Hello, and welcome to the 2008 edition of the JET *Streams* newsletter. This newsletter is a forum for former JET Programme participants to share their stories with one another, and to stay connected to the development of both the JET Programme and the JET Alumni Association.

*JET Streams* is distributed via email once a year to all alumni who request it, and is also sent to all JET participants completing their tenure on the JET Programme this year. On behalf of CLAIR, I would like to say a big *otsukaresama* to the 2,200 participants finishing the JET Programme this summer. I would also like to thank all of the JETAA chapters and individuals who have contributed articles for this issue of JET Streams. We greatly appreciate it!

Sharon Bignell - CLAIR JETAA Liaison (jet-aa@clair.or.jp)

The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) currently has 49 regional chapters in sixteen of the fifty-four countries that have participated on the JET Programme (Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, and the U.S.A.). As of April 2008, there are over 44,000 JET alumni spread across the world, of which approximately 22,000 are JETAA members.

**Update your Contact Information**

Please take a moment to update your contact details with CLAIR, to ensure you continue to receive the JET Streams newsletter via email, and all other CLAIR announcements. You can update your information by visiting the “Former JETs” section of the JET Programme website ([www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)) or alternatively, email your contact details to: jet-aa@clair.or.jp.

CLAIR would like to ask all JET alumni for their help to provide great examples to include in this publication.

In particular, we are looking for:

- Alumni who are still in contact with their former Contracting Organisation, school or prefecture
- Alumni whose work involves cooperating with Japanese schools, local governments or prefectures. For example, work involving sister city relations or organising student exchange visits to Japan, etc.
- Alumni who are actively promoting Japan in their home countries either as part of a Japan-affiliated organisation or individually
- Photos of JET alumni promoting Japan in their home countries

If you are involved in any of the above and would be willing to provide information for this publication, please send an email to jet-aa@clair.or.jp by August 31, 2008. We really appreciate your help!
Countries and Participant Numbers
In the 2007-2008 JET Programme year, participants were welcomed from 41 countries. In total, there were 4,661 ALTs, 398 CIRs, and 13 SEAs. For the 2008-2009 year, the JET Programme welcomed about 1,800 new JETs, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 4,700.

New CLAIR Tokyo Office
On May 26, 2008, the CLAIR Tokyo Office relocated to the address below. Please be sure to send all correspondence to this address.

Sogo-Hanzomon Building
Kojimachi 1-7
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
102-0083 JAPAN

Phone and fax numbers have also changed, however email addresses remain the same.
Tel: 03-5213-1729 (JETLine)
Fax: 03-5213-1743

New JET Programme Website!
On April 1, 2008, CLAIR introduced its new JET Programme website. The website contains lots of useful information for aspiring, current and former JETs.

Take a look at the top page for the latest JET Programme announcements and details about submission criteria and deadlines for the JET Essay.
Would you like to join the JET Alumni Association?
The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) was created in 1989 to strengthen and maintain the bonds of friendship developed between JET Programme participants, and to promote a broader and deeper understanding of Japan and the countries participating on the JET Programme.

For further information about JETAA or to join your nearest chapter, visit the JETAA International website at: www.jetalumni.org/

On July 25th, 2008, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) held a ceremony in Tokyo to commemorate its 20th anniversary. Speeches were made by representatives from each of the ministries that co-sponsor the JET Programme: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Following this, a commemorative speech was given by New Zealand Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Ian Forbes Kennedy, about international exchange between New Zealand and Japan. In the evening, a reception was held where a 20th anniversary commemorative DVD was shown.

In addition, CLAIR produced a 20th anniversary publication, which details the history of CLAIR and its current activities, with comments from both past and present local government employees that have been seconded to CLAIR over its 20-year history.

CLAIR was established in July, 1988, in response to rising concerns about local-level internationalisation in Japan. At that time, Japanese local governments were advancing their international relations efforts, but were realising that there was a limit to what they could do on their own. Thus CLAIR was created to promote and provide support for internationalisation at the local level, through gathering information, undertaking research, and providing assistance to local governments, both in Japan and abroad. To further these aims, CLAIR also established a network of overseas offices in major cities: New York and London (established in 1989), Paris and Singapore (1990), Seoul (1993), Sydney (1994) and Beijing (1997).

The JET Programme Management Department became a part of CLAIR in August, 1989. Before this, all work related to JET participants’ placement, counselling, conference planning, etc. had been undertaken by a separate organisation, which was founded in 1986. With the establishment of CLAIR, however, it was realised that the goals of both organisations were similar: to promote internationalisation in Japan’s local communities. Hence, it was decided that the two organisations would merge, and become what we know as CLAIR today.

20th Anniversary of CLAIR

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The Seventh Annual JETAA International Meeting was held in Toronto from September 13 to 16, 2007. All of the JETAA International Country Representatives were invited to attend the meeting, along with JETAA International’s Executive Officers and representatives from CLAIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

In all, 13 countries were represented at the Conference – Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Jamaica, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the U.S.A. This year, Korea, Russia and South Africa were unable to attend.

As JETAA-I Executive and Country Representatives are able to meet face-to-face only once a year at the most, it is crucial that all key and current issues are discussed in the limited time available. The key topics discussed at this year’s meeting were:

1. **JETAA Content Management System**
   The centrepiece of our meeting was the new Content Management System (CMS), which is being spearheaded by former JET participants Paul Donovan and Scott Norman. With MOFA and CLAIR attending, and a live running version of the CMS software, we were able to bring forth further dialogue about the needs of those who will be using the CMS.

2. **Local Government Ties**
   One of the most important facets of the meeting brought us back to our roots. This year, we would like to emphasise the importance of maintaining and furthering ties with Japanese local governments. In other words, those ties with sister cities, and any other smaller, more local relationships that exist between our many member countries and Japan. By furthering these relationships, we hope to build a greater understanding of the importance of the JET Programme.

3. **JETALUMNI.ORG Updated!**
   This year, we have successfully completed one major task, thanks to former JET participants Michelle Fox and Paul Donovan. The new JETAA International website, www.jetalumni.org, has become the hub of our information network. We will also look to further standardise and professionalise our organisation electronically (standardised emails, more transparent voting, etc.).

With this in mind, we welcome feedback from all former JET participants about our organisation. JETAA is a fantastic organisation furthering our interest and contact with Japan and its culture. I encourage you to become involved with your local JETAA chapter, and to run for committee positions at both the chapter and country level.

**Other Agenda Items**
This year’s meeting also covered a number of other topics including:
- The long-term future of JETAA International and ways of establishing stability, maintaining professionalism and the establishment of a JETAA-I bank account.
- Further brainstorming for promotional strategy and marketing tools for JETAA International.
- An online resource bank for existing and new chapters and members.
- Ways to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the JET Programme and JETAA.
- Ways of supporting international charities.

A great deal of progress was made in all of these areas and Executive Officers and Country Representatives are now working hard on making these ideas a reality. More detailed information can be found in the **Meeting Report**, which can be downloaded at www.jetalumni.org.
The meeting concluded with the Parliamentary session and election of new Executive Officers. The key decisions made at this session were:

- Professionalism in conduct and presentation, inside and outside of JETAA, is a minimum requirement for all JETAA-I elected officers.
- That we recognise the fluidity of movement of our international team.
- That JETAA-I should continue to strive to become an independent organisation, raising its own funds where possible, and having its own financial procedures.

I would also like to thank all of those people who volunteered to contribute to the development of the Small Chapter Committee and the CMS Marketing Group, as well as the CMS technical team itself for its excellent ongoing work.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank delegates for placing their trust in me by voting me in as JETAA-I Chair for the coming year. We sadly bid farewell to the outgoing Chair, Ali Bond of the UK. We also say goodbye to our Secretary, Cindy Pitkin.

Both of these wonderful representatives will continue to remain active in their countries and local chapters.

**Incoming Executive**

Michael Adams, Chair (Sydney): chair@jetalumni.org
Joseph Luk, Vice-Chair (Toronto): vicechair@jetalumni.org
Michelle Fox, Secretary (Sydney): secret@jetalumni.org
Liz Aveling, PR (London): pr@jetalumni.org

This year’s team is talented and strong, and we have already begun to achieve great things on behalf of our outstanding organisation. Thank you to everyone who continues to make the JET Programme, the Alumni Association and JETAA International a success.

Michael J Adams
2007-2008 JETAA International Executive Chair

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**JET Alumni Voices**

**On Being an English Teacher and Following Your Dreams...**

Contributed by Dr. Charles Browne
ALT, Kumamoto Prefecture, 1987-1988
Professor of Linguistics, Meiji Gakuin University

In college, I didn’t start out with the goal of becoming an English teacher. I actually majored in English literature, with a focus on the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien. I had never been abroad before and never imagined that I would spend most of my adult life in Japan as a teacher and teacher-trainer. How then, did I end up in Japan?

Well, when I was a college student back in America, my biggest dream was to be able to travel abroad and to one day be able to come to Japan. I studied Japanese in college, and during my senior year, I applied for and was able to get a job as an Assistant English Teacher on the MEF Program (Monbusho English Fellows Program). This was an amazing bit of luck since I was a very poor college student who was paying for his own tuition by working many different part-time jobs. The program provided free housing, a fairly high salary for a fresh college graduate, and most importantly to me, free airfare!

I was sent to Kumamoto Prefecture where I worked for the Kumamoto Kyoikuinkai (Board of Education), in the Gimukyoikuka (Compulsory Education Division). During the three years I was in Kumamoto I was responsible for visiting 53 junior high schools and several high schools. Each day I would visit a different school and try to teach English together with Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and attempted to provide them with new ideas and techniques for teaching English in a communicative way. I cared very deeply about the MEF Program and the teachers I was working with, and the following year was actually lucky enough to be elected as the first national chairman of the (then) new JET Programme. Although the job was very hard, my experience gave me a very unique understanding of the challenges and problems the JTEs faced in their daily lives.

Although my work was very interesting, by my second year in Kumamoto I had come up with another dream to work towards - I thought it
would be very interesting if I could move up to Tokyo and work for a major Japanese electronics firm like Sony. Amazingly, at the age of 26, I got a job as the Director for an educational division of Sony Corporation known as Sony Language Laboratories. Once again my dream had come true! I was responsible for hiring and training the over 130 full-time teachers that worked in their various schools, and also for developing and evaluating Sony’s curriculum. It was a wonderful job that stretched my abilities and helped me to grow further in my understanding of the problems of English education in Japan.

