

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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Hokkaido News Top 5



July 2021
Compiled by AIC

Efforts to Restore Marimo Colony at Lake Akan Swing into High Gear 5/28

The Ministry of the Environment has begun a full-scale effort to restore the breeding grounds for a marimo (algae ball) colony in Shurikomabetsu Bay that got wiped out in the 1940s due to an influx of sediment. These large, spherical marimo can grow over 15cm in diameter, and live in only a few places in the entire world. The Ministry also plans on creating an educational program focused on marimo conservation.

Summit for Space Companies to be held in Tokachi Prefecture 5/28

The town of Taiki and the city of Obihiro will host the first ever "Hokkaido Space Summit" from August 26th-27th. In addition to an online tour of space-related facilities, a conference themed on the space industry will be held for managers of space-related businesses and other special guests. The summit aims to inform domestic businesses about the current state, and future prospects of the space industry.

NPO Develops System to Match Nurses with People with Disabilities 6/11

The newly established NPO "Aeria" was founded by both Sapporo nurses and the families of those with disabilities. It aims to match patients receiving in-home nursing care that need urgent assistance with qualified nurses or caregivers that are able to assist, even if just temporarily. In addition, an internet forum will be set up so that families of those in need of care can search for nurses or caregivers to help with urgent assistance.

Curtains Open for Furniture-themed Design Fair in Asahikawa 6/17

The 11th International Furniture Design Fair (IFDA) was held at the Asahikawa Design Center, where 24 works selected out of 558 submissions from both domestic and international applicants were exhibited. The fair is held once every three years, and is planned by the IFDA Committee, which is made up of several members including the Asahikawa Furniture Industry Cooperative. The fair was scheduled to be held last year, but it was pushed back to 2021 due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Harvest Season Begins for Yubari Melons 6/23

Due to the large amount of snowfall this year, melon farmers worked diligently to melt the snow on their fields so that they could plant their seedlings according to schedule. As a result of their tireless efforts, the quality of this year's harvest is said to be one of the best so far. Farmers hope to lift everyone's spirits during these hard times with their delicious Yubari Melons.



Inside This Issue...

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Life in Asahikawa

July – Dazzling Night Sky

By KITAMURA Tadao

Even now, we remain under a cloud of fear from the COVID-19 pandemic and its variant strains. We have to put up with a scarcity of entertainment in our lives until enough people are vaccinated. In addition, people are urged to stay home, not to hold big meetings or events, to wear a mask, and so on. You might feel oppressed or frustrated—especially when nature is so beautiful in the month of July. If not for COVID-19, you would otherwise have a lot of chances to enjoy yourself and go on adventures.

When night falls, I recommend that you look up to the cosmos, where you will see an immense number of stars. These stars tell tales of romance and legendary feats, hold scientific mystery, and will expand the world of your imagination. The night sky of July is so wonderful, that *tanabata* (七夕), the festival of stars, is celebrated on the seventh of July.

High above you, the great Milky Way runs across the night sky. The gigantic Swan, Cygnus, spreads her wings over the width of this heavenly river. Just ahead of the swan, two magnitude-one stars twinkle brightly—one is on the left side of the river, and the other is on the right. The star on the left is Vega, in the Lyra constellation, and the other is Altair, in the Aquila constellation.

A legend from ancient China tells the story of a couple in love, between a maiden who is a weaver, and a lad who raises oxen. They loved each other so deeply, that they spent all their time together and eventually forgot to do their work. The Emperor of the Heavens, who is the father of the maiden, got so upset with them, that he decided to separate them by putting them on opposite sides of the Milky Way. Thus, the maiden and the lad are known as the stars Vega and Altair respectively. In Japanese, the couple is known as *Orihime* and *Hikoboshi*.

Seeing how sad they became, the Emperor took pity on them and allowed them to meet once a year on the seventh of July by using Cygnus as a boat to cross the river of stars. (Note: In Japan, the bird in the Cygnus constellation is a magpie instead of a swan.)



Tanabata is an exciting festival for children. They are allowed to stay up late playing outdoors in the dark of night, travelling in groups of twos and threes. Residents set up a young bamboo tree in their garden and decorate it with paper strips of various colors. On these strips, people write their wishes and dreams for the future.

In our very own prefecture of Hokkaido, you see somewhat different customs compared to the rest of Japan. Since we have no bamboo trees, we instead set up a branch of a willow tree. Children carrying paper lanterns go from door to door, chanting "Give us a candle! Give us a candle! Or you'll get scratched!" Residents will then treat them with some sweets.

