This year marks the 25th anniversary of the JET Programme. I can say with firm confidence that this long running success is thanks to the hard work of generations of JET participants, and it is to you that I would like to express my sincere admiration. In particular, it is the JETAA members active in various fields around the world who have contributed to JET earning the reputation as one of the largest person-to-person exchange programmes in the world.

As many of you know, the JET Programme came under government review last year. The resulting media attention understandably caused a great deal of concern for JET alumni both in Japan and around the world. One can not help but be moved by the sincere outpouring of JET alumni the globe over rallying against possible cutbacks. The vast majority of local governments in Japan share your sentiment in calling for the continuation of the JET Programme and it with these thoughts held close to heart that we would like to march forward, putting even greater effort into the ongoing improvement of the Programme.

Much has changed since the establishment of the JET Programme some 25 years ago. While it may be difficult for many early JET Programme participants to imagine, with foreign language instruction becoming a primary school curriculum requirement starting this April, more JET participants than ever are placed in these schools to teach young learners.

In addition, local level internationalisation has progressed steadily, leading to the further diversification of CIR work duties, including economic exchange activities and PR campaigns to attract tourists from overseas. With so many changes taking place, it may be perfect opportunity for you all to revisit Japan and your former JET stomping grounds.

One theme that has been common in my conversations with local governments has been their desire to get in touch and maintain connections with the JET alumni who once lived and worked in their communities. So do not be surprised if your former prefecture tries to contact you in some way in the near future. Whether it be asking for your advice on an upcoming visit by the mayor or governor to your home country or seeking your opinion on overseas initiatives, there are countless ways in which JET alumni can assists their former hosts. With these collaborations taking root, there is no limit to the possibilities the JET network holds. Here at CLAIR, we hope to move forward hand in hand with you to further realise the full potential that the JET Programme has to offer.
The New Kid On The Block
JETAA Singapore
(Contributed by Koh Yun)

The year 2009 is special as it marks the 10th anniversary of Singapore’s participation in the JET Programme. For former Singapore JET participants, it is double celebrations as 2009 also marks the official formation of JETAA Singapore Chapter on 26 May. Today, JETAA Singapore is a one and a half year old ‘toddler’, still learning the ropes of growing up. The sharing in this article is about the learning journey of the setting up and running of JETAA Singapore and the insights gained during the 1.5-year process. It is written with the hope that the sharing can make the learning curve less steep for future JETAA Chapters and at the same time promote the sharing of ideas between JETAA Chapters at the international level.

Looking Inwards…

Being a very new JETAA chapter, creating an active membership base is our main concern. As such, our vision for the formative years is: Visibility, Participation, Excitement.

Visibility: As a new alumni without our own website in the beginning, we had to explore alternative methods to increase our visibility. Three strategies were used:
1) Partnership with Embassy of Japan in Singapore and JETAA International to include our alumni email contact link in the JET page of these organizations’ websites to make it easier for potential members to contact the alumni.
2) Proactive approach in sending email invitations (to join alumni) to returning ex-JETs after obtaining the list of returnees from Embassy of Japan in Singapore.
3) Use of popular social media such as Facebook and Yahoo Group to set up alumni groups for photo sharing and communication etc.

Participation: As most of the alumni members are very busy working adults, they are more “unable” than “unwilling” to participate in alumni activities. To facilitate more active participation, we conducted a simple survey to find out about the day/time/type of activity preferences of our members. The results of the survey served as input for our event planning so that more convenient times can be chosen to maximize participation.

Excitement: To create more excitement in our alumni activities, we have in place the following systems:
1) Partnership System ~ Whenever possible, we pair up a non-board member with a board member in organizing each alumni event, taking into consideration the areas of interest expressed by respective members in “Member’s Survey”. Besides ensuring a closer partnership between board and alumni members, potential future board members can be scouted in the process.
2) Feedback System ~ At the end of each alumni event, there is a feedback channel for participants to give feedback and suggestions. JETAA Singapore successfully organized a “Pasir Ris Beach Clean Up” event to celebrate Sea Day, thanks to the suggestion of one of the alumni members who also helped co-organize the event.
3) “Activities Buffet” ~ To ensure that the alumni caters to the varied interests of our members, we present them with a buffet spread of activities. In the past one and a half year, JETAA Singapore successfully organized a variety of activities that promote Japanese and Singaporean cultures while facilitating networking among our members and associate partners.

Networking activities: Farewell Reception for new JETs, Welcome Home Reception for returning JETs, Buddy System for ex-JETs and new JETs, Shinnenkai celebration

Japanese Language activities: Oshaberi Cafes (communicating in Japanese through board games and themed conversations)

Cultural activities: Japanese Home Cooking Workshop, Japanese Summer Festival

Clean & Green activities: Pasir Ris Beach Cleanup
**Stories of JETAA Singapore**  
*(contributed by Koh Yun, Chen Jianwen & Olivia Wee)*

**Story 1: Beach Clean Up Community Project 2010**  
*(contributed by Koh Yun)*

In celebration of Umi-no-hi (Sea Day), JETAA Singapore organized a beach clean-up at Pasir Ris beach on June 27. Armed with gloves, rakes, trash bags and pails, 15 volunteers comprising JETAA Singapore members and friends started their race against time to pick up litter along the beach at 8:30 am before the onset of high tide.

During the two-hour period, the volunteers picked up all kinds of rubbish, ranging from snack packets, cups, bottles to straws and more. Unfortunately, the precious window period for clean-up was shortened by a heavy downpour that forced the volunteers to stop before the scheduled time. Despite the rain, the volunteers enjoyed the community event and expressed interest in taking part in another beach clean-up. The event was a collaboration between JETAA Singapore and the National Environment Agency.