After a few years though, I became a little disappointed with my job at Sony and missed being in the classroom and having my own students. Although Sony was a great company in some ways, I was uncomfortable with the fact that everything was focused on making a profit. I remembered fondly my days in Kumamoto where my only worry was how to help students and teachers to improve their English. After I came to that realization I came up with a new dream - to become a university professor and to focus more directly on teacher-training, so that I could have a larger, more positive impact on English education in Japan.

I quit my job at Sony and went back to school. I finished my Masters degree in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and quickly was able to get a full time job at a Japanese university. Once again my dream had come true! I immediately began doctoral studies in Applied Linguistics and graduated in 2003. From 1996 until 2007 I taught English at Aoyama Gakuin University’s Department of Business and worked very hard at publishing research, presenting at conferences, and doing teacher training for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

During my 11 years at Aoyama Gakuin I developed three different research interests in; (1) vocabulary acquisition, (2) junior and senior high school English education in Japan, and (3) CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). It was a great job, but one thing I missed at Aoyama Gakuin was that I wasn’t working with students who wanted to become English teachers. All of the interesting work I was doing seemed to be outside of Aoyama Gakuin – I even started my own online ESL learning company called Lexxica (www.lexxica.com). But the thing I enjoyed the most was the teacher-training work I was doing for MEXT, where I travelled around the country during my spring and summer vacations teaching junior and senior high school English teachers the latest teaching techniques.

I realized that it was time to think about my next dream. I decided that if I could move to a different Japanese university and work with students in a department of English, perhaps students who were studying to become English teachers, then I could help people even more than I was before. Imagine the joy I felt when I was accepted to join Meiji Gakuin’s department of English to help prepare students to become English teachers! Right now I am head of the teacher training department and have just received a grant to do a major online teacher development project for our students and alumni.

The reason I tell this story is that I have learned a lot since my college days about dreams and hopes for the future. I think it is very important to think deeply about what your dreams are and then to chase them with all of your heart. Most of us spend more time at our jobs than we do with our families, enjoying our hobbies or even sleeping, so if that job is not something you are really passionate about or believe in, I can guarantee that you will have a great deal of difficulty in becoming truly happy.

Being an English teacher is not one of the highest paying jobs you will find, but I can tell you that for me, it is truly fulfilling. Each and every day I get the chance to help people - to help make their lives a little better - to give them the tools they need to reach their dreams and to achieve some measure of happiness in their life.

To all of those JET participants who finished their contracts this summer, I hope you will also follow your dreams. I wish you every success for your life after JET.

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day)!

(This article is a slightly revised version of one Dr. Browne wrote last year for his school’s magazine to introduce himself to the students in his teacher training program at Meiji Gakuin University.)
Reflections on Japan  
Contributed by Paul Buckland  
ALT, Nara Prefecture, 2002-2003  

I still remember the first time I flew to Japan. It was the middle of summer in New Zealand but I was wearing woolly boots. We expected it to be cold when we arrived at Tokyo, and we weren’t disappointed. As we approached the runway to land at Narita airport it was snowing a gale, to which I announced to the surrounding passengers “Hey look, the snow goes sideways in Japan!” While I find it funny now, at the time I was deadly serious. In my defense I was only nine years old.

The year was 1987 and my mother, brother and I were going to Japan to join my father who had 4 months earlier become one of the first ever JET Programme participants. I remember it felt like an adventure into the unknown, armed only with a few facts Mum had told me about Japan, and a few words and phrases I had learnt in the weeks prior to our arrival.

I can only imagine how it must have felt for Dad. Twenty years later, the JET Programme is a well-oiled machine, and the support that JETs receive is exceptional. Before they travel to Japan, JETs receive orientations run by former JETs and the local Japanese embassy or consulate. When in Japan, there is a well-run orientation at Tokyo, followed by another at the prefectural level. New JETs benefit from information from a predecessor, Japanese tuition run by CLAIR, social networking through AJET, representation by National AJET, and the online community of JETs in Japan, among other things.

For Dad though, it was quite different. Tokyo Orientation was at the Keio Plaza Hotel, but that year there were only about 200 people there, not the thousands that is usual now. There was no predecessor to bring him up to speed about his village and school. And of course the internet was yet to arrive, meaning those handy online communities of JETs were not around either. They would probably have been handy, given how far away from other JETs and mainland Japan we were.

We were based on Miyake and Hachijo islands, 180km and 300km south of Tokyo respectively, in the Pacific Ocean. To get to Miyake it took 6½ hours on a ferry from Tokyo, while Hachijo was 10½ hours away. I remember the great fun I had on the ferry trips to and from Tokyo, playing cards and running around the boat. It certainly helped that I don’t get sea-sick though, as I’m not sure everyone else on the boat felt the same way!

In fact, Hachijo is so far away from the mainland that prisoners used to be exiled there. The first exile to be sent there was Ukita Hideie, one of the Daimyo defeated by the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in the famous Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. One thing I enjoy about Japan is that no matter where you go, the local area is famous for something!

Miyake also has an interesting history. The main peak on the island, Mount Oyama, is an active volcano, and still erupts from time to time. Four years before we arrived, Ako, the village we were based in, was destroyed by an eruption, and there are something like 200 houses buried there under volcanic rock. Most of the village had been rebuilt by the time we had arrived though.

My brother and I both attended Japanese primary school, and my brother graduated to junior high school while we were there. We partly studied through correspondence school work from back home, and partly through normal lessons. I can still remember learning my Hiragana and Katakana in class, rote learning through endless writing practice. Making friends was relatively easy, considering the language barrier. Perhaps running around and having fun is more important to kids than needing to understand each other. We did go to Tokyo a number of times. My most prominent memories of Tokyo are at Meiji and Asakusa shrines. We went to both shrines on the 1st of January, along with what seemed like the entire population of Tokyo. Being a nine year old in a sea of people all trying to get to the front of the shrine to throw a coin in and make a prayer is an interesting experience. Being so short, I couldn’t really see a lot, but I had a good view of the ceiling! In the end I chucked my coin
directly into the back of a policeman’s head, so maybe my wish wasn’t granted that year.

I still remember the day we left Hachijo to come back home. After we had boarded the ferry and were waiting for the boat to move away, we were waiting on the side waving to our friends and the people who had come to see us off. Many people had rolls of streamers and threw them to us from the wharf. I must have been holding 50 of them when we left. As the boat slowly moved away from the dock, the streamers broke one by one, severing the connection, until they had all broken and I was left with a handful of coloured paper.

My connection to Japan, though, has stayed with me, and my family’s experiences in Japan have had a large effect on our lives. In 1999 my brother went to Hyogo Prefecture as an ALT. He was the first ever second-generation JET. A once aspiring translator, he enjoyed teaching so much that when he came back home he instead went to teachers’ college and is now a primary school teacher.

In 2001, my then fiancée went to Nara Prefecture as a CIR, while I was finishing my studies. A year later, she returned home for one week, we married, and then 4 days later I was at the Keio Plaza Hotel for Tokyo Orientation, where Dad had been 15 years earlier. My wife was a Tokyo Orientation Assistant (TOA), welcoming us new JETs to the orientation. I guess you could say that Japan was our honeymoon.

To this day, Japan and the JET Programme plays a large part of my life. I’m involved with the JET Alumni Association here at home, helping our JET alumni, and also new JETs who are embarking on their own adventure. I’m now applying for a Monbukagakusho scholarship to study in Japan, and all going well, I hope I will be starting my next adventure in Japan soon.

The trip was organized by the hard work of NOLA Consulate employee and JETAA Mid-South President, Emily Winkler, as well as (the ironically named) Katrina Golden, one of the founders of the “Lean On Me” volunteer organization (www.help4families.org/). A group of volunteers from all over the country, JET alumni and their friends alike, convened in Emily’s apartment for two days of volunteer work. High school Japanese teacher Xian Barrett and myself were the representatives from Chicago.

Our volunteer teams went to two sites: a no-kill volunteer-run animal shelter called “Animal Rescue New Orleans” (www.animalrescuenumeworleans.org/), which helped rescue many abandoned animals post-Katrina and reunites pets with their owners; and the storm-struck Lower Ninth Ward, where we did yard work (residents of this area are fined by the city if they don’t maintain their yards, even though many of them have not yet returned to their homes).

The New Orleans I returned to had changed, but was in many ways the same. Some of my favorite places in the city were gone, but many businesses were open and thriving, particularly around the French Quarter. It was clear, however, that a city that struggled economically...
before Katrina, had taken a huge blow from the storm, and recovery was happening slowly. You could still spot Katrina Trailers around the city. You could also see watermarks on the side of houses and X’s marked on the front from when they had been checked for bodies following the storm. It was a harrowing reminder of the tragedy that happened only two years previously.

I spent both days volunteering at Animal Rescue New Orleans - cleaning cat cages, walking dogs, and generally assisting with the upkeep of the understaffed and underfunded shelter. The shelter’s director Robin Beaulieu told us that during the storm, some residents of the city were evacuated at gun point because they were not permitted to take their animals with them, but refused to leave without them. This must be considered in future evacuation strategies, because many people consider their pet to be a part of their family that they are unwilling to leave behind.

Despite their limited resources, ARNO has a strict no-kill policy for its dogs and cats, and on the first day I saw them rescue two scared puppies who had been slated for death at another shelter. By the second day, the puppies seemed happier and better socialized as a result of the care they received at ARNO. I was impressed by what the shelter was managing to achieve, despite their reliance on donations and volunteer staff to run their operation, and it was a pleasure to work with their organization.

Aside from our volunteer work, we were welcomed to New Orleans at a reception hosted at the Consulate General’s home. We also took advantage of all the excitement the city had to offer after hours, including a lavish Creole feast at Desire Oyster Bar on Bourbon Street, and of course, Beignets and Café Au Lait at Café Du Monde at midnight.

