

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

March 2021 VOL. 292

Published by AIC

Read issues of Asahikawa Info and get to know AIC on our website! <http://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



Hokkaido News Top 5



March 2021
Compiled by AIC

Ocean Heat Wave off Coast of Eastern Hokkaido Attracts Japanese Amberjack 1/23

Hokkaido University graduate students have determined that an “ocean heatwave” had occurred from the years 2010~2016 each summer off the coast of eastern Hokkaido. A warm-core ring (a spiral of warm ocean water) formed off the main path of the Kuroshio Current, a current that carries warm water northwards from southern Japan. This warm-core ring obstructed the path of cold water from the southward flowing Kurile Current, creating a warm ocean environment favored by Japanese Amberjack.

Hokkaido Government Loans Sightseeing Trains to JR on One Condition 1/24

Hokkaido Governor SUZUKI Naomichi revealed a policy where the government will loan JR several sightseeing trains for three years with no compensation required on condition that they maintain operation of designated unprofitable lines. In addition, the municipalities these lines run through must bear a portion of the cost of operation for the line. JR plans to commence operation of the trains at the start of the new fiscal year.

Local Aibetsu Town Association Produces Beer Made from Beets 2/3

The Aibetsu Town Association for the Promotion of Beets, an association that aims to expand the sales channels for and maintain stable production of the town’s beets, announced that it has finished creating a beer made from beets. They are commissioning the Noborigawa Wheat Brewery in Sapporo to produce the beer. Its noticeable characteristics are its deep red color and slightly bitter taste. The town first started growing beets around five years ago.

Hokkaido’s Largest Dedicated E-Sports Facility Opens in Asahikawa 2/8

The ICT (Information and Communications Technology) Park opened on 3-jo-dori 8-chome in the Kanda Building. The e-sports area, called “Kokugeki,” is located on the third floor in the area the Asahikawa Citizens’ Theater used to occupy. This space will be used as a training area for those aspiring to enter the world of professional gaming, and also serves as a venue for club activities for students. There is even a station that lets students try computer programming.

Asahikawa’s Ito Yokado Shopping Mall to Close Permanently 2/18

Seven and I Holdings, the parent company of Ito Yokado, announced that the Asahikawa Ito Yokado Shopping Mall will close its doors on May 9th. It has faced intense competition with other shopping malls and local drugstores, and its sales have been sluggish. Tenants were notified of the impending closure in fall of last year.



For further information or to register for events contact:
Asahikawa International Committee
(KAMIMAE Ayumi, Daniel LIZARRAGA, or SAITO Emmy)
Location:
International/City Affairs Division, Tourism, Sports and International/City Affairs Dept.
Address:
Asahikawa International Center Feeeel
Asahikawa 7F, 1-jo-dori 8- chome,
Asahikawa 070-0031
Tel: (0166) 25-7491
Fax: (0166) 23-4924
E-mail:
cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp

Inside This Issue...

Hokkaido News Top 5 <i>By AIC</i>	1	Movies	6-7
Life in Asahikawa <i>By KITAMURA Tadao</i>	2-3	Bulletin Board	8
Hello Asahikawa! (Ahmed Ait Bella) <i>Interviewed by AIC</i>	4-6	※ Due to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, events will not be listed this month.	

Life in Asahikawa

March, 2021

By KITAMURA Tadao

I hope from the bottom of my heart, that this March is as wonderful as it was in previous years, with the fear of the pandemic no longer a concern.

This March may very well be a warm, cheerful, beautiful, and wonderful month. The Sun regains his former brightness, the air grows gradually warmer, and the amount of snow covering the ground decreases by the day. The chirping of birds is occasionally heard, and good news regarding the blossoming of cherry trees makes its way to our ears from the southern areas of this archipelago.

The dominant wind-direction changes from west in the previous month to west-southwest this month. The daily average temperature is 0.5°C, warmer than the -5.6°C degree average of the previous month. The daily lowest temperature is still below the freezing point throughout March, however, the highest daily temperature reaches ten degrees centigrade near the end of the month. In the latter half of March, clear days become more prevalent. You'll clearly see the pure white Taisetsuzan Mountains if you look eastward, which up until now had been obscured by thick clouds during the winter.

Vasaloppet Japan is an international cross-country ski competition, and is one of Asahikawa's most important events. It is a joyous festival that welcomes the spring season and marks the end of the ski-season. Sadly, Vasaloppet Japan has been cancelled this year to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic. The event was scheduled to be held on March 13th and 14th, taking place at the 17km long course on the riverside of the Chubetsu River. The date for Vasaloppet is usually marks the beginning of pleasant weather. Even if the competition has been cancelled, the riverside ski course, which is open to citizens and starts from just behind the Central Asahikawa Station, is a very nice place to go for a stroll with your skis.

