

Hokkaido News Top 5

March & April 2024, compiled by the AIC

Kamikawa Area Land Value Continues to Rise (3/28)

Land value throughout the Kamikawa area has experienced a .3% rise compared to last year according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (MLIT). Kitanominecho in Furano saw the largest rate of increase nationwide. This could be attributed to the rise of foreigners acquiring ski resorts in the area.

Plan for Asahikawa-Sapporo Travel Time Decrease: Mixed Reactions (4/2)

The proposition to extend the Shinkansen construction from Sapporo to Asahikawa is predicted to shorten travel time by 25~60 minutes with intercity travel time. This has received mixed reviews with many of its proponents claiming improved commutes for students and residents as well as better tourism traffic. However, critics have found concerns regarding the decrease in stops between the two cities as well as the source of funds for the project.

Protecting Asahikawa's Bath Houses in Asahikawa (4/12)

In recent years, the city has been faced with bathhouse closures left and right due to a lack of demand. However, residents have been arduous in keeping these open through various approaches: improving the saunas to attract young people, online crowdfunding, and regular customers supporting elderly bathhouse owners. Many residents and bathhouse owners hope to preserve the bathhouses by appealing to younger audiences.

Japan Railways Planning to Decrease Non-Reserved Seating (4/17)

For Japan Railways (JR) Express between Sapporo and Asahikawa, the reserved seating becoming emptier while the non-reserved seating increasingly becoming packed. JR sought to spin the decrease of non-reserved seats to customers by marketing the reserved seating as "secure" and "comfortable", many commuters are expressing their dissatisfaction citing the change as inconvenient.

744 Local Municipalities in Possible Decline (4/20)

With the declining population gradually worsening, this becomes a concern for many local municipalities. According to a recent report by the Population Strategy Convention (人口戦略会議), from 2020 to 2050, municipalities with 20~39-year-old women less than half of the population, may cease to exist. This would apply to 40% or 744 municipalities nationwide.

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For more information,
please scan the QR code to
access our website



For further information or to register

for events, contact:

Asahikawa International Committee (AIC)(SUGANO Ayumi or MABILANGAN John)

Location:

International/City Affairs Division, Tourism, Sports and International/City Affairs Dept.

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

Asahikawa 070-0031

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Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities in Asahikawa and around Hokkaido



Peak Sakura Bloom at Mihonrin (Forest of Foreign Tree Species)

【桜・見ごろ】見本林

The cherry blossoms will bloom around late April to early May.

Date: 4/25 (Thursday)~5/8(Wednesday)

Time: 09:00~17:00

Location: Mihonrin (Kagura 7 jo 8 chome 2-15, Asahikawa)

Access: Free Parking (30 spaced 3/13 (Wednesday) by 17:15

Admission: FREE

For Registration and Queries: 0166-69-2626

(Phone Number Miura Ayako Memorial Museum)

Asahiyama Zoo Sakura

旭山動物園の桜

Come see the cherry blossoms in Asahiyama Zoo at full-bloom with the trees beautifully lit at night.

Date: 5/1~5/6

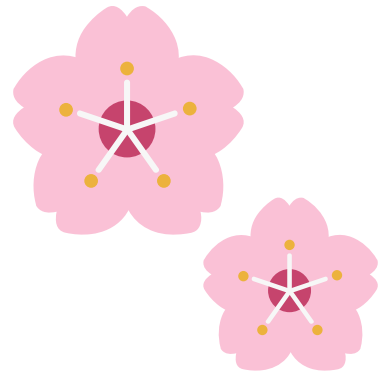
Time: 24 hours open; 19:00~21:00 (trees are lit)

Location: Asahiyama Zoo Park (Higashi Asahikawa-cho, Kuranuma)

Access: Free Parking

Admission: FREE

For Queries: 0166-52-1934



Junpei Shiina Hokkaido Tour 2024

椎名順平：北海道ツアー2024年

Renown blues and rythm performance artist, Junpei Shiina will be in Asahikawa as a part of his Hokkaido Tour

Date: 5/5 (Sunday)

Time: 20:00 (Open)~22:00 (Start)

Location: Asahikawa CASINO DRIVE (7 jodori 7 chome 32)

Admission: ¥ 3,000 (General) , Free Admission for Elementary School students and below.

Ticket Reservation: 01166-26-6022 (Casino Drive)

011-532-8044 | info@tonecatz.net (Morrow)

Asahikawa Look Look Puppet Show

旭川みてみて人形劇

Watch this family friendly Asahikawa puppet show with 10 puppets of all sizes taking the stage!