I’m sure many people are still hesitant about visiting New Orleans following Katrina. But New Orleans is still very dependent on tourism for its economy. The city is, for the most part, up and running, so now is as good a time to visit as ever. Also, if you’re interested in helping to make a difference during your trip, many guesthouses will offer discount rates to volunteer groups.

Japanese Language Education in the UK

Contributed by Kim Woodruff
CIR, Kagoshima Prefecture, 2003-2006
(kim.woodruff@jpf.org.uk)

One of my proudest moments during my three years on JET was reserving a hotel room under my first name, Kim, and being told “Ah, I get it – you’re Korean! I thought your Japanese was pretty good but you do have a bit of an accent”. The poor receptionist seemed quite baffled when I revealed that I was actually from the UK: it seems being British and speaking the lingo doesn’t quite go together – at least, not yet.

After returning to the UK in 2006, I spent an eye-opening year on the Civil Service Fast Stream, but found myself longing to use my Japanese more. Then, last September I was lucky enough to get a job at a Japanese organisation in London.

My job at the Japan Foundation London Language Centre involves organising training courses and other events for teachers of Japanese, disseminating resources, and answering enquiries about teaching and learning Japanese. I also have to keep up-to-date with UK policy on language education, in order to make sure that Japanese has the best possible chance of being taught in schools.

At the moment, around 250 primary and secondary schools teach Japanese, a number that has doubled over the last decade. Many of these teachers are also former JETs: some offer Japanese alongside another language, others teach an unrelated subject and run a Japanese club at lunchtime or after school, and others are class teachers in primary schools.
Greetings everyone!

My name is Sarah Lineker and I am heading into my fourth year as a CIR in Aichi Prefecture. This year I will be succeeding Michael Shu as the National AJET Chair for 2008-2009.

AJET and JETAA have a long history together, and I hope that this relationship will continue to strengthen and grow.

As you know, National AJET is committed to improving the personal and professional lives of all JET Programme 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. With continued communication and cooperation between AJET and JETAA we can both benefit and succeed in improving our undertakings.

We will do our best to ensure that returning JETs are aware of JETAA and all that it has to offer. Moreover, if there is any information or assistance we can provide to you in your personal or professional pursuits, please do not hesitate to contact us.

This year our Communications Liaison, Daniel Patterson, will be responsible for keeping the lines of communication between AJET and JETAA open. Please do not hesitate to use Daniel or myself or any members of the National Council as points of contact for tapping into the present JET world for the benefit of yourself, your JETAA chapter or just to stay in touch.

For more information, please refer to the National AJET website, www.ajet.net. I look forward to working with you this year.

Sarah Lineker
2008-2009 National AJET Chair
chair@ajet.net

It’s an exciting time to be involved in language education. In England, schools can get more funding by becoming specialist language colleges, and by 2010 all primary schools will have to offer a foreign language. At the same time, there is now a shortage of good applicants for teacher training who have language skills. People sometimes forget that your Japanese doesn’t have to be perfect to teach it. Most non-native teachers at UK secondary schools have around level 2 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. However, there are also many excellent teachers with Japanese below this level, who are successfully introducing Japanese language and culture in schools. Whatever their level, we try to help teachers keep up their Japanese by offering teacher training courses and encouraging them to continue studying on their own.

Although I had not previously considered teaching as a career, I can understand why so many former JETs have gone into the profession. Unlike teaching English in Japan, teaching Japanese in the UK means teaching a subject that students see as new, exciting and different. Many students who choose Japanese are very interested in anime and manga. The popular TV series Heroes has also helped create more interest in Japanese.

I find it inspiring talking to teachers who obviously enjoy their jobs and are able to share their enthusiasm for Japan and Japanese with their students. It’s also amazing to hear stories about successful school exchanges, including those between primary schools. One headteacher in the far-flung reaches of western Cornwall told me about his school’s annual exchange visit from Japan, and the bewildered Japanese students who step off the train wondering if they’ve reached the end of the planet, but leave a few weeks later among emotional goodbyes, having gained so much more confidence and developed a real bond with their homestay families.

I recently went back to Japan on holiday, and when I told my friends about my job they were surprised and intrigued to hear about Japanese being taught in UK schools. Hopefully, as more young people get the chance to learn Japanese, the idea of a Japanese-speaking Brit won’t seem quite so unusual.

Kim promoting Japanese at the annual Language Show in London
A total of 255 entries were received from current and former JETs for the 16th Annual JET Programme Essay Competition. 75 entries were received in the Japanese Language Category and 180 in the Foreign Language Category.

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, Science and Technology, a number of foreign embassies in Japan, and directors and staff of CLAIR, a total of 10 prizes were awarded to the following entrants:

**Foreign Language Division**

**Grand Jury Prize:**
Ashley Bissonnette (ALT, Mie)

**Prize for Excellence:**
Mitchell Stapleton (ALT, Kagoshima)

**Honourary Mention:**
Jill Patterson (ALT, Nagasaki)
Moriah Newman (ALT, Hiroshima City)
Meredith Hodges-Boos (former ALT, Ehime)

**Japanese Language Division**

**Grand Jury Prize:**
Katherine Wilde (CIR, Hamamatsu City)

**Prize for Excellence:**
Yuki Cruz (ALT, Kagoshima)

**Honourary Mention:**
Eliot Kelly (ALT, Shiga)
Benjamin Willey (CIR, Fukui)
Jungmin Kim (CIR, Tottori)

Congratulations to the prize winners and many thanks to everyone who submitted entries. We hope that even more JETs will share their experiences through this competition in the future.

All winning essays have been published in the 2008 JET Journal and also appear on the JET Programme homepage: www.jetprogramme.org. The essay by JET alumnus, Meredith Hodges-Boos, who was the only former JET to win a prize this year (Honourary Mention, Foreign Language Division), is also published below.

**Given Names**

By Meredith Hodges-Boos
ALT, Ehime Prefecture, 2003-2005

“Meredith Lynn Hodges-Boos… McCartney! Get back here!” My friend Jenni yelled as I took off down the road. Okay, so ‘McCartney’ isn’t really part of my name, but Jenni figured my name was getting so long and ridiculous already, adding one more didn’t hurt.

“But there was a tanuki!” I said, “You all have seen one and I haven’t!” A tanuki is a raccoon dog unique to Japan. They are also famous as statues with huge bellies outside of shops. But my obvious curiosity about it wasn’t rubbing off on my friend or my husband as they watched me dash off towards a bunch of persimmon trees at the side of the road.

“I only saw it for a second, Meru.” Greg said. “Mine didn’t count, either.” Jenni grumbled as she leaned on her car, “I ran over the bloody thing.”

Over a year ago, I had come to Japan thinking I knew everything. I could speak the language. I had studied the nuances of the culture. I’d been building myself up to participate in the JET Programme since I was fourteen years old. Sure, I’d miss my family, but I had that covered too. I was engaged. Greg, my fiancé was accepted to JET too and we were placed close enough together that we could share quarters. It helped we got to live in a house. Everything had gone according to plan. I felt like some mastermind at the end of a heist. We’d gotten everything we’d wanted.

Now there was a huge map in my analytical mind about how the rest of the time I’d live in Japan would go. It was such a pretty map, decorated with a big happy compass rose, North, South, East and West radiating out around the island of Shikoku. The huge title scrolled out across the top in elegant font, “Meredith Lynn Hodges (soon to be ‘Boos’), the Japan Years.” Finally, the legend translating out what a great time I’d have and how I was ready for anything… Then my first class took my snobbery and shoved it up my nose.

Names signify your being. It is who you are up to that point. How and why you were given your name probably has a special meaning behind it. Maybe your mother’s grandmother’s middle name is
now in play or your father’s favorite second cousin’s first name made it to the final cut. If I’d been a boy, my name would have been Kirk because my father is a Star Trek fanatic. Thank goodness for small favors, no offence to any Kirks out there. Most new parents don’t just throw a dart at the baby name book. But no matter how you got it, your name is yours.

The first new name any non-Japanese person usually gets is gaijin or gaijin-san, Mr./Mrs. Foreigner. As the children who lived next door to me soon proved, running up behind us, pointing and yelling, “It’s a Foreigner! Gaijin da!” soon became a town sport in our fishing village. No longer was I Meredith or was Greg, Greg, we were ‘foreigner.’ But they didn’t know us yet. We had expected this and knew as soon as we both started teaching they would learn our names and we’d learn theirs and that would be the end of the whole “Look it’s a Foreigner” Game.

One of the most basic and important phrases in any foreign language is ‘My name is…’ such and such. Most anyone who’s had foreign language training probably learned this in their first class. In fact it was one of the first things many ALTs taught their students. In Japanese the phrase is watashi no namae wa desu or the shortened, insert name here desu. Or if you want to be blunt about it. In most Western countries, your given name comes first not your family name as it does in Japan. This was just one of the many oversights I stumbled over blindly in my tenure as an ALT.

“Your name is what?” I could see the incredulity in their eyes as I spouted it off again, slower this time. It still took almost ten seconds to say. Even the teacher I was assisting looked baffled. The students of High School Class 2-F kept staring.

“Meredith” was my mother’s maiden name. ‘Lynn’ is my father’s first name. Hodges is my family name. I’ll get married next August so then my family name will change to ‘Boos.’” I smiled, expecting the same in return. Feeling ever so grown up, I wrote it on the board. Silence. I smiled again. Silence. Then the whispers…

“Nagaaai…loong.”

“ Weird. Why’s she got a name in the middle?” They don’t have middle names in Japan… “So what do we call her?” The kids turned their eyes back to me and the sweating English Teacher.

“Yes, what would you like them to call you?” The English Teacher asked quickly, ready to get on with it.

“Well, my name is Meredith.” I started. I guess it didn’t make sense to be called Hodges-Sensei since that would change the next year. “So, Meredith is fine with me.”

“Okay, Me-re-de-i-su.” The teacher turned to the class.

“Oh, no” I made the mistake of saying. “It’s more like Me-ru-de-su.”

One of the students laughed. “Meru desu ka?” Or in English, “Are you Meru?”

“Hai. Meru desu.” I’d forgotten lesson one. “Yes, I’m Meru.”

