

# 旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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## Hokkaido News Top 5



March 2014

Compiled by TAKADA Nobuhiro

### January 22

- Asahikawa City Board of Education made a guide map depicting the “Cross Country Ski Course” in the Kitasaito District near JR Asahikawa Station. A total of 1,500 copies of the map, including Japanese, English and Chinese versions, were distributed at a hotel. The ski course is like a mini cross country skiing, but similar to walking slowly at a park.

### January 28

- Gregory Porter’s jazz vocal album, “Liquid Spirit,” in which a Hokkaido University graduate joined as an alto saxophone player, won the 56<sup>th</sup> Grammy Award. Yosuke SATO, the saxophonist, was born in Tokyo, studied in Sapporo and started playing jazz as extracurricular activity in college. In search for more opportunities to play jazz, SATO went to New York City where he met Gregory Porter.

### February 1

- 23 people living outside of Hokkaido contributed to creating “Large Snow Sculptures” as volunteers at the 65<sup>th</sup> Snow Festival in Sapporo. A few of them from the Tokyo metropolitan area had been “commuting” to Sapporo almost every weekend to help produce snow sculptures. One of the volunteers said, “I am having a great time here. This is like playing in the snow for grown-ups.”

### February 14

- The 55<sup>th</sup> Winter Festival in Asahikawa, which was held from February 6 to 11, attracted about 876,000 visitors, a slight increase from the previous year. On the one hand, fine weather during the festival and a new event like “Projection Mapping” on a snow sculpture drew more visitors. On the other hand, bad weather in the metropolitan area on February 8 and 9 affected the number of visitors unfavorably, because many flights from Tokyo were canceled due to heavy snow.

### February 16

- A Tokyo-based IT company is going to have all of its employees take turns joining a “weeklong walk in the woods program” in Asahikawa from May to October. The program for treatment and prevention of depression has been devised by a doctor at Asahikawa Medical University. Each group of the employees is supposed to engage in taking a walk in the woods, growing vegetables in the fields, and receiving advice for health control based on medical tests by the doctor.



**ASAHIKAWA  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMITTEE**

**For further information or to register for events contact:**

Asahikawa International Committee  
(SASAKI Mai, Kim LACEY, or SAITO Emmy)

**Location:**

International Affairs Division, Civic and Community Services Dept.

**Address:**

Asahikawa International Center  
Feeeal Asahikawa 7F, 1-jo-dori 8-  
chome, Asahikawa 070-0031

**Tel:** (0166) 25-7491

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Special Thanks to KAWAI Tatsuo, Proofreader & Advisor

### Kanako MINAMI Recital 南加奈子リサイタル

International Award winning Asahikawa native Kanako MINAMI will be having a superb flue recital, featuring the highly acclaimed young pianist, Marika NAGASAKI. How about a relaxing Sunday night at this classical recital?

**Date:** March 2nd (Sunday)

**Time:** Doors 6:00 pm, Show 6:30 pm

**Venue:** Asahikawa Taisetsu Crystal Hall (Kagura 3-jo 7-chome)

**Admission:** General—¥2,500, College Students—¥1,500, High School and Under—Free with email reservation to: [ongaku\\_academie@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:ongaku_academie@yahoo.co.jp). Tickets purchased at doors will cost ¥500 more.

**Ticket Offices:** Yamaha Music Retailing Asahikawa, Taisetsu Crystal Hall, Gyokkodo Feeeal Asahikawa, Coach & Four, Asahikawa Civic Culture Center



### Let's Go to the Temple Photo Contest お寺に行こう フォトコンテスト

Asahikawa branch temple is one of the largest wooden architectures within Hokkaido Prefecture, surrounded by trees that are several hundred years old. The temple went through major repairs, including its main road. In order to show the renewed temple to many people, Otani sect of Shinshu Asahikawa branch temple is hosting a photo contest. The theme can be on anything that is relevant to the temple. You can submit as many pieces as you want on a 2L size photo paper, addressed to:

〒070-0030 Asahikawa City Miyashita-dori 2-chome 1463

**Date:** now to May 31st (Saturday)

**Prize:** Grand Prize (1): ¥50,000 Second Place (2): ¥20,000 Honorable Mention (10): ¥5,000 in gift certificates. A small present will be given for all participants.