Date: 5/12 (Saturday)

Time: 12:30 (Open), 13:00 (Performance Begins)

Location: Midori ga Oka Community Activity Center (Midori ga Oka Higasih 3 jo 1 chome 10 ban 30 go)

Admission: ¥1,000 (Reserve), ¥1,200 (Day-Off), ¥1,500 (Reserve for 2 persons/ Special Value Price)

For Queries: 090-8273-7151



Upcoming Events

Upcoming events and activities in Asahikawa and around Hokkaido



Blue Encount: 2Man Tour 2024 Assemble a New Age
Blue Encount comes to Asahikawa for their 2024 tour!

Event Details

Date: 5/22 (Wednesday)

Time: 18:30 (Open), 19:00 (Start)

Location: Asahikawa CASINO DRIVE (7 jodori 7 chome 32)

Admission: ¥6,400 (All Standing)

Reserve: <http://www.mountalive.com/>

For Queries: 011-623-5555

I Don't Like Mondays

Rock band, "I Don't Like Mondays" Will Perform Live In Asahikawa at Casino Drive!

Date: 5/25 (Saturday)

Time: 17:30 (Open)/ 18:00 (Start)

Location: Asahikawa CASINO DRIVE
(7 jodori 7 chome 32)

Admission: ¥7,200 (General Admission)

Reserve: <http://www.mountalive.com/>

For Queries: 011-623-5555



響き合う、深く透明な世界

ウィーンフィル首席チェロ奏者 **タマシュ・ヴァルガ**
& ピアニスト 医師・医学博士 **上杉 春雄**

in Crystal Hall

旭川市大雪クリスタルホール音楽
(旭川市神楽3条7丁目1-45)

Johann Sebastian Bach / 無伴奏チェロ
Gaspar Cassadó / 無伴奏チェロ組曲
Robert Schumann / 幻想小曲集 イ短調
Johannes Brahms / チェロソナタ 第1番

一般4,000円 | 学生・ハートフル

チケット販売所 / 玉光堂イオン旭川駅前店
コーチャンフォー旭川店ミュージックコーナー
大雪クリスタルホール売店(午前9時~午後
チケットぴあ[Pコード 263305])

[主催・問い合わせ] 実行委員会 楽の音 TEL080-55
〒078-8804 旭川市緑が丘東4条3丁目8-1 e-mail: te

Vienna Philharmonic First Chair Cello Tamas Varga and Pianist Dr. Haruo Uesugi in Crystal Hall

Listen to the resonating performance by Tamas Varga, Dr. Haruo Uesugi and many more.

Date: 5/31 (Friday)

Time: 18:30 (Open)/ 19:00 (Start)

Location: Taisetsu Crystal Hall (Concert Hall)

Admission: ¥4,000 (General Admission) | ¥2,000 (Student/Disabilities Admission)

Ticket Booth: Junkudo Feeeel, Gyokkodo Aeon Mall, Coach and Four, Taisetsu Crystal Hall, Asahikawa Fukidou, Asahikawa Station

Asahikawa Philharmonic: Melodies of the Euphonium and Orchestra

旭川フィル: ユーフォニアムとオーケストラの調べ

Date: 6/2 (Sunday)

Time: 14:30 (Open)/ 15:00 (Start)

Location: Asahikawa Civic Culture Center Large Hall

Admission: ¥1,000 (General Admission) | FREE (High School and Below)

Ticket Booth: Asahikawa Civic Center, Coach and Four, Gyokkodo Aeon Mall Asahikawa Station

旭川フィル
ユーフォニアムと
オーケストラの
調べ

指揮 萩原晴弥

2024
6月2日 日
開場 14:30 / 開演 15:00
旭川市民文化会館 大ホール 旭川フィルハーモニー管弦楽団

Letters to Asahikawa

Written by Jovana Maksimovic



Left: Jovana when travelling. Right: Types of heterochromia.

Blue Eyes like Blue Skies

Dear Asahikawa,

Once, in elementary school, my teacher instructed the class to draw a picture of their family. I blissfully drew my parents, younger brother and myself. A classmate next to me, a Vietnamese girl, looked at my picture and asked, “Are you and your brother adopted?” Puzzled, I looked at her family. All of the members had the same black hair and dark eyes. I then looked at mine and observed that my brother and I had light brown hair. My father had deep brown, almost black hair, and my mother had copper red, though she naturally had a deep chestnut colour. Everyone had brown or hazel eyes except me. Curiosity and anxiety came over me as I wondered if I was adopted.