That became my second new name in Japan. From that day on, I lost my old name. To the students, I was not Meru-san, or Meru-Sensei, or even Meru-chan, as some of the teachers called me, I was simply Meru. Two syllables. Very simple. No strings attached. And after a while, the other ALTs picked it up. Then my soon to be husband and even my mom and dad started using Meru to address me.

At first, the loss was unsettling. Part of me was gone. It was a verbal amputation, but with its phantom pains I started to look closer at other people’s names. I wasn’t very good at Kanji characters. Yet another hole in my flawless map I had overlooked. But everyday on the bus I would find myself staring at the driver’s magnetic name plate and the students’ name tags tacked to their uniform lapels. Last names, first names, symbols for trees and rivers and ones that meant two or three different things all squished together like jigsaw puzzles. I worked at eight different high schools in our prefecture, so I didn’t get to see many of the students more than once or twice a year. I couldn’t remember all their names or even read them and after a while that depressed me. How was I supposed to help ‘internationalize’ anything if I couldn’t make one on one connections with my students?

Then I was called into the Principal’s office one gloomy Monday morning. “Meru-san,” he said, “You must use an umbrella when it rains.”

“I brought one today, sir.”

“No, this weekend you didn’t have one. The students saw you shopping without an umbrella in the rain. They were worried you would get sick and miss their classes.”

This shocked me so much that for a moment all I could do was nod my head and promise not to brave the weather empty handed again. I went back to my desk in the Teachers’ Room and waited for my class to start. When we started the lesson, I kept scanning the class...
trying to figure out just who had spoken to the principal about my lack of raingear. But instead of feeling paranoid, I felt strangely giddy and happy. The kids wanted me there… so much so that they tattled on me. It was a strange way to show it but it made all the difference. From that point on, I embraced the new name Meru and threw myself into my job as an ALT with renewed vigor.

Next class I had, I asked for the students to explain their names. It took them awhile to get into it, but after a while they started to show pride in what their names meant. Some had kanji names, some had names written in the syllabic hiragana and some had both. Some liked their names and some didn’t. But they all enjoyed telling me and the other students why. For me it was great to see my students expressing themselves in English with such pride. Then they came back to me. They knew me as Meru, but didn’t know why. So I told them about my first class and everyone laughed. “Meru desu.”

Half a year later, I returned to that class after getting married and getting yet another new name. I’d gained the surname ‘Boos’. In America that was a huge deal, but after the honeymoon, it was a relief to return to Japan and simply be Meru again. I could be curious and it was okay if I didn’t understand everything all the time. The students gave me a small party to celebrate my marriage and their present to me was to give me a kanji version of my Japanese name. Even though we didn’t have many classes together, the students and I learned so much from each other.

After two years on the JET Programme, I returned to the states and became an art teacher in an elementary school. During that time, I lost the name Meru and became Mrs. Boos. But I never lost the love of teaching or my curiosity I had found in Japan. My new students loved listening to my stories about my time overseas and many fun projects kept me in touch with students and friends back in our fishing village. Both my old and new students even exchanged New Year’s cards. Written on the back of my American art students’ cards was ‘watashi no namae wa…’; the return cards from Japan came with the words ‘my name is…”

Then, two years after that, I returned to Japan. I was about to get another new name, the name Mother. I wanted to visit my fishing village at least one more time before my daughter was born. Greg wasn’t able to go with me due to his own teaching job, but I was lucky enough to have my own mother accompany me. We stayed with friends and had a wonderful visit. During our stay we went to a Tug of War contest in another town I had worked for. I wandered in, the only blonde head in a sea of dark hair and expected to hear the usual chorus of ‘gaijin da!’

But instead, a little girl, named Sara strode over to me with big eyes and proclaimed, “Look, it’s a blond tanuki!” She pointed to my round belly and grinned. I blinked. Another new name… one that baffled my mother. But I only grinned back at the girl and drummed on my stomach. “Yes, and baby tanuki will be here in about two months.” I told her. Later, I explained to my mother that a tanuki was a raccoon dog in Japan. “But I’ve never gotten to see a real one. Jenni and Greg did though.” Mom was so amused, she ended up buying every little tanuki souvenir she could get her hands on in honor of my new name.

Before we left, many friends and past students gathered for a very important event. My daughter’s name was painstakingly broken down and each syllable was given its own special character. Now my ‘little tanuki’ also has more than one name too. In America she is ‘Kyrie’ and in Japan her name means ‘Precious Village Treasure.’ As we left for the airport in the predawn light, my calligraphy teacher handed me a plaque with Kyrie’s name written in Kanji. Clutching it in the backseat of the car, I watched my fishing village disappear as we crested the mountain.

I had come full circle thanks to my JET experience, from Meredith Lynn Hodges-Boos, to Meru, to Mrs. Boos, to Mrs. Tanuki, to soon to be Mother, and back to Meredith Lynn Hodges-Boos again. It had been a lovely trip and my mother was fighting back tears that we had to leave so soon. I patted my belly and wondered when was a good time to start planning Kyrie’s first trip to Japan. Suddenly, our friend hit the breaks and we squealed to a halt. “Ah, Meru, look!” she cried. There, standing in the headlights, was a real, honest to goodness, Japanese raccoon dog. The tanuki blinked as we stared at each other then scampered away into the darkness.
日本人ブラジル移民百周年を見据えたブラジルJETの活躍
JETAA Brazil’s Activities for the Centennial of Japanese Immigration in Brazil

JETAAブラジル国代表　相良 クリスチーナ泉

ブラジルを「先輩国」が推薦してくれ、総会の場で動議が出されました。そのおかげで活動を始めることが可能となりました。2004年9月に当時現職の小泉首相が訪問された際には、元JET参加者との懇談会が特別に設けられ、大変貴重な思い出となりました。首相が手掛けられたJETプログラムが、日本から一番遠い、地球の反対側まで届いていたことに大変喜んでおらっただけです。

ブラジル支部の活動はまだまだ短絡なものですが、ポルトガル語JETホームページを立ち上げ、日本在外公館が行うJETプログラム関連のPR活動・説明会、志望者面接、および出発前のオリエンテーションに携わる、そのほか、日本文化紹介の催しなどのポータルサイトを展開しております。広いブラジルの各地域においてメンバーがどうしてうまく「散らばって」おり、一人ひとりが自分の活動範囲内でJETプログラムのPRに協力し、お互いの情報交換の手段ともなっております。

今年2008年は、ブラジルの日系社会において記念すべき「日本人ブラジル移民100周年」を迎え、日伯交流年です。この100年の道程、ブラジルの地で日本人移民とその子孫が涙と汗で築き上げてきた功績がブラジル社会で高く評価され、国を挙げてのさまざまな催しを通して地球の反対側ブラジルで日本の存在が高まるものと期待しております。

今年度のJETAAブラジルの活動について書かせていただきます。サン・パウロ州教育局が行っている100周年記念教育プロジェクト「Viva Japão」では、ブラジル日本文化福祉協会と協力して、日本文化や移民の歴史などを州立の小中学校で紹介しています。その他、サン・パウロ日本館において、3月には雛人形の展示、5月には鯉のぼりや五月人形の展示を行い、日本文化の体験コーナーも設け、非日系の方々にも日本文化に触れることができました。そして、皇太子さまが6月にブラジルを公式訪問された際には、JETAAブラジルは日本文化福祉協会、及び各地の日本在外公館の事業のお手伝いをさせていただきました。100周年の波に乗って、JETAAブラジル支部も活動範囲を広げ、様々な貢献ができればと思っております。
While the JET Programme celebrated its 20th anniversary last year, Brazil only became a participating country on the JET Programme in 1995. Despite being a country with few participants, in the past 12 years we have sent nearly 80 Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) and Sports Exchange Advisors (SEAs) to Japan as part of the JET Programme. We hope that in the future, many Japanese local governments will also begin asking for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) from Brazil, to teach Portuguese to Japanese students.

I, myself, was a CIR on the JET Programme from 1997 to 2000 at the Mie International Exchange Foundation. My home state of São Paulo and Mie Prefecture are sister states, and I was lucky to be able to do lots of interesting work as a CIR, including translating and interpreting, putting together a newsletter in Portuguese and Japanese, making announcements on a local radio station for Brazilian residents in the prefecture, doing school visits, and appearing on TV, etc. Unlike CIRs from other countries, however, one of my duties was to provide support and advice to Brazilian residents working in the prefecture. An increasing number of Japanese Brazilians, the grandchildren of Japanese who immigrated to Brazil, are coming back to Japan with their families to work. Due to differences in language and culture, they encounter numerous problems. I believe that one of the most important jobs of Brazilian JET participants is to become a bridge between Japanese and Brazilians in whatever way we can, to help them respect and understand each other better, and live peacefully together.

The JETAA Brazil chapter was recognised as an official chapter of the JET Alumni Association at the 2001 JETAA International Conference, held in London. Compared with other JETAA chapters, we only recruit a very small number of new JETs each year, usually about three, which meant that it was impossible for us to have the required number of members, but we were given the status of “observer”, and this put things in motion and we were able to start organising events and activities. When Prime Minister Koizumi came to Brazil in September, 2004, our chapter was well established, and our members were able to have an opinion exchange with him, which is something I will never forget. The Prime Minister was very pleased that the JET Programme had made it all the way to Brazil, a country all the way on the other side of the world.

While the Brazil Chapter still remains small, we have managed to create a website about the JET Programme in Portuguese, and we assist the Japanese embassies and consulates in their promotions, as well as with interviewing and pre-departure orientation for new JET participants. We also volunteer at various Japanese cultural events. Our members are scattered throughout Brazil though, so each member plays their part in promoting the JET Programme in their area and shares information with other members.

This year, 2008, marks the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil and has been designated the Year of Japan-Brazil Exchange. Over the past 100 years, the contributions that Japanese immigrants and their ancestors have made to Brazilian society have been much appreciated, and through the numerous events that will be held nationwide, it is hoped that awareness about Japan, a country on the opposite side of the world, will be strengthened here in Brazil.