**Story 2: Oshaberi Café**  
*(contributed by Olivia Wee)*

JETAA Singapore started our very own “Oshaberi Café” to provide an avenue for our members to practise Japanese. With the support of our Japanese friends, JETAA Singapore members spent two lazy afternoons in November and December at a cozy cafe playing board games and chatting in Japanese. Although playing English board games such as Squint, Pictureka and Hit/Miss, members used Japanese throughout the game with the Japanese friends.

On 27 Nov, members exchanged opinions with Japanese friends about what they found peculiar in each other’s countries. Besides getting to use Japanese, everyone gained interesting insights into understanding Singaporean and Japanese culture. On 19 Dec, as a pre-Christmas celebration, Japanese friends taught members how to sing familiar Christmas carols, Silent Night and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, in Japanese. It felt like we were transported back to Japan, minus the snow and wintry cold.

We plan to add more variety to the programme of Oshaberi Café, to engage the interest of our members to continue using the Japanese language.

**Story 3: Cooking Up A Storm**  
*(contributed by Koh Yun)*

JETAA Singapore members and some of our Japanese friends played chefs on 17 November, whipping up three Japanese dishes in a cooking workshop held at the Japa-
Chinese Association.
During the three-hour session, the 15 participants learnt how to make okonomiyaki, potato salad and miso soup. The workshop was conducted by Araya-sensei, a certified cooking instructor.
This was the first cooking workshop organised by JETAA Singapore and the participants expressed keen interest in taking part in such classes in the future.

Story 4: Summer FUN!
(contributed by Chen Jianwen)

Singaporean games such as Bola Tin, chapteh and cone and rings were a hit with the mostly Japanese crowd at the Japanese Summer Festival. Held on 21 Aug at the Japanese Primary school in Changi, the Festival was a one-day food and games carnival.

Over 300 visitors tried their hands at the games at the booth run by JETAA Singapore members and Republic Polytechnic students.

Friends cheered each other on as they tried to keep the chapteh in the air and children competed with each other to be the first to topple the tin can stacks. The booth was a hubbub of constant excitement and peals of laughter.

Other than the games, the participants had to answer a simple quiz based on the JET Programme information that was put up around the booth. As a result, we were inundated with lots of positive feedback and interest about the JET Programme from the visitors.

Upon completing all six games, the participants walked away with a lucky draw prize each.
During the second half of the day, the Republic Polytechnic students put up a story-telling performance --“The Singapore story: Sang Nila Utama” at the booth.

Decked up in their traditional costumes and homemade props, the actors charmed the audience with their consummate acting and comic punch lines. They delivered an enriching cultural show for the crowd at the event.

The summer festival was an important networking opportunity for JETAA Singapore members to meet and catch up with one another. Furthermore, it was a chance for the Japanese youths in Singapore to learn more about Singaporean culture.

The event was a great success thanks to the efforts of the volunteers from JETAA Singapore and the students of Republic Polytechnic and the support from the Embassy of Japan (Singapore), CLAIR, the Japanese Association (Singapore) and Japanese School in Changi (Singapore).

Looking Outwards...

As a brand new JETAA chapter, JETAA Singapore was privileged to learn good ideas from other well established JETAA chapters through the networking sessions at JETAA International Meeting in Edinburgh in 2010. Even though the meeting has ended, this learning has been ongoing through the sharing of invaluable online resources contributed by various JETAA Chapters on the JETAAI website (http://www.jetalumni.org/1514/index.php/resources.html).

For ex-JETs who are contemplating to set up a new JETAA chapter, JETAAI website is a good starting point to get great ideas and resources.

With the newly launched JETAA Singapore website (http://jetaasg.wordpress.com/about/), we hope to share and exchange more ideas with other JETAA Chapters at the international level.

For general enquiries, we can be reached at: jetaasingapore@gmail.com
For membership enquiries, we can be reached at: secretary-jetaasingapore@gmail.com
The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Alumni Association of Tokyo

JETAA Tokyo is a non-profit organisation for current and former JET Programme participants living in or active in the Greater Tokyo Area.

JET alumni represent an incredible resource of accumulated knowledge and experience about living and building a career in the city. Founded in the spring of 2010, JETAA Tokyo seeks to bring these individuals together so that this wealth of information may be shared amongst new and old alumni alike. It is our hope that these new connections and networking opportunities provide value for all our members and may benefit them in their future endeavors.

See what we are busy doing within our three pillar areas of Career, Community and Service!

Career

Providing support with…
- Job searching
- Resumes
- Interviews
- Contracts

Working for you!

We know that finding jobs after your JET appointment ends is a challenge. If you are interested in working in the Greater Tokyo area, we hope we can help. We have job listings, networking events, mentorship programs, and general advice sessions, all for former JETs who want to continue to live and work in Japan. Connect with us by registering on the JETAA Tokyo website (which will also allow you to view job postings), or join the JETAA Tokyo LinkedIn group. Our main focus is helping people like find jobs and advance their careers. Let us help you do that!
Contact us at: career@jetaa-tokyo.org

Community

Helping JETs through…
- Social activities
- Related organisations
- Fun in Tokyo!

Mentors and Mentees gather together for the Kick-off in October.

JET Alums working with volunteer organisation Minna no Mori to keep forests in the Tokyo area clean.

