



VOLUME 15, No. 1
APRIL 2000

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CJST ITEMS OF INTEREST

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JAPAN**

JAPAN ON THE WEB

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EVENTS**

... AND MORE

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WWW.CJST.ORG

CJST News

The Canada-Japan Society of Toronto

ACCESS JAPAN 2000 AND THE CJST

CJST Members submit a total of six Access Japan 2000 Applications.

As most of you are surely aware, the Consul General invited the CJST to submit applications for events to take place under the banner of Access Japan 2000 - a celebration of Japanese culture. After two special meetings and several Board reviews, six (6) different events were put forward by CJST members with Board approval. The following brief summaries, together with the contact person for the event, appear in no particular order:

~ **“Japanese Women in 2000: A Look Ahead.”** Panel discussion with the goal of enhancing and furthering the understanding of modern Japanese women both in Canada and in Japan and introducing and promoting Japanese culture. Moderated by Dr. Patricia Morley, Author the panel will consist of Ms. Mariko Fujiwara, Research Director - Hakuhodo Institute, Ms. Joy Kogawa: Author (*Itsuka, Obasan*), Ms. Kazuko Komatsu, President of the Pacific Western Brewing Co., Ms. Maryka Omatsu, Ontario Criminal Court Judge and Dr. Irene Uchida, Cytogeneticist, recipient of the Order of Canada. Contact: Tristan Cammaert 593-1871.

~ **Roundtable discussion of Japan-Canada Free Trade** and general trade issues by panel of speakers (3-5) with expertise in this area; followed by wine and cheese reception (speakers to be confirmed). Contact person: Don Waters 865-7920.

~ **“Japan on the Web.”** Internet podiums placed in strategic locations featuring websites categorically focussed on things Japanese with the goal of presenting an opportunity to familiarize oneself with things related to Japan through a new medium; furthering innovation, advancement and understanding. Contact person: Monique Grignard 594-9774.

~ **Japanese Student Art Exhibit.** Featuring art work by talented Japanese high school students selected by art teachers in Japan. Works on display will be viewed and judged by Canadian students, teachers and the public at large. Contact person: Ken Boles 396-2269.

~ **Tokyo French Cuisine Fair.** This week-long event will feature Mr. Akira Iwatsuki, Director and Executive Chef at Le Meridien Grand Pacific Tokyo Hotel. Mr. Iwatsuki will visit Toronto and prepare a special menu to be offered at a host hotel (to be determined). Contact person: Hiroko Yoshihashi 253-7842.

~ **Business Lucheon Series.** This series, hosted by our Business Committee, will feature 3 separate luncheons (one each hosted by McMillan Binch, Goodman Philips Vineberg and Stikeman Elliot) each with a different speaker and Japanese business related topic. Contact person: Fumiko Shiba 974-3820.

Details will follow as we learn of the Organizing Committee’s decisions regarding which events will be invited to be a part of Access Japan 2000 (the program runs from September 23 to November 5, 2000).

AGM ON MAY 18 IN THE OFFICES OF STIKEMAN ELLIOT

CJST members in good standing are invited to the CJST’s 2000 AGM.

It is that time of year again, time for the CJST Annual General Meeting where the present Board reports to the membership on the affairs of the Society and the membership is invited to vote for the members of the Board of Directors for the coming (existing by now) fiscal year. Tradition dictates that the meeting be informal and we are just not the types to break with tradition.

The law firm of Stikeman Elliot has generously offered us the use of their main boardroom for the event (Suite 5300 Commerce Court West - SE corner of Bay and King). The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM and should go on for no more than 2 hours.

Please refer to the enclosed flyer for more information.

Happenings and Things of Interest... we hope!

Japanese Speech Award for High School Students

On Sunday, June 4, 2000, the sixth annual Japanese Speech Award (JSA) for high school students will be held at the new Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Every year the winners of the national JSA competitions, now held in 15 countries, are flown to Japan for two weeks to participate in a language study and cultural experience program. This is a very exciting opportunity for students of the Japanese language to challenge themselves by first submitting a 5 minute speech by tape, and if selected, to compete with other high school students. An experienced panel of judges will interview each student after the presentations, and the first place winner will be awarded an all inclusive trip to Japan, from July 21 to Aug 2, 2000. Please see enclosed pamphlet for more details or call Ken Bole at 416-396-2269.

Speaking of Volunteers...

Time on your hands? Want to practice your Japanese, or just give something back to the community...? **The Momiji Seniors' Centre** in Scarborough, a residence for independent, mainly Japanese and Japanese-Canadian seniors, is always looking for fresh volunteers to help us in our many programs and enhance our seniors' quality of life. We are especially looking for Volunteer Drivers, who can assist us not only in Scarborough, but also in our Japanese Meals-On-Wheels Programs all over the GTA. Can you give a little of your time (we'll pay the mileage!) to brighten someone's day? For more information, please contact Lee Mixon, Momiji's Coordinator of Volunteers, at (416) 261-6683 ex. 224.

Japan on the Web!!

Looking for Japan on the web? This list should help you get started. If you find a site you would like to share with other CJST members, send it to our mail box cjst@mailcity.org and we will include it in our next newsletter - subject to editorial control review, of course.

<http://www.lumine.net/english/index.html> English – bad/ funny English on Japanese products

Interactive Games for learning:

http://www.japan-guide.com/quiz/index_e.htm - Test your knowledge of Japan.

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/4220/kotowaza.html> - Japanese expressions and sayings

<http://www.mickey.ai.kyutech.ac.jp/cgi-bin/japanese?CONFIG=BE&FILE=KanjiFiles/Quizzes/Grade.html> Kanji quizzes. Various levels.