### Fuyumi SAKAMOTO Concert 坂本冬美コンサート

Fuyumi SAKAMOTO is a famous Japanese enka singer who has taken part in prestigious NHK Kohaku Uta Gassen 21 times. She is in fact the first female enka singer to have an album reach 200,000 in sales since Teresa Teng in 1989. She not only promises a performance that will touch audience's heart but also pleasant talks in between.

**Date:** March 12th (Wednesday)

**Time:** Afternoon: 2:30 pm, Evening: 6:30 pm

**Venue:** Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall (7-jo 9-chome)

**Admission:** ¥6,500

**Ticket Offices:** Lawson, Ticket Pia (7-Eleven), Gyokkodo Feeeal Asahikawa, Coach & Four Music Corner

**For Further Information Contact:** 011-261-9991, Mon-Fri, 9:30 am - 6:00 pm (Trust Creative Planning)



### Asahikawa Ryouin High School Wind Instrument Club's 18th Regular Concert 旭川凌雲高等学校吹奏楽部 第18回定期演奏会

Asahikawa Ryouin High School's wind instrument club students are having their 18th regular concert, named "Revolution: things we want to protect, things we want to overcome." Some of the playlists include a piece from *Swan Lake* and a famous music from *Les Miserables* the musical. In addition, guest performers will be participating as well.

**Date:** March 15th (Saturday) and 16th (Sunday)

**Time:** 15th: 5:30 pm, 16th: 1:30 pm

**Venue:** Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall (7-jo 9-chome)

**Admission:** General—¥1,000, High School and Under—¥500

**Ticket Offices:** Lawson Ticket (L-Code: 17249), Gyokkodo Feeeal Asahikawa, Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall, Yamaha Music Retailing Asahikawa, Taisetsu Crystal Hall Museum Shop, Coach & Four, Online (<http://l-toke.com>)



## Ayako MIURA Literature Museum Special Exhibition 三浦綾子 記念文学館 15周年記念 特別展

Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of Ayako MIURA Literature Museum, a special exhibition called 感激なきところに人生なし (Without Inspiration, There Is No Life) is on display. It is based on a biographical novel, *Ai no kisai*, written on the life of one of the zealous Christian clergies, Kyuzho NISHIMURA. MIURA was born and stayed in Asahikawa all her life, even after becoming a best-selling writer. Her writing is considered very unique among Japanese scholars, as the influence of the Bible is a major element in her works.

**Date:** now to March 27th (Thursday) except on Mondays and holidays  
**Time:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (admission is until 4:30 pm)  
**Venue:** Ayako MIURA Literature Museum (Kagura 7-jo 8-2-15)  
**Admission:** General—¥500, College and High School Students—¥300, Middle and Elementary School Students—¥100, Supporting Members—Free  
**For Further Information Contact:** 0166-69-2626



## Everything Will Be Alright! By Hello Kitty & Sugar Bunnies ハローキティ&シュガーバニースのきょうまいくよ!

Hello Kitty and its friends from Sanrio will be singing and dancing, getting everyone involved in this fun musical show. There will even be activities with games and time to cheer a troubled character, "My-Melody." Families can enjoy this interactive stage together.

