

Japan America Society of Minnesota



通 信

The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

September 2017 VOL. 26, No. 9

Great Fun and Many Attendees at Como Park Japanese Obon Festival 2017

Thousands of eager festival-goers converged on the grounds of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park on Sunday, August 20th in order to celebrate one of the largest summer festivals in Japan, the Obon Matsuri.

JASM this year hosted several different booths: the main booth served as an information center through which people could learn about JASM as well as a "Japanese market" where people could buy authentic Japanese goods such as Ramune (Japanese soda). JASM also hosted two Yo-Yo Tsuru booths, leaving many children with an exciting new toy for the festival. The



Kingyo Sukui booth was also a great success, with almost 400 children walking away with a new friend. Many festival-goers also enjoyed the calligraphy booth. The Friends of the Minneapolis Japanese School ran a Gyudon booth and other assorted foods booth which was beloved by many. Finally, JASM hosted a J-Quiz booth which engaged festival-goers in testing the knowledge of Japan. It was popular with adult and children alike. In addition, dozens of other restaurants and organizations came together to bring great success to the Obon Festival. -Page 4



Last Chance for Tickets to Ambassador Sasae Welcome Banquet - September 13

JASM is happy to welcome His Excellency Ambassador Sasae to Minnesota. Kenichiro Sasae assumed his post as Ambassador of Japan to the United States in Washington, D.C. in 2012.



Prior to his appointment as Ambassador to the U.S., Ambassador Sasae was the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, the highest ranking civil servant in the Foreign Ministry of Japan.

This will be Ambassador Sasae's first time visiting Minnesota and the banquet dinner will be a wonderful way to welcome him. During the program, Minnesota Orchestra cellist Sachiya Isomura will be performing with his daughter Eri Isomura and his wife, Hitomi. There will also be a speech by Ambassador Sasae. This event will be a great way to meet Ambassador Sasae and to listen to him speak about the current U.S.- Japan relationship.

When: Wednesday, September 13th, 2017, Check in at 5:30 p.m., Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Where: St. Paul Hotel, Promenade Ballroom, 350 Market St, St. Paul, MN 55102

Price: JASM Member: \$40.00, Non-Member: \$50.00

Support Ambassador Sasae's Welcome Banquet through a Silent Auction!



Thanks to a Generous Donation by All Nippon Airways, a Silent Auction of Air Tickets to Tokyo, Japan - details on page 5

Letter from the President

Dear JASM Members and Friends,

I hope you all had a pleasant Obon holiday, spent time with family, remembered those who came before us, attended a festival and danced a *Bon Odori*. As always, the Como Park Obon Festival was spectacular! Traditional music, food, games, art, and dance, concluding with the lovely lantern lighting ceremony truly transformed Como Park into a small slice of Japan. *Domo Arigato* to Tomoko Drake and the Oyagi Club for feeding delicious gyudon to the masses. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all the dedicated volunteers for managing the different JASM booths and activities. There were thousands of attendees and all looked very happy to me. Much thanks to Mother Nature too for giving us a beautiful, sunny day to enjoy this amazing summer festival.

Major events like the Como Park Obon Festival really accentuate the strength of the Minnesota-Japan relationship at the grassroots level. It is also nice to know that JASM is part of a greater whole, both locally and nationally, when it comes to fulfilling this mission. In Early August, JASM Executive Director Ben Van Lierop and I had the privilege of attending the National Association of Japan America Societies (NAJAS) annual meeting. Our very own JASM is actually one of 37 Japan America Societies that comprise the NAJAS network. The Japan Society of Boston, established in 1904, is the oldest while the Japan America Society of North Carolina, founded in 2015, is the youngest. Our 45 year history makes JASM the fourteenth eldest society. It was quite motivating and educational to spend two days in workshops with leadership from other societies, learning about the trials and tribulations they face in their daily operations. Six current and former Ambassadors were present at this meeting, showing just how important the work of Japan America Societies are considered at high levels of the Japanese, US and Canadian governments.

One of the Ambassadors present at the NAJAS meeting was His Excellency, Kenichiro Sasae. We are honored by the opportunity to welcome Ambassador Sasae to Minnesota with a community dinner on September 13 at the St. Paul Hotel. It is not often that a Japanese dignitary of this stature visits the great state of Minnesota so I hope we can greet him with a large and enthusiastic gathering!