I don't know what the origin of this custom is, but don't you think it resembles how children celebrate Halloween? However, as long as the pandemic continues to be a problem, children will not be allowed to flock together in search of treats this year. I feel very sorry for them.



Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Daniel Dyrnes
Home Country: Norway
Interviewed: 6/8/2021

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: So Daniel, where are you from?

Daniel: I'm from Norway. Trondheim, Norway.

AIC: Can you tell me a little about Trondheim?

Daniel: It's the third biggest city in Norway, and has a population of 175,000. In Norway, it's considered a big city. It's a peaceful place to live, and it has most of the amenities available in Norway. It's also quite lively because there are a lot of students.

AIC: Is there a big university there?

Daniel: Oh yeah. There's a university called NTNU (English: Norwegian University of Science and Technology). There are campuses all over, so the city is more or less like one big campus.

AIC: That's interesting. My own university town was like that (laughs).

Daniel: Yeah, right? The nightlife is apparently pretty good, but I was too young to really partake by the time I moved.

AIC: Where did you move to?

Daniel: First I went to Korea for six months when I was 20, and after that was Tokyo.

AIC: What made you want to move to Japan?

Daniel: Well, I couldn't stay in Korea anymore for personal reasons. I had to go somewhere else, and I had already come to the other side of the world, so I thought, "Well, I'm not ready to go back home yet." Back in Norway I had a friend who was really interested in Japan, and he said it was a cool place. I figured I should try and get a job in Japan, and that's how I ended up here.

AIC: So why Takasu of all places?

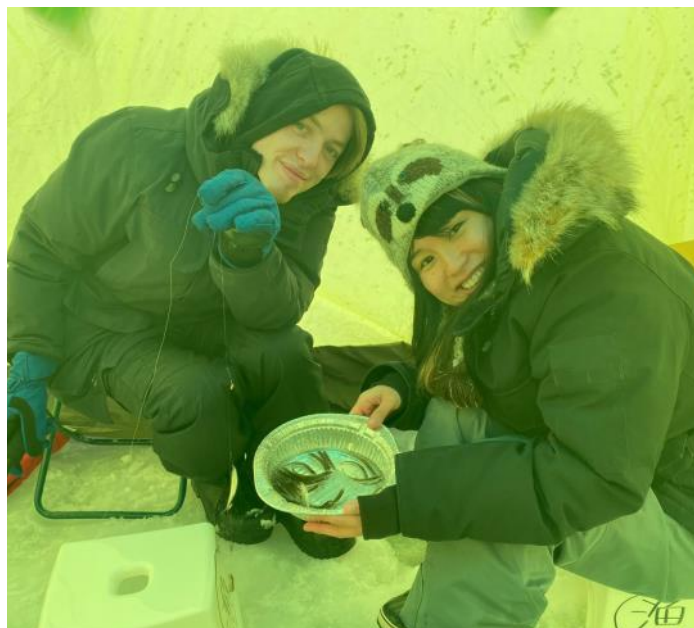
Daniel: I used to live in Tokyo, but it's a bit too wild of a metropolis for me. It's 100 times the population of the city I came from. I also met my wife there. She's from Tokyo. We decided that we wanted to make a new life somewhere else, and I always thought Hokkaido seemed interesting because of the snow, so we decided to go driving around Hokkaido and look for different towns to move to. We went to Biei, Furano, Sapporo... We went driving across the prefecture quite a bit. The first thing we did when we got into every town was go to the local city hall and talk with them to see what kind of feeling we got from the people there. It was very mixed. Either they were very stuck in their ways and inflexible, or not very interested. When we got to Takasu, they were very open and friendly, and surprisingly flexible. We thought, "Oh cool! This is a nice town." We looked around a bit, found a good piece of land for sale, and decided to go for it.

AIC: What do you for work in Takasu?

Daniel: Well, I work for a Singaporean company as an engineer/programmer. I've been with them for two years now.

AIC: How does life in Japan compare to life back home?

Daniel: It's surprisingly similar, really. The snow is quite similar here—at least in terms of the amount of it. Heating is different. Here they use *toyu* for heating, but in Norway it's considered not eco-friendly and dangerous, so we use electricity instead. You can't do it here because it's so expensive. I guess that's it, besides the language and food, of course.



AIC: Has the language been difficult for you?

Daniel: Oh, it's difficult. I enjoy learning the English translations of Kanji, but I don't enjoy learning the *on-yomi* and *kun-yomi* of each one. That stuff makes no sense to me. If I see "fire" and "mountain" together, that's probably "volcano," right? Maybe? *(laughs)* There are also certain readings that are contextual, and only apply if this other kanji is in front or behind. As I said with volcano (火山), you would read the 山 (*yama*) as "zan." I think if I could memorize most of the English meanings of the kanji, I would be happy even if I couldn't pronounce it.

