

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

April 2016 VOL. 233

Published by AIC

Also visit us at: <http://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



Hokkaido News Top 5



April 2016

Compiled by TAKADA Nobuhiro

February 24

“Tetsugaku no Ki” (Philosophical Tree) in Biei Town, a big poplar tree loved by tourists and photographers, was cut down on. The poplar was referred to as the “Philosophical Tree” because it towered alone in a wide, gentle field and leaned a bit as if it thought about something like a philosopher. The farmer owning the field made up his mind to cut the tree down because it was so old that it might fall and many tourists entered his field to see it.

March 1

Malaysian YTL Hotels running “Niseko Village” ski resort announced next season’s plan to have a new ski slope for beginners from Asian countries. The 1.2 kilometer-long new ski area will open between “The Greenleaf Niseko Village” and a commercial complex in the ski resort. At the base of the area, there will be a conveyor belt that carries beginners up the hillside for skiing lessons.

March 3

The City of Asahikawa redesigned its website. The new website has a machine translation system that converts Japanese into English, Chinese (both in simplified characters and traditional characters), Korean, and Russian. Its homepage contains videos of penguins and other animals in Asahiyama Zoo, Taisetsuzan Mountains, and Asahibashi Bridge which all symbolize the city.

March 6

A cat adoption event was held in Asahiyama Zoo to find owners of stray cats on Teuri Island in the Sea of Japan off the town of Haboro near Rumoi City. Teuri Island is the territory with the largest number of marine birds in Hokkaido, where many of them are attacked by homeless cats. Haboro Town and the Ministry of Environment have been involved in catching those cats, taming them, and finding people to keep them as a pet.

March 8

“Seven & i Holdings,” a major distributor, announced the closing of the Asahikawa Seibu Department Store at the end of this coming September. The performance of the department store has been declining because more and more customers have been attracted to “AEON Mall Asahikawa JR Station.” The department store’s amount of sales was 13 billion yen in 2010 but dropped to 10.7 billion in 2015 showing a large deficit. It opened in August 1975. There will be no department stores in northern Hokkaido after it closes.



For further information or to register for events contact:

Asahikawa International Committee (Jacob WERSCHHEY, or SAITO Emmy)

Location:

International/City Affairs Division, Comprehensive Policy Dept.

Address:

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

Inside This Issue...

Hokkaido News Top 5 <i>By TAKADA Nobuhiro</i>	1	Life in Japan “Cherry Blossom Viewing” <i>By Satoshi SAKURABA</i>	6
Upcoming Events	2-3	Movies	6-7
Hello Asahikawa ! (Alex Ehler) <i>Interviewed by AIC</i>	4-5	Bulletin Board	8

Special Thanks to KAWAI Tatsuo, Proofreader & Advisor

Asahikawa Poet - The Frank Romanticist - Masateru SUZUKI Exhibition

旭川ゆかりの詩人 ～豪放なるロマンチスト～ 鈴木政輝展

For those of you interested in Japanese poetry, Yasushi Inoue Memorial Hall has works dated from 1905 to 1982.

Date: Now to April 10th (Sunday)

Time: 9:00am to 5:00pm*

Venue: Yasushi Inoue Memorial Hall, (Shunko 5-jo 7-chome)

Admission: General ¥200 High School ¥100 Junior High and under FREE

For further information contact: 0166-51-1188

*Notes: Closed on Mondays



Touching & Looking: Hands-on Enjoyment of Art

さわって みて 美術をまるごと楽しもう!

Works of art aren't something you get to touch, but this exhibition is a bit different. Opening boxes, catching the scent of the sculptures, etc. allows you to appreciate these works in their entirety, as opposed to just seeing them.

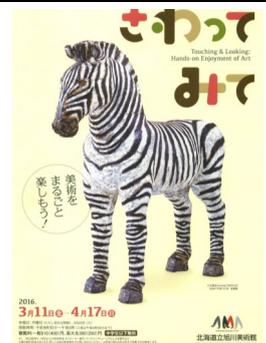
Date: Now to April 17th (Sunday)

Time: 9:30am to 5:00pm

Venue: Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (Inside Tokiwa Park)

Admission: General ¥510; High School ¥300; Junior High and under FREE

*Notes: No entry after 4:30pm.

