

**Spring/Summer
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CJST Quarterly

The Canada-Japan Society of Toronto

Craig Martin is our new President!

*Naval officer-turned-lawyer shares his vision for CJST's future
and thanks John Le Blanc for three years of brilliant work*

**BY CRAIG MARTIN,
CJST PRESIDENT**

The new Board of Directors of the CJST was elected on May 23rd at our annual general meeting. For those of you who could not make it to the swanky offices of McMillan Binch for the AGM, you may well be wondering who is at the helm and where the CJST is headed. It is high time, as our Communications Director, Linda Adachi, has frequently reminded me, that your new President engage in the time-honoured Japanese custom of self-introduction.

Before telling you a bit about myself and where I think the CJST is headed, however, I think a few words are in order on where the organization has recently stood under the stewardship of the outgoing President, John Le Blanc. I have been involved with the CJST since 1994, and during these past eight years the organization has had its ups and downs. Like all volunteer and not-for-profit organizations, it has experienced its share of waning energy, petty politics, and personal conflicts - and it wouldn't be a Japanese organization without a healthy dose of factionalism, would it?

When John became President some three years ago, he immediately infused the CJST with a new sense of energy and enthusiasm, and skilfully navigated the shoals of personal politics within the organization. Under his leadership the CJST achieved a truly remarkable showing in the Access Japan exposition coordinated by the Japanese Consulate, which enhanced the visibility and credibility of the CJST among the broader community of Japan-related organizations in and around Toronto. Also, after an incredible string of bad luck in selection of locales for our monthly Ichi-Moku-Kai, with no less than three of our chosen venues going bankrupt within the span of a year, the CJST has firmly re-established IMK at Sushi Bistro as our cornerstone social and networking event.

Despite the entreaties of the Board of Directors, John decided earlier this year that new energy and new vision were needed in the Presidency. That may have been his only error in judgment in the job - but he has certainly handed over the organization in vibrant good health; it is as dynamic as it has ever been in recent memory. The entire Board of Directors joined me at the Annual General Meeting in expressing our gratitude and appreciation for his dedication and contribution during his three-year term. We also managed to convince him to stay on as Vice-President, for which I am most appreciative. I look forward to his continued guidance in the coming months. *(Continued next page)*

New CJST President's Message *(continued from Page 1)*

So, who is this new President, and where does he see the CJST heading? I'll start with my connection with Japan: in 1990 I headed to Osaka, after four years' service in the Canadian Forces as a Naval Officer. I was fortunate enough to receive a Monbusho scholarship from the Japanese government to study Japanese for six months at the Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku, followed by a year of research in political history at Osaka Daigaku, or Handai as it is more commonly known.

Like so many others, once there I wanted to stay longer, and so decided to do my Masters at Handai in order to extend my scholarship and my rather irresponsible student lifestyle in Japan. Given the structure of Japanese universities, I ended up in the Graduate School of Law, even though my area of study was really political history. In the course of my two-year Masters I became increasingly interested in the area of law itself. (My thesis was on US-Japanese conflict over Japan's international legal rights in Manchuria during the 1920s and 1930s, an issue that I am sure one day will become extremely topical; if you ever have burning questions on the issue, you know who to call!)

Thus, after commencing my PhD at Handai in early 1994, I tore myself away from the possibility of at least four more years of Monbusho largesse and my rather idyllic lifestyle in Osaka, to head back to Canada to study law. After three years at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, I joined the ranks of the many lawyers among the CJST membership (a topic for future articles may well be the question as to why there are so many lawyers in the CJST!). I now practice civil litigation at a downtown litigation firm.

In terms of my "vision" for the CJST, the single most important objective I have as President is to significantly increase the percentage of Japanese members within the organization. When I say Japanese, I do not mean Japanese Canadian, or even so much Japanese who have become permanent residents or citizens of Canada, but rather those who are here for a few years as part of their work or study.

In my view, the central role of the CJST is to further Japanese-Canadian relations and cultural understanding on a micro or community level. There are two aspects to that function. The first is to provide a forum for Canadians with an interest in or a connection with Japan to continue to develop their understanding of and bonds with Japan. The second, however, is to provide a forum for Japanese in Canada through which they can become more fully integrated into Canadian society and develop a better understanding of its culture and social structure.