JETAA Brazil is expanding its activities in line with the 100th anniversary celebrations. We have become involved in a project called “Viva Japão”, which, in partnership with the Japan Society and the Board of Education in São Paulo State, has introduced Japanese culture and immigration history to Brazilian public school children at both the primary and secondary levels. Other activities we have been involved in include displaying hina-ningyou (Girls’ Festival dolls) in March, and having a koi-nobori (carp-shaped flags) and gogatsu-ningyou (Children’s Day dolls) display in May at the Japanese Pavillion, which focuses on bringing together different generations of Japanese Brazilians and non-Japanese Brazilians. In June, Crown Prince Naruhito officially visited Brazil for the centennial celebrations, and JETAA worked with the Japan Culture and Welfare Society and the various Japanese consulates and embassies to assist with their activities. With only a few members in our chapter, it is shaping up to be a very busy year, but I’m sure it will also be one of the most exciting years for JETAA Brazil.
JETAA USA held its annual Kintetsu-sponsored JETAA USA Essay Contest again for the third time in 2007. 76 essay submissions were received from JET alumni across the USA in September, and after careful consideration by a judging panel made up of alumni from various chapters and various years on JET, and a representative from Kintetsu, 15 winning essays were chosen based on the following three factors: development of narrative, writing style, and overall significance (effect on the reader). These 15 winners received a free round-trip to Japan and four nights hotel stay, courtesy of Kintetsu Travel.

In December, 2007, the winners flew to Los Angeles for an awards ceremony, then went on to Tokyo together, where they met with various government officials and attended a Welcome Reception. Following this, several of the winners went to visit their respective JET “hometowns”, where they had the chance to reunite with teachers, former students and friends.

The 15 winning essays can be found on the JETAA USA website (www.usa.jetalumni.org) and will also be included in a special 20th anniversary publication, which is expected to be printed in Fall, 2008.

The third annual Kintetsu-sponsored JETAA USA Essay Contest was a collaborative event organized by our Country Representatives, Shannan Spisak and Shannon Quinn, and our Essay Contest Committee, Clara Solomon (JETAA NY), Jennifer Olayon (JETAA NY), Liz Sharpe (PNW JETAA) and Steven Horowitz (JETAA NY), in honor of the 20th anniversary of the JET Programme. The overall goal of the essay contest was to foster relations between the USA and Japan, as well as maintain strong ties between the alumni and their local “hometowns”.

Prizes were awarded to the following entrants:
- Earth Bennett - “Ping Pong Diplomacy”, (ALT, Aomori, 2000-2002)
- Melissa Todd - “Sakiko’s Speech”, (ALT, Niigata, 2004-2005)
The essay by prizewinner David Flynn, “Unintentional Engagement” is published on the following page. David’s impressions of returning to Japan after 20 years are also included below.

If any JETAA chapters around the world are interested in organizing a similar essay contest, please contact the JETAA USA Country Representatives: us1@jetalumni.org or us2@jetalumni.org.

RETURNING TO JAPAN AFTER 20 YEARS

Contributed by David Flynn
ALT, Osaka Prefecture, 1987-1988

I hadn’t been to Japan in twenty years, since 1987-88 when I was a JET participant in Osaka-fu during the first year of the JET Programme. My daughter Caitlin is currently on the JET Programme, assigned to Gunma-ken, as well. When I heard I was one of 15 winners of the Kintetsu Essay Contest and was going to Japan, it really was an amazing opportunity and I was very excited.

I met the other winners at an awards ceremony in Los Angeles on December 8. Clearly we all had been changed by our time in Japan. Quick friendships developed, and continued during the flight to Tokyo the next day, and our four days at the Keio Plaza Hotel. The orientation during my JET year had been at the Keio Plaza Hotel, and immediately everything seemed familiar. I roamed the streets of Shinjuku, enjoying the noise and the lights, and finding that my bowing, my apologizing and even a few words of my Japanese returned.

The next day was for official visits, starting with the CLAIR office. There I met many officials who had made this trip possible. After a fine lunch, and a conversation with Mr. Kayama, the Chairman of the Board of Directors at CLAIR, we visited three government ministries: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At each I was singled out in remarks by the directors, because I was a participant in the first year of the Programme and represented tradition. I learned that JET, though challenged by private programs, is still strong, and expected to continue far into the future. That night there was another dinner, with us winners and representatives of CLAIR, Kintetsu, and other government ministries.

I spent my free day in Tokyo wandering the streets, then took several trains to Kizaki, the part of Ota-shi where my daughter is now living. After she met me at the station, we attended her cooking class. There we made a Christmas cake and decorated it with cream and chocolate, then made miso soup with vegetables - an interesting combination. The next day I visited her elementary and junior high schools, making speeches to the teachers, and enjoying tea in the principals’ offices. It was clear she was enjoying her JET experience. The last day with her, a Saturday, we visited Nikko, touring the temples, and viewing the “See no evil; hear no evil; speak no evil” carving of monkeys.

Several trains later on the following morning I was back at Tokyo Station to catch a Shinkansen for a three-hour trip to Osaka. The ride was uncrowded, relaxed, and with wonderful scenery like Mt. Fuji and Kyoto. Tada Masao met me at Shin-Osaka Station. He had been a teacher, since retired, at one of my schools, and with the help of CLAIR staff, we had made recent contact by email again. I spent that night at his house, not reminiscing but talking.
The next day Kawase Yoshihiko, another retired teacher from the same school, drove Tada Masao and I to an elementary school where Tada-sensei volunteers several days a week. I helped teach several classes of enthusiastic English students at Tanpi Elementary School. We drove around my old territory, utterly changed of course, then visited Matsuura Koji, another teacher-friend from twenty years before. He was now principal of an elementary school. In his office we enjoyed school lunch, and I was updated about many of the people I had known. After a stop at the office of Mr. Fujita, yet another teacher I used to know who is now Chair of the Habikino Board of Education, we drove to see my old neighborhood in Nankadai, then to Matsuura’s house. The whole Matsuura family and I had been great friends, and we instantly became reacquainted.

After this, Mr. Kawase again drove us, this time more than an hour into the mountains of Wakayama in the dark to an onsen. Matsuura Koji had rented a cabin for the night. After dinner we changed into male yukatas, and took an outdoor hot spring bath. Back in the cabin we four drank, talked, and enjoyed Mr. Kawase’s rakugo and puppet show with Shokichi, “Little Lucky”.

The final morning in Osaka-fu was sad, because I had to say good-bye to all my old teachers again. We had been re-united, however, and would maintain contact. Mr. Tada took me by train back to the Shinkansen station in Osaka-shi, and after another sad farewell I enjoyed a second relaxed ride, back to Tokyo Station.

That night, before my flight back to America the next day, I had a glass of wine by a window on the 45th floor of the Keio Plaza Hotel, gazing down at the lights of Tokyo. The trip had been wonderful, reconnecting with Japan and my friends. Much had changed, of course. My old territory was much more filled with buildings, with fewer rice fields. There was more English on the signs and buildings. Christmas was a bigger holiday than before. I had seen the promotion of women in the schools, which would not have taken place in 1987-88. Even people walking the sidewalks were less aligned into rows on left and right.

JET itself had grown from the 800 of us the first year to more than 5,000 annually, and though facing challenges, seemed set to remain active far into the future. My daughter didn’t face the pioneering problems of the first year, such as Japanese lack of experience with foreigners, teacher fears, and nationalistic opposition. That was all for the good.

In a real way, I felt America and Japan had overcome more of the wounds from World War II. Through JET and many other factors we had become more familiar with the humanity of each nation, so fewer stereotypes remained. JET has been a success, changing the Japanese and the Americans who have been touched by it, and helping to establish English as the nation’s second language. I would like to thank Kintetsu and JETAA USA, for giving me this wonderful opportunity to re-connect with Japan after so many years.
Unintentional Engagement
By David Flynn, ALT, Osaka Prefecture, 1987-1988

An American living in Japan for the first time has to learn the many cultural differences between what he is used to back home and what is daily all around. Some are obvious, such as bowing instead of handshaking. Others are below the polished surface. In my case, cultural ignorance led to my almost becoming engaged to be married without my knowing it.

Miss Wada was a substitute English teacher at a middle school in rural Tondabayashi, Osaka-fu, where I was assigned for one fall month as part of my Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) year in 1987-88. We taught a few classes together and spoke a few times at my desk. I was charmed one day in her class when she told the students about her childhood in a small village: “When I was a little girl...” Short and athletic, she and I were, to my mind, friendly.

After I left the school, she and her friend took me for a tour of Kyoto, then she and I met at a local coffee shop, the Cafe de Bebe, so I could give her copies of the many pictures I had taken. At this point I should have recognized signs that something more serious than meeting a colleague was going on, but I had been in Japan only a few months. There would have been nothing important in any of this activity back in the States.

Meeting at the coffee shop was a bad sign too, Inoue said, particularly because of the village where she lived near the mountains of Wakayama, which was inaka, or country. Dating as such didn’t exist there. At best, the young went to coffee shops in groups. For a single man and a single woman to meet at a coffee shop alone was a sign that they were engaged, or close to it. The majority of marriages were still arranged, matchmakers bringing the potential couple together for omiai, marriage meetings. Inoue’s marriage had been arranged by omiai.

Finally, when I described calling the house, he threw up his hands. “Mr. Flynn, when is the wedding date!” he said, a bit too mischievously for me. Permission to call a single woman at her house was given only when the couple was serious. To have the mother answer the telephone, then allow her daughter to talk with me, was a sign that we were considered by the family quite far along, he said. I didn’t dare tell him that the parents had invited me to their house to play mah jong, or that Miss Wada wanted me to meet her sister at the Cafe de BeBe that Friday.

The more details I told him, the worse I felt. Even the trip to Kyoto with her friend was a sign of a romance that had developed without my knowing it. The friend, he surmised, was there to pass judgment on me as a romantic partner. That Miss Wada had subsequently met me at the Cafe de BeBe...
meant I had passed. I must have been too friendly at the school.

After my talk with Inoue, I made mistake after mistake trying subtly to end the “engagement,” while keeping face for both of us. Word apparently reached Miss Wada that I was not interested in marriage, and the couple of meetings we had at cafes, both with a friend of hers, were suddenly tense. Her sister did not appear.