**Date:** March 28th (Friday)  
**Time:** First Show: 11:00 am, Second Show: 2:00 pm (admission begins 30minutes before)  
**Venue:** Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall (7-jo 9-chome)  
**Admission:** ¥2,000  
**Ticket Offices:** Gyokkodo Feeeal Asahikawa, Yamaha Music Retailing, 7-Eleven (7-Code: 027-007), Lawson Ticket (L-Code: 17196), Ticket Pia (P-Code: 625-582), E-Plus (<http://www.ticket.ne.jp/nt/>), N-Ticket (<http://www.ticket.net.jp/nt>)  
**For Further Information Contact:** 011-214-5261 (Mon-Fri, 9:30 am - 5:30 pm)



## Expressions of Life: Works of Art Students Who Died During War 戦没画学生<生命の絵>展

"I want to survive, return home and paint once again!" This was a desperate desire of many young art students who fought for their country and passed away during the World War II. This exhibition includes 150 pieces of work from about forty five students whose paintings have been preserved by the Mugonkan Museum of Art.

**Date:** now to April 6th (Sunday) except on Mondays and holidays  
**Time:** 9:30 am to 5:00 pm (admission is until 4:30 pm)  
**Venue:** Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (inside Tokiwa Park)  
**Admission:** General—¥800, High School Students and Under—Free  
**For Further Information Contact:** 0166-25-2577  
**Website:** <http://www.dokyoj.pref.hokkaido.jp/hk-asamu/>



## Exhibition of Shoichi IDA's Works: "Between" - The Between-World 井田照一作品展「間」-あいだの世界

What does the word, "between," really mean; a gap between two things, or is it more correct to see it as a relationship formed by two matters? Shoichi IDA's paper-works and sculptures speculate the above questions and may even create the "between-world" for you. If you haven't heard of him before, this is a good place to start. IDA was one of the best known paper artists and printmakers in Japan whose work is held in collections around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

**Date:** Now to April 6th (Sunday) except on Mondays and holidays  
**Time:** 9:30 am to 5:00 pm (admission is until 4:30 pm)  
**Venue:** Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (inside Tokiwa Park) the 2nd exhibition room  
**Admission:** General—¥170, High School Students—¥100, Seniors and Children—Free

Surface is the Between

—あいだの世界—  
新収蔵 井田照一作品展

2013.11.16 Sat ▶ 2014.4.6 Sun  
北海道立旭川美術館 第2展示室

観覧料：一般(18歳以上) 100円 高校生 100円 (70円)  
1) 18歳以下無料  
65歳以上、中学年以下の生徒無料、土曜日は高校生無料。  
その他の特典について、詳しくは問い合わせてください。  
主催：北海道立旭川美術館

EVENTS IN ASAHIKAWA FOR MARCH



# Life in Asahikawa

## March

By KITAMURA Tadao

March, how much we have been longing for thee!

The Sun resumes his brightness, air becomes breezy, and birds begin tweeting merrily. Plants reveal themselves by breaking the remaining snow and children have fun outside. For us who are living in this northern part, joy of meeting this season is much greater than of those living in the rest of this archipelago.

Here in Japan, the new school year as well as the new fiscal year of corporations starts around this month. Many young people and school children await while holding onto their dreams and expectations as their newly start begins in *Yayoi*, a classical expression for March that means “to grow more and more.” In Hokkaido, March is said to be the month of preparation to grow tomorrow.

You ought to head to ski slopes to enjoy the remaining ski-season, where in a ravine you’ll see birch trees or alder thicket with their elongated twigs. Attractive flowers will be on the banks of river willows that will make you imagine a cat with velvet paws. Twigs of *neko yanagi* (rose-gold pussy willow or *Salix gracilistyla*) with velvet flowers on them are essential items for flower arrangement in early spring.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> of March is *Momo no Sekku*, the Peach Festival and Girls’ Day. Most families with girls display their *o-hinasama*, a set of elaborate figures which are imitations of the royal court life, on a tiered stage covered with a scarlet carpet. The set of figures normally consists of the Imperial Crown Prince and Princess, the three court ladies and the five musical accompanists. Orange and cherry trees are also essential. Offered for them are tricolored

and diamond shaped rice cakes and a pair of bottles of sweet white sake.

Peach twigs with pink blossoms are also essential for a bright display. Girls invite their friends to show their favorite *o-hinasama*.