For Canadian who have lived in Japan, or anywhere else for that matter, it is easy to appreciate how difficult it can be to really penetrate a foreign culture and become a part of the social fabric of one's adopted home. This is all the more true for the Japanese, who may tend to be a little less inclined to draw attention to themselves and thrust their way into the host society. The CJST can play a vital role in helping Japanese in Toronto do so, and in the process, will make the organization that much more able to satisfy the needs of its Canadian members who seek to develop meaningful ties with Japanese culture.

We will be working with other organizations in Toronto, such as the Japan Foundation, the Japanese Consulate, JAVA (Japanese Visitors Association), and Shinkikai (Association for Japanese Canadian Businesses), to boost our Japanese membership and to make the CJST a more attractive organization for the Japanese community in Toronto.

In closing, I should say that I am very excited by the strong Board of Directors that was elected with me at the AGM. The full details are set out elsewhere in the Newsletter, but the new Board is an optimal mix of seasoned veterans of the CJST management and new members who bring fresh ideas and new energy to the Board. We have also established a number of committees, including a membership committee, to focus on those areas that the Board has identified as key objectives for the coming year.

We will be updating you as the year progresses, and we look forward to seeing you all out at the various events we have planned! ■

Outgoing CJST President's "Painfully Confessional" Self-Assessment!

BY JOHN E. LE BLANC,
VICE-PRESIDENT

Since my best material is years behind me, I thought it would be interesting (and easiest) to look back to the first article I wrote when I became President of the CJST some three years ago. In that first rant I listed the following objectives of my tenure.

Here goes:

1. Don't ruin a good thing.
2. Encourage people to stay involved and make their involvement as worthwhile as possible to encourage continued involvement.
3. Remind existing non-active members of reasons they might want to come back into the fold.
4. Exploit new membership sources such as returnees and expatriots to bolster the membership ranks and further strengthen what I see as an already strong membership base.
5. Work closely with other cultural organizations (Japanese Canadian and others) to make sure that we are not missing opportunities to better further the goals and ideals of the CJST.
6. Work with the Board members to establish a consistent business element for those members who are seeking the capitalist as well as cultural experience while remaining faithful to the CJST mandate.

Now, how did I do? In order:

1. Success. I did not ruin the CJST, I trust!
2. Partial success. In these tough times for Japanese Canadian organizations, I think we have hung in there admirably. In fact, as I look at our list of Board members for the coming year I think I should change my grade to full success; we are fortunate to have so many high-quality, capable people committed to the CJST.

I have been told that I have to write one final "presidential rant" before I get to saunter off into the sunset and do what all good CJST vice-presidents do: nod and smile, and eat pizza.

3. Not so successful. However, like any good president I shall blame others – notably our Membership Director for the past two years, Craig Martin. Yeah, that's the ticket, blame the incoming President for the failings of the old!
4. See #3 – hey, is Chef Hiro missing a long sushi knife?
5. Success and failure here. We co-organized a number of successful events with other Japanese groups that benefitted our members and the community at large; that's great success. The failure lies in the fact that the CJST sometimes ended up in the background and did not receive what I felt was well-deserved recognition for our efforts. We occasionally accepted being billed as the supporting player, when we were actually carrying the important scenes, as well as doing the behind-the-scenes work. How modest and Japanese!
6. Success. While the last few months have been quiet on the business front, our Business Committee has organized some fantastic events over the past few years that have been praised and enjoyed by our business membership. More to come from this talented and dedicated group – stay tuned.

Scorecard: 3 full successes, 1 partial success, and 2 failures that I am blaming on others!

All kidding aside, I am thrilled that Craig has accepted the position of CJST President despite his gruelling schedule as a litigator. He brings a wealth of Japan-related knowledge to his position, as someone who has a master's degree in law from Osaka University and who is fluent in the Japanese language. We all look forward to seeing his vision for the CJST in action.

Well, that's it, everyone. To quote the title of Douglas Adams' fourth book in his *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* 'trilogy': "So long, and thanks for all the fish." Of course I'll still be active as the ribbon-cuttin', beer-drinkin' VP, so see you at the next IMK! ■

Once a Gaijin...

The effen hyphen

BY STUART CREEMORE

You already know that there's a lot of stuff I just don't get. Geez, it was so much easier to understand everything when I lived in Japan...