I want to say that the feeling of being different disappeared with time, though other genetic traits kicked in by middle school, like my height. I was the tallest student in my class every year. Not the tallest girl. The tallest student. A much taller than average girl with untamable curly hair, blue eyes and an olive-yellow undertone that darkened easily when exposed to the sun. I was very self-conscious of my ‘weird’ appearance and often wished my features were darker to look like everyone else. Had I mentioned that I also had glasses and braces?

Thankfully, I learnt that this genetic lottery has allowed me to blend in when I travel. Growing up, I was often mistaken for Italian or Greek (skin tone and hair), Russian (hair and eye colour) or Israeli (hair texture and face shape). On the rare occurrence that I was tan, I got mistaken for Argentinian or Spanish. On holiday, I’ve been stopped by countless locals for directions, only to shrug my shoulders and apologise in their language with a teeny accent, giving away that I wasn’t a local. Here in Japan, I often get asked if I’m German. It must be my serious face. Or the blue eyes. Or both.

My first encounter with not being able to blend in with the people around me was when I first visited Tokyo in 2016. My culturally ambiguous characteristics drew more attention than I was used to; I didn't know how to react. The lack of facial expressions on most locals also made it difficult to read their feelings, especially those of young children.

I remember visiting the Ueno Zoo on a bright morning in March. After seeing pandas for the first time, I walked over to the nocturnal house. It was designed to look like a cave: irregular crevices in the wall, narrow paths to follow and lighting so dim it was impossible to take good photos without flash, which was prohibited anyway. I had read somewhere that there were sugar gliders and galagas (more commonly called bushbabies) and was thrilled to see them in person. Excited, I went inside to observe the tiny mammals with large, black, buggy eyes. Like them, I enjoyed the cooler air and dark light. People with light-coloured eyes are naturally more sensitive to sunlight as their eyes lack the protective pigment, epithelium, which helps block out bright light. For as long as I can remember, I preferred doing activities in low light, and I still adore very grey, rainy or foggy days.

At some point, a team of teachers guided a group of schoolchildren into the nocturnal house. I backed away into a concave portion of the cave-like wall to let the group go ahead. The teachers casually walked by, nodding their thanks as they passed. To my surprise, the children turned and fixed their expressionless stares on me, even though there were adorable nocturnal critters just across from me past the glass. The students came and went, group by group, all turning to stare at the foreigner and then looking ahead at their teacher. I would have liked to react with a smile, tell the students where to look, or maybe stare back at them. My mind drew blanks. If that experience were a scene in an anime, there would have been a (•••) bubble above my head. My thoughts were permanently loading with no results in sight.

Expressions from adults were usually just as controlled as the children's but easier to read. They were also, impossible to avoid. Strangely, I could feel when someone was staring at me and the general direction it was coming from. If I happened to turn my head and meet the eyes of the person observing me, they would comically bring a hand up to shield their face from view and abruptly look away. I would look ahead as well with a tiny smirk of amusement. On another occasion, a brave gentleman simply told me "You are very beautiful" in English and walked off.

When I went to a senta in Tokyo for the first time, the bathing areas were separated by gender, as in every onsen. Afterwards, a client could wear loungewear provided by the senta and go into the communal spaces. I remember going down a flight of stairs to go to the bar. As I was going down, a young couple was going up. The male partner caught sight of my eyes and tripped up the stairs, stumbling awkwardly until he found his footing again.

Men's reactions are a bit more obvious. Women stare just they same yet solemn express their thoughts. When they do, it's generally very polite. A pair of high school girls came up to me once and very kindly asked if they could look at my eyes. I accepted and took off my glasses so they could have a good look. A third student joined in and an eruption of squeals rose from them all. Recently, during a class, I noticed a student who seemed to be staring into space. I looked at her with a smile as I wondered what was going through

her head. Maybe the lesson wasn't interesting. At some point she caught my attention again. "Me ga totemo kirei desu." She told me with a dreamy smile. Another time, an older female colleague looked into my face and said "Your eyes are blue. That's quite a rare trait, isn't it?" We then got into a discussion on genetics and I was briefly reminded of the family portrait I drew as a 7-year-old.