The JETAA Community Subcommittee takes as its task to do what it can to help the community of JET alumni live easier, fuller lives here in this sprawling metropolis. Our members give advice about their favorite Tokyo spots, lifestyle tips, interest/hobby groups and special events around town. We also collaborate with the Career and
especially Service Subcommittees to hold events, and host our own casual get-togethers throughout the year. If you have some good tips, please get in touch!

community@jetaa-tokyo.org

Service

Come see what we are doing…

Second Harvest Japan – Monthly
Preparing and serving hundreds of hot meals to the homeless in Ueno Park, as well as assisting in 2HJ’s other food bank activities.

Tokyo Yamathon Apr. 09
An all-day team foot race around the Yamanote Line to support the Oxfam Japan Charity.

Fujisawa Beach Clean Up Apr. 17
Joining over 700 volunteers for a day of surf and sand cleaning up the Shonan coast. Last year over 150 bags of gomi were removed!

Rhythm and Hope Apr. 28
A night of music and fun to support Refugees International Japan

The JETAA Service Subcommittee strives to give back to the greater society in which we live by supporting worthy causes both international and local. In doing so we hope that JETAA members will not just develop a sense of camaraderie, but also enjoy a sense of meaningfulness in action that is too often absent in the bustling urban landscape. Have any other ideas for community service you would like to do? Please let us know!

service@jetaa-tokyo.org

For more information, please visit our website at
http://www.jetaa-tokyo.org
To say that my experience on JET was life changing would be an understatement. From 2004-2007, I gained skills and experiences that helped me in the next step of my career path, and made some lasting personal connections that are still strong today. I often reminisce on my little town of Santo (山東町), nestled in the northern region of Hyogo Prefecture, and how far I’ve come since those days of stumbling over self-introductions and simple greetings.

Presently, I work at the Nihon Bay Clinic in San Mateo, California. Nihon Bay Clinic is a family medical practice that caters to Japanese citizens and their families living abroad in American branches of their Japanese companies such as Nikon or Canon. My job is to manage the daily medical office operations for the two doctors and other staff members. The total staff on hand at the clinic is five on a full-time basis and no two days are ever the same.

It is a unique situation in that every process handled within the office is in Japanese, but I alone handle any issues that may crossover into the outside English-speaking world to create greater ease for our clients. My duties include appointment scheduling, specialist referrals, hospital admittance, and ensuring that all policies concerning general patient visits and appointments for medical procedures are consistent and understood by all staff members. In addition, I am in charge of formulating quality assurance methods that assess and monitor all aspects of the billing and collection process, including front and back end functions. I handle all insurance claims (both English and Japanese – the latter relating to overseas travel insurance companies); collaborate with insurance providers to identify discrepancies with medical data, invoices, patient billings and collections. On top of this, I also write and distribute the clinic’s report packages that detail revenue, expenses, patient load, and various office issues. I’m in charge of drafting contracts that detail collaborative relationships with partner medical facilities; proofread and scan business documents, guaranteeing that all outgoing documents meet professional industry standards. Finally, I also manage the relationships between the office’s vendors and suppliers, overseeing the purchase of office and medical supplies with additional responsibilities of inventory control and price negotiation.

Aside from me, the entire staff and most of the patients are Japanese, so I find myself using the skills and experiences I had on the JET Programme at every moment of every day. The office conducts the majority of its internal communications in Japanese, and a lot of the workplace customs from my school’s staff room are also in place at the clinic. My formal and medical Japanese has tremendously improved, and progressively I have gained enough confidence to even answer the dreaded Japanese phone lines at work, relying heavily on the phrases “Chotto omachi itadakemasuka?” and “Sho sho omachi kudasai.”

One of the doctors in the office is a pediatrician, so I still
have opportunities to interact with Japanese youth of all ages and I create office decorations showcasing the various American holidays for their benefit, which is a direct extension of my experience teaching elementary and junior high school students in Japan.

During my time as an ALT, I had to create and implement lesson plans, often together with a Japanese English teacher. I find that while the content has changed from teaching English to providing healthcare, the skills of problem solving, teamwork, and collaboration have stayed the same. By understanding the dynamics of the Japanese workplace, I’m able to communicate clearly with my co-workers and the foundation of that understanding comes from my time teaching at a Japanese school.

As somebody that lived in Japan for over three years, the understanding of Japanese custom, culture, and lifestyle has been a tremendous boon in not only relating with my co-workers; it has created a closer bond with them both in and out of the workplace. We’ll reminisce together about missed Japanese foods and TV shows, favorite vacation spots, the seasons. Luckily, San Mateo has an established Japanese community, so we’re able to go out together for ramen or an izakaya together after work.

Being a former expatriate myself has given me a strong understanding of how our patients and my co-workers may sometimes feel during their time in the United States. It’s an interesting change of roles for me, as I had met so many courteous and helpful Japanese people while in Santo, and this job has provided me with an opportunity to pay back the kindness that I received when I was abroad.

Another interesting aspect of my time on the JET Programme is the connections that I made outside of school. When I moved to San Francisco after finishing my time in Japan, I knew very few people, but because of the JET Programme, I already had a network of people that had shared my experience and was able to get connected very quickly. In fact, I found my job through the JET Alumni Association user group, and now play on a regular soccer team with JET alumni and some Japanese friends who are studying English in San Francisco.

Lorelei Cortez

Lorelei Cortez, an Oregon native, lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area. While spending 3 years on the JET Programme in Hyogo-Prefecture, she was able to experience many of the wonderful aspects of Japan. While not working at the clinic, she loves playing soccer and spending time with her husband and two cute cats.
Better Than a Thousand Days of Diligent Study…


Q: What do bloodthirsty demons, fresh melon-pan and stilt-walking lessons have in common?