AIC: What are some differences you have noticed between Norwegian and Japanese culture?

Daniel: The worship of old people. There's an inherent respect for people that are older just because they're older, which I don't agree with.

AIC: Eastern and Western societies tend to value their elders differently, so it's partly a matter of where you're from, I suppose.

Daniel: That's true. Japan tends to embrace the concept of filial piety along with other East Asian societies. You can see this in Japanese society a lot, especially at the workplace. It is quite a notable difference and I think it is changing slowly. But I'm not Japanese, so what right do I have to come here and complain about how society works, you know? If I really wanted to point out something that's different, I think the food here is not very salty, whereas in Norway it's very salty. That's a more mild observation.

AIC: How do you like Japanese food?

Daniel: I generally like Japanese food, but it gets complicated because I don't like seafood.

AIC: You came to Hokkaido but you don't like seafood? That must be difficult, no?

Daniel: Norway's the same, really. I think Norway technically has one of the longest coastlines in the world. Norwegian food is very seafood-based, but of course, it's different than Japanese seafood. We don't focus on *umami* and seaweed. We're more focused on preservatives. There's a lot of dried fish, salted fish, and stuff like that. Any way you could imagine serving fish, we have it. Other than the seafood, I generally like Japanese food. I like Japanese curry—good stuff, and *tonkatsu* as well.

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AIC: How about ramen?
Daniel: Good stuff, too. Not the seafood one, of course (*laughs*).

AIC: (*laughs*) I feel like I hardly ever see seafood ramen.

Daniel: It's rare. I think it's more of a southern Japan thing. One of my friends in Tokyo used to work at a seafood ramen restaurant. Of course I've never been (*laughs*). Seeing how much *wasabi* I can eat is a hobby of mine. I'm slowly growing my resistance to it.

AIC: Wasabi? So you just eat it plain, then?

Daniel: Oh yeah. I've gotten pretty strong now. If you go to sushi restaurants, which will inevitably happen even if you don't eat seafood, the way to go is to numb your face with *wasabi* so that you can't taste what you're eating.

AIC: (*laughs*) That's a great strategy.

Daniel: That's one of my quirks that annoys my wife and my closest friends (*laughs*). When you go to a sushi restaurant and you don't like seafood, there's really nothing you can eat besides the sushi rice, right? What do you do? You just hang out, drink beer, and see how much *wasabi* you can take (*laughs*). As far as I know it isn't dangerous or harmful, but if it is I'll find out.

AIC: (*laughs*) I imagine you go to a doctor and they say, "How on earth did you get this illness?"

Daniel: Yeah, and it's some mysterious, never-before-seen disease (*laughs*).

AIC: What are some of your favorite spots in Asahikawa and Takasu?

Daniel: I wouldn't say Takasu is the most touristy place in the world. We only have four restaurants as far as I can remember. The best thing about Takasu is that if you get to know the people there, they'll usually invite you to a barbeque. They have this type of barn where they keep all their rice farming stuff, but the ceiling is high so they hold all their barbeques in there. If you can get invited to a barbeque, they're awesome. Takasu also has a good public library—brand new. The selection isn't the best, but it's a great place to hang out. They have really good Wi-fi there, so that's something. Before corona, I use to go to bars a lot in Asahikawa. It's good that we have international bars around here. Asahikawa has good restaurants, for example, Daikokuya. It's so good. I bought one of those Daikokuya spice bottles, and I use it on everything, whether it's on pizza or pasta. It goes well with everything. Other than that, I like to go to used goods stores.

AIC: What do you like to look for?

Daniel: I usually check out audio systems, like speakers, amplifiers, LPs, and things like that.



AIC: **Are you a big music person?**

Daniel: I like music, but my interest is more in the technical side of it. I want to see how good I can make it sound. I'm not that deep into it yet. I need to retire and have even more time on my hands than I already have (*laughs*). Recently I went to Oita prefecture down in southern Japan to pick up a pair of speakers I bought in an auction. I guess I'm pretty involved, but I'm not as deep as it can go.

AIC: **What do you like to do in your free time?**

Daniel: Well, speakers, and my work is my hobby, too. Reading up on the new trends in the programming community, like what new stuff is out, and what people are talking about.