Ironically enough, blue is the second most common eye color after brown, but only 8-10% of the world population have it, and are of European descent. Other colors that are more rare include hazel (5%), amber (5%), grey (3%) and green (2%). There are also two rare genetic conditions that produce unusual eyes. Someone with albinism has no pigment in their skin or eyes. Their eyes appear red or violet because of the blood vessels in the irises. Someone with the other genetic condition, complete heterochromia, has two eyes with a different colour each. This particular condition affects less than 1% of the total global population. Personally, I can say that I have met only one person with complete heterochromia. She had one blue and one brown eye.

Genetics and statistics aside, my blue eyes still grab people's attention on a regular basis. In places that I'm familiar with, like the schools I visit or my bike rides along the river, it doesn't bother me at all. I know the people that use those spaces and feel comfortable with them. As for new places and faces, I simply smile and watch the magic happen.

Until next time,
Jovana

A Baby Boomer Learns English

Episode 2: What Is Learning English About?(1969-1977)

Written by Noriaki Gentsu



Clockwise from top left: Visiting Ken and Kathye; At the Rockefeller Center; a horse and buggy in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; Ken's authored novel, "Mennonite Soldier"

(Continued from Episode 1)

Introduction

“Know the difference. Understand the difference. Enjoy the difference.” are goals to pursue in international business. These were taught to me in my corporate language class in Osaka. As an English learner, I will reflect on how I have proceeded in such a way, particularly tracing a series of firsts in the 1970s: my first debate and interpretation in English, my first trip to America, and my first experience with the Amish Country on a visit to see Ken.

The Corporate English Class

I began living in Osaka in 1969 and worked as an engineer for Panasonic, then called Matsushita. I joined it with the aim of working for their overseas operations, which I believed was the best way to apply my English competency. While adapting to my new life and work, I continued learning English but was not satisfied with my progress. I had to dedicate more of my time to product development than English. A

few years later, while trying to return to my original goal of working abroad, I applied to a corporate English class offered on weekdays after work and on Saturdays at the Overseas Training Center in Hirakata City, Osaka. I entered the intermediate course and was upgraded to the advanced course the following year. I had two vital experiences at its annual Speech Contest: a debate and interpretation practice.

At the debate contest for the intermediate course, our team of three won 1st place. We struggled with the theme, “Should JR employees be restricted in their right to go on a labor strike?” Debate skills were not taught at my schools and significantly influenced my later business practice. By discussing an issue in both affirmative and opposing positions, we can get to the core of any problem. In problem-solving, pursuing the causal effect is vital. This is not only embedded in the structures of the English language but is in other Western languages. However, it is not exactly in the same way in Japanese language, which gives more room for its listeners to

guess what a speaker says.

Moreover, the language is in close connection with its culture. Once I said, "I am going to Okinawa for my vacation", I was caught off-guard by an American instructor asking me, "Why?" I thought, "Do we need a reason for a trip?". A Japanese person would ask more specifically, "What will you do there?". As a result, I began to think, "Learning a language is knowing the difference in culture and its way of thinking."

At an interpretation contest for the advanced course, I was supposed to be an interpreter for a tourist (an American instructor) and a Japanese native (another Japanese instructor). At the final phase of the dialogue, the Japanese person asked, "Do you know Hou-nen (法然) ?", I interpreted it in English as "Do you know Hou-nen?" adding, "By the way, he's a Buddhist priest." The tourist said no. The Japanese native explained a long story about Hou-nen. I interpreted the part I was able to explain and skipped the rest I was not familiar with.

After I ended up in 2nd place, I learned two things: First, if communication is defined as a two-way interaction between two people, an interpreter should not omit the speaker's main message to its receiver. Next, if the two people are from different cultures, or their ways of thinking differ from each other, you may add information to fill in the gap between them.

Technical English Writing

I was engaged in developing the first generation of home-use VCRs (Video Cassette Recorder). Because the original technology was invented in the US for broadcasting, much of documentation I was working with was in English. I struggled with the specialized language in patent claims, technical papers on television technologies, etc.

Although I had read many of Hemingway's novels as a student in Asahikawa, such technical English looked entirely different. If Hemingway wrote, "But man is not made for defeat, a man can be destroyed but not

defeated," ten people will each have a different understanding. On the other hand, technical English is clearer, more standardized, and straightforward. It provides the same meaning or fact to any of its readers. For example, "Click 'Add File' on the menu, select a file from your PC, and click SEND", will always lead to the same action. Thanks to this knowledge, my email writing (both in English and Japanese) and reading the news in English have improved.