A: They were all part of a seminar for high school students of Japanese, recently hosted by the Hyogo Prefectural Government Cultural Centre, in Perth, Western Australia.

As a presenter, author, and lover of Japanese culture, my role was the health and safety lecture: essential techniques for surviving a yōkai (妖怪) encounter!

One hundred students from eight schools registered for the day, which included language workshops and seminars as well as cultural exchange with students from The Japanese School in Perth. The Japanese students introduced their Australian counterparts to taiko drumming, koma (spinning tops), fukuwarai (the make-a-face game), stilt-walking and yosakoi soranbushi dancing.

The very beginning

Flashing back to my own high school years, I realised that I too had my first experience with Japan at the Hyogo Cultural Centre. I can remember touching tatami for the first time there. Staring at koi flags and sake barrels. Wondering what it would be like to actually go to Japan.

Back then, the Centre had only just been established, a venture by the Hyogo Prefectural Government to commemorate ten years of successful Sister-State relations between Western Australia and Hyogo Prefecture.

In 2011, our Sister-State relationship turns 30. Over those years, many thousands of Australians have been inspired to pursue their interest in Japan and its culture. For me, that meant packing my bags and moving to Hyogo as an ALT, then accepting an editorial job in Ibaraki. Now, many years later, Japan and its culture (and its demons!) are still threaded through my work and play.

Things that go bump in the night

The recent high school seminar was just one in a long line – the Hyogo Centre also hosts Japanese immersion days, professional development seminars, exhibitions, concerts and more – but this seminar was the first to devote an entire presentation to Japan’s mythological monsters: the yōkai.

Yōkai are a big favourite for me, and I incorporated this interest into a series of adventure stories featuring Japanese demons. The first of these, Takeshita Demons, won children’s book awards in the UK and was featured on the BBC’s Blue Peter TV show. I am thrilled to be sharing my love of Japan – and its demons – with children everywhere! But what are yōkai exactly?

A well-timed cucumber

The Japanese equivalent of supernatural monsters and demons, yōkai are as various as they are fantastic. They might be bringers of luck or harbingers of doom, clippers...
of hair or shakers of beans. They can be good, evil, or just plain strange, and they have featured in Japanese fairy tales and folklore for centuries. There are thousands of yōkai species, including favourites such as the shape-changing fox, the long-nosed tengu, and he-of-the-astounding testicles, the tanuki.

In presenting to the students, I stressed not only essential survival techniques (just as a silver bullet can disarm a werewolf, so too can a well-timed cucumber quell the blood-lust of a kappa), but also the continuing influence of yōkai in Japan’s modern culture. Yōkai still show up on menus (kitsune udon; tanuki soba; kappa-maki sushi, etc.), beer advertisements (that ain’t no giraffe, dear reader), and outside restaurants, welcoming luck in the door. They are listed in databases, studied in universities, celebrated in festivals. And, as I warned the students, only one thing is certain about yōkai: one is probably watching you right now!

The National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools

This workshop was organized and coordinated by the Japanese Language Advisor at the West Australian Department of Education, as part of Australia’s National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program. One goal of the initiative is to provide more opportunities for students to experience the culture of Japan.

The hundred students at this seminar were just a fraction of the 350,000 students of Japanese in Australian schools today, but I hope they have been inspired to continue their studies, just as I was so many years ago. And I also hope they take extra care when something goes bump in the night…

Did you know? Japanese is the most widely taught language in Australia today; more than 10 percent of students have studied some Japanese at school.

Resources and links:

The Hyogo Prefectural Government Cultural Centre

National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program

The Current State of Japanese Language Education in Australian Schools

Database of images of Strange Phenomena and Yokai (Monstrous Beings)
http://www.nichibun.ac.jp/YoukaiGazouMenu/

Cristy Burne’s blog: Takeshita Demons
http://cristyburne.wordpress.com/

Cristy Burne lived for two years in Hyogo-ken, working as an ALT with the JET Programme, and for a year in Ibaraki-ken, editing for a biotechnology law firm. Now living in Western Australia, Cristy divides her time between changing nappies and writing children’s books. Her favourite yōkai is the Filth Licker (because who wants to clean their own bathroom?)
I was raised in a Foreign Service family, my father’s work concerned housing and urban development projects in developing countries like Honduras, Ecuador and India—all places that I was fortunate to grow up in. My father was likewise very fortunate to grow up in Mexico City as a youth—my grandmother was the first female director of the CARE program in Mexico in the 1950s. She also earned the Margaret Mead award for anthropology. I was extremely fortunate to grow up in a family of people who appreciated and celebrated variety and diversity in cultural and social existence.

My mother was a professional photographer when I was growing up, and although she never “pushed” photography on either me or my brother, it was always part of the house, there was a darkroom in every house I ever lived in growing up! My mom loved to cook a variety of meals and probably my first contact with Japan was in the form of tempura that my mom had made for dinner...

Tempura turned to origami, samurais and swords—all things that an 8 year old is fascinated with. I read a lot as a kid and decided that Japan was one of those places I needed to see.

Fast forward to 2001. I had studied multimedia in school and had some background in the music industry, working with composers who scored music for documentary TV. While living in Washington, DC, I decided to apply for the JET Program. I had read lots of anthropological writings on Japan and its people and culture, Edwin Reischauer, Chie Nakane, Ruth Benedict, etc... By the time I got on the plane headed to Narita, I was sure I was ready for anything.