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/puzzle/Menu.html> in English, word puzzles and picture puzzles - cultural

www.mickey.ai.kyutech.ac.jp/cgi-bin/japanese?CONFIG=BE&GAME=WF&BOARD+S002 This has Hiragana word find games.

<http://www.mickey.ai.kyutech.ac.jp/cgi-bin/japanese?CONFIG=BE&FILE=KanjiFiles/Quizzes/Frequency.html> Kanji quizzes. All levels.

<http://www.ChipChat.com/NihonGo/HiraganaDrillTestDrive.html> Game - hiragana comes up and you must find the romaji equivalent.

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/puzzle/Menu.html> in English, word puzzles and picture puzzles

cultural: You can send Japanese email/ cards to your friends.

<http://www.asahi-jc.com/umbrella.htm> Send your own ai-ai umbrella

<http://www.asahi-jc.com/kitchen/htm> Here you can send a virtual Japanese meal to your friends.

www.123greetings.com/cgi-bin/123greetings/interface/send1.pl.fcgi?ql=spe_money&sname=&rname=&reml=&seml=&log=34392

You can send virtual yen

<http://www.bluemountain.com/eng3/japan/index.html> For Japan's special days.

<http://www.cardforyou.com/birthday/cake/jp/> Send a Japanese birthday card.

Sakura: April is the time for "sakura" – cherry blossoms and "o'hanami" – cherry blossom viewing. Here are some sites to get you in the mood.

<http://gojapan.about.com/travel/gojapan/library/cards/blsakura.htm> Send a "sakura" e-postcard.

<http://www.jin-japan.org/kidsweb/calendar/april/hanami.html> Description of cherry blossom viewing (o'hanami)

http://www.bluemountain.com/enge/tomoko/JPN_esday.html Send an e-card for spring and cherry blossoms

<http://tuli.cc.lut.fi/~sheinone/japan/sakura.html> Sakura song in 'romaji' and English

Remember we have our own sakura right here in Toronto at High Park!

“OTHER” NEWS FROM JAPAN: AN IDIOSYNCRATIC VIEW OF WHAT YOU HAVE MISSED IN YOUR NEWS ABOUT JAPAN - OR NOT....

GOOD NEWS: JAPANESE REGULATORS IMPOSE RIGOROUS REPORTING STANDARDS ON LISTED COMPANIES

We are very happy to report that investors looking to purchase Japanese equities will soon be able to make their decisions based on better quality information. As of April, all listed Japanese companies have to record saleable property and securities assets at current market value (a big issue for trading companies, for example, which have significant real estate and equity holdings). Listed companies must also disclose the value of pension liability shortfalls, and they will be required to write down losses on any assets whose current market value is 30% lower than the value at which they are held on the balance sheet. *The Financial Times* reports that these changes make Japan's accounting standards among the toughest in the world, and are intended to encourage international investment by increasing transparency. FT predicts the new rules will yield a fair bit of bad news and restructuring as they take effect. Tomen, acting earlier than it needed to, has reported annual results in line with the new standards, recording ¥407bn losses as a result, and asked creditors to forgive ¥200bn in debt. FT says Nissan and Toshiba have announced billions of dollars of provisions to cover underfunded pension liabilities. FT also predicts that up to 40% of Japan's big construction companies could report liabilities in excess of assets under the new rules (bankruptcy, in other words), requiring more debt forgiveness. Equity analysts in Tokyo believe the new reporting standards may force more companies to unwind cross-shareholdings and look for more aggressive ways to improve operating efficiency. that could lead to more M&A activity in a broad range of industries, including construction.

MORE GOOD NEWS: LIVING IN TOKYO GETS A LITTLE LESS SWEATY

Matoko Egashira, marketing manager at JR East, reports Tokyo commuters are having an easier time of it lately – in part because of because of difficult economic conditions. Mr. Egashira reports commuter train passenger numbers have fallen for the past nine years, while rail network capacity is up 60% since '75. Result: rush hour trains now carry about 183% of designed capacity, down from 221%

in 1975. “We used to have to pull back the passengers who couldn't squeeze their way in. Now we can push them all in.” Oh, the relief.

LESS GOOD NEWS: MORE RESTRUCTURING IN THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT

Sanwa Bank, Tokai Bank and Asahi bank have revised their post-merger business plan and now expect to cut significantly more jobs than previously announced. The old plan called for 4,500 positions to be eliminated by 2003. (That's about 12% of their domestic workforce). Bank management now expects to cut about 10,000 jobs by 2005, or 27% of combined workforce. They will also close 150 branches in Japan, 20 international branches. The merged bank, to be Japan's 2nd largest, will begin operation in April 2001. It will have a ¥1 trillion asset base, 852 branches around the world and about 38,000 somewhat anxious employees.

SOME GREAT NEWS

The BBC reports that MP Seiko Hashimoto had a healthy baby girl this week. Ms. Hashimoto is a former Olympic speed skater and, following a well-received campaign to change laws regarding maternity leave for MPs, is now on 14 weeks paid maternity leave. The last politician to have a baby in office was Ms. Tenkoku Matsutani, in 1950. She was a member of the lower house.

...And a bit of silliness

Far Eastern Economic Review's Nury Vittachi recently reported that Japanese children are having trouble getting past the grown-ups in their local toy stores. Tomy Co. reports that 70% of people who buy its Star Wars action figures are adults. Most shoppers at the new HakuHinkan Toy Park in the Ginza are in their 20s and 30s. And young dads are buying ¥20,000 computerized Lego sets for their babies. Why not wait? “I play with it since my kid is still small.” I remember my dad “looking after” a model ship I once got in just the same way. Isn't it nice that things don't change?

