

Ways To Get Involved in Your JET Community

Good Morning Aomori! We are currently looking for someone interested in **taking over designing and publishing** the Good Morning Aomori! Newsletter. This person works in coordination with the P.A. who decides on article topics and ideas, and proposes the topic to various JET participants to write the articles. As the design manager you decide **the layout of the articles and photos**. This newsletter is **published about 5 times a year** (quarterly and the welcome edition). It is a great way for JETs to get involved, share their thoughts and ideas and obtain information about upcoming events and schedules. If you like graphical design, playing around on the computer, or just **looking for something to fill some hours at work**, this is a great project for you! If you are interested please email Marti at marti_in_japan@yahoo.com or the GMA account at goodmorning.aomori@gmail.com

Community Coordinators The CC group is still looking for new members. If you are interested in helping out at Seminars, spending more time with the new JETs, and doing all the other Community Coordinator duties, please talk to your local CCs for more information. There are currently **positions available in all regions**. Feel free to contact your local CC or Marti for more details.



A new year will begin soon. With that new members are more than **welcome to join our local charity group** as we continue to improve the

lives and education of children in various regions of the world. New committee members and event organizers will be decided at the next meeting. Please join us on **Sunday, April 12th at 1:30** as we discuss the goals and objectives for next year. Please contact Melanie Surry melanieupnorth@yahoo.com.au or Chris Swanson ckswanson10@gmail.com

Lights, Camera, Action! Your chance to dazzle and amaze our local Japanese community is here...The **Tsugaru Ben Taikai** will take place on **June 27th** at the Tsuruta Kokusai Kouryuu Kaikan (鶴田国際交流会館) A.K.A. the **Tsuruta Town Office**. The show will start at 3, but... seats will fill up quickly so **come early!** If you have any questions, please contact Karen Eaton karenea-ton1979@gmail.com or Laura Stanley miss.ennaebel@gmail.com

Yearbook Staff This year has been full of many wonderful people and memories! If you would like to work on this year's yearbook to document those memories, please contact Marti!

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Aomori JET and Community

Good Morning Aomori!

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Photo by David Crawford

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**HAPPY
Hanami!**

The seasons of Aomori never cease to **disappoint** those of us who are always up for a surprise. Look up the prefectural stats online, and you'll find everything from reports of a "cool climate with distinct seasons" to omens of an icy land with raging winters that pile as much as twenty-five feet of snow upon the brave souls (stunningly sturdy little *oba-chans*, more often than not) persevering to exist below it. Why, it's enough to make a pre-departure newcomer dash out to the store and buy a brand spankin' new pair of sub-zero snow boots...that ultimately don't get used because, similar to life, **Aomori is like a box of chocolates.**

This winter has been a weird one, feinting pleasant, unlikely rises in temperature—even *raining* in February—before unleashing massive blizzards that leave people shivering and powerless. But Aomorites are strong and adaptive. Soon after Mother Nature douses us with a seasonal flip-flop, you'll see us laughing in that "**ha ha, you got me**" kind of way and then trudging off to work clad in rain boots and snow jackets, armed with umbrellas and scarves, keitais in hand—always striving to be ready for anything.

- Melissa McIvor

Last Three Months at a Glance

Genevieve Murphy, Fukaura ALT



While the New Year brought new experiences for many of us as perhaps we were in a new country, a new city or sharing a **kampai with new friends** at the stroke of midnight, others of us were enjoying the warmth and comfort of friends and family in our home country. But, no matter where we were, **new goals, new ambitions, and new dreams** were being made for the new year! As it tends to happen during the blustery months of winter, things settled down quite a

bit. People tended to hibernate in their respective corners, gathering in small groups for **nabe parties and/or igloo building**.



The cold weather was greeted differently around the ken. There were cheers from some as the first snowflakes fell and grumbles from others. Excitement mixed with apprehension perhaps for some who were experiencing the white months ahead for the first time. Some folks were quite content to curl up under their **kotatsu** as they headed home under the darkening skies of the late afternoon, reminiscing of summer days of sunshine and sunlight. While other, more adventurous souls, embraced the new season with open arms... whether it was trekking to Hokkaido to experience the amazing **Yuki Matsuri**, hitting the ice-rink to become a **professional curler** or dashing to the mountaintops as frequently as possible, (which meant when the snow decided to cooperate and actually fall as it was supposed to), armed with boards and skis, hats and goggles, ready to **slide down the...hopefully... powdery slopes**. All in all it was a fun season for most. Beginners rejoiced as they mastered the skill of standing, professionals continued to perfect the art of "making it look easy", and the rest of us found our own personal conquests to celebrate.