I was very lucky, my first choice for a prefecture was Tokushima-ken and somehow I ended up getting placed there. I was ecstatic. I had a romantic vision in my mind of rural Japan and I wanted very much to experience life there, before anything changed too much or before things disappeared forever. I was placed in a small town of about 5500 called Kainan-cho. I lived in a funny little house about 500 meters from the sea and 2km from the mountains. It was absolutely stunning.

My job as an ALT in Tokushima-ken was diverse and richly rewarding. My “main” school was Kainan Senior High School and I taught there Mondays through Wednesdays. I taught at a second school, Shishikui Commercial High School on Thursdays and Fridays. The schools were very different, but I loved both of them and I had lots of fun with my students and teachers. As soon as I arrived in Japan, I took very seriously the concept of being a “cultural ambassador.” That was something I could “give” to the students. It was a chance to really actively share my culture, my life and my hobbies with my students in the efforts to engage conversation and mutual understanding. We had tons of fun doing music projects, field trips and just talking together.
While my experiences as an ALT were very rich and rewarding, this story has another dimension. Although I was fortunate to be sharing my cultural experiences with my Japanese students during class, I was immersed in Japan and it was sharing with me and demanding my close attention... Although I loved my hobbies, I felt compelled to put down my video camera, play a little less guitar and to document the visual inspiration I was feeling. I needed to distill my thoughts and feelings into an image that I could review quickly, something that would renew my feelings about a location or an experience. Photography was the way to achieve this for me.

I went up to Tokushima city and bought a very good digital camera and began seriously photographing all around Japan. In my free time and evenings, I studied and studied and studied. I wanted to learn everything I could about photography. I practiced and practiced. I traveled a lot, learning about photography and learning about Japan and it’s wonderful people. I made lots of Japanese friends, who I am lucky enough to have to this day.

Some of my images made it into CLAIR publications and the JET Programme Calendar, I was so thrilled to be published as an amateur photographer! By the middle of my second year in Japan, I had been inspired so much and had worked so hard to understand photography, that I had made up my mind to become a professional photographer once I returned to Washington DC. I still had a year and a half of wonderful experiences and many, many memorable photos to create. By the end of my third year, I was lucky enough to have a variety of JETs interested in my photography and I was sure that I had chosen the right path for my future. I felt that Japan had really guided me and caused this massive change.

When I returned to Washington, I had no idea how hard it would be to become a self-employed business, making a living as an artist. It was difficult at times and still has many challenges. I ran my business in Washington for about 5 years before moving to California. I recently moved to the Japantown area of San Francisco. Before long, I felt a need deep inside me to return to Japan to honor that fundamental inspiration that it placed within me. I decided that I would return this February to Japan to revisit the special places and people that were so compelling to me. I want to share the “hidden Japan” that so many JETs are lucky to experience, with a wider audience. There is a special Japan out there that isn’t in guidebooks. It’s not available for viewing online and you can’t feel it by going to an izakaya in NYC. You must be there, you must be comfortable within the cultural context and trusted by those around you. I’m returned to stay with some of my dear Japanese friends and to document those amazing locations from the ultra-rural spots in Tokushima and Kochi, through Kansai, all the way up to Roppongi in Tokyo.

My project is called Japan 2.0 and I’m producing a beautiful fine art photography book showcasing the special locations and people in hidden spots along my route from South to North. I was lucky enough to stay with old and new friends from my time in Japan to document all these amazing places.
friends, in traditional homes, in coastal onsen, at surfing minshukus and in some interesting hotels. I traveled light, with the purpose of being inspired by Japan to record my thoughts and observations on what I find on my first return to Japan in 7 years. It was incredible to revisit and review some of the scenes that were so inspiring to me long ago! I’m looking forward to exhibiting a fine art show here in San Francisco, with the hopes of sharing the beauty and inspiration that I found in Japan with a wider audience.

Japan 2.0 has not only moved me to create a photography project, but also to become more involved in the rich Japanese community here in San Francisco. I’m hoping to work on my Japanese language again so that I can take my commercial photographic skills to Japan in some professional context and hopefully share my artwork with people in Japan.

The JET program was a very special, life-changing experience for me. It helped me to see clearly and to find a new direction that is very creative and meaningful. I believe that cultural exchange is a powerful force for better understanding and appreciating other people and other ways of living. It is a benefit and quality that is priceless. If only every country had a program like JET, I think we would have a more peaceful world, or at the very least a more understanding one. My love, respect and fondness for Japan have only grown over the years and I sincerely look forward to returning to complete my project.

The images from the Japan 2.0 project are viewable by clicking this link:


If you are interested in learning more about the project, please check out the blog at www.japantwopointzero.com and my commercial photography site is:

Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu!

Stirling Elmendorf

Stirling Elmendorf is a freelance photographer living in San Francisco, CA. He was an ALT in Shikoku, Tokushima Prefecture from 2001-2004.
Rebun Island, Hokkaido

This picture was taken from the hill I walk up and down every other day to Kafuka Junior High. From the newly-built onsen in the upper right, down to Rebun’s only traffic light in the lower left, as well as Mt. Rishiri (itself an island) in the background, the sights from this hill make it one of the best views in Rebun. During the 6-month winter, all of this is covered in snow, and equally beautiful.

My apartment, right along the shore, provides a great view of Mt. Rishiri, but not much of a backyard, so it was understandable that nobody did anything with it except abandon old fishing equipment there. However, I managed to make an okay flower and vegetable garden here, despite the gravelly soil and salt winds. Flowers in the center, and vegetables include zucchini, daikon, lettuce, carrots, mini tomatoes, and edamame, most of which came up enough to give to friends around town.