A common display of *o-hinasama*

Around this day most parts of the archipelago are in the right season for peach blossoms; that’s why the day is called the peach festival, *Momo no Sekku*. However, here in Asahikawa the peach blossom season would not have arrived yet, and you’d have to wait until the end of April or so to see the bloom in nature.

March 21<sup>st</sup> is Vernal Equinox Day when the genuine “spring” starts. It is one of important days in the Buddhist custom called *o-chunichi* of *o-higan*. People visit cemeteries to perform memorial services for their deceased ancestors. Even though it may be unusual to see in other parts of Japan, here in Asahikawa, you will see people bring a shovel along with a bunch of flowers to scoop covered snow off from the gravestones.

# Life in Japan

## 追いコン Farewell Party By SAKURABA Satoshi

In Japan, it is said that March is the month of farewell because commencement ceremonies are held during this season. Moreover, many companies set their end of fiscal year to March 31, and as a result some people quit their jobs around this time as well. Junior fellows or colleagues often organize farewell parties for the people who are leaving. This kind of farewell party in Japan is called “追いコン *Oikon*” (abbreviation of *Oidashi-Kompa* (追い出しコンパ)) and held all across Japan. The term *Oikon* is quite a recent word, but as you know, farewell parties themselves have existed in a similar way as other countries.

In high school, for instance, *Oikon* is held in clubrooms. For college, the scale of these parties tends to be much bigger. In my faculty, junior fellows spend 2-3 months to organize *Oikon*, and then invite graduates to a large hotel banquet hall. They arrange and prepare for it with hotel staffs, make movies to reminisce university life, and take photos in advance. The graduates are asked one-by-one to say a few words about university life they have experienced. Some graduates cannot say anything because they are moved to tears. Perhaps the whole four years of college life that they have experienced cannot be summarized in a single phrase. Others prepare some clever words to bring out laughs (these people are expected to do great things in the future.)



An example of *Yosegaki* (寄せ書き) given to a graduate

Not just at universities but also at some part-time jobs, the graduates are invited to *Oikon* which is organized by junior working members. These *Oikon* parties are more casual, often held at Japanese-style pubs of some sort. As for my workplace, all the graduates receive *Yosegaki* (寄せ書き) from junior members at *Oikon*. Many encouraging messages and pictures are attached and signed on it. A lot of people keep at least one *Yosegaki* that they would treasure for the rest of their lives.

In March, you are most likely to hear the word *Oikon* here and there in this country. This culture may be perceived good or bad considering the unique aspects of Japanese apprenticeship system. Nevertheless, I believe that *Oikon* keeps the membership between graduates and juniors more strongly and connected.

# Holidays Around the World (March)

## St. Patrick's Day By Kim LACEY

March 17th is observed as St. Patrick's Day across the globe by many Irish people and the "Irish-at-heart." For those of you who are not too familiar with the holiday, I would like to briefly describe the history and some fun facts behind, then how it is celebrated in the U.S.

My stepdad is Irish-American, very much proud of his heritage and doesn't hesitate to show it. (His name is Patrick!) Naturally, I grew up exposed to Irish/Irish-American culture. St. Patrick's Day actually began as a religious feast day for the Patron Saint of Ireland, but over time it turned into an international festival that celebrates Irish culture. Nowadays, St. Patrick's Day is mainly composed of parades, drinking, dancing, special foods and a whole lot of green.

So why does the holiday fall on the March 17th? Supposedly it's the day Saint Patrick died in 461. Since then, Irish Catholics have marked the anniversary as a holy day. They would close up their shops and attend church services to honor the Saint on this day. And it was also time to celebrate, since it was the only day before Easter when Lenten restrictions, which Catholics abode by for penance, were lifted on eating and drinking. Irish men could down a pint or two, and this custom really took off.