The months didn't slip by completely uneventful. In February a bunch of JETs got "gussied up" in our best scrubs and sloshed through the snow to the big city for a night of **drunken debauchery and gambling** as Everest of Apples held its annual **Casino Night** fundraiser. People's hard earned yennies were transformed into E of A rupees and the night was spent at the tables of **Texas Hold Em, Roulette, and Black Jack**. It was a successful event for all! AJET stayed busy as they hosted both the **cabin weekend at Moya Hills** and another fantastic **St. Paddy's Day Party in Misawa**. These events gave JETs an excuse to crawl out from under their respective crannies and get together for some much needed social interaction. Now that the winter has finally ran its course... with an extended stay through all of March- we look forward to the **warmer days of spring and the beauty of the cherry blossoms**.



Introducing...AJET

おめでとうございます



Aomori has new AJET members to introduce. Please welcome, **Bryan Haut** and **Aaron Chambers** as the new local Head Honchos for the upcoming year. They will be working together to help organize the Welcome Party, Culture Day, Orientations, the annual cabin party and the Farewell Party. **Joe Colistro** will continue on board!



Also... a **HUGE congratulations** to **Alisa Tobin** who will now be our **National AJET Block 1 Representative!**



If you have any questions or concerns, or ideas on how to improve JET... Please let her know! a_tobin@city.hachinohe.city.com



Happy Birthday to the Following JETS

April	May	June
4 Carly Romano	2 Melissa Nye	7 Katie Mulroy
11 Daniel Van De Sandt	2 Mark Scott	12 Alison Sprung
15 Melissa McIvor	7 Bec Behrendt	14 Lindsay Hurley
16 Leon Fonseka	10 Eric Clark	19 Joel Gruwell
19 Helen Bridges	11 Brian Elstein	
20 Natalie Leong	18 Yumiko Dark	
21 Anne Barton	18 Zachary Bass	
22 Chris Swanson	21 Alisa Tobin	
22 David Foley	24 Abidemi Bankole	
23 Melissa Tee	28 Amy Miller	
24 Garrett Austin	30 Aaron Chambers	
28 Brandon Cline		
28 Jason Johnson		
30 Michelle Payne		



JET Talk

Will Koch Hiranai ALT

Spring.... Honestly, I was surprised when given this topic to write about. I am one of the handful of people out there that doesn't look forward to Spring. This is because, well, I can never really get over the snow melt when spring starts. This year was especially painful because winter was warmer than usual and the total snowfall was well under average. **The snow is the reason I came to Aomori:** I enjoy being in blizzards and the ice is my playground.



Still, there is a part of me that welcomes the warmth. I can finally **ride a bike, move out of the room with the heater, and see the lines on the road when I drive.** The return of warmer weather reminds me of times when I could be outside more often, and with less layers of clothing. But, the memories of wearing a heavy jacket at the cherry blossom time last year also remind me **how fickle Aomori can be**—it never seems to make up its mind about which season it is.

One sure sign that spring is here is looking around my town in the afternoon at the hordes of students **practicing baseball** at local fields, parking lots, and almost anywhere else there is open space. Soon, the town office and company teams will be playing too, getting ready for the **Morning Baseball League**, with games starting at the **ripe hour of 5:00 a.m.** (an experience I recommend for any fans of the sport.)



The more I try and think about spring last year, the more I realize how short it was. **It flew by.** The **cherry blossoms** came in late April, **Golden Week** happened in May, and before I knew it, it was a humid 30 degrees and the beach was the best place to be. Considering it snowed last week, I'd say we're in for more of the same this year. **Days where it's "just right" are few, so get out and enjoy them.**

They are right around the corner.

~コッチ

CALVIN AND HOBBES
BY NEWMAN



*Research for current dates

April—June Festivals: **Japan Day:** Misawa April 5th; **Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival:** Hirosaki Last weekend in April; **Tako/ International Kite Festival:** Fujisaki Last weekend in April; **Kanagi Cherry Blossom Festival:** Kanagi 1st week in May; **Yokohama Rape Blossom Festival:** Yokohama 3rd weekend in May; **Taue Taiken Rice Planting Experience:** Inakadate End of May; **American Day:** Misawa 1st weekend in June; **Kuristo Matsuri:** Shingo 2nd weekend in June; **Tsuruta Sake Matsuri:** Tsuruta Mid-June; **Bug and Fire Festival:** Goshogawara Last weekend in June

Upcoming Work & Event Schedule

Events and Holidays: April

- 1 First day of new school year
- 7 PA Applications come out. Good luck!
- 8 Group C JETs arrive in Japan... WELCOME!