Rebun shows its stuff in the Rishiri-Rebun teacher exchange sports day, which was hosted by Rebun this year. I did the tug-of-war and we decided to have me in front for intimidation purposes, although Mr. Yoneta right behind me is actually taller (the only one in Rebun.) Rebun ended up sweeping all events!

Sado Island, Niigata

This is a picture of Onogame, taken by Jessica Saiki, a 3rd year Sado ALT.

Sado ALTs helping plant rice in one of our close friend’s fields.

Hi! I’m Alex, a 26-year old 2nd-year ALT, living way up here in Rebun, home of the Atsumorisou flower. I’m originally from Pittsburgh, PA, home of the Pittsburgh Penguins! Nice to meet you!

My name is Jamie Johnston. I’m 24 years old, from America, and am currently in my 3rd year teaching in Sadogashima, Niigata. I teach elementary, middle school, adult conversation classes, and enjoy helping out with events in Sadogashima. Some of the things Sadogashima is famous for include rice, Toki, and the Sado Triathlon.

Alexanderm Clemmens
Rebun Island
(礼文島)
Rebun Town,
Hokkaido Prefecture
ALT

Sado ALTs and friends unwinding after a long week of classes.

Sado Island (佐渡島)
Sadogashima, Niigata Prefecture ALT

Rebun Island
(礼文島)
Rebun Town,
Hokkaido Prefecture
ALT

Jamie Johnston
Sado Island (佐渡島)
Sado City, Niigata Prefecture ALT

Current JET Activities

JET Island Life
- A Photographic Perspective -
Current JET Activities continued: JET Island Life

**Goto Islands, Nagasaki**

My name is Stephanie Mercier. It's my fourth year on Goto island and I love it here. Everyday, I am amazed by the beauty of this island.

Stephanie Mercier  
Goto Islands (五島列島)  
Goto City, Nagasaki Prefecture ALT

One of Japan's most pristine beaches. On windy days, it's a popular spot for surfers.

Hanging out with fishermen. Exploring the island and fishing is part of our Goto life weekend activities.

Making mochi: Tomie High School sadly closed in March. An impact of the loss of population in rural areas. This event will be history.

**Ishigaki Island, Okinawa**

Angama is Yaeyama's unique Obon celebration held in August each year. The messenger grandmother and grandfather spirits bring the children and grandchildren spirits called “fa-ma” back to the real world, and visit the houses that have called for their presence. The fa-ma recognize the ancestral spirits by dancing to the beat of the drum, flute, and sanshin.

The person slowly leading the procession with graceful movements with a mysterious white mask and yellow clothes is the "Miruku". Miruku appears in each district at the harvest festival, a time to report and give thanks to God for the successful harvest and pray for next year. It is said that "Miruku" comes from "Maitreya bodhisattva" and is an incarnation of "Budai", one of the Seven Deities of Good Luck.

**Ishigaki Island, Okinawa**

I'm Stephanie Toriumi (from Honolulu, Hawai'i), Japan’s southernmost CIR in Ishigaki City, Okinawa. Ishigaki City (population approx. 48,000) is the center of administration, transportation, and economy of the Yaeyama Islands and attracts tourists year-round with its natural beauty and rich marine life. Located closer to Taiwan than Naha, the region has a distinct history and culture where houses with orange tile roofs and stone walls make you feel as if you've slipped back in time.

Chosen as a 3-star location by Japan's Michelin Green Guide, Kabira Bay is one of the most beautiful places in Japan. It is reknown as the world's first cultivation area of the black pearl, valued for its mysterious beauty beyond description. With scenery like a painting in which glass boats float above the emerald blue sea, its beauty is undoubtedly Mother Nature at its best.

Stephanie Toriumi  
Ishigaki Island (石垣島)  
Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture CIR
Kimberly McNelly
Tsushima Island (対馬)
Kamitsushima Town, Nagasaki, Prefecture
ALT

Hi, I'm Kimberly! I'm a 3rd-year ALT from rural Maine, USA, and now live in Kamitsushima-machi, Tsushima. I like hiking, scuba diving, and taiko drumming.

Tsushima is famous for our delicious squid, so we have many squid boats. They go out at night and use very bright lights to attract the squid. The boats shine like stars in the ocean, framed by mountains, and it's very calming to look at them.

Tsushima is 89% mountainous forest surrounded by sea. Much of the island is uninhabited. You can see this untouched-nature view from the top of Mt. Eboshi.

My favorite Tsushima festival is the Hydrangea Festival in June. Part of the festival is a paragliding competition; hundreds of people come from mainland Japan and other countries to paraglide in beautiful Tsushima. Anyone can ride tandem with a paraglider, too!

Tsushima is 89% mountainous forest surrounded by sea. Much of the island is uninhabited. You can see this untouched-nature view from the top of Mt. Eboshi.

You may have heard of the Ioromote yamaneko, but Tsushima has its own endangered species of yamaneko, too! There are only 80-100 Tsushima yamaneko left in the wild. You can see this one, with its distinctive striped head, at the Tsushima Wildlife Center.

These are hitotubatago blossoms blooming in May. Hitotubatago only grow naturally in two places in Japan, and one place is Waniura, the most northern point of Tsushima! The small island in the background is Unijima, a Japanese self-defense air force base.

Mt. Shiratake is the second-highest mountain in Tsushima and has the most beautiful view. It takes about 2 1/2 hours to hike up, but seeing this from the top is worth it!