Ambassador Sasae is highly regarded both inside and outside Washington DC. His tenure as Japanese Ambassador to the USA has coincided with Prime Minister Abe's current term. Throughout this time, Ambassador Sasae has been present at some momentous historical events, including Prime Minister Abe's address to the US Congress, his visit to Pearl Harbor and President Obama's visit to Hiroshima. I cannot think of a better source to receive a comprehensive update on the state of the Japan-USA relationship than Ambassador Sasae!

The US-Japan alliance is continuously challenged by ever-escalating security, economic, political and regional issues. This alliance cannot be taken for granted. Japan America Societies play an important role at the grassroots level supporting the crucial work performed at the diplomatic level.

See you all on September 13th as we welcome Ambassador Sasae to Minnesota!

Marc Blehert, JASM President

2017 Mondale Award Application

The U.S. has a long history of sending top-notch people to serve as Ambassador to Japan—Minnesota's own Walter Mondale certainly fits the description. As a former Vice President and Senator, he was dubbed O-mono (a "magnate") by the Japanese press when President Bill Clinton appointed him in 1993. He served with distinction, earning praise in both countries for his deft handling of trade disputes and a serious diplomatic crisis involving U.S. military personnel. After his return to Minnesota in 1997, the Japan America Society of Minnesota created the Mondale Award for Japan-Minnesota Partnership to recognize outstanding contributions to the building of understanding, cooperation, and respect between the people of Japan and Minnesota. The Award was named for—and first presented to—Joan and Walter Mondale to recognize his service as Ambassador and their ongoing efforts to promote cultural exchange in both countries.

Who do you know that is dedicated to building cultural bridges between Japan and Minnesota? If you know someone that you believe is worthy of the Mondale Award, consider making a nomination using our online application!

Applications for the Mondale Award nomination can be found at the following website:

<http://mn-japan.org/programs/mondale-programs/mondale-award/>

All applications must be submitted by email to jasm@us-japan.org by Monday, September 11th

Membership News

Thanks to the following Renewing JASM Members:

Jeffrey Hensley, Masako Yoshida, Jane Powers, Jutta Thompson, Michael McPhee, Yoichiro Ashida, Catherine Ayano Nixon, Ritsuko Narita, David Fink, Chiharu Hall, Noriko Katzmark, Asako Hirabayashi, Scott Wenum, David Mixon, See Yang, Alexander Ellis, Rachael Youngs, Gretchen Dempewolf & David Toplon, Keiko Kawakami, Chris Bercaw

Thanks to the following New JASM Members:

Kelly Cheng, Mark Petty, Mary Witkus, Werner Koehler, Kevin Chiles, Gregory Schuneman

Thanks to the following Renewing JASM Corporate Members:

Hamre, Schumann, Mueller & Larson, P.C.

Mondale Gala Ramping Up for October 28, 2017

Applications for Mondale Scholarships are being processed

The Mondale Scholarship is a scholarship for students enrolled in Minnesota colleges and universities that have a Japan study Program. Four candidates have been chosen to receive scholarships for 2017– 2018.

The Mondale Award nominations deadline is on September 11

The Mondale Award was named after Joan and Walter Mondale. When Joan and Walter Mondale returned from their tenure in Japan they worked with our Society to establish both the Mondale Award for Japan and Minnesota Partnership and the Mondale Scholarship. The Society bestows the Mondale Award upon an individual for outstanding contributions to the building of relationships between the people of Japan and Minnesota. Last year, the award was given to Yoko Breckenridge, the founder of the Japanese Library in Minneapolis and longtime leader of the Nihonjinkai group, as well as Stanisław Skrowaczewski, former Artistic Director and Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, who conducted many concerts in Japan.

Mondale Sponsorship tables will be available for reservations soon

How would you like to have a table for your company, friends, or family to celebrate the Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala? Reservation information for being a sponsor at the Mondale Gala will be sent out soon. The planning committee is hoping for a record number of sponsors for 2017.

Corporate Spotlight:



Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd. (BTMU) is the largest bank in Japan, as well as a subsidiary of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG). After the merger of the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, Ltd. and UFJ Bank Ltd., the bank was established on January 1, 2006.

Mitsubishi UGJ Financial Group's services includes commercial banking, trust banking, securities, credit cards, consumer finance, assets management, and leasing. The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd. is one of MUFG's five primary operating companies, in which the bank operates as the core retail, corporate, and investment banking branch of MUFG.