- 11 E of A Futsal Tournament Aomori
- 12 E of A Meeting 1:30 PM at Fukushi Plaza
- 16 C.C. Meeting... details T.B.A.
- 29 Showa's Day Holiday

Hanami Season! Go have a picnic!!!

***If you need a Japanese Drivers License, start working on it NOW! ***



May

- 4 Green Day Holiday
- 5 Children's Day Holiday
- 6 Substitute Holiday (for Constitution Memorial Day)

Mid-May TOA Participants will be notified

June

- 20-21 E of A Trivia Event
- 27 Tsuraru Ben Taikai at the Tsuruta Town Office



Trivia... June 20-21 2009... Save the Dates!



Trivia Weekend is back again this year for a wonderful re-run of all the fun and mayhem of previous years. Come for the trivia, stay for the food and drinks. For those of you poor people who have yet to experience a Tohoku Trivia Taikai, it is a weekend of adventure and hang-overs set in the beautiful **Oirase Gorge** to be remembered for years to come. The festivities start around noon on Saturday, June 20th with lunch, followed by entertainment until dinner. After dinner we will start the extraordinary **test to your general (and not so general) knowledge along with some other amusing challenges** to try to even the playing field. There will also be the highly popular Secret Auction to offer you the chance to bid on some old favourites from home - or anything else we manage to find! After spending a refreshing night in the Oirase Grand Hotel, you can then spend the next day **enjoying the natural beauty of the gorge** and wandering home.

While the date, June 20th, may seem a long way in the future now, **it is never too early to start thinking of a team** (10 people) and work out your study schedule. More information, including price and other such details, will be sent out soon!



Spotlight: Nagano Ken

Benjamin Raven, Nagano JET

The rooftop of Japan

- The geographical "heart" of Honshu
- 4th largest prefecture
- Area: 13,562km²
- 120 km x 212 km
- 15 mountains over 3000m
- Four seasons destination
- Winter Olympics 1998



Today I would like to introduce my home for the past five years, and my favourite place, **NAGANO – THE ROOF-TOP OF JAPAN.**

Nagano Prefecture is located at the geographical **heart of Honshu** and the 4th largest prefecture in Japan. The prefecture is surrounded by the 3000m peaks of the Japan Alps with 15 mountains over 3000m located in or bordering Nagano prefecture.

Let's begin our journey and traverse the rooftop of Japan:

Zenkoji Temple, located in Nagano City and first built around early 7th century, is one of the most visited temples in Japan as it is said "**One must visit Zenkoji - once in a lifetime**". The temple has applied to be registered as a World Heritage Site due the significance of storing what-many-believe-to-be the **first Buddhist statue ever brought to Japan**. Even though it is one of the most visited temples, you can still find serenity around the temple or even the hidden key to paradise in the dark tunnel that runs under the temple.

Zenkoji Temple



The **Snow Monkeys** - Made famous by the international media during the 1998 Winter Olympic Games here in Nagano, live in a mountainous valley on the edge of Jigokudani or Hells Valley Natural Park, just north of Nagano City. **About 270 wild monkeys call the hot spring area home** and bathe and relax everyday in its warm waters. It's best to see the monkeys in winter as they escape the harsh cold.

The old Nakasendo highway which ran from **Kyoto to Tokyo in the Edo Period** (1603-1867) passes through the **Kiso Valley**. In those days, it took three days to pass through the valley and as a result post towns developed along the road. Nowadays you can see beautifully restored old houses and experience the **spiritual fabric of "Old Japan"**.

Snow Monkeys



In Japan, there are only four castles that have been designated as **National Treasures** and **Matsumoto Castle** is one of these. The five-storied castle is one of the oldest castle structures remaining in Japan, **surviving in its original form**. During spring the cherry blossoms paint the surrounding area in **beautiful pink colours**.

Nearby, **Kamakochi** lies in a small basin of the Azusagawa River at a base altitude of 1500m. **Walter Watson**, a **British missionary and mountain climber introduced**

Kamakochi to the world in the 19th century and since then many climbers from around Japan and across the world have climbed the peaks of the **Japan Alps** appreciating the view of the crystal clear waters and snow-capped peaks.

P.A. Talk

Marti Deyo, BoE P.A.