AIC: **What specifically do you like to read up on?**

Daniel: Things move very quickly in the programming community. Every so often there will be some new database or language that comes out, so if you want to stay relevant as a programmer, you need to be on top of that. There are a lot of tech blogs, and there is even a Facebook for programmers called GitHub, so I just browse around there for a bit to see if there's anything trending. If I find something I'll read a little bit about it to see what it is. If it comes up in conversation, you can pretend you're on the ball. You don't really need to know it. You just need to know *about* it and maybe bring up two key points. If you're really good, you can bring up one negative thing about it as well.

AIC: **Sounds like a lot of work just to keep up with everything!**

Daniel: It's alright. I would rather do this than be an accountant. It depends what type of accounting. If it's cool accounting like finding tax loopholes, that could be fun. If it's normal accounting for a mid-size company where you're digitalizing receipts and archiving files because you need to keep them for 10 years, not so much. I would rather be a programmer, where I can program in the park if I want to. You just need your computer, WiFi, and coffee. You can more or less work anywhere.

AIC: **You have a great setup! It's cool that you're able to everything from Takasu.**

Daniel: As far as I know I'm the only programmer in Takasu. I haven't heard of anyone else.

AIC: **Is there anything you miss about Norway?**

Daniel: I miss the candy. We have a notorious black licorice candy, and I miss it.



AIC: **I know about that candy! A lot of the Japanese people I know hate it.**

Daniel: Oh yeah, most people hate it. Americans too. I haven't met an American that likes it.

AIC: **I actually like it! I tried it when I was in university.**

Daniel: Well, I have a hook-up for you, then! There's this online store in Finland that ships to Japan. They even have *salmiak*, the really salty one that tastes like detergent. It's a bit like *natto* in the sense that you have to get used to it.

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- AIC:** I'm looking forward to trying it again! How long will you be in Takasu?
- Daniel:** Probably until I die, but that depends on the side effects of the wasabi and the caffeine.
- AIC:** Together, they could be pretty bad, you know (*laughs*).
- Daniel:** Maybe they cancel each other out? (*laughs*)
- AIC:** (*laughs*) That's all I have. Thank you for participating, Daniel!
- Daniel:** You're welcome.



★ Movies ~ July ★

*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

- Sore Ike! Anpanman: Fuwa Fuwa Fuwari to Kumo no Kuni (Japanese/Anime)
- Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway (English)
- The Door into Summer (Japanese)
- Arc (Japanese)
- Hinomaru Soul~The Heroes Behind the Scenes~ (Japanese)
- A Quiet Place Part II (English)
- The Fable: A Contract Killer Who Doesn't Kill (Japanese)
- Mortal Kombat (English/R15+)
- Mobile Suit Gundam: Hathaway's Flash (Japanese/Anime)
- Character (Japanese/PG12)
- Gyokou no Nikuko-chan (Japanese/Anime)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Beginning (Japanese)
- Cruella (English)~7/1
- Inochi no Teishajyo (Japanese)
- Jigoku no Hanazono (Japanese)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Final (Japanese)
- Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet (Japanese/Anime)
- Evangelion:3.0+1.0 Thrice Upon a Time (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- Godzilla vs. Kong (English, Japanese) 7/2
- Around the Table (Japanese) 7/2
- The Seven Deadly Sins: Cursed by Light (Japanese/Anime) 7/2
- Lockdown Hotel/Death, Spirit, Feeling, Dyeing (English) 7/2
- Black Widow (English) 7/8
- Tokyo Revengers (Japanese) 7/9
- The Crocodile Who Lived For 100 Days (Japanese/Anime) 7/9
- Restart (Japanese) 7/9
- Belle (Japanese/Anime) 7/16
- Seobok (Korean) 7/16
- Gundam Reconquista in G: The Legacy of Space (Japanese/Anime) 7/22
- Kamen Rider Saber + Zenkaiger Superhero Senki (Japanese) 7/22
- Jungle Cruise (English) 7/29
- Machi no Tom & Sawyer (Japanese) 7/30
- Crayon Shin-chan: Nazo Meki! Hana no Tenkasu Gakuen (Japanese/Anime) 7/30
- The God of Cinema (Japanese) 8/6
- Fast and Furious 9 (English) 8/6
- Gift of Fire (Japanese) 8/6
- My Hero Academia: World Heroes' Mission (Japanese/Anime) 8/6