Being a gaijin, you knew the rules - or you learned pretty damn quickly - and you knew your place. You were never going to be Japanese, so no point in even trying. It was either 'we Japanese,' or everyone else who wasn't: what could be simpler! And no use trying to sneak into the club either, like if you and your parents were born in Japan but your ancestors were Korean or something; this is strictly for Members Only, and the Japanese keep damn good records.

But over here - holy cow, what a smorgasbord! You can't tell one team from another. In fact,

people will even argue there are no teams in Canada. Canadians are just one thick soup, so don't even try to pick out the peas and carrots. We're all just mush, except for some of the so-called 'new Canadians' who haven't yet had enough time to get sullied.

A little of this, a little of that, some from here, some from there - et voila - a true Canuck! But what about all those Japanese Canadians, you ask? The ones who've been here three or four generations, and have still managed to propagate their pure Japanese blood line?

Forget the 90% of the JCs who marry outside the clan, who are Japanese in name only. Let's look at the 'real Japanese Canadians,' including the handful of immigrants who have left Japan on their own free will to begin a new life here in Canada. After a few years here, especially if they raise children on foreign soil, it's game over even if you were Made in Japan - you can't go home again.

The kids wouldn't fit back in if they went back to Japan, even if they wanted to (which they don't). And that's all there is to it; you've forfeited your right to be Japanese. You're something different now. You're no longer a

member, even if you still speak the language. (And you'll soon start to forget how to write some of your 1,945 Jōyō kanji!).

As for the ones born in Canada of Japanese stock, well, ask them yourself. Most gaijin who've kicked around present-day Japan for a couple of years seem to know more about what it means to be Japanese than the JCs do. The JCs may remember a few Japanese traditions passed down from their parents and grandparents, and may dabble in the culture, but emotionally they're Canadian; they wouldn't last a day living under the good old Hinomaru! If the native, unhyphenated Japanese have a hard enough time following the rules in Japan, imagine what it'd be like for someone used to voicing their own opinion!

So here's my advice to one and all: just be yourself, join in the game of trying to define what it is to be Canadian, and forget the effen hyphen.

And if you're a real Nihonjin who's planning to go back home sometime, be careful - the longer you stay, the harder it is to resist those creeping Canadian values. But that's a theme for another rant, eh? ■

The following individuals were elected to the CJST Board of Directors for 2002 - 2003:

Craig Martin - President
John E. Le Blanc - Vice-President
Linda Adachi - Communications Director
Ken Bole - Director
Margaret Buckworth - Director
Tristan Cammaert - Treasurer

Trevor Fencott - Director
Steve Fry - Director (Membership Committee), Webmaster
Jeff Harju - Director (Membership Committee)
Fumiko Shiba - Director
Robert Tran - Director
Adrienne Young - Secretary

Being a Broad in Japan: CJST member Annette Goulin contributes to resource book for female expats

CJST member Annette Goulin informs us that she is a contributor to the recently published *Being A Broad in Japan: Everything a Western Woman Needs to Survive and Thrive*, a resource book for expatriate women living in Japan.

Compiled by Caroline Pover, the 500-page survival guide is a wealth of information, phone numbers, websites, Japanese translations, tips, advice, and personal anecdotes from hundreds of women. The chapters range from job-hunting to volunteering, dating to having a baby, and from health care to beauty. There are tips on where to find a good English-speaking doctor, where to get a good haircut, who to go to for career advice, and even how to handle *chikan* (perverts who grope women on crowded Japanese trains).

Annette contributed her ideas for the “Leaving Japan” chapter, including a mention of the CJST:

Upon returning home, seeking out new friendships while maintaining dear friends is one of the best things you can do. I am back in my hometown after seven years away, including university. It was a strange feeling at first, but I am making the most of it. Seeking out other returnees is a good way to meet

people who have done similar things and who understand you. I found the Toronto chapter of the Canada-Japan Society and they have social events once a month. There are groups of former JETs and other similar clubs in major cities. I started by asking a friend and by contacting the closest Japanese Embassy. Even it is just someone to eat sushi with once in while, that's great.



Shortly after moving to Japan in 1996, author Caroline Pover founded *Being a Broad* as a monthly magazine with the purpose of connecting and supporting English-speaking women in Japan. The magazine sparked the growth of an extensive network of predominantly Western women all over Japan, and inspired Caroline to write her book.

Caroline interviewed hundreds of women from different walks of life and varied backgrounds about their experiences, struggles, and successes while living abroad. After three years of hard work,

the book was published in 2001.

