Beavers Got Nothin’ On HJETAA

Vernal Greetings, Heartlanders,

For those of us in KC, March both came in like the ‘lion’ in the old expression and is exiting in the same manner. We’ve truly been busier than those proverbial beavers. In the last month we’ve hosted the first ever Midwest Regional Conference, had the Hanseikai to dissect it and today we held our Monthly Meeting to plan the coming year’s events.

Please take a look at the article on the Midwest Regional Conference. We managed to pull a very successful rabbit out of our hat, if delegate comments are to be believed. Many thanks to those hardy souls who spent long hours making it the success it was. To those of you who didn’t come out for any of the events, well, you missed a great opportunity to find out how the other guys live by mingling with the regional delegates.

Somehow it always comes down to timing. We could have done better but we managed to maintain our presence at the Midwest Japanese Language Contest thanks to the valiant efforts of Jerry Daugherty, despite it falling on the same day as the conference.

Following the conference we held a Hanseikai to determine where we went wrong and what went well. We compiled a list of suggestions for hosting future conferences and passed it on to the other Midwestern chapters. At press time we still don’t know who will be hosting next year’s Midwest Regional Conference.

Last weekend we held our March Monthly Meeting at Kato in Gladstone. We had a good meal and then discussed the coming year’s activities. Several committees were set up. We are working on a Children’s Day Family Event for May, a Career Advancement Seminar for October and, of course, the Ethnic Festival in August and the Japan Festival in the fall.

With only the briefest of respites we will start planning the 2009 JET Q&A Seminar. As always, we hope some of you who have not come out for any events recently will make your presence felt. We can always use additional hands and many of the activities we engage in are supported by CLAIR or the consulate and include stipends, in addition to all the fun.

If you have suggestions for events throughout the coming year, please let a member of the Executive Committee know and we’ll try to work them into our regular meeting schedule or plan them as special events as our budget allows.

Please watch for announcements of our Hanami and April Monthly Meeting in the next few days. We hope to see you there, even if you haven’t been to an event in years, come and see what we’ve been up to.

Ja, soredewa, sakura no shita ni aimasho…

Warren A. McAllen
Seminal JETAA USA Midwest Regional Conference In KC

In an historic gathering, six Midwest chapters, including four sub-chapters, met on the weekend of March 6th in Kansas City, MO and Overland Park, KS. This conference marked the culmination of several years of effort on the part of HJETAA President, Warren McAllen, several staffers from CLAIR and numerous other Chapter Rep’s and Country Rep’s.

The conference was supported by a grant from CLAIR, generous support from the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago and HJETAA as the host chapter. Several Kansas City-based companies also made contributions.

A core of tireless HJETAA members provided transportation and kept the conference running. Because of the uncertainty of funding, most of the conference preparation took place in the 3 weeks prior to the big weekend.

Delegates arrived throughout the afternoon and evening of March 6th. Billy Maher, former JET Coordinator of the Kansas City Consulate and HJETAA member, hosted the Welcome Reception at his Japanese-inspired home. Delegates, members and honored guests enjoyed a sampling of Kansas City’s best BBQ while they got to know each other and compared notes on various chapter issues. Representatives from CLAIR, the Chicago Consulate and the Heart of America Japan-America Society also shared their opinions.

To maximize their time together delegates endured a long day of intense working sessions which covered a broad range of topics. The conference notes will be posted on our website along with the Conference Handbook.

Saturday, March 7th was a full day of business sessions which included three guest speakers. Mr. Fred Spears, Overland Park Councilman, gave a welcome address on behalf of the city. Following that, Carole Owsley, Moderator of the GKC Japan Council spoke on the creation and history of the Japan Council and its accomplishments to date. This led into the first session on working with other Japan-related organizations. James Kanki, President of HoA JAS and his wife Lydia and Japan Festival Executive Director Fran Lemery also participated in the discussion.

The final morning session was on Non-Profit Organization status and included Mr. David Stallings, an expert in the creation and organization of non-profit groups. He spoke in concert with Randall Crowder and Warren McAllen, members of the JETAA USA standing committee on non-profit status.