I am sure you all know me, my name is **Marti Elaine Deyo** and I hail from Orofino, Idaho, (a mountain town in the panhandle of Idaho). This is my **5th and final year on the JET Programme** having spent 2 years as a one-shot ALT, 1 year at a High School, and the last two years as one of your **Prefectural Advisors of Aomori**. So you all know me, but do you really know what the BOE PA job often entails? Well now is your chance to get a secret

view inside the workings of a Prefectural Advisor:

(I will go through the basics, just to give you an idea of a few of the things that can often occupy our time, but if you are interested in more information, please **chat with your local PA** (as all situations are different)! Remember BoE PA applications are due soon!

***Mediate** for Aomori JET participants and Contracting Organisations relating information about the contract, school visits, work conditions, and daily life

***Translate** and offer JET participants **assistance** at hospitals, Immigration Offices, City Hall, Driving Center, and government offices (whether that be during the work day or in some cases - the middle of the night)

*Assign and **provide information** to Pref. JET participants about their work placements, duties and answer questions ranging from work to daily life

*Offer **counseling services** and confidentiality to JETs

*Create **newsletters*** and update Aomori JET publications

*Facilitate JET and JTE **orientations, seminars, Culture Days*** as well as organize **Summer English Camps** for Junior High and High School Students

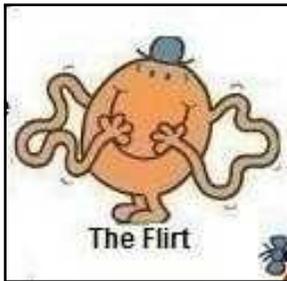
*Attend counseling, mediating, and seminar organizational training at bi-yearly **Prefectural Advisor Seminars**

***Work in a Board of Education Office** with Japanese government employees assisting in word checks and calculation for the Standardized High School Textbooks and answer any questions they may have about Japanese students studying abroad, foreign cultures, or English issues

Just to name a few. Basically **our goal is to help you start with a smooth adjustment in Japan**, guide you through your years here, and aid you in your transfer out of the Programme and into your lives beyond. It has been an **amazing and challenging two years** in the position and I want to thank you all for your help and support. Even the PAs appreciate encouraging words. => Hope you all have enjoyed your time here so far and I **wish you the best of luck** in the future. If there is anything we PAs can do to improve the Aomori JET community, we would love to hear it! Looking forward to **seeing you around Aomori during this beautiful spring season!**



Featuring our 2nd Year JETs continued



Name: Genevieve Murphy
Job Description: Juggle as many things as possible without dropping them... and teach English
If I could do anything I would... fly! It would cut down on travel expenses!
Summary of the last two years: It's been a wild and crazy ride!
Something Japanese that interests me: the Taiko and festivals
Words of advice: The world is your playground!
 Live, Laugh, Love!



Name: Jabari Smith
Job Description: Fujisaki Internationalization Ambassador
If I could be/ do anything I would . . . Travel the world as a Internationally renown Motivational Speaker, Talk Show Host and Peace Ambassador...of course, with Lil' Kim as my wife!!!
One statement to sum up your last 2 years on JET: FUL-FILLING!!!
Something Japanese that interests you: I'm intrigued by the totemi (outside face/mask) and honei (inside face/mask) of Japanese culture. Living and working amongst the Japanese has undoubtedly caused me to intently analyze the personality traits and characteristics that this society deems socially acceptable.

Quote / words of advice: "When you COMPLAIN you REMAIN; When you PRAISE you RAISE!"



Name: Melissa Tee
Job Description: Towada City ES/JHS ALT
If I could be anything, I would be a philanthropist.
One statement to sum up your last 2 years on JET: Ever finding more to love about the job!
Something Japanese that interests you: Taiko
Words of advice: To succeed as an ALT, always put 100% into the tasks you're given, and, as much as is possible, do more than is asked or expected of you.

Other 2nd year JETS: Garrett Austin, Zack Bass, Mark Beese, Bec Behrendt, Dana Berte, Helen Bridges, Mike Cayas, Seamus Couch, David Crawford, Michael Dawson, Leon Fonseca, Martha Gast, Alex Gordon, Crystal Green, Weldon Green, Allie Hurley, Lindsay Hurley, Ridwan Khan, Will Koch, Natalie Leong, Teresa Lepak, Wyomia Mowers, Melissa Nye, Stephen Pendlebury, Carly Romano, Alisa Tobin, Daniel Van De Sandt, Tina Wang, Juliet White



Nagano continued . . .



Obuse is a historical town located 30 minutes outside of Nagano City, well-known for its chestnuts, sake and most importantly home of famous Japanese artist, **Katsushika Hokusai** who painted the famous image of the wave crashing in front of Mt Fuji – you might know this image, as well as this exquisite roof painting of a phoenix.

