



ConsuLink

January 2023 Newsletter

Keeping you updated on Japan-related news in Michigan and Ohio



Welcome to 2023, the year of the rabbit! The ancient zodiac, or *eto* in Japanese, uses 12 animal symbols to represent the years. People born in the year of the rabbit are thought to be kind, quiet, quick-witted, and courageous. Happy New Year to all from the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit!

Japan's New Year Celebrated in Many Ways

In Japan, the new year holiday is marked by various "firsts," such as the first calligraphy one writes that year (*kakizome*, 書初), the first dream one has that year (*hatsuyume*, 初夢), and *hatsumode* (初詣), the first visit of the year to a Buddhist temple or Shintō shrine. Between January 1st and 3rd, millions of people make such visits, to pray for health, peace, and prosperity. Famous places to do *hatsumode* include Kita-in Temple in Kawagoe, Saitama (below left), and Shirahige Jinja Shrine in Takashima, Shiga, with its famous *torii* gate in Lake Biwa (below right).



Other New Year's traditions include *okinahajimeshiki* (翁始式), a Shintō ritual performed at Taga Taisha Shrine in Shiga to offer greetings to the spirits, with traditional Noh performances (below left). In Saitama, on Jan. 3, people flock to Kita-in Temple's Daruma Market (below right), disposing of last year's *daruma* dolls and purchasing new ones with which to make wishes for the new year. On these papier-mâché dolls, people color in one eye when they make the wish, and color in the other eye when it comes true.

Photo credits: InSaitama.com (above left); Biwako Visitors Bureau (above right & below left); Kita-in Temple (below right)



MEXT Scholarship Deadline Nears

The application deadline for the MEXT Japanese Studies Scholarship is **Wednesday, February 15**. This scholarship offers enrolled undergraduates majoring in a field related to Japanese language/culture the opportunity to study in Japan for one year. Details can be found [here](#). Please contact our office for Detroit-specific requirements and deadlines.

Japanese Language Contest Dates Announced

This spring, Japanese language contests for non-native learners in Michigan and Ohio will be taking place in person. The following dates have been confirmed:

Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl & Culture Festa - Sun., March 5, 2023 in Ann Arbor

Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest - Sat., March 11, 2023 in Novi

We also expect the **Ohio Japan Bowl** to take place in late February, and the **Ohio Japanese Speech Contest** in late March. Additional details will be forthcoming; please mark your calendars for these exciting events!

Great Lakes JETAA Career Fair is Open to All



On Sunday, January 29, the Great Lakes Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association will host its annual job fair, from 9:00am to 12:00 noon at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi, MI. The event is open to anyone seeking a Japan-related position, and is not limited to JET alumni or GL-JETAA members. For details, please email Alicia Smith at president@greatlakesjetaa.org. Career fair registration for prospective employers may be found [here](#), and for job seekers [here](#).

SPOTLIGHT ON JAPANESE CULTURE ENTHUSIAST FROM OHIO

LCSA President Leads Youth Exchange to Japan

Lima (OH) Sister Cities Association President, Matthew Neeley (below left) is excited to be leading another exchange delegation this summer to Lima's Japanese sister-city since 1999, Harima-cho in Hyogo Prefecture. The group (below right) includes 8 students selected from high schools and homeschooling programs in the Lima area, plus some participants from a 2018 exchange visit to Harima who are eager to return after a planned 2020 visit was cancelled.



Mr. Neeley was elected president of LCSA in 2021. An auto service center manager and event entertainment provider by profession, Mr. Neeley first became involved in Japan-U.S. exchange in 2002, when his sister participated in a Lima-Harima exchange.

After visiting in 2012 and 2018, he finds Japan a "truly magical place." He cherishes memories of "traditional tea ceremonies, *zazen* meditation with Buddhist monks, exploring Tokyo markets, and seeing the beauty of Himeji Castle with my own eyes." Mr. Neeley will be spending the next several months helping lead fundraising efforts and orientation sessions for the delegation, the first from Lima to Harima in five years.



ConsuLink is the official newsletter of the Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit

400 Renaissance Center, Suite 1600 | Detroit, MI 48243 US

[CGJ Website](#)

CALENDAR Exhibits & Events

Through February 12: [Netsuke and the Art of Little Wonders](#) @ Dayton (OH) Art Institute

Wed., January 4 [Japanese Conversation Group](#) @ Novi (MI) Public Library

Thurs., January 12 [Hofu-Monroe Book Club](#) @ online platform

Fri.-Sun., January 20-22 [Ohayocon 23](#) @ Columbus, OH

Thurs., January 26 UM-CJS Film Screening [Tampopo](#) @ State Theatre, Ann Arbor, MI

Sun., January 29 [GL-JETAA Career Fair](#) @ Novi, MI

Tues., January 31 [OSU/NCTA Origami-STEAM Workshop for Teachers](#) @ online platform

QUICK LINKS

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#)

KIZUNA



[Kizuna: The official magazine of the Government of Japan](#)

Digital publication reporting on a variety of topics, promoting stronger links between Japan and the world.

[Consulate General of Japan in Detroit](#)



Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

400 Renaissance Center, Suite 1600
Detroit, MI | 48243 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.