One meeting was to show off her new car. A driver’s license in Japan was extremely expensive, involving a required school that easily could cost more than $10,000, plus the cost of the car itself, a small Toyota. Miss Wada in addition was the worse driver I had ever seen. She almost crashed many times on our drive to and from the cafe. Still, I felt she was proud, and wanted to show me what she had accomplished.

“It is good to have a friend,” I said, when she let me out at my aparto. She didn’t say a word. Her sad face stared directly at me. Men and women were not friends in Japan.

One night soon after, I was drinking with two high officials in local school affairs. One, my JET go-between, sat on a stool at the local karaoke bar, his head bobbing as he neared alcoholic stupor. The other, a bureaucrat in his 30s and I were talking about America, and why there was so much divorce there. Suddenly he grinned broadly, and said, “I know about your secret.”

“My secret?”

“The Japanese woman!”

Oh dear. I had to be very careful. Miss Wada was only a substitute teacher, and it was these very men who would have to give her assignments and eventually hire her full-time. Her reputation, which may have been blemished already, had to be maintained.

“Oh her,” I said, as nonchalantly as I could, “but we are just friends.”

“Oh Mr. Flynn! You are a very lucky man.” He slapped me on the back like a man among men.

No amount of persuasion would work on the official. I felt badly that I had harmed Miss Wada. She had been working as a restaurant hostess that spring, and I wondered if I had caused her to lose her teaching job.

I called her house, genuinely concerned, and was told by her sister that she was out. Miss Wada never returned my call. A decision had been made, I thought. Just as well.

I saw Miss Wada by accident that July, near the end of my JET year, on a historical tour of emperors’ tombs in Fujiidera for new teachers. She had been hired for a one-year temporary job at a district middle school. I felt relieved as could be. I had been an idiot, and wanted to apologize to her. Directness, however, my American way, was offensive. We exchanged a few stiff words about her job as we entered the bus, then we sat at opposite ends during the tour. At the school where the ride ended, she talked to the women teachers. She looked at me once, angrily I thought. I watched her back as she walked away. That was the last of my “fiancée”.

No one confirmed whether or not we were engaged. Even discussing the problem with Inoue was chancy, as the concept of privacy was not part of the culture, and what we said “in private” undoubtedly became news a hundred miles around by the next morning. In the end, I have no sure idea of how close to engagement we were, but in the process I learned a great deal about how to live in Japan. The rest of the year I kept a distance from single Japanese women. I think of Miss Wada from time to time, hoping she has found happiness in spite of my American blundering.

CLAIR is always looking for people to contribute articles for the JET Streams newsletter. Articles can be about your experiences on the JET Programme or about life after JET, or on any subject that may be of interest to other alumni.

CLAIR needs your help to make this newsletter interesting and relevant, so please consider submitting an article. If you are unable to write an article yourself, please send ideas for what you would like to see included. The next edition of JET Streams is due next June. We are looking forward to some great submissions.

Email all submissions to: jet-aa@clair.or.jp.
JETAA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Here are some highlights of the activities that JETAA chapters have been doing over the past year. Chapter updates are only included for those chapters that submitted information to CLAIR.

AUSTRALIA
Sydney
Sydney JETAA holds a wide range of social and cultural events throughout the year. Events in 2007 included: a Japanese festival, monthly meetings, pub trivia night, JET pre-departure orientation and dinner, sake-tasting and onsen in the Blue Mountains, careers and networking night, taiko workshop, Japanese film nights, participation in JETAA international and regional conferences, yukata workshop, and a Christmas party.

Victoria/Tasmania/South Australia (Melbourne)
Vic/Tas/SA is an amalgamation of three state chapters, with the main committee based in Victoria and sub-chapters in Tasmania and South Australia. These are some of the events that were held during the last year: karaoke night (Victoria), moonlight cinema (Victoria), annual day trip, onsen and winery tour (Victoria), hanami view event (Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia), careers night (Victoria), bonenkai (Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia), film and dinner night (Tasmania and South Australia), Obon social function (Tasmania and South Australia), returnee function (Tasmania and South Australia), and an official function at Consul General’s residence (Victoria).

Western Australia/Northern Territory
JETAA WANT provides JET alumni many opportunities to continue their relationship with Japan and to meet the right people to assist them in forwarding their Japan-related ambitions, be they employment or otherwise. Activities include: outgoing JET info night and sayonara party, quiz nights, and regular social events, employment seminars and guest speakers, and a returnee party.

Canberra
JETAA Canberra’s events and activities include: a shinnenkai and Canberra Multicultural Festival (February), regional wine-tasting (March), AGM (April), Pre-Departure Orientation (June-July), trivia night (July), hanami picnic (September), field trip (September), Canberra-Nara Candle Festival (October), Okaerinasai Kampai Drinks (November), bonenkai (December), and movie nights and dinners throughout the year, monthly oshaberikai meetings, and quarterly general meetings.

Queensland
We are an active and enthusiastic chapter involved in distribution of an electronic newsletter, running a photo competition every two to three years which is exhibited during Japan week, hanami under the jacaranda trees in New Farm Park, sponsoring a sake tasting night during Japan week, conducting an Australia-Japan Trivia Night during Japan week, holding regular functions including dinners, lunches and sometimes karaoke, collaborating with the Consulate-General of Japan in Brisbane to recruit JETs through interview panels, and organising Q&A desks and workshops for departing JETs.

BRAZIL
Members of the Brazil chapter help consulates and the embassy in recruitment, selection, and interviewing of new JETs and with pre-departure orientation. They also introduce the JET Programme at events held by the consulates, Brazilian Japanese Culture Society, Japanese Government Scholarship Program Alumni Association and universities. This year, JETAA has also been cooperating with Special Committees for the 100th anniversary celebration of Japanese Immigration in Brazil and Nippaku Kouryu Nen.

CANADA
Ottawa
The Ottawa Chapter of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Alumni Association, or JETAA Ottawa for short, is an active group of JET alumni who are helping to give this government town some Japanese flavor. Events include: monthly social event (e.g. movie nights, pub nights, karaoke, Japanese restaurant), Japanese lessons, Ottawa Natsu Matsuri (Japanese Summer Festival), katakana name writing (Ottawa Tulip Festival), cooking class, re-entry seminar for returning JETs, networking wine and cheese, JET recruiting and orientation.

Toronto
JETAA Toronto is a busy chapter, with 12 monthly events, as well as a sporting event every season. JETAA Toronto organizes a number of activities throughout the year for its members. A couple of annual activities are the re-entry seminar for returning JETs in the fall, the spring hanami party, a Toronto harbour boat cruise and our Annual General Meeting and shinnenkai. JETAA Toronto tries to organize activities that incorporate the large Japanese-Canadian community in Toronto. Some of our events are done in partnership with the Japanese Visitor’s Association (JAVA) and the Canada Japan Society (CJS). This allows our members numerous opportunities to interact with different people in Toronto.

British Columbia and Yukon
The JET Alumni Association of British Columbia and Yukon (JETAABC) is one of Canada’s most active chapters. Some of our events include a preparation seminar and reception, regular food nights, pub nights, volunteer appreciation boat cruise, JET Alumni vs. Mokuyokai bowling competition, Korean spa/food night, career development seminar, summer BBQ, shiatsu workshop, snowshoeing hike with Mokuyokai, sake and shochu tasting event, Ready JET Go! dragonboat fundraisers, Japanese Language Proficiency Test volunteer proctors, ikebana class, teaching onsen and winery tour for returning JETs (shared with NAJETAA), JET recruiting and orientation.

Southern Alberta
SAJETAA serves as a cultural and social link to Japan for JET alumni living in Southern Alberta. We keep members’ interest in Japan and in JET alive with social and cultural events including pub nights, karaoke, dinner at Japanese restaurants, taiko workshops, cooking classes, re-entry seminar for returning JETs (shared with NAJETAA), JET recruiting and orientation.
FRANCE
JETAA France has been involved in various events, such as promotion of the JET Programme through visits to universities, cooperation with the Japanese embassy for the creation of posters, and active participation in the pre-departure meeting and the interviews for selection. JETAA France set up a display at the CLAIR Paris Office’s booth during the French Mayor Congress. JETAA France also sets up original presentations on Japanese culture at the Japan House of the Paris campus, and organises get-togethers such as the annual shinnenkai, hanami and picnics. This fall (Sept-ember 25-28, 2008), JETAA France will host the 2008 JETAA International Meeting in Paris.

GERMANY
The German JETAA chapter has created a mailing list which provides various information about job offers, etc. The chapter also participates in the returners meeting in Berlin, and organises photo contests. It has also set up a networking-database and XING GROUP: JETAA Deutschland Alumni (see: www.xing.com).

IRELAND
JET AA works closely with the Embassy of Japan in Ireland and other Japanese groups to provide support, social events and advice for all former JETs. Activities include film nights, table quizzes, Japanese cooking demonstrations, returners’ reception (hosted by the Embassy of Japan), trips to Japanese cultural events e.g. taiko drumming, koto concerts, and pre-departure language classes for new JETs.

JAMAICA
Jamaica JETAA plans and executes school visits - primary to tertiary level; engages in JET promotions and promotion of Japanese culture at various events such as International Days; assists the Embassy of Japan with coordination of cultural events; assists in the recruitment, screening and selection of new ALTs, and with pre-departure orientations for outgoing ALTs; prepares a handbook for outgoing ALTs; prepares and circulates an Annual Newsletter to current JETs and JET Programme stakeholders; holds an essay competition for high school students to promote awareness of Japan; holds a photo exhibition and talk/seminar for primary level students and teachers to learn more about Japan through pictures taken by current JETs as well as photos taken by JET Alumni; and undertakes other promotional activities that may arise during the course of the year or as requested by the Embassy.

JAPAN
Eastern Japan
JETAA Eastern Japan is a network for former JETs in Eastern Japan providing formal and informal, online and in-person opportunities to network with current and former JETs, as well as people and organizations in Japan affiliated with or interested in the JET Programme. Activities include: sponsoring networking events and informal gatherings, including a Shinnenkai; holding job fairs for former JETs and JETs soon-to-complete their contracts; providing internet-based information for living in Japan, including internet-based employment information, much of which involves former JET-specific interest by employers; supporting and attending events held by different Japanese government ministries and related organizations; volunteer activities in collaboration with different foreign embassies; supporting and attending JET Programme-related events such as the Returnees Conference, JET Programme Welcome Receptions, JET Programme anniversary events, etc.; promoting the JET Programme and representing and promoting the JET Alumni Association in Japan to Japanese and foreign media and a variety of Japanese domestic and international organizations; working with JET alumni groups worldwide in a variety of areas, including networking, promoting the JET Programme, etc.