Yasushi INOUE From Winning the Akutagawa prize to *Hyōheki*

井上 靖 芥川賞受賞から「氷壁」の頃

Yasushi INOUE was a famous Asahikawa born novelist. If you missed the last event in January, this is another chance to see poems, pictures, etc. related to his award winning works *Tōgyū* - "Bullfighting," *Ryōjū* - "Hunting Rifle," as well as other novels such as *Hyōheki* - "Ice Ridge."

Date: Now to May 28th (Saturday)

Time: 10:00am to 4:00pm

Venue: Tokiwa Park Literary Museum

Admission: FREE

For further information contact: 0166-22-3310 (Tokiwa Park)

Notes: Closed on weekends and holidays



Hokkaido Asahikawa Kita High School Orchestra 3rd Spring Concert

旭川北高校吹奏楽部 第3回スプリングコンサート

If you'll recall from the last issue, a lot of schools were holding a spring concert. You might have missed that Hokkaido Asahikawa Kita High school wasn't on that list but here they are this month!

Date: April 9th (Saturday)

Time: Doors 1:30pm Show 2:00pm

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

Admission: General ¥300

Ticket Office: Asahikawa Taisetsu Crystal Hall, Yamaha Music Store, Gyokkodo (3rd Floor Aeon Mall)





Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Alex Ehler

Hometown: San Jose, California, USA

Interviewed: March 23rd, By AIC

AIC: **Alright Alex, where are you from? Any similarities to Asahikawa?**

Alex: I'm from a suburb located in San Jose, which is a part of the Santa Clara County in California: the western-most state in mainland America. It's quite similar in that there it's a big area with not a lot to do, and it's about an hour and a half away from the big city (San Francisco).

AIC: **How long do you think you will be living in Asahikawa or Japan in general?**

Alex: Right now I've no plans to move. And if Trump is elected, I will definitely be staying another four years at the least.

AIC: **(laughs) Just one more thing to take into consideration I suppose. What made you interested in coming to Japan?**

Alex: When I was in high school I was a big fan of the Dragonball comics and I started studying Japanese because the dubbed version was terrible and I couldn't eat and read the subtitles of the Japanese version. Over time, I got more interested in the culture, particularly the Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa eras. So I decided after college to come back to Japan for work and it's been a lot of fun since.

AIC: **Really? What was it about those eras that got you interested?**

Alex: Japan was a relatively unknown country to the majority of the Western powers during the period of "Sakoku," and once Commodore Perry forced Japan to trade, they quickly industrialized, emerging as a major world power in less than a century. That's pretty impressive and worthy of study in my opinion. It's a crazy period.

AIC: **I noticed you said *come back* to Japan. What was the first time like?**

Alex: I studied abroad at Sophia University in Tokyo for a semester. I lived out in Setagaya but spent most of my time in Shinjuku or Yotsuya. It was a blast but I couldn't stand the summer heat. The morning commute on the subway with all the sweat and body odor was pretty overwhelming.



Hello Asahikawa!

Alex Interview (Part 2)
Continued from page 4

AIC: Is that why you came to Asahikawa? To beat the heat? The cold is killing me.

Alex: I hate sunny weather. Cold I can take but on a hot day I'm completely useless and unproductive. San Jose has an entire summer and a half to deal with. Asahikawa's only got a few weeks in August that are actually hot. I love it. The snow's not fun, but I mostly stay indoors anyway.

AIC: Yea, I'm the opposite. Where else have you been?

Alex: I've been in London and Paris on vacation. I was also briefly in Korea on a transfer where I tried Korean Taco Bell and it was satisfactorily spicy.

AIC: Nice. I missed a chance to go to France in high school and I'm still bitter about it to this day. How is your language acquisition coming?

Alex: I can get by in Japanese, I speak a small amount of French, and I'm learning Dovah-Zul right now to vanquish Alduin the world-eater.