Being A Broad in Japan is sold across Japan in English bookstores (and it's a best-seller at Tower Records). It is also available online at www.beingabroad.gol.com

The Japan Foundation Library in Toronto has a copy on its shelf – check it out! ■

OBSERVATION

One Moment, Please...

Surely you've seen Jacques around at IMK. He's the well-dressed guy that always elicits comments like, "Wow, I saw you on television again." Jacques, a VP and Director of Octagon Capital, is a prominent investment analyst specializing in the airline and leisure industries; he appears frequently in the media as a commentator on airline-related issues. He speaks seven languages and flies all over the world, so you'd think he's a pretty unflappable individual who commands respect wherever he goes. As it turns out, in Japan he's just another hapless gaijin... Here's his rant.

BY JACQUES KAVAFIAN

There's something about Japan that I've just recently noticed. I've been to Japan numerous times but the thing never occurred to me before, perhaps because my visits were always short and hectic. Well, my most recent trip was twelve days long, which got me right into the fabric of Japanese society...or it got right under my skin.

It finally dawned on me that every time I ask someone a question, the person would inevitably reply, "One moment please..." and disappear to consult his or her colleague before returning to give me the usual negative answer. At first I didn't give it any thought, but after a while it hits you. Especially when the questions are rather yes-or-no basic: "Does the hotel gym have any shoes for rental?" or "Is there internet access in the hotel's business centre?"

Admittedly, other questions are more challenging to answer because they would require a long explanation in a foreign language: "Where is the nearest gaijin bar?" or "Where is the men's underwear section?"

One day I was at a Daimaru department store where I painstakingly sought out a male sales clerk (a challenging task, as they were a rare sight there) so that I could avoid asking the underwear question to a woman. So what does the guy do? "One moment please..." and relays the question in a loud voice to a group of three female sales clerks. He turns to me and says it's one floor up. Really, you'd think the guy would know.

Upon much reflection, I conjectured that this phenomenon must be due to the language barrier – a simple matter of my questions not being understood. But then, I've also asked questions in Japanese and got the same auto-reply. The Japanese are polite and gracious, so my thinking shifted to the possibility that they were asking colleagues to help them find the appropriate English words to assist me.

That theory was quickly tested one evening at a restaurant called *Modo di PonteVecchio*, which bills itself as one of the finest dining establishments in Osaka. Really nice place on the 30th floor of a skyscraper across from the Ritz-Carlton. Nice place if you don't mind paying 3,000 yen for a mingy appetizer portion of linguine al pesto – but I digress. Our reservation is for 9:00 p.m., the final sitting for that evening. We hurry and look at the menu, and my friend zeros in on the fish of the day. Great! Call the waiter over – he ought to be able to tell us what the fish of the day is, right?

"One moment please..."

The waiter comes back with the answer in Japanese: sea bass. Now, if I, a gaijin, had asked that question I would've totally understood his disappearance – he probably would've been looking up the English word for sea bass. The thing is, the question was asked by my Japanese friend in Japanese. Also, we are the last customers sitting that evening in a rather large restaurant - nobody else during that entire evening had asked what the fish of the day was? *(continued on Page 8)*

Restaurant Review

Even the waterfalls are black

Rain

19 Mercer St., Toronto
416-599-7246
Chef: Guy Rubino
Closed Mondays
Reservations useful; beastly expensive



REVIEWED BY

MARGARET BUCKWORTH AND ADRIENNE YOUNG

We heard about the place in whispered, reverential tones: Rain has Nobu-style black cod and a bathroom with hanging Lucite bubble chairs. But we also heard the intimidating warnings: Rain has industrial-luxe décor, high prices, and the “who are you” kind of snottiness that scares us silly.

Well! First of all, you needn't be scared, although the site was originally Toronto's first women's prison. Rain is like a circus for foodies, except without the loud colours. This place is hugely into black: the furniture, the clothes, and even the waterfalls (!) are all black. Unless you want to stick out like a pastel-wearing tourist from Omaha, you'd also want to wear lots of black.

Rain was *trop* trendy when it first opened: bouncers, line-ups, and rumoured six-week waits for tables. But this is 2002: Rain has now been open for more than a year, making it tired news for the trend-addicted who have now moved on to Crush.