I've been playing with the Tsushima Aikoren (対馬鼓連) taiko group for over two years. This picture was taken at the Yamaneko Music Festival in Shushi, Tsushima. The festival is meant to raise awareness about the Tsushima yamaneko and money for helping to care for them.

Tsushima has beautiful sunsets. On clear days from the northwestern part of the island, you can see the sun set behind South Korean mountains. In this picture, the mountains in the background are in South Korea.

Kimberly McNelly
Tsushima Island (対馬)
Kamitsushima Town, Nagasaki, Prefecture
ALT

Tsushima Island, Nagasaki

Current JET Activities continued: JET Island Life
Delegates from 14 countries with active JET Alumni groups met with representatives of MOFA and CLAIR from 1 – 3 October for the 2010 JETAA International Meeting in Edinburgh.

The event marked the end of a 15-year tradition of annual face-to-face meetings between JETAA Country Representatives. Naoki Murata (Director-General, Public Diplomacy Department) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) confirmed that financial support would not be available for the event in 2011. Murata spoke of the funding challenges for the coming year, but affirmed MOFA’s ongoing commitment to both the JET Programme and activities of JETAA.

Hiroshi Narita, Executive Director of CLAIR (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations) Tokyo confirmed that the JET Programme’s budget had come under scrutiny, but he expressed the view that JET was increasingly important in an age of growing internationalisation. He also spoke of the coming 25th anniversary for the programme and his aspiration for the continued development of both the JET Programme and JETAA.

Michelle Elliott, the outgoing JETAAi Chair welcomed our newest chapter, JETAA Tokyo to the family and updated delegates on the success of recent initiatives to effectively communicate the value of the JET Programme in the international press.

Moving towards the future, delegates discussed ways to develop closer international ties between chapters, grassroots links with Japanese organisations and ways to support smaller or newly formed chapters. Reforms were also proposed to the current structure of JETAAi to enable the organisation to adapt to the immediate funding challenges. Part of the newly appointed executive committee’s mandate is to refine these proposals and start implementing reforms over the coming year.

Shree Kurlekar, JETAAi Chair (JETAA New York)
Barbara Gill, JETAAi Vice Chair (JETAA Scotland)
Kay Dunkley, JETAAi Secretary (JETAA Jamaica)
David Boyd, JETAAi Public Relations (JETAA Sydney)
Paul Donovan / Bob Schnyder, JETAAi Webmasters (JETAA British Columbia and JETAA Portland)

A wide range of issues were covered during the three-day meeting. Throughout, delegates expressed their strong mutual determination to collaborate at a regional and international level; including utilising videoconferencing and social networking tools as appropriate; and collectively support the proposed transition in the way the organisation operates in the coming year. Some of the main points were also updated via Twitter during the meeting.

Congratulations are in order for JETAA Scotland on their success in planning and delivering an outstanding International Meeting. Their hospitality, hard work and enthusiasm was greatly appreciated by all delegates.
**Shree Kurlekar - Chair**

Shree Kurlekar was on the JET program from 2005-2007 in Shiga-ken. She returned from Japan to the United States in September 2007, to New York City. Her involvement in JETAA started as the Vice President of the New York Chapter in 2008. She has been one of the three JETAA USA Country Representatives since 2009 and is excited to now be leading as Chair of JETAAI. In true JET alumni form, she is once again planning a life move to London, England, where she will reside from January 2011.

**Barbara Gill - Vice Chair**

Barbara Gill was on the JET program from 2000-2003 in Matsuyama, Ehime-ken, Shikoku. In 2003, she returned from Japan to Northern Ireland and later moved to Edinburgh, Scotland. Her involvement in JETAA started after starting up a Northern Irish JETAA in 2004. She has been on the JETAA Scotland committee since 2006 and was JETAA Scotland Chair from 2009-2010. Following the international conference held in Edinburgh in 2010, she has been privileged to work as Vice President of JETAAi. Her position in Edinburgh enables her to benefit and gain support from well developed local and national exchanges with JETAA Scotland and the wider UK JETAA representatives as well as through support from the local Consulate and CLAIR. She works an educational psychologist and stills tries to keep up her Japanese language and snowboarding, of which early skills were first founded in Japan!

**Kay Dunkley - Secretary**

Kay was a JET Programme participant from 2000 to 2003 in Osaka Prefecture. Since she has returned to Jamaica in 2003, she has been heavily involved in JETAA activities including coordinating events locally and participating in JETAA International meetings. She is serving her second term as JETAA International Secretary.

**David Boyd - Public Relations**

David Boyd acted as Australia's country representative in 2010 at the international conference. He was nominated as public relations officer for the committee.

**Bob Schynder – Co-Webmaster**

Bob Schynder was on the JET program from 1993-1996 on Iki Island in Nagasaki-ken. He has been a member of JETAA Chapters around the world (London, Western Japan, Southest US) and finally settled in Portland (US) and has been active in the local chapter since 2002. He has served as Vice-President and held a variety of positions and is currently the longest running active JETAA Chapter Webmaster (over 8 years). He has served as co-JETAA International Webmaster since 2010. He helped create and chair JETAA's first ever Technology Conference that hosted 11 chapters from the US & Canada. He has spoken at JETAA Conferences all over the world and was honored to speak at the 2010 Conference for Returning JETs in Yokohama. He remains active in JETAAi to help spread the utilization of technology and social marketing to enhance chapters across the globe.