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.'s vision is to "be the world's most trusted financial group." While the trust of the globe is important to BTMU, BTMU has maintained its commitment to earning trust in Japan by diligently meeting the ongoing needs of Japan's post-2011 earthquake disaster reconstruction. BTMU also continues to aid financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and provide housing loans to those in need of financial assistance. True to their vision, BTMU has come to be a respected and trusted financial group in Japan as well as around the globe.

JASM is honored and thankful to The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd. for its Corporate Sustaining Membership. Scott Ackerman, Director of U.S. Corporate Banking, and Amy Cartright, Executive Assistant are key members of the Minnesota team.

(This information was taken from <http://www.bk.mufg.jp/global/aboutus/index.html>)

*Please thank our members with
your support!*

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Macalester College Asian Language & Culture Department
Minneapolis Japanese School
Minneapolis Institute of Art
NDSU-Emily Reynolds Historic Costume Collection
US China Business Connection
U of MN Dept. of Asian Languages and Literatures, Japanese Language Program
Winona State Univ. Global Studies Dept.

Obon Festival 2017: Special Thanks

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of this year's Obon Festival. We greatly appreciate all that you do!

Thank you to all of our devoted volunteers:

Takuzo Ishida, Tetsuya Shimano, Seigo Masubuchi, Koichi Shiozawa, Barb Breckenridge, Martha Hardesty, Emily Bohlig, Nika Johnson, Chieko Rogers, Ryan Rogers, Luke Rogers, Lue Yang, Nou Yang, Amelia Li, Frances & Emma Egan, Peter Gavin, Jutta Thompson, Diana Lynn, Mike Breckenridge, Chris van Lierop, Samuel Larson, Mark Schmitt, Johan van Lierop, Marcia Sanoden, Nora Farley, Kang Xiong

Thank you to our Friends:

Tomoko Drake and her friends, and the Minnesota Oyaji Club

Congratulations to all those who successfully answered all J-Quiz questions:

Arlena Vang, Marissa Gasper, Garisha Goodman, Jenny Becker, Gabs Swangstue, Kailey Kravs, Eric Canillas, Kioren Wiles, Leon Erstad, Kelsey Brown, Xue Rin, Dan Schilling, Kyobong Seo, Brian Pogatchnik, Celeste Larson, Andy Lundberg, Jack Waite, Joseph Hennen,

20th Anniversary Ikebana Exhibition at Landscape Arboretum



An example of Ikebana color combinations, natural shapes, graceful lines, and the meaning latent in the total form of the arrangement.

20th Anniversary Ikebana Exhibition Yoshie Babcock and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Sogetsu Study Group

Saturday, Sept. 9, 10am - 4pm

Sunday, Sept. 10, 11 am - 4pm

MacMillan Hall, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
3675 Arboretum Dr., Chaska MN 55318
arboretum.umn.edu

Obon Festival 2017 (Continued)

Several dance and taiko drumming groups performed on the main stage as well as martial arts dojos and similar cultural groups. Shopping and eating at the festival were no less popular, and many people dressed up in the spirit of Japan for the afternoon. As night approached, many made their way to the Frog Pond, where dozens of lanterns were lit and set afloat, reminding people that the Obon festival is originally a spiritual ceremony of the Shinto religion.

JASM is very proud of the many Minnesotans from all walks of life who came out and experienced the culture of Japan, building bridges between Minnesota and Japan, and we fervently wish that events such as these continue to grow in popularity.



New JASM Intern: Samantha Chase



Hello, my name is Samantha Chase, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Media Relations Coordinator at JASM. I am currently in my final semester at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities campus, where I am majoring in Global Studies with a minor in Japanese. Like many people, my interest in Japan started when I began watching Japanese animation as a child. However, it was not until I was a little older that my interest in Japan blossomed into love and appreciation for the culture as well. Now here I am, the new Media Relations Coordinator! I look forward to contributing to JASM and getting to know many more people who are also interested in Japan and Japanese culture. I am also extremely grateful for the opportunity to intern for JASM, and I am confident I will do well.

Fourth Annual Normandale Japanese Garden Festival

From 11:00 A.M.-5:30 P.M. on September 23rd, the Normandale Japanese Garden will be hosting its fourth annual Japanese Garden Festival located at 9700 France Avenue S, Bloomington MN. Be sure to go and enjoy the many highlights of the festival, including Taiko performances by both Taikollaborative and Harisen Daiko, martial arts exhibitions, dancing, Ikebana, koi feeding, as well as an abundance of food and beverages.



