



# ConsuLink

April/May 2024 Newsletter

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

## Saitama & Shiga Waterways Draw Tourists

This year, record numbers of tourists are flocking to Japan from all over the world. In the fine spring weather, one popular option for seeing the sights is by taking a boat ride on one of Japan's numerous rivers. In the city of Soka, Saitama (sister-state to Ohio), tourists can do this on the Ayase River (pictured below left), which flows past [Soka Matsubara](#), also known as the "Big Bonsai Road." Almost one mile of this ancient road is paved with stones and lined with over 600 pine trees--some over 6 feet in diameter--that are carefully pruned to look like massive *bonsai* trees. The Soka Matsubara was one of the first roads mentioned in haiku poet Matsuo Basho's 1689 travel diary entitled, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

In Michigan's sister-state of Shiga, some of the most popular boat rides are in the [Hachiman-bori Canal](#), the former Hachiman Castle moat in the city of Omihachiman (pictured below right). When Hachiman Castle was built in the late 1500s by a nephew of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, its moat was connected to Lake Biwa, promoting trade and travel. Blossoming cherry trees and willow trees line the sides of the canal, creating a scenic backdrop for the *yakatabune* boat rides.



Photo credits: [Live Japan](#) (left) and [Biwako Visitors Bureau](#) (right)

## Japanese Seafood a Big Hit in Ohio

In March, the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit hosted two receptions in Ohio featuring Japanese seafood and sake. On Friday, March 22, Consul General Shindo hosted a reception in Centerville, in honor of the military personnel at Wright-Patterson Airforce Base who have previously served at U.S. bases in Japan (pictured below left). Guests also included local government officials,

## CALENDAR

### Exhibits & Events

Through September 22:

[Captivating Clay: Japanese Ceramics](#) @ Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH

Sat., May 4

[Asian American Pacific Islander Celebration Show](#) @ Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

Sun., May 5

[Hanami Spring Picnic](#) @ MSU Tollgate Farm, Novi, MI

Mon., May 13

[JASGC Intro to Way of Tea](#) @ Pleasant Ridge Library, Cincinnati, OH

Sun., May 19

[White Pine Glee Club Spring Family Concert](#) @ Orchard United Methodist Church, Farmington Hills, MI

Sat., May 25

[Bonsai Workshop](#) @ Japanese Cultural Center, Saginaw, MI  
[Japanese American Community Night](#) @ Great American Ball Park, Cincinnati, OH

Thurs., May 30

[Glimpse of Japan by Ikebana International](#) @ Southfield, MI

members of the Japan American Society of Greater Cincinnati (JASGC), Japanese business representatives, and other professionals.

On Monday, March 25, Consul General Shindo and the Japan America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO) co-hosted a Japanese Scallops and Seafood Tasting Reception in Columbus (pictured below right). The reception gave over 100 local residents the opportunity to sample Japanese seafood, including scallops, and various kinds of sake. Attendees included local restaurateurs, chefs, company executives, government officials, hospitality industry representatives, JASCO members, and Ohio State University student volunteers. Thank you to all who helped make these receptions such a success!



## **SPOTLIGHT ON MUNICIPAL COMMUNICATIONS** **DIRECTOR FROM OHIO**

### **Worthington Communications Director Promotes Cross-Cultural Understanding**

As Communications Director for the City of Worthington, OH, Anne Brown works with the volunteers in the Worthington International Friendship Association (WIFA) to support that community's sister-city relationship with Sayama, in Saitama, Japan, established 25 years ago. Since she began working for the City of Worthington in 2001, Ms. Brown has helped welcome hundreds of Japanese visitors as part of various citizen delegations, including youth sports teams, artist delegations, and official mayoral delegations. She has also visited Sayama several times, interacting with the citizens there during visits to schools (pictured below left), local businesses, government offices, and community events, including those hosted by the Sayama International Friendship Association (SIFA, pictured below right).



Sun., June 2

[Asian Pacific Islander  
Heritage Festival @  
Fuerst Park, Novi, MI](#)

Tues., June 11

[JASMO Annual Dinner @  
Wayne State University,  
Detroit, MI](#)

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## **QUICK LINKS**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of  
Japan](#)



[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.

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[Consulate General of Japan in  
Detroit](#)





Even during the recent pandemic, WIFA and SIFA found ways to bring citizens of each city together in real time to exchange cultural information and learn from each other. These included online programs about topics such as holiday traditions, student music, gardens, and art. Ms. Brown gives credit for the strong sister-city connection to the "commitment of people in Worthington and Sayama [who] enjoy learning from each other and sharing these experiences with our communities."

As a participant in citizen delegations from Worthington to Sayama, Ms. Brown states: "I enjoyed taking part in the Sayama Tea Festival, interacting with young students who are learning the ancient art of tea ceremony--as well as taiko drumming, koto music, and other traditional arts--and seeing how proud they are to continue these traditions." Ms. Brown adds that the sister-city activities have given her lifelong friends in Japan. "In my 23 years with the City of Worthington, this has been the most personally rewarding part of my career." Worthington expects to send a mayoral delegation to Sayama in October 2024 for Sayama's 70th anniversary celebration, and then to welcome the Sayama mayor to Worthington in 2025, and a Sayama citizens' delegation to Worthington in 2026.



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

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