The "Dosojin" or Fire Festival of Nozawa Onsen is one of my recommendations. The festival is held every January to pray for good harvests in the new year. 42 year old men of the village sit on top of the tower with 25 year villagers doing their best to protect the tower from other villagers carrying fire. Definitely a sight to be seen!

Next on the right-hand side is the festival called "Onbashira", this is peculiar to the Suwa Lake area of Nagano and takes place once every seven years, the next being in 2010. Participants drag huge logs up a mountain slope and then try to ride them.

Upcoming this year is the "Gokaicho" at Zenkoji Temple. Held also every seven years, and is centered around the public showing of a replica of the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan, 1400 years ago. This festival will take place from April 5th to May 30th.



So with all this traveling you are probably getting quite a bit hungry? Right? What does the rooftop offer in delicious foods?

Soba – Nagano's highland areas, hilly slopes and cold climate create ideal growing conditions of soba buckwheat. **You can even try cutting your own noodles!**
Chestnuts – roasted or chestnut sweets and pies.
Nozawa-na pickles – often served on the side with meals.
Gohei Mochi – grilled rice cakes covered in miso paste
Jibie – how about some venison? Raw or cooked.

Take a bite into a **Nagano apple** – Nagano is Japan's second highest producer of apples.

Salmon – caught from the crystal clear waters of Nagano's rivers.

Oyaki – steamed buns with filling such as Nozawa-na, eggplant, and pumpkin.

Sake – wash it down with some sake produced from the crisp winter climate and water originating from snow-capped mountains combined to make great sake.

Wine– Nagano is also renowned for an emerging wine region, and its climate produces some quite tasty wines.



Featuring our Second Year JETS!!!



Name: Anne Barton
Job Description: ALT
If I could be/ do anything I would . . . live to be 1000 and spend all my time exploring.
One statement to sum up your last 2 years on JET: can't remember... mostly a drunken haze...
Something Japanese that interests you: zaru soba
Quote / words of advice: play nice, have fun



Name: Rinjii Benedikuto
Job Description: Master of karate and friendship for everyone.
If I could be/do anything I would... have an awesome, easy, fun job that allows me to take 2 or 3 international vacations per year. Oh, wait.
One statement to sum up the last 2 years of JET: I came, I saw, I karoked.
Something Japanese that interests you: I'm saving

up to buy a Washlet when I get home!

Quote or words of advice: "They say travel broadens the mind - but you must have the mind." - G.K. Chesterton



Name: Joe Colistro
Job Description: Sannohe Elementary School ALT
If I could be/ do anything I would fight crime vigilante style while using my position as Ambassador to Japan as a daytime coverup.
One statement to sum up the last 2 years of JET: Good times, cold times, and some times I can't seem to remember.

Something Japanese that interests you: Passive-Causitive Verb Clauses and other grammatical fun-fests.

Quote or words of Advice: Stay away from shochu; no good has or ever will come of it.



Name: Travis Emery
Job Description: SHS ALT/Cat Herder
If I could be/ do anything I would . . . Stop global warming so we can get some decent snow in the ken
One statement to sum up your last 2 years on JET: Being illiterate is hard.
Something Japanese that interests you: dorodango
Quote / words of advice: "The time has come!" the walrus said.



Name: Puddin Tain, ask me again, and I'll probably give you a straight answer.

Name: Touché, it's Sam
Job Description: I teacha da english. Teachita goodd.

If I could be/ do anything I would: Sell unicorns to beach balls.

One statement to sum up your last 2 years on JET: "I've only been here for a year and a

half."

Something Japanese that interests you: Racism

Quote / words of advice: "You know how I know you're gay? You look at me sometimes in a certain way... and your lip quivers."



Name: David Foley
Job: Mutsu City ALT
Last two years on JET: Good Times
Something Japanese that interests me: Politics, Owarai, Izakaya, Snack, Kani-pan from Circle K, Enka

Word of Advice: Japan is safer than most countries in terms of crime but in terms of nature it can be fairly dangerous. Don't drive back roads without asking a Japanese person first even if the road is numbered on a map and looks legitimate. Tempt not the fates.



Name: Steven MacWhinnie

Job Description: ALT
If I could be/ do anything I would... Travel the world and be amazingly rich. Oh, and still be able to use proper English.

One statement to sum up the last 2 years of JET: Busy and boring.

Something Japanese that interests you: I am definitely here for the green tea and onsens.

Quote or words of advice: Read your contract!