Western Japan
The Western Japan Chapter includes Nagoya, and all areas west of Nagoya. It was active several years ago, but became inactive until earlier this year when a few alums decided to serve on the Executive Committee. On July 6, JETAA Western Japan had a Revolution Day Party in cooperation with the St. David’s (Welsh) Society and the St. George’s (English) Society at an Australian pub newly opened by a former JET. The Chair also attended the new JET orientations in Tokyo, and found it to be very helpful to meet people from AJET and CLAIR, as well as enjoyed the stroll down memory lane. We also tried to organize a viewing party for the Yodogawa Fireworks with the Danish Chamber of Commerce in Western Japan. In November we had a gathering at Rokko Island for a cheese fondue.

NEW ZEALAND
Wellington
This close-knit chapter has been going strong for over 10 years with old and new members working together to create a community of ex-JETs in Wellington. Some of our activities include: pre-departure orientation and workshops, monthly drinks, karaoke, onsen trip (new for 2007), tramping, quiz night, bonenkai, social functions with other Japanese interest groups (ongoing), sushi making and other food events, and a hanami picnic.

South Island
JETAASTI aims to hold a variety of events during the year to help JETs maintain their personal ties with Japan, and to promote Japan, Japanese culture and the JET Programme in the community. We work closely with the Christchurch Consular Office of Japan in the promotion and selection of candidates on the JET Programme each year, and are continuing to establish ties with local Japanese organisations to promote mutual aims. Our events include: AGM and welcome dinner, hanami picnic, Japanese cooking class, karaoke evenings, winter onsen trip to Hanmer Springs, bonenkai, Japan/NZ trivia evening, and a career and networking evening.
Auckland
JETAA Auckland’s goals are to assist and support JET participants in their re-adjustment to life in New Zealand, assist in the promotion and implementation of the JET Programme, and promote international relations between Japan and New Zealand. JETAA Auckland plans a number of events throughout the year for members. Here is a list of events we have held/will be holding: an AGM dinner, kayaking/rafting at Rangitoto, a pre-departure Q&A session and answer sessions and orientations for new JETs, regular social drinks, hanami, NCEA Japanese language workshop and monthly pub nights for all students studying Japanese, video competition for secondary schools throughout New Zealand, quiz night, bonenkai (end of year dinner), walking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, and a golf tournament for members and the Japanese community.

SOUTH AFRICA
JETAA South Africa has three broad objectives: to provide support for the JET Programme, to foster a broad and deep understanding between South Africa and Japan, and to strive toward forging a national JETAA community. Activities include: an AGM (February/March), pre-departure Q&A session (June), pre-departure orientation (July), returnees party (November), and various social gatherings and general meetings throughout the year.

UNITED KINGDOM
London
JETAA London organizes “JETConnect” networking evenings, monthly pub nights (in Fluid Bar, Farringdon) and “Speed Dating” – a very popular event that is held about two/three times a year. JETAA London also holds a pre-departure Q&A day for new JETs and parents; a returnees’ party; a careers information day (for returning JETs); the JETAA ball; Japanese restaurant nights; sake tasting and sushi making with the Japan National Tourist Organisation; and film nights.

Midlands
Some of the events held by the Midlands chapter include an annual taiko workshop led by Joji Hirota, regular Japanese cinema evenings, bi-monthly Japanese restaurant visits, a pre-departure event for new JETs, a returnees’ Christmas party, a sake workshop, a visit to the Tatton Park Japanese gardens, a “go” workshop, cookery days, and a kimono appreciation event.

North West
JETAA North West represents ex-JETs living in the north west area of England, which covers Manchester, Liverpool, Cumbria and Lancashire. Chapter activities include: karaoke at Tiger Tiger, Manchester; taiko performance in Preston Kodo at Bridgewater Hall; Japanese conversation evenings at the Japan Centre; anime and Japanese films at Cornerhouse cinema, Manchester; and a trip to the Japanese Gardens at Tatton Park.

Wales
We are a new chapter and primarily a social networking group. We have a Yahoo! Group and a Facebook group and warmly welcome new members. Thus far we have organised a hanami picnic, a trip to watch Wales vs. Japan in the Rugby World Cup, a hike in the Brecon Beacons, and various theatre outings to Japanese plays in Cardiff. We also organise regular pub meetings for committee members which anyone is welcome to join.

UNITED STATES
Washington D.C.
JETAA DC is a very active chapter with recently returned members working and playing alongside veteran JETs. Our active members range from early 1990s returnees through last summer’s returnees which helps with networking. We usually host at least two different types of events each month and we try to mix up social events alongside language, volunteer or business meetings. JETAA DC organises regular events such as monthly happy hours and quarterly business meetings. In winter, we hold bonenkai and shinnenkai parties. In spring, we attend the Japan-America Society of Washington D.C.’s Annual Sakura Matsuri Street Festival. In summer, we organize a social event with new JET participants, new JET orientation and a pre-departure reception. In the fall, we hold a career night, welcome back reception and the JETAAADC Rally (scavenger hunt). Other periodic events include Nihongo Dake/Hanbun dinners (3-4 per year), volunteer events (3-4 per year) and other social events such as karaoke nights, sento outings, sporting events, hiking, tubing, etc.

New York
JETAA New York is one of the largest chapters in the US, covering the metropolitan New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania areas. For new and established JETAAANY members alike, we provide numerous opportunities to reconnect with their Japan experience through our own signature events and in collaboration with a vibrant Japanese cultural scene in the greater New York area. We also work closely with both CLAIR’s New York office and the Consulate General of Japan in New York City. Activities include regular nihongo dake dinners and happy hours; yearly softball tournament; the JETAAANY career forum; pre-departure
New England
Our chapter mostly organizes around Consulate-sponsored events and activities and supports other events and learning related to Japan. Many members are interested in taking our Japanese classes and attending events like the Nihongo Dake Dinner in which only Japanese is spoken. In the next year, we are planning to hold a Japan-related photo exhibition and possibly a digital storytelling workshop, which would allow our members to combine a variety of audio and digital media. Other events include: welcome party for new JET alumni, Japanese classes, happy hour, visits to the Japanese collection at local museums, shinnenkai, pre-departure orientation for new JETs, Japanese crash-course for pre-departure new JETs, and a book club for Japanese literature in translation.

Southeast
JETAASE is an active and growing chapter. In 2007, our chapter hosted the US National Conference in Atlanta, GA. We offer social events for new and old alumni, workshops and seminars to further education and career, and continue the promotion of cross-cultural understanding between the US and Japan via several events and activities. Some of our events and activities last year included: Annual Shinnenkai Celebration (January); JET interviews and Community Luncheon (February); Iron Chef Potluck (March); Hanami Picnic at Dogwood Festival (April); Q&A session for new JETs (June); pre-departure orientation for new JETs (August); welcome back picnic and JapanFest (September) and annual camping trip in South Carolina (October). We also hold quarterly culture and lecture series, monthly social events, monthly executive officer meetings, and help with recruiting for potential JETs.

Mid-South
Mid-South JETAA is hoping to remain active as the Japanese Consulate in New Orleans relocates to Nashville. We have been able to reestablish some social activities after regrouping following Katrina. New members are needed and welcome to organize activities and take on leadership roles. In addition, the mid-South chapter is currently building a sub-chapter in Kentucky and establishing a new chapter in Nashville.

The Mid-South chapter assisted with consular activities such as JET Q&A session and pre-departure orientation. Additionally, JETAA hosted a month-long intensive Japanese class, a mixer with local Japanese university students, a Japanese cooking night, and had a tent with Japanese dress-up at the New Orleans annual Japan Fest. Our biggest event in 2007 was a multi-chapter event in which we invited JETAA members throughout the U.S. to come to New Orleans for a volunteer project. We had about 20 members participate representing six states. For two days, we volunteered with a local animal shelter and at a lower 9th ward community clean-up. The Consul General also hosted a reception at his residence for newly returned JETs and the volunteers.

Florida
JETAA Florida works along with other Japan-related organizations in Florida to promote interest and understanding of Japan in our community. We organize an annual shinnenkai in Tampa (January); mikoshi carrying at Morikami Museum, Palm Beach (February); hanami/happami in Tampa (March); JET pre-departure Q&A sessions in Tampa and Miami (June); natsu-matsuri in Tampa (July and August); games and JET info at Obon Summer Festival in Palm Beach (August); and JET information sessions at universities statewide (September through November). JETAA Florida also set up a Support Mentor Program, where returning JETs are given JETAA mentors and set up in regionally-organized sub-chapters who organize regional socials (South Florida, Tampa/Sarasota, etc.).

Chicago
While our chapter covers a big area in three states, our chapter’s active members are mostly those who now live in Chicago or the surrounding suburbs. As for social events, we have the highest turnout for our annual shinnenkai and yakiniku/karaoke nights. We are always looking to try new events in order to attract more members and to be more visible in our community. Our big goal this year is to expand a little more by holding events in the suburbs and possibly in the other two states. We stay connected mainly through Yahoogroups. We have a strong group of members this year with our new returnees being very enthusiastic to join as well as older members continuing to stay very active. Some of our activities include: Consulate Returnees Reception and Shinnenkai (winter); yakiniku/karaoke night (spring); Q&A session and reception with new JETs, a welcome back picnic, and a baseball game with the Japan Society of Chicago (summer); career fair and Lincoln Park “Spooky Zoo” Volunteer Event (fall). Other events include nihongo dake dinners, happy hours, music concerts, summer festival outings and skiing/snowboarding trips.

Heartland
Heartland JETAA covers the six states formerly under the jurisdiction of the Kansas City Consulate General. We are a moderately active chapter and hope to host a Regional Conference next year. Some of our activities and events include: the annual meeting, quarterly meetings in sub-chapters, monthly meetings in Kansas City, shinnenkai, the Midwest Japanese language contest, a career advancement event, hanami, tsukimi, JET Q&A seminar in KC, the Midwest JETAA Mentor Program, where returning JETs are given JETAA mentors and set up in regionally-organized sub-chapters who organize regional socials (South Florida, Tampa/Sarasota, etc.).