The first St. Patrick's Day in colonial America occurred in Boston in 1737 with a parade organized by the Charitable Irish Society. New York City followed in 1762, and today New York's Fifth Avenue Parade is America's most famous and largest "St. Paddy's Day" tradition. Due to the fact that millions of Irish were forced to leave their country during the 1840s at the time of the Irish Potato Famine, the mass migrations sent Irish to Canada, Australia and the United States. As Irish settled in their new

countries, they brought along old customs and invented a few more. In the United States, for instance, it became customary to wear green on St. Patrick's Day. Toward the end of the 19th century, it was common to smell corned beef and cabbage in Irish neighborhoods on this day, as it replaced the traditional Irish meal of potatoes and bacon. As the Irish Americans gained influence in politics and culture, their exclusive holiday became a nationally recognized celebration.

Then why is Ireland (and St. Patrick's Day) associated with the color green? It is said that the reason has to do with the greenness of the landscape of Ireland itself, and then also with the shamrock which Saint Patrick used to explain the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. As a result, the color became the symbol of Irish Catholic nationalism later, often used politically. During the United Irish Uprising in 1798, for instance, Irish took the popular connection of a national Saint and wearing of the green. In the United States, it became associated with showing an identification with Ireland.

Even in Japan, St. Patrick's Day Parades are now held in many locations. The first parade, which was held in Tokyo, was organized by the Irish Network Japan (INJ) in 1992. It grew over time, and last year's parade in Tokyo attracted more than 1,500 participants and 50,000 visitors.

**Happy  
St. Patrick's  
Day!**



## Hello Asahikawa!

**Name:** Karin Strom  
**Hometown:** Spokane, Washington, U.S.A.  
**Interviewed:** February 19th, 2014 by AIC

**AIC:** *First of all, what brought you to Hokkaido? What do you do here?*

**Karin:** I came to Hokkaido as an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) on JET Program. I teach English to junior high, elementary, and kindergarten students in Higashikawa.

**AIC:** *So how did you initially become interested in Japan? Why did you decide to come here?*

**Karin:** I guess it mostly just happened. (laugh) Well, I was interested in Japan because I had friends and family who often hosted Japanese exchange students. We would meet and spend summers hanging out together. Also, I was interested in Kabuki Theater through some of my drama classes, mostly the history of it. I wanted to live internationally; somewhere I didn't speak the language, somewhere I didn't have much experience. I had studied in Africa before, so I wanted to extend my experience to the Far East. Asia seemed the most "foreign" to me at that point. So, I looked into JET Program, applied, and here I am! It's my third year and I am staying for another year. I love it here.

**AIC:** *Where are you from? Please describe your hometown to us.*

**Karin:** I am from Spokane, Washington. It's a city located in the Northwestern United States. Spokane is about the size of Asahikawa, actually... Maybe a little bigger, but definitely more spread out. It's urban but it's not like Seattle. Spokane and Seattle are the two biggest cities in Washington. I would say that Spokane is more of a place for families and college students. We are famous for Hoopfest, which is an annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament held in downtown Spokane. It is the biggest one west of the Mississippi river. So yeah, that's a little bit about my hometown.

**AIC:** *Is there anything specific you would like to achieve while in Japan?*

**Karin:** This is not something I would like to "achieve" per se, since it is already in process, but I would like to see a volunteering organization with ALTs and perhaps Japanese people as well that will work with children's homes throughout Hokkaido. This is actually something that I've wanted to do ever since I arrived here.





# Hello Asahikawa!

## Karin Strom Interview (Part Two) Continued from Page 7

**AIC:** *That sounds like a great plan. What do you usually do in your free time?*

**Karin:** Hmm, I guess it changes every week. I love being outdoors and staying active. In the winter, I like to snowshoe. In the summer, I enjoy hiking and exploring the hidden gems of Hokkaido. I started learning guitar this year, and am enjoying the pains and gains of learning a new instrument. I also play volleyball with a team of students that my co-worker coaches.