The Normandale Japanese Garden

Silent Auction

JASM is pleased to celebrate its 45 anniversary and welcome Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae to Minnesota by offering two round trip economy class air tickets to Tokyo through a generous donation by All Nippon Airways. The proceeds from this auction will go directly to sponsoring the banquet for Ambassador Sasae and to help further the JASM mission of serving the US-Japan relationship building activities within Minnesota.

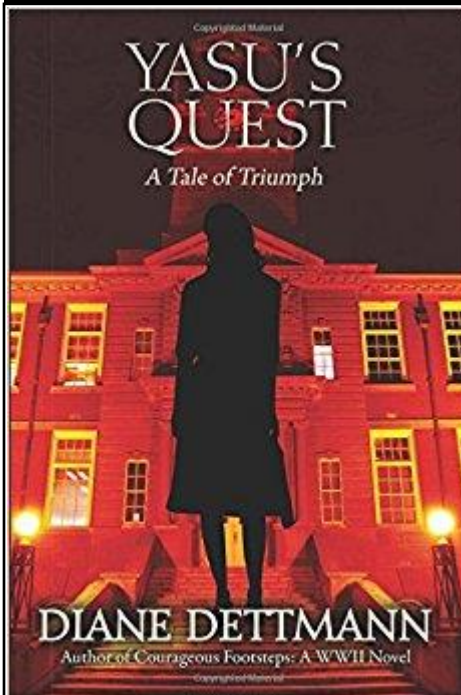
The two air tickets are offered as a single item through this online silent auction.

You can make a bid for the air tickets by visiting www.32auctions.com/us-japan



Fly ANA to Tokyo, Japan

Tom Haeg's Book Review:



Yasu's Quest: A Tale of Triumph; Diane Dettmann; Outskirts Press, 2016; \$19.95.

In *Yasu's Quest*, we follow the Sakamoto family in Ms. Dettmann's second book of her historical fiction trilogy. As you may recall, her first book, *Courageous Footsteps* (reviewed in *JASM tsushin*, August 2018), found the Sakamoto family, formerly from Glenville, California, interned in a war camp following President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. *Yasu's Quest* picks up

where *Courageous Footsteps* ends.

The Sakamoto's daughter, Yasu, escapes from the camp and while on the lamb is serendipitously befriended by a college professor, Martha, from the University of Minnesota. Martha provides her with shelter, support, and companionship while Yasu suffers bigotry and racial slurs in the community. Notwithstanding the abuse, Yasu finds succor in the perseverance lessons taught by her parents. And, through hard work, grit and determination, eventually graduates from college, finds a job and marries her sweetheart, Masato Nakahara, whom she met in the camp. In the meanwhile, her parents are eventually discharged from the camp when Executive Order 9066 is rescinded and are reunited with her in Minnesota, and they live happily ever after.

Dettmann cleverly intersperses this historical novel with literary flashbacks to period classics such as *Grapes of Wrath* (Steinbeck), *Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell), *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen) and *The Beautiful and Damned* (Fitzgerald) and others. And, by doing so, subliminally reinforces some of the themes she attempts to project in *Yasu's Quest* (e.g., social justice, perseverance, love and romance and challenged morals). And, we are often reminded of popular era songs and frequent references to local structures that may no longer exist (such as Memorial Stadium) to draw upon our sense of nostalgia. This creates a pathos to dramatically connect the reader with our protagonist to enhance credibility.

Notwithstanding, the character development is still somewhat predictable, yet the story line reads well and the dialogue is quick and unpretentious. All the while Dettmann does a splendid job of serially connecting Yasu with its predecessor, *Courageous*. Next up: book three. Stay tuned.

-Tom Haeg

ミネソタ 若妻会

以前には「ストーリータイム」と言ったこともありましたが日本語図書館常連のお母さんたちが子供に本を読んであげていたのから始まって、これまで週一回だった集まりが今ではお母さん達の日本語図書館の主力管理グループになりました。集まってくる本やDVDを補強、マーク、分類、本棚への格納等をすべてしてくださり、子供たちは毎週会う友達と本？テレビ？芝生の木陰で走り回って楽しそう。「本も読んであげています」とお母さんからの忠告。(ハイハイ訂正いたします)毎月第二月曜日正午からの日本人会(持寄り昼食会)そして沖縄三線のお稽古会と三種のグループが日本語図書館で催されております。勿論お帰りの時には見つけた読みたい本やDVD映画等、無料貸出可能です。本は約40000冊、DVD・ビデオはその10%位でしょうか？興味をお持ちの方はどうぞ下記の電話番又はE-mailへお問い合わせください。