With the busiest day of the conference behind them, delegates and volunteers adjourned to Matsu in Westport for a celebratory dinner sponsored by CLAIR and HJETAA. Takao Shibata, our last Consul General of Kansas City, gave the assembly his best wishes and advice on future activities. Following that, party master Taichi Hanzawa gave the Kampai which started the feast.

The Conference concluded with a working brunch on Sunday to wrap up any unfinished business.
**Jerry Daugherty At 11th Annual Midwest Japanese Language Contest**

This year the 11th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest was held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 in Shawnee Mission, KS. Students from Midwestern high schools and colleges competed in Kanji recognition, poetry, calligraphy, and live performance. HJETAA was present, with a booth manned by Jerry Daugherty (Maebashi, Gunma-ken 89-92), promoting The JET Program to the many students and guests attending the all-day event.

For more information contact: mariansheeran@smsd.org or kderign@smsd.org

**Name That ‘Nihonmono’**

Here’s a little test of your knowledge of arcane Japanalia. It comes to us from Zach Lawrence’s collection. From time to time he shares some of the more unusual Japanese collectibles. Do you know what this ancient device is called in English and in Japanese? Look for the answer elsewhere in the newsletter.

**Cooking With Susie San**

Susie Burke recommends the following recipe to take the chill off the unseasonably cold nights we’ve had of late.

Natsukashii, ne?

**Agedashi dofu**

**You will need:**
- 2 cakes firm tofu, drained
- flour for dusting
- vegetable oil for deep frying
- 1 Tbsp. sake
- 1 Tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1 cup dashi
- fresh ginger, grated
- dried nori strips

1. Place each cake of tofu on a cutting board and weight it with a plate. Tilt the board and leave for 15 minutes, to drain off excess liquid. Cut each cake into squares.
2. Dust tofu squares with flour on all sides.
3. In a wok or deep fry pan heat oil to medium and gently slide in tofu. After first side is golden, turn and fry until other side is golden. Drain on paper towels.
4. In a small pan, combine sake, soy sauce, and dashi stock. Dissolve 1 Tbsp cornstarch in 1 tbsp water and add to broth. Cook until sauce thickens.
5. Arrange the tofu in individual bowls, spoon some sauce over, and top with grated ginger and nori strips. Serve immediately.

**RETURNEE WELCOME RECEPTION, HJETAA ANNUAL MEETING & 2009SHINNENKAI**

The Head Table - Pictured left to right:
Yosuke Kameda, Amnet Travel, Zach Lawrence, Sam Baker, Warren McAllen, Akira Tajima, Director, JIC Chicago, Susie Burke, Bob Burke, Beck Wiley, Stacia Wagner and John Drakey

On January 25, about 15 HJETAA members and guests gathered at Choga Korean Restaurant for our annual triple-play event, the Welcome Reception, Annual Meeting and Shinnenkai.

This year we were honored by the appearance of Mr. Akira Tajima, recently arrived Director of the Japan Information Center in Chicago. We also welcomed Yosuke Kameda of Amnet Int’l Travel, Chicago.

Tajima san made the keynote speech and addressed the group in both English and Japanese.

Following the meal Warren McAllen convened the Annual Meeting which lasted about an hour and covered numerous topics, including planning for the Midwest Regional Conference to be held in March. After the meeting adjourned, Kameda san chatted with members about services offered by Amnet Int’l Travel. A good time was had by all.
In celebration of Children's Day, a family event is being planned for JET alumni and the children in their lives on Saturday, May 9th. The event is tentatively scheduled to take place at Tunnel Voyage, located in Lee's Summit, just off of the I-470 and Woods Chapel Rd exit.

Tunnel Voyage has tunnels, ball pits, rope courses, rides, a craft room and other safe indoor activities for children ages 0 and up. There will be Pizza and drinks for the kids. We anticipate a group of at least 10 ‘Juniors’.

We are planning to have Koi Nobori art projects, music and other fun activities for HJETAA members to share with the children. There will be no charge to members and only a small charge, if any, for non-member children.

If you are interested in participating or know of any JETAA or Friends of JET families who might be interested in a Kodomo no Hi experience, please contact:
Tracie Whiting-Kipper (816-588-7043)
e-mail: kipperedwhiting@yahoo.com

Name That Nihonmono Answer: Makibishi ( )
Equally mysterious in English: Caltrop