JET Interviewer Roundtable allows interviewers to discuss the attributes and abilities of an effective program participant with recent JET returnees. JETAANC’s Alumni-Led Orientation is a day of workshops and discussions addressing concerns of new JETs departing for Japan, and the Grocery Store Tour familiarizes new JETS with the Japanese supermarket and basic food preparation techniques. A series of “Ask JETAANC” Information Nights and the online SFJETs Yahoo! group give departing JET’s informal opportunities to ask alumni about their experiences.

In addition to JET Program-related activities, alumni are encouraged to broaden their network and strengthen their ties with Japan through a variety of social and

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In addition to JET Program-related activities, alumni are encouraged to broaden their network and strengthen their ties with Japan through a variety of social and cultural activities. JETAANC partners with local organizations in an effort to foster further ties with the Japan-related community.

Recent community activities have included: an encore to the 24th San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival to screen Director Nobuhiko Yamashita’s ‘Linda Linda Linda’; a JETAA event at the official residence of the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco where 25 JET Alumni and 25 key individuals from the Bay Area Japan-related community enjoyed a language exchange activity and reception; a hanami event at Hakone Gardens; and Icons Amplified, an art exhibition of works by JET alumni TJ Wagner, hosted by the Japan Information Center at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco. JETAANC also offers a scholarship to high school seniors. Established in 2002, the JETAANC scholarship is granted annually to a graduating high school student in Northern California or Nevada pursuing studies at an accredited college or university. Applicants are judged on a number of criteria including a demonstrated interest in Japan, academic accomplishments, a personal essay, and recommendations. For further details, please visit the JETAANC website:
www.jetaanc.org.
July 2006

US14 Southern California Chapter
www.jetaasc.org
If you’re headed to sunny Southern California, make sure that JETAASC is on your list of things to check out during your transition. The Southern California chapter consists of over 800 members and comprises the areas of Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego, Santa Barbara / Ventura County and Arizona. We like to think of ourselves as an active bunch, so we hold an event on the second weekend of every month with activities including hiking, rock climbing and various dinners, to name a few! In addition, we host quarterly “Nihongo Dake Dinners” and a semiannual Professional Networking Event called “Connect JETAA.”

JETAASC takes great pride in its relationship with the Japanese American community, and we volunteer annually at Little Tokyo’s Pika Pika cleanup, Koban Casino Night, Japanese Restaurant Association's Food Fair and Tofu Festival. We also have a monthly column in the local publication *Sushi & Sake*, where JET alumni relay their JET Program experience to a broad Southern California audience.

We love seeing fresh faces at our events, and as you can see, there's definitely something for everyone. Note that you're welcome to come out to any event that happens to fit in your schedule. If we miss you one month, join us the next! No doubt you'll be busy when you return home, but we hope that we'll meet somewhere along the way. Visit www.jetaasc.org and register for our monthly newsletter and email listserv. Feel free to contact us at officers@jetaasc.org.

US15 Hawaii Chapter
The JETAA Hawaii chapter strives to promote Japan and the JET Program, and to be a resource to future, present and past participants. Much of our activities are focused around promoting and supporting the program. Many of the events are focused on preparing the newly accepted JET participants for what awaits them in Japan. We also host a variety of events to help those former participants as they transition into their lives in Hawaii.

If you are interested in getting involved in your local JETAA chapter, or would like more information about JETAA events in your area, please access the JETAA International homepage at www.jetalumni.org for links to your local chapter homepage or contact the chapter representatives as listed on pages 15-16.

JETAA CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES

Australia
AU1-Sydney
Michael Adams
Email: jetaasydney@yahoo.com.au
URL: www.sydneyjetaa.org

AU2-Victoria/Tasmania (Melbourne)
Glen Clark
Email: melbourne@jetalumni.org.au
URL: www.jet.org/Melbourne/

AU4-Perth/Darwin
Crisy Burne
Email: president@want.jetalumni.org
URL: www.want.jetalumni.org

AU5-Canberra
Lucy Shields
Email: president@canberra.jetalumni.org
URL: www.canberra.jetalumni.org

AU6-Queensland (Brisbane)
Mark Pitkin
Email: pitkin@bigpond.net.au
URL: www.queensland.jetalumni.org

Brazil
BR1-Brazil
Cristina Sagara
Email: crisagara@jetprogramme.org.br
URL: www.jetprogramme.org.br

Canada
CN1-Ottawa
Jessica Sellars
Email: jetaaottawa_president@yahoo.ca
URL: www.ottawa.jetaa.ca/

CN2-Toronto
Sean Figueroa
Email: jetaa_toronto@yahoo.com
URL: www.toronto.jetaa.ca