River Willows nested in the riverside shrubs show their sober flowers, and the catkins look like a feline's velvet paws. The catkin, *nekoyanagi* (ねこやなぎ), is a very important plant in the art of flower arranging, as it is a symbol of early spring. If you find and opening in the snow, you may spot a small but brilliant yellow flower eagerly collecting the sun's rays. It is called the *Fukujuso* (福寿草), also known by its scientific name "*Adonis amurensis*." You may feel slightly cheerful when seeing it, as the meaning of the Japanese name is "an herb of good luck and longevity."

If you look up into the sky, you might see a flock of beautiful and dazzling birds making their way north. They are on their way to the Shinkawa river of Nagayama, which is a resting point on their long journey to Siberia.

March 20th is Vernal Equinox Day. From that day onward, spring truly begins. Outside of the city, farmers start preparing for sowing and planting. You may see what appear to be gigantic works of black and white art on the hilly terraces of Biei. This is the result of the spreading of a type of chemical agent that melts snow.



(Photo by Minoru Kubota)



Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Ahmed Ait Bella
Home Country: Morocco
Interviewed: 1/31/2021

If you live in Asahikawa or are just passing through and would like to be interviewed for "Hello Asahikawa," email us at cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp!

AIC: Hello Ahmed! Where are you from?

Ahmed: I'm from Morocco.

AIC: Where are you from in Morocco?

Ahmed: I am from Agadir. It's in the south of Morocco, and it's a coastal city that attracts a lot of tourists. The weather is warm compared to the cold weather of Asahikawa.

AIC: Is this your first time experiencing cold weather like this?

Ahmed: Yes. They have a really harsh winter here in Asahikawa. Sometimes our heater stops working, and it's especially bad when it happens in the middle of the night. My kids are shivering... It's difficult, including for my kids and my wife. We're not accustomed to such cold weather. There are some good things to do here like go skiing or take kids out to play in the snow, and make snowmen, etc. My kids love doing that, but when my little kid stays out for a long time, she starts to cry because she can't stand the cold.

AIC: What brings you to Japan?

Ahmed: I'm mainly here for a cultural exchange program on a MEXT scholarship funded by the Japanese government and the Ministry of Education. I'm supposed to conduct research by the end of the program.

AIC: What kind of research are you working on?

Ahmed: Before we came to Japan, they asked us to send a project proposal. It could be anything. I decided to work on research that is related to education. That is my field. I am conducting an experiment here at the Hokkaido University of Education in Asahikawa.

AIC: Was there a specific reason you wanted to come to Japan, or was it because you got the scholarship?

Ahmed: *(laughs)*. Basically, Morocco is very far from Japan, and I always wanted to learn more about Japanese culture. Before coming here, I thought that just reading books would not be enough for you to get a complete idea of what the Japanese culture and language is like. We've heard a lot about Japanese manga, culture, and the fact that the Japanese language is unique and a little bit complicated. I wanted to discover that for myself, so that is mainly why I'm here.



AIC: **What do you like about Asahikawa?**
Ahmed: I like the people the most. People here are very helpful and kind. Sometimes I receive letters in Japanese, and I can't read anything because it is written all in Kanji. So, when I call someone to help me translate the content of the letter, they don't hesitate. They do it quickly, and sometimes they even come to my house. When I have to go to somewhere, for example, to city hall or to the hospital for whatever reason, there is always someone who accompanies me to help me understand what they are saying. They are very helpful and I really respect that. This is what I like the most. There's also the food too. It's delicious.



AIC: **Speaking of food, what kind of Japanese food do you like?**
Ahmed: I like all types of food here. I like *sushi* the most. I like *ramen*. I tried it once in a halal restaurant. I like *gyoza*, and I love *natto*! So many foreigners don't like it. My daughter Maria loves it. She's crazy about *natto*.

AIC: **Really? That's so funny! Not a lot of people from outside of Japan like it.**
Ahmed: Maybe we're different from most foreigners (*laughs*). I love *natto* so much, I think I even have some in my bag. (Ahmed proceeds to pull a pack of *natto* out of his bag)

AIC: (*laughs*). **Can you tell me a little bit about Moroccan food?**
Ahmed: There are many types of Moroccan food, and they are usually very rich in flavor. There are some Moroccan foods that have even become international, like couscous. We have *Tajine*. You can make it with different types of meat, like fish or chicken, or you can make it vegetarian. We have *Pastilla*. We have *Zaalouk*. We have *Rfissa*. We have so many types. There are also many types of sweets and pastries.