**Paul Donovan - Co-Webmaster**

Paul Donovan went to Japan in 1991 as an ALT in Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka Prefecture. He taught in four Junior. High Schools there for three years. Then moved to Ashiya City in Hyogo Prefecture for two years as a conversation school teacher. He lived there during the Kobe Earthquake. Since he returned to Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada in 1996 he have become quite involved with JETAA, first with the BC Chapter, then on to the International as the webmaster. Paul owns and operates his own business producing web sites and also doing Video and Audio services. He specializes in providing services to small businesses and organizations.
Setting up a JETAA Chapter

Are you interested in joining the JET Alumni Association but live in a country or area which does not have a JET Alumni Association Chapter?

We can help you to get started 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
   - Social events
   - 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
   A simple spreadsheet can be used. For chapters that require funding from CLAIR, keeping a detailed and up-to-date list is essential.

8. You could set up a website
   The 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
Shree Kurlekar, JETAA International Chair
chair@jetalumni.org
Barbara Gill, JETAA International Vice Chair
vicechair@jetalumni.org

Japan Exchange Teaching Program(me) Alumni Association

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Welcome to the new and improved 2011 edition of the JET Streams newsletter. This newsletter is issued to former participants of the JET Programme as a way to share stories and memories of their time in Japan, and stay connected with the development of the JET Programme and JETAA chapters around the world. In this issue, the main focus is the upcoming 25th year JET Programme anniversary, looking into the future and the JET Programme alumni having ties with their former workplace. This edition has been sent directly to readers who have requested it, so please go to the JET Programme website (link below) to update your contact details if they have changed. We would like to thank all contributors to this issue of JET Streams and hope you enjoy reading it!

JETAA Member Count
The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) currently has 52 chapters in 17 of the 54 countries that have participated on the JET Programme (Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, and the U.S.A.). There is a new chapter, JETAA Tokyo which was established in April 2010. As of March 2011, there are over 54,000 JET alumni spread across the world, of which approximately 24,000 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, along with any other CLAIR announcements. You can see details on how to update your details on the JET Programme website (http://jetprogramme.org/e/former/address.html).

Pension Refund Information
Japanese Pension Insurance was deducted from your monthly salary while you were a JET participant. If you are eligible and have not yet applied for the Lump-Sum Withdrawal Payment (dattai ichijikin) and the refund on the 20% flat tax that is levied on it, please visit the “Former JETs” section of the JET Programme website (www.jetprogramme.org) for details on how to apply. There is also a detailed section on the pension refund in the 2010 edition of the General Information Handbook, downloadable from the JET Programme website. Please note that you must apply for the pension refund within two years after leaving Japan, and the tax refund within five years. We encourage you to apply for your refunds early, in order to avoid the possibility of being denied funds you are entitled to.

JETAA Alumni Activities Book
In March 2009, CLAIR published the JETAA Alumni Activities book. This book was produced to share examples of the activities of JETAA chapters and alumni around the world, and the continued interaction that many alumni have with their contracting organisations and areas that they lived in while on the JET Programme. It is hoped that this book will be helpful in promoting JET alumni and the JET Programme overall to contracting organisations. A PDF version of this publication can be downloaded from the JET Programme website: http://jetprogramme.org/documents/pubs/JETAA_activities.pdf.

Countries and Participant Numbers
In the 2010-2011 JET Programme year, there are 4334 participants from 36 different countries (3,974 ALTs, 354 CIRs, and 6 SEAs. In 2011-2012, the JET Programme will welcome approximately 1,500 new JETs, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 4,300.

The JET Programme Website
The JET Programme website (www.jetprogramme.org) contains lots of useful information for aspiring, current and former JETs.
In the “Former JETs” section, you can:
- Get information on updating your contact details
- Download past editions of JET Streams
- Find information about the Pension Refund

We also have the majority of our publications available for download on the website.

JET Programme Forums
There are also forums on the JET Programme website to provide a discussion place for anyone involved with or interested in the JET Programme. The forums have just been updated to new software recently that we hope will make the forums even easier to navigate and use. There is a separate “After JET / JET Alumni Association” section for former JETS, but we also invite you to have a look and share your experiences with both current and aspiring JETS. The forums can be accessed at: www.jetprogramme.org/forums/
## Australia

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## Brazil

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## Ireland

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## Jamaica

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## New Zealand

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## Singapore

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## South Africa

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## United Kingdom

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Final thoughts…

It has been my privilege to write and design the new 2011 JET Streams newsletter.

This year we took a different approach where we incorporated current JET activities. We thought it would have been interesting for the JET Alumni to reflect back to their past JET lives and see how things are going now. This year’s theme is “Jet Island Life”.

On 11 March, a devastating earthquake hit off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture which caused an extremely large tsunami of mass destruction to hit the Tohoku coastal area. Most of the articles contributed to this newsletter were written prior to the earthquake and tsunami. Our prayers and condolences to all the family and friends in the affected areas. If you would like to help in anyway, please visit the National Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching website at www.ajet.net.

I would like to personally thank all the current JET Programme participants and the alumni for contributing articles to make this newsletter come to life.

Finally, after a long journey, the JET Programme enters its 25th year of existence. Who knows what lies ahead? However there is one thing that we all can agree on: this fantastic programme has allowed many of us to branch out our network and meet awesome people who have touched and changed our lives. Keep the good spirit going…

2011 JET Streams Editor
JETAA Liaison
Christian Tsuji

David Namisato - Always -

David is an illustrator in Toronto, Canada. Before becoming an illustrator, David was a CIR in Ajigasawa-machi, Aomori-ken. David's illustrations appear in children's magazines and comic books. Check out "Life After the B.O.E." David's online comic inspired by his experiences on JET.

WORDS FROM THE EDITOR.

David Namisato

Stirling Elmendorf

- Looking Ahead -

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