Photo of the Dunk Contest at Spokane Annual Hoopfest  
Credit: [nytimes.com/2009/06/29/sports/basketball/29hoops.html](http://nytimes.com/2009/06/29/sports/basketball/29hoops.html)

**AIC:** *You've been in Japan for almost three years now. What is the most memorable thing that happened to you during your stay?*

**Karin:** It is hard to say, because I've got to meet some of the most kind and amazing people along the way. But if I had to pick one, it would be the encounter with my fiancée. We were living in the opposite side of the American continents back home but I met him in Japan through the JET program and now we are going to get married this coming August.

**AIC:** *Wow, congratulations! Japan brought you guys together, huh? (laugh) How do you stay connected to your families and friends back home?*

**Karin:** I actually have friends all around the world, so having time differences with my friends often happens. I usually email them in advance to set a time that works for both of us and Skype them. Since my family all has iPhones, we group chat for free on iChat. Lately, I talk with my mom more often than before, with my wedding coming up soon.

**AIC:** *Technologies, technologies! Before we close, please tell us your future plans briefly. Where do you see yourself a few years from now?*

**Karin:** Let's see... I can see my fiancée (well, he will be my husband by then) and me in Brazil. He is a percussionist and I am interested in dance. We would like to study samba from our respective backgrounds. I would also like to work for an international and/or local non-profit organization with a focus in community development and peace building. It would be a completely new culture and environment for both of us, especially since neither of us speaks Portuguese. In general, I want to continue living abroad for the next few years.

**AIC:** *Thank you for your time, Karin. Enjoyed talking to you.*

**Karin:** Of course! I had a good time as well.



## ★ *Movies ~ March* ★

\*Every Wednesday is “Ladies’ Day.” Admission is ¥1,000 (tax included) for women at all theaters.

\*<Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Thursday is “Men’s Day.” Admission is ¥1,000 (tax included) for men.

\*The 1st day of every month is “Movie Day” in Asahikawa. Admission (tax included) is ¥1,000 for Adults, ¥800 for Senior High School Students and Under at all theaters.

★ **Cineplex 7 Asahikawa:** Nagayama 12-jo 3-chome Western Powers Nagayama / ☎ 49 – 1000

URL: <http://www.kadokawa-cineplex.co.jp/asahikawa/> (Japanese)

**Directions:** Take Dohoku Bus No. 66, 72 or 665 at Bus stop No. 18 in front of Feeeal Asahikawa (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nagayama 10 (ju)-jo 3 (san)-chome.”

### Now Showing

- Majo no Takkyubin (Japanese)
- The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (English)
- Game Center CX The Movie 1986 (Japanese)
- Kick-Ass 2 (English/R-15)
- Rush (English/PG12)
- Snowpiercer (English/PG12)
- Mogura no Uta Sennyusosakan REIJI (Japanese)
- Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (English)
- Lee Daniels' The Butler (English)
- Dakishimetai (Japanese)
- American Hustle (English)
- Thor: The Dark World (English)
- Chisai Ouchi (Japanese)
- Trick Last Stage (Japanese)
- Eien no Zero (Japanese)

### Coming Soon

- Silver Spoon (Japanese) 3/7
- Riddick (English/R-15) 3/8
- Doraemon the Movie (Japanese/Animation) 3/8
- RoboCop (English) 3/14
- Frozen (English) 3/14
- Precure All Stars (Japanese/Animation) 3/15
- LIFE! (English) 3/19
- Kamisama no Karute 2 (Japanese) 3/21
- Kamen Rider the Movie ~Heisei Rider vs Showa Rider~ (Japanese) 3/29
- Shirayukihime Satsujin Jiken (Japanese) 3/29

★ **Dinos Cinemas:** Taisetsu-dori 5-chome / ☎ 21 – 1218

URL: [http://www.geodinos.jp/cinema/asa\\_schedule.php?StoreID=5](http://www.geodinos.jp/cinema/asa_schedule.php?StoreID=5) (Japanese)

**Directions:** Take Dohoku Bus No. 61, 62, 67 or 667 at Bus stop No. 18 in front of Feeeal Asahikawa (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nippon Seishi Mae.”