Yoko Breckenridge

612-839-0008

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Takuzo Ishida Receives Order of the Rising Sun

JASM is pleased to announce that on Tuesday, August 29, 2017, former JASM President Takuzo Ishida received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette. The award is in recognition of Mr. Ishida's significant contribution to the Japanese community in Minnesota and to the promotion of friendly relations between Japan and the United States through cultural sharing. This prestigious decoration is bestowed by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

JASM is grateful for the many years of membership, contributions, and support that Mr. Ishida has provided as both a member of JASM and a respected leader.



Takuzo Ishida received imperial commemoration from Consul-General Ito

Family History Record Company



ファミリーヒストリー記録社は、お客様の祖先様の歴史やルーツを探し、家系図を含めた書籍にまとめて納品するサービスをご提供しております。日本国内での調査が主となりますが、海外在住の日本人や日系人の方々からのご依頼を承っております。詳しくは、下記アドレスにEメール、若しくは当社ウェブサイトをご覧くださいませ。



Family history record company helps you trace your ancestors and family history. We create your own family history books including genealogy. Our research is taken place in Japan basically, but we take requests from Japanese living abroad or Nikkei-jin as well. For more details, please e-mail us or check our website:

Email: info@familyhistoryrecord.jp

HP: <http://familyhistoryrecord.jp/>

Advertise in the Tsushin!

Advertisement Rates

Style	Size	Cost/issue
1/4 page	5 x 3.5 in	\$50.00
1/2 page	5 x 7.5 in	\$90.00
Full page	10 x 7.5 in	\$150.00
Classified	80 character line	\$10/ line (min. 2 lines)

Ad production and design available in both Japanese and English for an additional charge. Deadline for completed ads and classifieds is the 20th of every month.

**Questions? Contact
the JASM Office
Tel: 612-627-9357
jasm@us-japan.org**

Japan America Society Calendar

September

13th: Ambassador Sasae Banquet

*If you would like to let JASM know about an upcoming event, email us at jasm.interns@gmail.com

Japanese Speaking Club

The Japanese Speaking Club is an informal meeting place for those wishing to practice Japanese. We encourage those just beginning the language as well as native speakers to gather at the **Espresso Royale Café** in Downtown Minneapolis to meet new people, discuss experiences in Japan, or simply to speak Japanese. Come when you can, leave when you must.

Date/Time: Every Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

Place: Espresso Royale Café

1229 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

For more information, visit www.meetup.com and search for the key words "Japanese speaking club"



月例日本人会のお知らせ

毎月日本語図書館で日本人会の昼食会（Monthly Nihonjin-kai）を行っています。電話などでお誘い合わせの上、お友達やお知り合いと一緒においで下さい。可能の方はどうぞ料理を1品ご持参願います。ミネソタ州在住の日本人達で良い事を考え、ご馳走と日本語で楽しい時間を持ちましょう。

日程：毎月第2月曜日正午より

場所：日本語図書館

(4231 Bloomington Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407)

また、毎週土曜日午後2時から、日本語図書館のお手伝いしてくださる方の集まりがあります。是非ご参加ください。この図書館には、漫画や宗教誌約25000冊や約2500本のビデオDVDがあり、希望者にはセルフサービスで日本人会と同じく無料で貸出しています。お問い合わせは下記までどうぞ。

Yoko Breckenridge

Cell phone: (612) 839-0008 E-mail: Yoko@yoko4home.com

Nihonjin-kai monthly meeting on 2nd Monday, at noon, at 4231 Bloomington Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55407

Become a JASM Member online!

Support our mission and become a member!

1. Go to mn-japan.org
2. Click on 'Membership' at the top
3. Select your membership type and read the benefits and instructions.

You can also become a member using your smart phone!

Japan America Society of Minnesota

- ☐ Membership Application ☐ Change of Address
☐ Tax-deductible Donation

Name

Name (2nd adult of a household membership)

Address

City

State

ZIP

E-mail

Phone

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

(Please make checks payable to JASM)

Individual Membership

Patron.....	\$1,000+
Sustaining.....	\$500+
Contributing.....	\$100+
Individual	\$30
Student/Senior	\$20
Household	\$50
(2 adults plus children under 18)	

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通信

Tsūshin
September 2017

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