AIC: I haven't played any games for a while now but I am pretty sure that's an Elder Scrolls reference. Is gaming something you are really into? What are your favorite titles?

Alex: I used to mostly be into the Star Wars titles but these new "open-map" games are just so much fun. They're time-consuming, though. I really enjoy Skyrim, Far Cry 3, and the Arkham games.

AIC: What about some other hobbies? Are you into winter sports?

Alex: I like to watch films and mod PC games until my computer crashes. I started watching a lot of movies as a way to sound smarter than my friends. I started to mod my PC when I couldn't afford to actually just buy the new game. I ski a little.

AIC: How do you feel about karaoke?

Alex: People take it too seriously. I hate those mini-games where you have to hit the note accurately. Maybe for a Queen song it makes sense, but Nirvana? Or Ramones? Or Blue Hearts? C'mon, nobody loves those songs because Kurt, Joey, and Marcy were the next Three Tenors. Also, I still have yet to find my favorite band (The Pogues) on a karaoke machine out here.

AIC: Yea, not having your favorite artists can really sap the fun out of it. Thanks for letting me interview you!

Alex: No problem, thanks for talking with me.



Life In Japan

Cherry Blossom Viewing - お花見

By Satoshi SAKURABA

It gets warmer and warmer in April. In this season, many kinds of flowers will start to bloom here and there - especially cherry blossoms, which represent the flower blooming in April. In Japan, viewing cherry blossoms under (or around) the tree is called "Ohanami (お花見)" and Japanese people have been doing this since olden times. When we say "Ohanami," that means "viewing cherry blossoms."

Ohanami is not only about viewing cherry blossoms but also eating and drinking. On a sunny holiday, there are many people with food and drink under the cherry tree. However, the spots good for viewing cherry blossoms are limited, so some people get a hold of a spot the previous day. Hokkaido Shrine (北海道神宮) is the most famous place for Ohanami in Hokkaido. There will be many people there during the cherry blossom blooming season and people "battle" for a good spot.

In Hokkaido many people eat Genghis Khan (ジンギスカン : Mongolian mutton barbecue) during Ohanami. University students often call these barbecue parties "Jimpa (ジンパ)." Of course, there is no rule on what to eat at Ohanami. Some people will eat merely a sack lunch (that is, sandwiches and so on) while others might strictly view the cherry blossoms.

In Hokkaido, you will be able to hold an Ohanami party in May. I recommend that you prepare for Ohanami toward the end of the previous month because cherry blossoms start to bloom in (or shortly after) Golden Week every year. All that is left is wishing for a sunny day.

★ *Movies ~ April* ★

*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 / ☎ 74 - 6411

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

Now Showing

- Miss Granny (Japanese)
- Kamen Rider 1 (Japanese)
- Assassination Classroom: Graduation (Japanese)
- Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice (English)
- Chihayafuru 【Kaminoku】 (Japanese)
- Boku Dake ga Inai Machi (Japanese)
- What a Wonderful Family! (Japanese)
- The Summit of the Gods (Japanese)
- PriPara Movie: Minna no Akogare Let's Go Prix Paris (Japanese/ Animation)
- Shimajiro no Wao! Shimajiro to Ehon no Kuni (Japanese)
- Doraemon: Nobita and the Birth of Japan 2016 (Japanese/Animation)
- The Big Short (English)
- The Finest Hours (English)
- Point Break (English/ 2D 3D)
- Nobunaga-Concerto (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Kurosaki-kun no Inari ni Nante Naranai (Japanese) 4/9
- Ultraman X the Movie: Here Comes! Our Ultraman! (Japanese) 4/9~4/22
- Crayon Shin-chan:Fast Asleep! Dreaming World Big Assault! (Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- Detective Conan: The Darkest Nightmare (Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- The Revenant (English/R15+) 4/22
- Zootopia (English/Animation) 4/23
- I am a Hero (Japanese/R15+) 4/23
- Terra Formars (Japanese) 4/29
- Chihayafuru 【Shimonoku】 (Japanese) 4/29
- Scanner (Japanese) 4/29
- Captain America: Civil War (English) 4/29

★ Movies ~ April ★

*<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 / ☎ 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 Feeal Asahikawa Department Store (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nagayama 10 (ju)-jo 3 (san)-chome.”