AIC: **What do you like to do in your free time?**
Ahmed: I like to go skiing during the winter, I like to take my kids out, and I like to read. During the summertime, I like to go the forest and climb the mountains. I love discovering the area and talking to different people. I like going to the cafes here, going shopping, and I like going fishing during the summer.



- AIC:** Do you miss anything about life back in Morocco?
- Ahmed:** I miss my family the most—my parents and my brothers. Also my two nephews. And of course, I miss the food. Vegetables, fruits, and also the weather. Especially during the winter time here, I miss the sunny days of Morocco. It's almost always sunny there. I miss hanging out with my friends, going to Moroccan cafes, and I miss my students. I miss a lot of things. I think I'm homesick now (*laughs*).



- AIC:** How much longer do you plan to be here?
- Ahmed:** I think I'll just spend two more months here, and then I'll go back to Morocco. I wanted to stay here, but I find it kind of difficult because of the working conditions, visa issues, and a lot of other reasons. It's not easy to stay in Japan.
- AIC:** I hope you have a good rest of your stay in Japan! Lastly, do you like Karaoke?
- Ahmed:** I've never been, but I've thought about going to do it. So many people tell me it's a nice experience, but I've never tried it yet. We might go there together.
- AIC:** Thank you for participating!
- Ahmed:** Alright, thank you! My pleasure.

★ Movies ~ March ★

*The 1st day of every month is "Movie Day" in Asahikawa. Admission (tax included) is ¥1,100 for Adults, ¥800 for High School Students and Under at all theaters.

*<Aeon Cinema Only> Every Monday is "Happy Monday." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for all.

★ **Aeon Cinema:** Miyashita-dori 7-chome / 0166 - 74 - 6411

URL: cinema.aeoncinema.com/wm/asahikawa (Japanese)

Now Showing

- Aristocrats (Japanese)
- Ima wa Susume (Japanese)
- Liar x Liar (Japanese)
- Decoration Truck Shu 2 (Japanese)
- First Love (Japanese)
- Under the Open Sky (Japanese)
- The Cinderella Addiction (Japanese)~3/4
- Jyukaimura (Japanese)
- Loved Like a Flower Bouquet (Japanese)
- Yakuza and the Family (Japanese)~3/4
- The End of the Tiny World (Japanese)
- Poupelle of the Chimney Town (Japanese/Anime)
- Pocket Monsters the Movie: Coco (Japanese/Anime)
- The Promised Neverland (Japanese)
- Shin Kaishaku • Sangokushi (Japanese)
- Demon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese/PG12/Anime)

Coming Soon

- The Sun Does Not Move (Japanese) 3/5
- Raya and the Last Dragon (Japanese/Anime) 3/5
- Brave: Gunjyo Senki (Japanese) 3/12
- Caution, Hazardous Wife (Japanese) 3/19
- Tom and Jerry (Japanese, English/Anime) 3/19
- Minari (Korean) 3/19
- Monster Hunter (English) 3/26
- Kiba: The Fangs of Fiction (Japanese) 3/26
- Thomas the Tank Engine: Come One, Come All! To the Future Inventions Show! (Japanese/Anime) 3/26
- Signal (Japanese) 4/2
- Zokki (Japanese) 4/2
- Byplayers: What if 100 Supporting Characters Make a Movie (Japanese) 4/9
- Funtasia (English/Anime) 4/9

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

★ Movies ~ March ★

*<Cineplex 7 Asahikawa and Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Wednesday is “Ladies’ Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for women at all theaters.

*<Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Thursday is “Men’s Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for men.

★ **Cineplex 7 Asahikawa:** Nagayama 12-jo 3-chome Western Powers Nagayama / 0166 – 49 – 1000

URL: <http://www.unitedcinemas.jp/asahikawa/index.html> (Japanese)

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

Now Showing

- Anti-Life (English/PG12)
- Redline (Japanese/Anime)
- Super Sentai Movie Ranger 2021 (Japanese)
- In Those Days (Japanese)
- Patlabor 2 (Japanese 4DX)
- First Love (Japanese)
- Tsunagare Radio: Our Rainy Days (Japanese)
- The Cinderella Addiction (Japanese)
- Loved Like a Flower Bouquet (Japanese)
- The End of the Tiny World (Japanese)
- The Night Beyond the Tricornered Window (Japanese/PG12)
- Iwago Mitsuaki no Sekai Neko Aruki the Movie (Japanese)
- Damon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese 4DX/PG12/Anime)
- Pocket Monsters the Movie: Coco (Japanese/Anime)
- The Promised Neverland (Japanese)
- Shin Kaishaku • Sangokushi (Japanese)
- Tengaramon (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- The Sun Does Not Move (Japanese) 3/5
- Baseball Girl (Japanese) 3/5
- Raiders of the Lost Ark (English 4K 4DX) 3/5
- Raya and the Last Dragon (Japanese/Anime) 3/5
- You're Not Normal, Either (Japanese) 3/19
- Tom and Jerry (Japanese, English/Anime) 3/19
- Healin' Good Pretty Cure: Yume no Machi de Kyun! tto GoGo! Daihenshin!! (Japanese/Anime) 3/20
- Kiba: The Fangs of Fiction (Japanese) 3/26
- Monster Hunter (English) 3/26
- Nomadland (English) 3/26
- Toki wo Kakeru Shoujo (Japanese 4DX) 4/2
- My Blood & Bones ina Gloing Galaxy (Japanese/PG12) 4/9
- Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet (Japanese/Anime) 4/16
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Final (Japanese) 4/23
- Crayon Shin-chan: Shrouded in Mystery! The Flower of Tenkazu Academy (Japanese/Anime) 4/23

