



ConsuLink

Dec. 2023/Jan. 2024 Newsletter

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



Welcome to 2024, year of the dragon! People born in the year of the dragon are thought to be courageous, intelligent, ambitious, and charismatic. Best wishes for a happy, healthy new year from Consul General Shindo!

Winter is a Time for Fun in Saitama & Shiga

In Japan, summer and fall may be popular seasons for festivals and outdoor activities, but winter also has its own special events. Every January in Michigan's sister-state of Shiga, Ōmi Jingū shrine in Ōtsu hosts the Karuta Festival (below left), including a national tournament of the competitive *karuta* card game. The shrine is dedicated to Emperor Tenji, author of the first *tanka* poem of the *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* poetry collection that forms the basis of the *karuta* game. In Ohio's sister state of Saitama, the Otaki Ice Festival in Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park features nighttime illuminations of the massive Misotsuchi Icicles on the Arakawa River (below right). This naturally-made wall of icicles, measuring over 30 meters wide and 10 meters high, forms into different shapes each year.

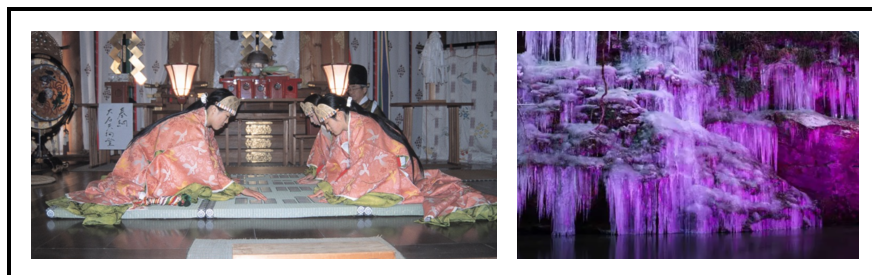


Photo credits: [Biwako Visitors Bureau](#) (left); [InSaitama.com](#) (right)

CALENDAR

Exhibits & Events

Through March 10:

["Colors of Kyoto"](#)

Ceramics Exhibit @
Cleveland Museum of Art,
Cleveland, OH

Mon., January 8

[Manga Mondays](#) @
Redford Branch Library,
Detroit, MI

Fri.-Sun., January 26-28

[Isshocon Anime
Convention](#) @ Sheraton
Detroit Sheraton, Novi,
MI

Fri., January 26

[JASCO Japanese-English
Language Exchange
Meetup](#) @ Columbus, OH

Sat., February 10

[2024 Michigan Japanese
Language Speech
Contest](#) @ WCC, Ann
Arbor, MI

Fri., February 16

Great Lakes JETAA-OU
Japan-America Career
Event @ Oakland
University, Rochester, MI

Sat., February 24

[2024 Ohio Japan Bowl](#) @
Columbus, OH

QUICK LINKS

Shiga is home to Japan's largest lake, Lake Biwa, on which "Snow Appreciation Cruises" during the winter months offer spectacular views of the mountain ranges surrounding the 4-million-year-old lake (below left). One of the most popular annual events at Saitama Children's Zoo is the Capybara Onsen, during which the giant rodents enjoy a dip in a "hot spring" scented with citrus (below right).



Photo credits:

[Japan National Tourism Organization](#) (left); [InSaitama.com](#) (right)

Winter Events Feature Networking and Learning

In November, alumni from the Japan Exchange & Teaching (JET) Program attended a Welcome Back Reception (pictured below), hosted by Consul General Shindo at his residence, for the first time since the pandemic. At the event, JET Program returnees had a chance to network with Great Lakes JET Alumni Association leaders, and to learn about career opportunities from special guest, Kasia Lynch of Ikigai Connections, while sampling Japanese cuisine and sake. Great Lakes JETAA is collaborating with Oakland University in Rochester, MI, to host an on-campus event focused on careers and culture in the Japan-U.S. nexus, with Consul General Shindo as the featured speaker, on Friday, February 16.



In addition to its annual Holiday Dinner in December, the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario (JASMSO) hosted a special art-focused event in late November. In collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art and Wayne State University's Freer House, JASMSO brought Dr. Frank Feltens of the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery to speak at the Detroit Institute of Arts (pictured below). A video recording of Dr. Feltens' presentation, about Sotatsu's *Waves of Matsushima*, is available on YouTube video [here](#).

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#)

KIZUNA Winter 2023
Linking Japan and the World



[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](#)



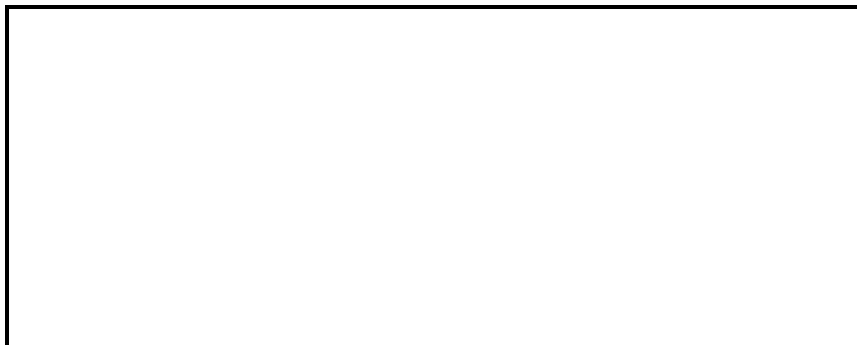


We look forward to the [2024 Michigan Japanese Speech Contest](#), to be held at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor on Sat., Feb. 10, and the [Ohio Japan Bowl](#), to be held at Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center in Columbus on Sat., Feb. 24. The application deadline to participate in either event is Fri., Jan. 5. The Consulate appreciates the efforts and collaboration of the groups who work hard to make these events possible, including the Japanese Teachers Association of Michigan. Japanese Business Society of Detroit, JSD Women's Club, JASMSO, and the Japan America Society of Central Ohio.

SPOTLIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL LEADER FROM OHIO

JASCO Names New Executive Director

The Japan America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO) recently selected Mr. Seth Josolowitz as its new Executive Director. A native of Columbus, Mr. Josolowitz worked closely with elected officials and community groups as a political consultant for nearly a decade before joining JASCO. He first became interested in international exchange while in high school, when a friend's mother recruited him to show around a group of exchange students from Japan. This inspired him to become an exchange student himself at age 17, spending a year in Japan, and eventually earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Waseda University in Tokyo. After such experiences, Mr. Josolowitz says, "It was only natural for me to want to facilitate cultural relations between the two countries I love."





One of Mr. Josolowitz's most significant memories of his first visit to Japan was the *bunkasai*, or "culture festival," held at his Japanese high school. He recalls being "amazed at how my fellow high school students were able to organize such a huge school-wide festival with zero teacher support...The level of cooperation, planning, execution, and professionalism was way beyond anything I had ever experienced at my U.S. high school."

As Executive Director of JASCO, Mr. Josolowitz notes that the organization has done a "phenomenal job" over the past 26 years introducing Japanese culture to thousands of people in Central Ohio, and he is eager to collaborate with local partners to expand such activity in Northwest and Northeast Ohio as well. He is also hoping to begin hosting accessible, affordable trips to Japan so more Americans can experience Japanese food and culture firsthand.



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

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