



ConsuLink

Feb./March 2024 Newsletter

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

Plum Blossoms Celebrated in Saitama & Shiga

According to the traditional calendar, this is the time of year when spring begins, as marked by the blossoming of the *ume*, or Japanese plum tree (*prunus salicina*). In Michigan's sister-state of Shiga, there is a special exhibition of miniature plum trees in blossom from January to March each year (below left). The Nagahama Plum Bonsai Exhibition, held annually since 1952, includes over 80 of potted trees, some of which are believed to be 400 years old.

Ohio's sister-state of Saitama has several locations known for lovely plum blossoms, such as Mt. Hodo in Chichibu and Plum Grove Park in Koshigaya. In west central Saitama, the town of Ogose is home to one of the three great plum blossom groves of the Kanto region. The Plum Blossom Festival is held at Ogose Bairin (below right) every year between February and March.

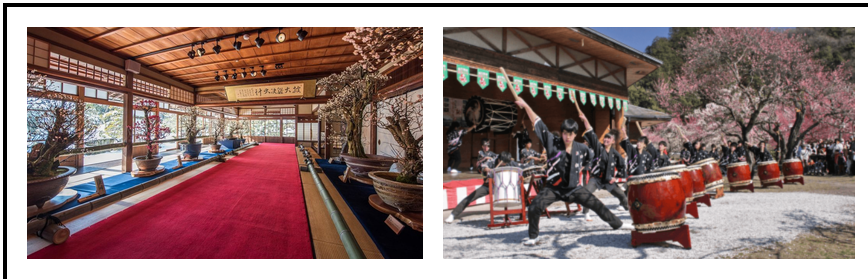


Photo credits: [Nagahama Tourism Association](#) (left);
[Ogose Tourism Association](#) (right)

Japanese Seafood, Career Networking, and Language Skills Take Center Stage

On February 23, Consul General Yusuke Shindo hosted around 200 guests at the Emperor's Birthday Reception (below left), in addition to several other receptions in recent months at which local residents had the opportunity to sample Japanese scallops, seafood, and sake. On February 16, the Consul General presented a talk titled "Japan-American Relations and Recruiting and Retaining Talent" at a career networking event co-hosted by the Great Lakes JET Alumni Association and Oakland University in Rochester, MI (below right).

CALENDAR

Exhibits & Events

Through June 2:

[To the River's South in Japanese Painting](#) @ Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH

Sat., March 2

[Cleveland Bonsai Winter Silhouette Show](#) @ Avon, OH

Sun., March 3

[Hina Matsuri Japanese Girls Festival](#)

@ Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Sat., March 9

[JASGC Sakura Grove Beautification](#) @ Ault Park, Cincinnati, OH

Sun., March 10

[2024 Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl](#) @ Ann Arbor, MI

Sun., March 17

[7th Annual Hinoki Cup](#) @ Ann Arbor, MI

Sat., March 23

[2024 Ohio Japanese Speech Contest](#) @ Cincinnati, OH

Thurs., March 28

[UM-CJS Politics of Taxation Lecture](#) @ Ann Arbor, MI

Wed., April 3

[OSU-IJS Food Diversity](#)



In February and March, several competitions for students of Japanese language and culture were held in Michigan and Ohio. On Feb. 10, the Japanese Teachers Association of Michigan collaborated with the Consulate to host the 29th annual Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest (below left). Twenty non-native learners in two high school and two university categories participated, with judges and prizes generously provided by the Japan Business Society of Detroit, Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario, and JSD Women's Club. In Columbus on Feb. 24, the Japan America Society of Central Ohio hosted the 2024 Ohio Japan Bowl, in which teams of high school students of Japanese vied to demonstrate superior knowledge of Japanese language and culture in a quiz-bowl type format (below right).

On Sun., March 10, the Japanese Teachers Association of Michigan will host the 2024 Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl on the campus of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, for middle- and high-school learners of Japanese. On Sun., March 17, with the support of the Japan Foundation and local sponsors, the Hinoki Foundation will host the 7th annual Hinoki Cup, a Japanese-English bilingual quiz contest for 3rd to 9th graders, at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. On Sat., March 23, at the University of Cincinnati, the Japan America Society of Central Ohio will host the 2024 Ohio Japanese Speech Contest, for non-native learners of Japanese age 15 and up. Best of luck to everyone involved!



SPOTLIGHT ON BICULTURAL CONSULTANT FROM MICHIGAN

Ypsilanti Translator Promotes Bilingual Education and Bicultural Understanding

Andrew Gillman of Ypsilanti, MI, works as a bicultural consultant serving the automotive industry in the U.S., Europe, and Japan. In his spare time, Mr. Gillman volunteers for the Hinoki Foundation,

[Lecture](#) @ online platform

Thurs., April 25

[JASCO 27th Anniversary](#)

[Gala](#) @ Columbus, OH

QUICK LINKS

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
Japan](#)

KIZUNA Winter
2023
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[Kizuna: The official magazine of the
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[Consulate General of Japan in
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currently serving as its Board President. His interest in Japan began 40 years ago, when he befriended a Japanese exchange student at his high school and then discovered the Japanese book collection at the Michigan State University Library near his home.

Mr. Gillman became a Japanese language major at the University of Michigan, and spent a year on a Lansing Community College work-study program in Michigan's sister-state of Shiga. He then worked in various positions in Japan and the U.S., forming friendships and continuing his "adventures in bilingualism and biculturalism," and eventually becoming a skilled translator, interpreter, and consultant.



Mr. Gillman says his desire for the next generation to enjoy similar experiences and understand the value of connecting with another culture motivates him to volunteer for "organizations that help youth pursue the development of a global mindset, particularly with respect to Japan." The Hinoki Cup bilingual quiz game is one of the activities Gillman designed to help motivate young learners of Japanese and English. "Research indicates that learning another language will sharpen the mind," he states, adding that "learning about other cultures, and building bridges between them, is an essential part of securing peace in the world." He adds that such skills can also create career and business opportunities in an increasingly interlinked world.

Mr. Gillman believes that Americans can learn from the diligence, service-orientation, and precision of Japanese people, while Japanese can learn from the assertiveness, adaptivity, and heterodox problem-solving of American people. He states that he cannot think of two other countries that are better partners.



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

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