★ **Dinos Cinemas:** Taisetsu-dori 5-chome / 0166 – 21 – 1218

URL: <http://cinema.sugai-dinos.jp/pc/> (Japanese)

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

Now Showing

- The Farewell (English)
- The Man Standing Next (Korean)
- Takizawa Kabuki ZERO 2020 the Movie (Japanese)
- GOZE (Japanese) 2/26~3/4
- Natsume's Book of Friends: The Waking Rock and the Strange Visitor (Japanese/Anime)
- Portrait of a Lady on Fire (English) ~3/4
- Sailor Moon Eternal Part II (Japanese/Anime)
- First Love (Japanese)
- Jyukaimura (Japanese)
- Yakuza and the Family (Japanese)
- The End of the Tiny World (Japanese)~3/4
- The Night Beyond the Tricornered Window (Japanese/PG12)~3/4
- Sailor Moon Eternal Part I (Japanese/Anime)~3/4
- Gintama: the Final (Japanese/Anime)
- Pocket Monsters the Movie: Coco (Japanese/Anime)
- Pouppelle of the Chimney Town (Japanese/Anime)
- The Promised Neverland (Japanese)~3/4
- Shin Kaishaku • Sangokushi (Japanese)
- Demon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- The Sun Does Not Move (Japanese) 3/5
- Hitsville: The Making of Motown (English) 3/5
- Raya and the Last Dragon (Japanese/Anime) 3/5
- Brave: Gunjyo Senki (Japanese) 3/12
- Shimajiro and the Flying Ship (Japanese/Anime) 3/12
- Tom and Jerry (Japanese, English/Anime) 3/19
- Caution, Hazardous Wife (Japanese) 3/19
- Kiba: The Fangs of Fiction (Japanese) 3/26
- Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet (Japanese/Anime) 4/16
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Final (Japanese) 4/23
- Black Widow (English) 4/29

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

Playing with Wood: Sculptures, Crafts, and Toys

Hokkaido Foreign Resident Support Center

Dates: Now ~ March 31st
(Wednesday)

Location: Hokkaido Asahikawa
Museum of Art (Located in Tokiwa
Park)

Admission: General ¥800, High
School and University Students
¥500, Elementary and Junior High
School Students ¥300.

Notes: Closed Mondays



Phone Number: 011-200-9595

Email: support@hiecc.or.jp

URL: <http://www.hiecc.or.jp/soudan>

Office Hours: 9:00-12:00, 13:00-16:00,
M-F (Excludes New Year's Break, Holi-
days)

Location: HIECC (Hokkaido Interna-
tional Exchange and Cooperation Cen-
ter), Docho Annex Bldg, 12 Floor, West 7,
North 3, Chuo-ku, Sapporo. *10 min. walk
from JR Sapporo



Wooden creations are one of the pillars of our muse-
um's collection. We have assembled sculptures,
crafts, and toys to create an exhibit themed around the
concept of "play," including pieces from our 1987 ex-
hibit on wooden box crafts and toys. This exhibit also
has an area where you can play with wooden toys pro-
vided by the Komu Museum of Art in Nishiokoppe. Be
amazed by a world of marvelous wooden creations!

This support center offers a variety of different consultation
services, such as those concerning visa applications, work,
hospitals, taxes, pensions, birth, parenting, child education,
housing, marriage, divorce, domestic violence, and more in
over ten different languages! If you need assistance, please
don't hesitate to contact or visit the center!

FUN FRIDAYS

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 12th & 26th, April 9th & 23rd, May 14th and 28th

Times: 1:00pm-2:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
6:30pm-8:30pm ~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.
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.



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free
wifi available for public use free of charge. Registration for a user card is needed, if you
are residing in Asahikawa. 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 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.



Asahikawa International Committee

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

Tel: (0166) 25-7491 Fax: (0166) 23-4924

E-mail: cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp

****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.****