CN3-Montreal
Jodi Pichovich
Email: montrealjetaa@yahoo.ca
URL: www.montreal.jetaa.ca

CN4-Manitoba-Saskatchewan (Winnipeg)
Michael Moreau
Email: mansaskjetaa@hotmail.com
URL: www.mansask.jetaa.ca/

CN5-Northern Alberta (Edmonton)
Gretchen Phillips
Email: president@najetaa.jetaa.ca
URL: www.najetaa.jetaa.ca

CN6-British Columbia (Vancouver)
President: Ala Ji
Email: info@bc.jetaa.ca
URL: www.bc.jetaa.ca

CN7-Southern Alberta (Calgary)
Kristian Whillans
Email: kawhillia@hotmail.com
URL: www.calgary.jetaa.ca

FR1-France
Cecile Gross
Email: cecilegross@aol.com
URL: www.membres.lycos.fr/jetaafrance/association_main.htm

Canada
CN2-Toronto
Sean Figueroa
Email: jetaa_toronto@yahoo.com
URL: www.toronto.jetaa.ca

CN3-Montreal
Jodi Pichovich
Email: montrealjetaa@yahoo.ca
URL: www.montreal.jetaa.ca

CN4-Manitoba-Saskatchewan (Winnipeg)
Michael Moreau
Email: mansaskjetaa@hotmail.com
URL: www.mansask.jetaa.ca/

CN5-Northern Alberta (Edmonton)
Gretchen Phillips
Email: president@najetaa.jetaa.ca
URL: www.najetaa.jetaa.ca

CN6-British Columbia (Vancouver)
President: Ala Ji
Email: info@bc.jetaa.ca
URL: www.bc.jetaa.ca

CN7-Southern Alberta (Calgary)
Kristian Whillans
Email: kawhillia@hotmail.com
URL: www.calgary.jetaa.ca

FR1-France
Cecile Gross
Email: cecilegross@aol.com
URL: www.membres.lycos.fr/jetaafrance/association_main.htm

FR2-France
Gregoire Bousquet
Email: whitetiger96@hotmail.com
URL: www.membres.lycos.fr/jetaafrance/association_main.htm

Germany
GR1-Germany
Frank Bender
Email: genki-sport@gmx.de
URL: www.jetaa.de

GR2-Germany
Friedrich Martini
Email: info@jetaafrance.org
URL: www.jetaafrance.org

IR1-Ireland
Neil Maher
Email: jetaaireland@yahoo.com

Japan
JP1-Eastern Japan
Daniel Lintz & John Ghanotakis
Email: jghanotakis@yahoo.com
URL: www.jetaa.com/

JP2-Western Japan
Aaron Isgar and Lisa Honda
Email: jetaawest@jetalumni.org
URL: www.jetaa.com

New Zealand
NZ1-Wellington
Marie-Louise Siddle
Email: jetaawgtn@hotmail.com
URL: www.jetaawgtn.org.nz

NZ2-South Island
Sean Lowry
Email: info@southisland.jetalumni.org
URL: www.southisland.jetalumni.org

NZ3-Auckland
Hannah Grace
Email: hanahgrace77@hotmail.com
URL: www.geocities.com/jetaaa

NZ4-Wellington
Marie Louise Siddle
Email: jetaawgtn@hotmail.com
URL: www.jetaawgtn.org.nz

NZ5-Tauranga
Sarah Anderson
Email: info@southisland.jetalumni.org
URL: www.southisland.jetalumni.org

NZ6-Auckland
Hannah Grace
Email: hanahgrace77@hotmail.com
URL: www.geocities.com/jetaaa

NZ7-Christchurch
Sarah Green
Email: jetaawc@jetalumni.org
URL: www.jetaawc.org

NZ8-Wellington
Caitlin Meister
Email: info@southisland.jetalumni.org
URL: www.southisland.jetalumni.org

US1-Great Lakes Chapter
The Great Lakes Chapter is involved in the JET pre-departure orientation, returnee reception in fall, career fair and workshops, and joining with other groups such as JAS and other international groups to host events.
Contact president@greatlakes.jetalumni.org or visit the website (www.greatlakes.jetalumni.org) for more information.

US17 Great Lakes Chapter
The Great Lakes Chapter is involved in the JET pre-departure orientation, returnee reception in fall, career fair and workshops, and joining with other groups such as JAS and other international groups to host events.
Contact president@greatlakes.jetalumni.org or visit the website (www.greatlakes.jetalumni.org) for more information.