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

★ Movies ~ July ★

*<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

- Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway (English)
- Sore Ike! Anpanman: Fuwa Fuwa Fuwari to Kumo no Kuni (Japanese/Anime)
- The Fable: A Contract Killer Who Doesn't Kill (Japanese)
- Mortal Kombat (English/4DX/R15+)
- A Quiet Place Part II (English 4DX)
- Hinomaru Soul~The Heroes Behind the Scenes~ (Japanese)
- Evangelion:3.0+1.0 Thrice Upon a Time (Japanese/Anime)
- Mobile Suit Gundam: Hathaway's Flash (Japanese/Anime)
- Darwin's Amazing Animals: Super Legacy of Sea Creatures (Japanese)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Beginning (Japanese 4DX)
- Mune ga Naru no wa Kino no Sei (Japanese)
- Cruella (English)
- Jigoku no Hanazono (Japanese)
- Inochi no Teishajyo (Japanese)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Final (Japanese 4DX)
- Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet (Japanese 4DX/Anime)

Coming Soon

- Godzilla vs. Kong (English, Japanese 4DX) 7/2
- On The Road: An Artist's Journey (Korean) 7/2
- Black Widow (English) 7/8
- Honey Lemon Soda (Japanese) 7/9
- Tokyo Revengers (Japanese/PG12) 7/9
- Restart (Japanese) 7/9
- Belle (Japanese/Anime) 7/16
- Honest Thief (English) 7/16
- The Fast and Furious (English 4DX) 7/16
- Inubu (Japanese) 7/22
- Kamen Rider Saber + Zenkaiger Superhero Senki (Japanese) 7/22
- Fast and Furious 7 (English 4DX) 7/23
- Jungle Cruise (English) 7/29
- Crayon Shin-chan: Nazo Meki! Hana no Tenkasu Gakuen (Japanese/Anime) 7/30
- In the Heights (English) 7/30
- Fast and Furious 9 (English 4DX) 8/6
- The God of Cinema (Japanese) 8/6
- My Hero Academia: World Heroes' Mission (Japanese/Anime) 8/6

★ **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

- Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway (English)
- Itomichi (Japanese)
- The Door into Summer (Japanese)
- Hinomaru Soul~The Heroes Behind the Scenes~ (Japanese)
- A Quiet Place Part II (English)
- The Fable: A Contract Killer Who Doesn't Kill (Japanese)
- Mortal Kombat (English/R15+) ~7/8
- Character (Japanese)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Beginning (Japanese)
- Greenland (English) ~7/1
- The Father (English) ~7/1
- HOKUSAI (Japanese)~7/1
- Inochi no Teishajyo (Japanese)
- Jigoku no Hanazono (Japanese) ~7/7
- Fate/Grand Order Paladin; Agateram (Japanese/Anime)
- Rurouni Kenshin: The Final (Japanese)
- Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet (Japanese/Anime)
- Evangelion:3.0+1.0 Thrice Upon a Time (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- Pompo: The Cinéophile (Japanese/Anime) 7/2
- Godzilla vs. Kong (English) 7/2
- Black Widow (English) 7/8
- Restart (Japanese) 7/9
- Tokyo Revengers (Japanese/PG12) 7/9
- Belle (Japanese/Anime) 7/16
- Kamen Rider Saber + Zenkaiger Superhero Senki (Japanese) 7/22
- Jungle Cruise (English) 7/29
- The God of Cinema (Japanese) 8/6
- Fast and Furious 9 (English) 8/6
- Yokai Daisenso: Guardians (Japanese) 8/6
- Free Guy (English) 8/13
- Last of the Wolves (Japanese) 8/20
- The Method of Repulsing the Dove (Japanese) 8/27

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

EGUCHI Hisashi illustration exhibit [Kanojo]

This compilation of images features realistic depictions of young, modern women from EGUCHI's 40-year career in illustration. EGUCHI Hisashi started off as a cartoonist who wrote light-hearted comedies, such as "Stop!! Hibari-kun!" and "Susume! Pirates!" for Weekly Shonen Jump. However, it was the cute, cool, and stylish women he drew that gained the most popularity. From the 90s onward, he put his focus on drawing pictures of modern women. EGUCHI is able to skillfully capture youth culture and tell a story in just one picture. Enter the world of EGUCHI Hisashi and look at over 400 illustrations created over the course of 40 years that follow the never-ending pursuit of capturing female beauty.

Date: 7/10 (Saturday) - 9/5 (Sunday)

Time: 9:30-17:00 (Last entry is at 16:30)

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

Admission: General ¥1,200 (¥1,000), High School and University Students ¥700 (¥500), Junior High School Students ¥400 (¥300).

Notes: Elementary school students and below are free with an accompanying guardian. Prices in parenthesis are for tickets sold in advance or for groups of 10 or more.



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!

FUN FRIDAYS

Dates: July 9th & 30th, August 13th & 27th, September 10th & 24th

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.

FREE Wi Fi

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.



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****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.****