### Now Showing

- Majo no Takkyubin (Japanese)
- Kick-Ass 2 (English/R-15)
- Kamen Teacher The Movie (Japanese)
- Giovanni no Shima (Japanese Animation)
- Moratorium Tamako (Japanese)
- Mogura no Uta Sennyusosakan REIJI (Japanese)
- Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (English)
- BUDDHA 2 (Japanese Animation)
- Rush (English/PG12)
- The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (English)
- Thor: The Dark World (English)
- Dakishimetai (Japanese)
- The Wolf of Wall Street (English)
- Trick Last Stage (Japanese)
- Eien no Zero (Japanese)

### Coming Soon

- Silver Spoon (Japanese) 3/7
- Doraemon the Movie (Japanese/Animation) 3/8
- Idainaru Shurabobon (Japanese) 3/8
- RoboCop (English) 3/14
- Frozen (English) 3/14
- LIFE! (English) 3/19
- LEGO? Movie (English/Animation) 3/21
- Saving Mr. Banks (English) 3/21
- Lone Survivor (English/PG12) 3/21
- Kamisama no Karute 2 (Japanese) 3/21
- Kamen Rider the Movie ~Heisei Rider vs Showa Rider~ (Japanese) 3/29
- Shirayukihime Satsujin Jiken (Japanese) 3/29

**Movie schedules change often. Please call the theater for confirmation and details.**

# The 34th Vasaloppet Japan

Vasaloppet, which literally means The Vasa Race, is an annual long distance cross-country ski race. Vasaloppet Japan has been held in Asahikawa since 1981. Other sister races include the American Vasaloppet which is held in Mora, Minnesota and the Chinese Vasaloppet held in Changchun since 2003.

The 34th Vasaloppet Japan in Asahikawa will have athletes from various parts of Japan and also around the world. The event will take place from March 8-9. Even though the sign-up period to compete has already passed, there will be exciting activities to keep everyone entertained, including "Vasa Marche" filled with delicious hot food to keep you warm. There will also be the Swedish specialty "blueberry soup" at the venue, so be sure to check it out!

To find out more about Vasaloppet Japan, please visit:  
<http://www.ahmic21.ne.jp/asahikawa-sports/vasa.index.html>



Interesting activities, such as quizzes, discussions, songs, games, handcrafts and many more, all in English! Come meet new people, relax, and relate on Fun Fridays!

**Dates:** March 14th

**Time:** 1:00-3:00pm & 6:50-8:50pm

**Location:** Asahikawa International Center, Common Meeting Room (1)  
 (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)

**Charge:** ¥1,500 for 3 months (Free for volunteer leaders)

The AIC offers many services to make your life in Asahikawa more enjoyable. Here are just a few:

**Volunteer Guide:** Volunteers are registered to help translate and interpret.

**Event Volunteer:** The AIC plans many exciting events throughout the year, such as Friendship Parties.

Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?

**Homestay:** Families are registered to welcome you into their homes for an overnight stay or just for an afternoon visit.

**For further information or to register, please contact AIC.**

**Center Computers:** The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has two computers available for public use free of charge. There is a time limit for use and prior registration is necessary. Please feel free to come by and use them anytime as well as check out some of the other services and activities available at the Asahikawa International Center.

## Spread the Word...

Contribute to the AIC newsletter and share any interesting information you may have with other readers. You may write on any topic including, items to buy or sell, offers for culture/language exchanges, or write an essay about your life in Asahikawa or your hometown. The article should not be profit related! Please send your submissions to us at the AIC.



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## Calling All Writers

Would like to contribute to the Asahikawa Info by sharing local information or a story with the English speaking community in the area? We would love to hear from you if you think you could submit a one-time article or commit to write monthly. We are also looking forward to hearing any comments or suggestions.



If you are interested in writing for the upcoming newsletters, please contact the AIC at the e-mail address listed below to receive more information.

**\*\*The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Asahikawa International Committee or the City of Asahikawa.\*\***