Now Showing

- Miss Granny (Japanese)
- Kamen Rider 1 (Japanese)
- Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice (English 2D/ Japanese 3D)
- Assassination Classroom: Graduation (Japanese)
- Boku Dake ga Inai Machi (Japanese)
- Chihayafuru 【Kaminoku】 (Japanese)
- Pretty Cure All Stars:Minna de Utau Kiseki no Mahou (Japanese)
- The Summit of the Gods (Japanese)
- What a Wonderful Family! (Japanese)
- The Good Dinosaur (Japanese)
- Doraemon: Nobita and the Birth of Japan 2016 (Japanese/ Animation)

Coming Soon

- The Stare (Japanese) 4/2
- 5 Flights Up (English) 4/9
- Crayon Shin-chan:Fast Asleep! Dreaming World Big Assault! (Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- Detective Conan: The Darkest Nightmare (Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- The Revenant (English/R15+) 4/22
- Zootopia (English/Animation) 4/23
- I am a Hero (Japanese/R15+) 4/23
- Chihayafuru 【Shimonoku】 (Japanese) 4/29
- Terra Formars (Japanese) 4/29

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

URL: 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 Feeal Asahikawa Department Store (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nippon Seishi mae.”

Now Showing

- Miss Granny (Japanese)
- Kamen Rider 1 (Japanese)
- Assassination Classroom: Graduation (Japanese) 3/25
- Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice (English)
- Boku Dake ga Inai Machi (Japanese)
- Chihayafuru 【Kaminoku】 (Japanese)
- Tenshi ni "I'm fine" (Japanese)
- The Summit of the Gods (Japanese)
- The Good Dinosaur (Japanese)
- What a Wonderful Family! (Japanese)
- Doraemon: Nobita and the Birth of Japan 2016 (Japanese/Animation)
- The Big Short (English)
- Nobunaga-Concerto (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Dokyusei (Japanese/Animation) 4/2~4/15
- The Hateful Eight (English/R18+) 4/9~4/21
- Pawn Sacrifice (English) 4/9~4/21
- PERSONA3 the Movie #Winter of Rebirth (Japanese/Animation) 4/9~4/21
- Dearest (Chinese) 4/9~4/21
- Crayon Shin-chan:Fast Asleep! Dreaming World Big Assault! (Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- Detective Conan: The Darkest Nightmare Japanese/Animation) 4/16
- The Revenant (English/R15+) 4/22
- Zootopia (English/Animation) 4/23
- The 5th Wave (English) 4/23
- I am a Hero (Japanese/R15+) 4/23
- Yu-Gi-Oh! The Dark Side of Dimensions (Japanese/Animation) 4/23
- The Sea of Trees (English) 4/29
- Terra Formars (Japanese) 4/29
- Chihayafuru 【Shimonoku】 (Japanese) 4/29

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

The Fascinating World of Prints Selected Wood Works



This is your last chance to see the paints exhibit if you haven't been able to get out to see it the past couple months! Make a stop by

while you are at "Touching and Looking: Hands-on Enjoyment of Art."

Date: Now until April 17th (Sunday)
Time: 9:30am until 5:00pm
Venue: Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (Inside Tokiwa Park)
Admission: ¥ 170 High school/University ¥ 100



Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art will be bringing out award winning wood carvings and crafts out from its collection of over 200 works alongside "Seeing Nature: Wind, Water and Forestry"

Date: April 27th (Wednesday) to October 16th (Sunday)
Time: 9:30am until 5:00pm
Venue: Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (Inside Tokiwa Park)
Admission: ¥ 170 High school/University ¥ 100

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: April 8th&22nd, May 13&27, June 10th&24th
 *Fun Fridays are held only on the 2nd Friday of every month for the evening session (2 hours)
Time: 1:00-2:00pm & 6:30-8:30pm
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.****