My First Trip to America

In 1975, "the videotape format war" broke out, and I was at the center of it. There was fierce competition between incompatible models of consumer-level analog VCRs. The primary contenders in this battle were the Betamax and Video Home System (VHS) formats. I was directly involved in developing the VHS system then.

In 1977, I was assigned the task of obtaining the type approval for our first model for the US market. Every new model had to be approved for relevant certificates through required procedures.

These included licenses from the FCC (Federal Communications Committee) and the UL (Underwriters' Laboratory). They regulated the radiation emission from the products, and controlled product safety, respectively.

Back in the days before digital communication someone had to carry the products to the US and have them duly inspected. I was stationed at our New Jersey office to report the progress status to Japan. I also temporarily stayed in Long Island to help UL test our products at their laboratory.

One Saturday afternoon in February 1977, I left Osaka Airport for JFK via Anchorage with such tasks, leaving my wife and small kids at home.

The flight was stable. Inside the JAL cabin there were only a few dozen passengers, and the lighting was dimmed. It was already dark outside the window. While I was kind of nervous and half-awake, a stewardess occasionally sat with me and tried to help me

relax. I got information about New York from her and told her my plan to visit my American friend Ken in Pennsylvania. She mentioned that it was the coldest winter in decades in North America.

Chateau Renaissance

It was already dark outside when I checked into the Chateau Renaissance Hotel in New Jersey. In the lobby, a black man of large build was sitting on a sofa and watching me with his gun holster around his waist. On the opposite side of the reception was an entrance to the hotel restaurant. It was open but dark and without guests.

For the first time ever, I gave a tip to the porter who brought my luggage to the room. When he left, I took a deep breath and noticed something going wrong inside me: I was not able to catch their English, neither spoken by the receptionist nor the porter. At that moment, my confidence in the English language collapsed.

I was all alone in the room. I had no fixed return schedule because that depended on our negotiations and advancement with the FCC and the UL. I suddenly noticed I had not eaten for many hours. I would have finished Sunday's breakfast by then if I were home in Japan. I hesitated to go down to the gloomy restaurant in the lobby and called them for room service instead. Again, I couldn't catch their English and was left to wait for dinner to arrive.

Two staff members came and silently prepared a gorgeous dinner on a big table covered with a white cloth. Once the server finished the settings, he nodded to me and left. The dinner felt like a banquet for rich people, which I had never seen before. While having dinner, I was still thinking of two questions: "Why can't I catch their English here?" and "Why do they clearly understand my English?". For the first one, I would know the answer the next day. For the second, I decided, "I don't care if I can't catch it. I'll speak to them until I get what I want." Then I came to my senses and thought, "I've just accomplished my long-time dream of coming

to America."

Mary at El Dorado

The next day was Sunday and it had heavily snowed the previous night. I wanted to take a bus through the Lincoln Tunnel to Manhattan, but the bus did not come nor were any of the nearby shops open. As I returned in vain, I found a small restaurant near my hotel called El Dorado.

I ordered something from the menu with pictures. As I was eating my meal with a Budweiser, a middle-aged waitress came to me smiling. She sat across my table and asked me many things about Japan. We talked for a while when I noticed something: I can catch her English perfectly, and my English worked for her too. It is the same spoken American English that I have been learning. In that moment, I recovered my self-confidence again.

Her name was Mary, and talking to her felt like I was speaking to my own mother; I was 29 then. She told me of attractions in Manhattan, like museums and musicals. During our conversation, she talked a lot about Leonard Bernstein, an American conductor, composer, and pianist. It felt as if I were at home again. I still appreciate her for treating me so kindly during my stay there.

Cherry Blossoms in Manhattan

By March, work was going well and I had more time to myself, so I took the time to explore Manhattan on weekends. I hung out with my younger Japanese colleagues from our New Jersey office. They took me to many places like Sapporo Ramen, Burger King, Japanese restaurants, the Hippodrome, Hunter Mountain for skiing, bars, piano bars and the Easter Parade.

I made only a few calls to my family in Japan. Unlike today, one asked the operator for an international call and waited for about an hour to be connected.

In April, I frequently visited the United Nations and tried to study its roles in the

world. One weekend, I was walking in its park area with cherry blossoms in full bloom when an elderly American couple, obviously visiting from the countryside, asked me, "Excuse us, but can you tell us what the good places to visit around here are? We haven't got much time, though." I remember for sure I did not say, "Sorry, but I'm a foreigner here." Instead, I recommended to them some places I knew. I began to enjoy living in a big city like New York.