All right, we love the scene – but what about the food? Surprisingly, it's serious and accomplished. Rain's cooking is not old-school Japanese; you'd probably define it as Asian fusion, with a definite bias toward Japan. The menu, which changes seasonally, is beautifully presented on *washi* paper.

To begin with, there is a long drink list, heavy on the chi-chi cocktails. Margaret sipped a Matsu Apple Martini and Adrienne plowed through a Rainfall (alcohol with a few berries). Stick with the Matsu, or one of the five kinds of saké. (The Hakusan Napa is \$35.00 a bottle: yeah baby!)

But back to the food... If you are keen on a Japanese theme, try the sashimi plate - delicious, creative and beautiful, but surprisingly tall. There's also the black cod, which is marinated in saikyo miso and saké, then grilled on a hot river stone; it's even better than the version at Zen. You could also try eggplant tempura, or a wonderful dish of enoki and oyster mushrooms. Other (non-Japanese) things we have tried that are equally fabulous are pork tenderloin sitting on a baked apple (warning: tall food); Chinese long beans in yuzu mayo; fried rice with spinach (also tall); bok choy and gai lan; molten chocolate cake with homemade ginger ice cream and passionfruit cream; chrysanthemum Pu-ehr tea.

The business of ordering will be a bit weird. You will be asked to order your mains (\$18-\$38 each) separate from your veggies (\$9 each). And you will be told that they come in no particular order, and that's the way Chef likes it so don't fret please. Once the food does arrive, though, you'll be too blissed out to remember your initial bristling.

But when you eventually stop moaning with joy, we suggest you have a look around. Make a trip to the bathroom. Ogle the other diners. When we went, we noticed mainly two kinds of folks eating here. There are lots of wealthy Asians, typically on dates. You'll also have the Bay Street suits taking up a big chunk of space, trying to look cool and un-bankerly. During our evening, we witnessed a large, boisterous group of suits falling into silence in perfect unison whenever any of the hostesses walked by. Rain's hostesses are very beautiful, and their dresses very backless.

Assessment: This is the best fun we've ever had in a women's prison. Margaret wants to be locked up permanently, and is still plotting crimes and misdemeanours. It's expensive, so such a plot may need to be worked out if we want to go back often. This place is what Tempo is trying to be. Cool is cool, this year or last year. We declare Rain the coolest restaurant in town. ■

Rating: 3 ½ sushi rolls

One Moment, Please.... *(continued from Page 6)*

Now, choosing a wine. I ask the waiter if a particular Italian wine is available in the 1997 vintage. Yes, you know what's coming.

"One moment please..."

The sommelier shows up. Great, now we can get some direct answers. Or do we?

Q: The Solaia 1997 on the wine list - do you have any?

A: One moment please....

He runs away and comes back with a bottle but it is a 1998 vintage.

Q: How much is it?

A: One moment please...

He runs away and comes back: san-man yen. That's too much.

The sommelier, now knowing that we are asking about Solaia, runs away and comes back with four bottles in his hands for us to choose from.

Q: (Pointing to the Tignanello 1997) How much?

A: One moment please....

He runs away and comes back. Darn, it's too much again.

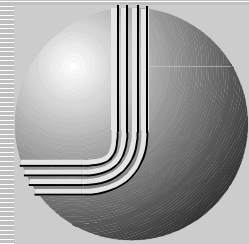
Q: How about this one?

A: One moment please ...

He runs away yet again. He always heads somewhere behind me, so I have no idea where he disappears to every time I ask a question. But really, someone calling himself a sommelier in a high-end restaurant doesn't know the prices of signature high-end wines?

So, this has been my experience of Japan. Why can't anyone give me a straight answer to a question? After asking some people of authority, like the gaijin in the gaijin bars, I was told that this phenomenon was due to the collaborative tendency in Japan: everyone has to consult their colleagues, or else the colleagues would become upset at being deprived of the privilege of contributing to giving a negative answer. So it's not me?

On the final day of my most recent trip to Japan, I asked a hotel employee if I could smoke a cigar in the lobby. As soon as his lips parted, I was ready to pounce on the poor guy, figuring that he would deliver the dreaded "One moment please..." Which he did end up saying. ■



CJST QUARTERLY

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We welcome comments, suggestions and contributions you may have on Japan and related topics for this publication.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not of the CJST or its Board of Directors.

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**Don't forget to RSVP for the September 17, 2002 preview performance of *Godzilla!*
See the enclosed flyer for details of the event.**