US18 Minnesota (Minneapolis) Chapter
www.minnesota.jetalumni.org
Email: jetaa_mn@yahoo.com
Core group members: Nichola and Matt Schoenfelder; Rebecca Metz; Michael Mosenthin

We are a small but genki Midwest JETAA chapter, one of only a few chapters that is not in a city with a Japanese Consulate or Embassy. We have about 150 members, a regular group of whom get together several times a year. We typically meet monthly for a Happy Hour social at a local Japanese restaurant, which is also host to our annual sushi making and sake testing event. Other events include our send off party for new JETs; attendance at the St. Paul Lantern Lighting Festival; our joint JETAA / JASM barbeque; and our welcome back party for new returnees.

We welcome all returning JETS to our area. Please get in touch with us and sign up for our regular emails.

If you are interested in getting involved in your local JETAA chapter, or would like more information about JETAA events in your area, please access the JETAA International homepage at www.jetalumni.org for links to your local chapter homepage or contact the chapter representatives as listed on pages 15-16.
Korea
KR1-South Korea
Park Sung Hee
Email: sirayukihime21@yahoo.co.jp
www.jetaakorea.org

United Kingdom
UK1-London
David Giddings
Email: london@jetaa.org.uk
www.jetaa.org.uk

UK2-Midlands
Alison Bond
Email: abond@jetaamidlands.fsnet.co.uk
www.jetaa.org.uk

UK3-Northwest
Helen Coulson
Email: helen_coulson@hotmail.com
www.jetaa.org.uk

UK5-Scotland and Northern England (Edinburgh)
Janice Leary
Email: jetasascotland@yahoo.co.uk
www.jetaa.org.uk

United States
US1-Washington D.C.
Susan Gundersen
Email: susan_gundersen@hotmail.com
URL: www.jetaadc.org

US2-New York (*Philadelphia)
Jennifer Olayon
Email: president@jetaany.org
URL: www.jetaaany.org

US3-New England (Boston)
Matt McHale
Email: president@nejetaa.org
URL: www.nejetaa.org

US4-Southeast (Atlanta)
Kristina Rudski Murphy
Email: president@jetaase.org
URL: www.jetaase.org

US5-New Orleans
Angela Beard
Email: jet@cgneworleans.org

US6-Florida (Miami)
William Collazo
Email: PresidentFL@jet.org
URL: www.florida.jetalumni.org

US7-Chicago
Melinda Finkral
Email: melindafinkral@hotmail.com
URL: www.chicago.jetalumni.org

US8-Kansas City
Warren McAllen
Email: chapter_rep@heartlandjetaa.org
URL: www.heartlandjetaa.org

US9-Houston
Kelvin Chatman
Email: kelvin@jetaa9.com
URL: www.jetaa9.com

US10-Rocky Mountain (Denver)
Desiree Thorp
Email: info@rmjetalumni.org
URL: www.rmjetalumni.org

US11-Pacific Northwest (Seattle)
Amanda Mobbs
Email: officers@pnw.jetalumni.org
URL: www.pnw.jetalumni.org

US12-Portland
Kim Bartisch
Email: vp@jetaaportland.com
URL: www.jetaaportland.com

US13-Northern California / Nevada
Interim President: Andrew Hattori
Email: president@jetaanc.org
URL: www.jetaanc.org

US14-Southern California (Los Angeles)
Co-Presidents: Jennifer Lee and Mary Wakabayashi
Email: president@jetaasc.org
URL: www.jetaasc.org

US15-Hawaii (Honolulu)
Brad Araki
Email: bradaraki@hotmail.com
URL: www.jetaahawaii.com

US16-Anchorage
Mike Hellings
Email: platinum@alaska.net

US17-Great Lakes (Detroit)
Scott Norman
Email: president@greatlakes.jetalumni.org
URL: www.greatlakes.jetalumni.org

US18-Minnesota (Minneapolis)
Core group members: Nichola and Matt Schoenfelder; Rebecca Metz; Michael Mosenthin
Email: jetaa_mn@yahoo.com
www.minnesota.jetalumni.org

US19-Portland
Kim Bartsch
Email: vp@jetaaportland.com
URL: www.jetaaportland.com

US20-Rocky Mountain (Denver)
Desiree Thorp
Email: info@rmjetalumni.org
URL: www.rmjetalumni.org

Jamaica
JM1—Jamaica
Shawn Aarons
Email: shawnaarons@yahoo.com
www.jamaica.jetalumni.org

Russia
RS1 - Russia
Alexei Pavlov
Email: Alexei_a_pavlov@yahoo.com

JET Streams
JET Streams is published once yearly by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. It provides information and updates about the JET Programme and its Alumni Association (JETAA) to former Programme participants.

For further inquiries and correspondence, please contact CLAIR at

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations
Shin Kasumigaseki Building 19F
3-3-2 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0013 JAPAN
Tel: 03-3591-5968 Fax: 03-3591-5350
www.jetprogramme.org
Email: jet-aa@clair.or.jp