Ken in Amish Country

Back in March, I was a little nervous in my hotel room when I dialed Ken's number. Although I had managed to get it from a friend during my time in Asahikawa, I have not contacted him since he left Japan eight years ago.

Recognizing me on the phone, he said, "Oh! It's you, well I must sit down to talk. How have you been, Nori? Yes, you're in America, and I can call you Nori." He used to call me Mr. Gentsu during his time in Asahikawa, as most people did in the English learning community there.

That was the first time I was called by my first name in English. Choosing to address Western friends or colleagues by their first or last name has always been a delicate cross-cultural issue. Though I still do not have a good answer, I have made many friends worldwide and call them by their first names.

One Saturday morning, shortly after the call, I boarded an Amtrack train at Penn Station, New York, bound for Pennsylvania. Some hours later, I got off at a small train stop in Coatesville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and met Ken and his wife Kathy. On the ride to their home, the three of us sat in the front row seat; Ken driving on my left and Kathy on my right. While Ken asked me many questions about Japan, I saw a horse on the road and thought, "This is another America."

He drove through the countryside and finally pulled over at a peculiar place. He said, "Here we are! It's our trailer house." In that moment, I was in the middle of the Amish Country,

much different from the Manhattan I had seen for weeks.

He showed me inside the house: a living room and kitchen, a bedroom and his tiny study filled with books and papers. "We don't have TV or radio. . ." he said. There was a small record player by the window. I gradually began to understand what living in the Amish Country meant.

Shortly, he urged me to sit at the table to talk in Japanese. He proved to have maintained his skills, and Kathy listened to us with a gentle and caring smile. We eventually switched to English and tried to catch up on the past eight years after being out of touch. It felt as if we were together in Asahikawa again. An old saying goes, "Out of sight, out of mind", however, this never applied to our friendship.

Kathy served us a heartfelt American meal, which made me feel special after a month of being away from home. In the evening, they took me to the People's Place, an educational and heritage center focusing on the Amish and Mennonite communities. I can recollect two things from my distant memories:

First, they offered a live performance on the stage in the hall. It sounded like English, but not exactly. Ken did not tell me in detail then, but I would know decades later that they must have spoken Pennsylvania Dutch.

Next, there were collections of paintings and crafts exhibited in corridors and surrounding rooms. They were quite different from the billboard posters on Broadway or Fifth Avenue in New York, which were more familiar to me. I would also learn much later that they resembled religious arts I encountered in European museums.

Time passed quickly. The next day, Ken and Kathy saw me off at the station. We promised to keep in touch.

Shortly after, I received a parcel from Ken containing a thick book, *Mennonite Soldier*, which he wrote some years before. It portrays the tragedies befalling young brothers, raised in a traditional Mennonite community, and their worried parents and lonely girlfriends during World War 1.

There is a hand-written message on the backside of the front cover. That has remained a symbol of our long-lasting friendship. I would proudly show it to my grandchildren and tell them my stories with Ken. By doing so, I hope they may also think of their own cross-cultural journey in the future.

As I recall the moment we promised to keep in touch at the station, I never knew it would take four decades until we did so. As for my “long cross-cultural journey”, I knew then that I had reached the first milestone of “Know the difference” and had further to go. (to be continued)



To Be Continued



A hand-written message from Ken (1977)



With Ken at his trailer home (1977)



Horseback riding at the equestrian park (1977)



Cherry blossoms by the United Nations (1977)



Husband Liberation Protests at the Easter Parade (1977)

AIC BULLETIN BOARD



Need Assistance?

If you ever find yourself in need of assistance, know that the Hokkaido Foreign Resident Support Center is there for you! They are able to provide you with consultation services in various languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Russian, Indonesian, Thai, Nepalese, Burmese) on residence procedures, employment, medical care, welfare, childbirth, childcare, education, and more for FREE! Call them at **011-200-9595** or go to: www.hiecc.or.jp/soudan



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

Dates: May 10th & 24th, June 14th & 28th

Times: 13:00pm-14:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
18:30-20:30pm ~Night~ 2nd Friday of the month

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.

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

Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free Wi-Fi available for public use. If you reside in Asahikawa, registration for a user card is required. Please feel free to come by 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/shell, offers for culture/language exchange, 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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****The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AIC or the City of Asahikawa.****