Texas and Oklahoma (Region 9)
JETAA Region 9 is committed to supporting the JET community in Texas and Oklahoma, as well as the efforts of the Consulate-General of Japan at Houston. We are currently expanding chapter involvement in Japanese relations and cultural events beyond Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth. Our events in September included the executive officers meeting, happy hour, group viewing of an Asian art exhibit, and volunteer support for Kaminari Taiko. In October, we participated in the Asia Society Texas Center Luncheon and Lecture, Komen-Houston Race for the Cure, and a CLAIR dinner and discussion, and organized a bowling night. Other events included: happy hour “tabehoudai” and karaoke night (November); JET returnee reception at the Consul’s Residence, general meeting and planning session (December); JETAA shinnenkai (January); cultural trip and happy hour in DFW Sub-Chaprer (February); and business afterhours and ‘meishi-koukan’ mixer (March).
**Bay Area**

Although they are often located in further Northern California, most of our events occur in and around the Puget Sound area. PNW JETAA also includes our Inland JETAA sub-chapter that focuses its activities in and around Spokane, Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. PNW JETAA holds monthly officer meetings, monthly networking happy hours, and bi-annual community events. Other events include: “shinnenkai” meeting and officer elections (March); Seattle Sakura Matsuri (April); Annual Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Food Bank “Walk for Rice”, and Departing JET Training Weekend with PNW JETAA-sponsored pizza party (June); Seattle Mariners Night (July); bon-odor, and the PNW JETAA summer picnic (August); Eastside Nihon Matsuri Association (ENMA) Aki Matsuri, and Seattle Arboretum Tsukimi (September); Imoni-kai, JET returnee weekend reception and career day (October), and a bonenkai (December).

**Northern California**

JETAANC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization open to current and former participants of the JET Programme. The organization serves as a network resource for JET alumni in the Northern California region. In addition, JETAANC collaborates with the Consulate General of Japan to provide recruitment assistance and orientation for new JET Programme participants. Most of our events occur in and around the Northern California Bay Area, although they are often located in further-reaching areas, from the Central Valley to Nevada and beyond.

**Southern California**

JETAANC organizes a shinnenkai, hanami, tax seminar for returnees, social networking events, professional networking events, career and networking forum, internet-based networking groups, media circle events, family day picnic, sake tasting event, Japanese cultural seminars, progressive dinner, scholarship fundraising, scholarship giveaway, group sports events, and volunteering in the community. We are also active in Northern California's many Japan-related cultural and artistic events, and serve as a resource to the community.

**Portland**

Our mission is to (1) provide a professional/social network for JET alumni; (2) serve as a resource to the Portland Japanese Consulate in recruitment and training of new JETs; and (3) promote international understanding on a local level through cultural exchange and community activities. Our activities include: shinnenkai and mochitsuki (January); officer annual meeting (February); JETAA officer elections (March); hanami-kai (April); GIA signing day (May); Iron Chef and Pre-Departure Orientation (June); sayonara BBQ and Mexican themed meeting (July); JETAA National Conference, annual oboon party, Masters Golf Tournament, JET pre-departure dinner (August); Returnee Party/Festival and Miso Magic Cooking Class (September); JETAA Job Panel and annual Halloween party (October); JET campus recruiting (November); and bonenkai, origami workshop and Japanese Emperor’s Birthday (December). We also hold JETAA United Soccer and J-Kaiwa Classes throughout the year, and have a book club.

**Pacific Northwest**

PNW JETAA encompasses Washington, Northern Idaho, and Western Montana and focuses most of its activities in and around the Puget Sound area. PNW JETAA also includes our Inland JETAA sub-chapter that focuses its activities in and around Spokane, Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. PNW JETAA holds monthly officer meetings, monthly networking happy hours, and bi-annual community events. Other events include: “shinnenkai” meeting and officer elections (March); Seattle Sakura Matsuri (April); Annual Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Food Bank “Walk for Rice”, and Departing JET Training Weekend with PNW JETAA-sponsored pizza party (June); Seattle Mariners Night (July); bon-odor, and the PNW JETAA summer picnic (August); Eastside Nihon Matsuri Association (ENMA) Aki Matsuri, and Seattle Arboretum Tsukimi (September); Imoni-kai, JET returnee weekend reception and career day (October), and a bonenkai (December).

**Rocky Mountain**

The Rocky Mountain JET Alumni Association is based in Denver, Colorado. Our mission is to support returning JETs, encourage participation in the JET Programme in collaboration with the Consulate-General of Japan at Denver, and serve as informal ambassadors of Japan. Some of our activities last year included a shinnenkai (January), Sing into Spring Karaoke and Sushi (April), JET Q&A (June), career forum and networking event (September), a sushi rolling demonstration/JET welcome back party (October), a ski trip and onsen visit (winter), and book club meetings held bi-monthly.

**Southern California**

JETAA SC is one of the most active alumni chapters around and has a long history. Some of our events include: monthly second weekend socials (shinnenkai, bonenkai, picnics, rock wall climbing, hikes, trying new things in the greater Los Angeles area), bi-monthly nihongo dake dinners, numerous volunteer opportunities in local Japanese community, annual networking events in the fall and spring, and pre-departure seminar for new JETS. Area representatives also organize local events.

**Hawaii**

It is the goal of JETAA Hawaii to perpetuate our growing network of alumni each year. With so much interest here in the Japanese culture and language, we work towards becoming a great resource for our local community, as we act as ambassadors for Japan. We have been very instrumental in assisting the Consulate-General of Japan here with community events, recruitment of JET applicants, interviewing of new JET candidates, helping to facilitate the Q&A session, hosting cultural workshops for the new JETS, and preparing them for life in Japan. Other events and activities include: shinnenkai celebration, general membership meeting, Ohana Family Fun Fest, Japan Wizards Competition (JASH event), Iron Chef, Nabe Taikai (hot pot dish competition), kujira hike (whale watching) at Makapuu, yukata/hanami night, Starbucks Aids Walk, JCCH Kodomo No Hi (Children’s Day Celebration), kokusai sake-kaai at Consul General’s residence, summer picnic, karaoke nights, Aiea loop hike, welcome back reception and career workshop, and bowling.

**Great Lakes**

JETAA Great Lakes organizes karaoke nights, a returnees reception, a career fair, bonenkai, shinnenkai, happy hours, and other events that people suggest and plan. We are an outlet for your creativity, and a liaison to the various Japan-related organizations around Michigan and Ohio.

**Minnesota**

JETAA of Minnesota was founded several years ago to provide a resource for those recent returnees of the JET Programme to readjust back to life in the United States. It was hoped that through shared experiences in working and living in Japan, we could provide a support network for those returnees who had recently come home. JETAA-MN has always been interested in promoting the JET Programme, promoting the ideals of internationalization in our respective communities, and trying to establish communal ties with other Japan-oriented organizations, as well as those with greater international awareness themes. Our activities include bi-monthly get-togethers at local Japanese restaurants, sushi making and sake tasting events, a barbeque with Japan America Society of Minnesota, organizing a send off party for new JETS, setting up a booth at the St. Paul Lantern Lighting Festival, and a welcome back party for new returnees.
Would you like to join the JET Alumni Association?

Do you live in a country or area which does not have a JET Alumni Association Chapter?

We can help you to get started by setting up a chapter local to you.

Here’s how...

1. You will need to find some local members
   This can be accomplished via word of mouth, and also with the help of your local Japanese consulate. From there you can start to build your membership numbers slowly.

2. You’ll need to set up a working group
   This will include you and anyone else keen on helping you get things set up. This need not be a formal committee at this stage, although later on, when you get bigger, you will want to appoint a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

3. You need to think about the kind of activities you would like to do
   Depending on where you are and how many people are around, you can hold various events:
   - Japanese cultural events - hanami, cookery, ikebana, taiko
   - Socials - drinks nights, Japanese meals
   - Pre-departure events (for people about to go on JET)
   - Careers/networking events
   - Welcome back night (for returnees)
   - Japanese language lessons
   - Newsletters and email forums

4. You can apply to become a member of JETAA International
   This is the umbrella organisation for JETAA chapters and we will be happy to welcome you into the group. Membership of JETAA-I means that you can participate in regional meetings with other chapters, use the JETAA logo, access resources and advice and network with other chapters and members.

5. You can apply for funding for activities
   Funding for activities may be obtained from CLAIR as they provide funds to chapters with over 50 members. If you have fewer than 50 members there may be other ways you can get help. Japanese consulates may also provide funds for various cultural events - you will need to liaise with your local consulate.

6. You can look at what other chapters are doing
   The JETAA website is a great place to start (www.jetalumni.org). We are currently working hard on getting lots of new resources on to this site, including advice on accessing funding, chapter newsletters, templates for planning events, event brochures and pre-departure guides. From this site, you can also visit other JETAA chapter websites around the world.

7. You will need to set up a database of members
   JETAA International is setting up an online database for members to nominate the chapter they belong to (along with their contact details). However, this is still in the process of being created. In the meantime, a simple spreadsheet can be used. For chapters that require funding from CLAIR, keeping a detailed and up-to-date list is essential.
### JETAA CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES

#### AUSTRALIA

- **AU1-Sydney**
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- **AU4-Western Australia/Northern Territory**
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- **AU6-Queensland (Brisbane)**
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### 8. You could set up a website

The [www.jetalumni.org](http://www.jetalumni.org) site can host your website but you will need someone to create a website for you so it can be uploaded.

Sounds like a lot to do? Don’t be concerned as we can help you with everything! JETAA International has a group of people dedicated to helping ex-JETs set up new chapters anywhere in the world. If you are interested, why not get in touch?

Contact Mike Adams, JETAA International Chair, at chair@jetalumni.org.
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**JET Streams**

JET Streams is published yearly by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). It provides information and updates about the JET Programme and its Alumni Association (JETAA) to former JET Programme participants. For further enquiries, please contact CLAIR at:

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All information is correct as of 2008.