

From the Desk of the Consul-General

Consul-General Dr. Kazayuki Katayama
September 2013-August 2015

The Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit
Detroit, MI
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From the Desk of Consul General of Japan in Detroit
(Preface)

I have served for nearly two years as the Consul General of Japan, in my jurisdiction of both Michigan and Ohio, from September, 2013 to August, 2015. I focused on the promotion of economics, politics, culture, public relations education and consular affairs, as well as the expansion of person-to-person exchanges in various areas between Japan and the 2 states.

The consulate opened in 1993 and I am the 10th Consul General. During my term, I often visited local governments, companies, universities and colleges, Japanese weekend schools, branches of the Japan-America Society and the Japanese associations in various parts of the 2 states in order to foster the understanding of Japan's policies, including its foreign policy, among the Americans here. I traveled to Ohio 66 times and Michigan (beyond Metro Detroit) 45 times. I visited universities/colleges 43 times, companies 24 times and Japanese weekend schools 14 times. I recited approximately 110 speeches and lecture and invited guests to my residence, to serve them Japanese food and Sake, about 200 times.

My goals in participating in these activities were twofold. First, I aimed to convince Americans that Japan is a trustworthy and strong partner to the U.S. Second, I earnestly set out to provide quality services to local Japanese residence and portray the Consulate General as both conscientious and dependable. I don't know how successful I was, but I would be happy if I had added something to my predecessors.

I compiled more than 300 stories from the desk of the Consul General and they are available to read, on Facebook, in both Japanese and English. I would be happy if you would understand my activities through the reading of these reports.

My US life has consisted of a '86-87 year study in Palo Alto and Boston; my embassy work from 1999-2002 in Washington DC; and my time in Detroit. Altogether, this amounts to living here 3 times and for a total of six years. I especially appreciated this stay because I lived in the Midwest—the “heartland” of the United States. I had a valuable opportunity to view, up-close, the resurgence of Detroit and I experienced a magnificent amount of diversity and ingenuity which are the main sources of U.S. strength. I understood profoundly that more than 900 facilities of Japanese companies in my jurisdiction (which have created over 110,000 local jobs) and the roughly 26,000 local Japanese residents have a deep-rooted presence, based on contributions and activities, that shows a great display of Japanese power in the region.

I want to express my gratitude to American and Japanese people here for their great contributions. Comprehensively, my final wish is for further development of the relationship between Japan, Michigan and Ohio.

Consul General of Japan in Detroit

Katayama Kazuyuki

August, 2015

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Vol. 1: Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference

Prior to beginning my new assignment in Detroit on September 20, while I was still posted in Brussels, Belgium, I returned to Japan shortly from September 8-10 to attend the 45th Annual Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. In attendance from the U.S. were five Midwest governors, including Governor Snyder of Michigan. Of the five Japanese sister-states, Governor Kada of Shiga Prefecture, Michigan's sister state, and Governor Ueda of Saitama Prefecture, Ohio's sister state, participated as well. The governor of Iwate Prefecture also came to show thanks for support received from Midwest donors after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, and to report on the progress of reconstruction efforts. And I, myself, gave a speech at the opening session of the conference.

It is often said that you cannot always see the true image of the United States by just looking at L.A., New York, or Washington. It is the Midwest that is said to be the Heartland of the U.S. I thought I had much to anticipate, for someone who hadn't visited Detroit before. I had a little anxiety as well. But at the conference, the officials and delegates I met from Michigan and Ohio were very kind and friendly people and before I even started my new assignment they already gave me such a warm welcome. From this pleasant surprise, I felt their appreciation toward the Japanese companies and Japanese nationals in Michigan and Ohio for their great contributions to their local communities. In Tokyo I exchanged about 150 business cards and although I can't yet match all the names and faces, it gave me a good head start in my new role as Consul General. Now for the actual Midwest.



(Pictures: From Midwest U.S.-Japan Association)

Vol. 2: At Last, Arrival in Detroit

On the morning of September 20th, my wife and I departed from Brussels, Belgium where I had been posted at the Embassy of Japan for three years. We first drove to Paris, France, where our Air France flight 375 to Detroit departed Charles de Gaulle Airport a bit behind schedule. Despite the delay, it touched down at Detroit Metro International Airport on that very day after an 8.5 hour flight. This marked my first day in Detroit, and the beginning of my new post.

In the airport, I immediately noticed that the signs were written in both English and in Japanese. From my first few moments in Detroit, I already sensed that the presence and contributions of Japanese companies and Japanese residents were clearly visible here in Michigan. At the immigration and customs gate I was asked a couple of questions. An officer at the immigration gate had not right away noticed the title "Consul-General", but my wife and I were able to pass through the immigration and customs services without any problem. In terms of temperature, I was pleasantly surprised that it was warmer here in Detroit than in Brussels. After picking up our luggage, we head straight to our new home—the Consul General's Residence in Bloomfield Hills, MI. This residence will serve as the base for our Consulate General's various exchanges and activities and I hope to use it as meaningfully and effectively as possible.

Two days after starting our lives at the Residence, we had already received a visit from the local police! Since I was not yet sure how to operate the home security system, the alarm suddenly sounded when I was returning home with my wife. Of course, the local police were notified that the alarm had been activated and quickly showed up at the residence. I heard that it takes on average 58 minutes for police officers to come to the scene in Detroit, but here they came immediately. I explained the situation to them

and apologized several times for the inconvenience. They were very kind and warmly welcomed my wife and myself to Bloomfield Hills. I felt such mixed feelings, both of embarrassment and of appreciation.

During my time in Detroit, I will aim to do my best to fulfill my duties as Consul General of Japan for the people of Michigan and Ohio. I will also gladly be of assistance in any way possible to the residents of our jurisdiction.

Vol. 3: Japan Business Society of Detroit 40th Anniversary Event

On Sunday, September 22nd, I had the privilege of attending a world-famous Japanese ventriloquist, Mr. Ikkokudou's performance held at Novi Middle School. Though it sounds a little bit odd, this was my first official work duty as Consul General of Japan in Detroit. Ikkokudou's performance took place during the Japan Business Society of Detroit's 40th anniversary event celebration. It has been 20 years since our office was established in Detroit, so it looks like JBSD has had a presence in Detroit for twice as long as our office! I would like to express sincere respect for the many contributions that JBSD has made to the local community over the past 40 years. Interestingly, according to Mr. Ikkokudou, the word "ventriloquist" originally comes from the Latin word for delivering a message from heaven.

I was truly fascinated by Ikkokudou's performance, and how his dummy spoke and sang in both Japanese and English. As a matter of fact, Ikkokudou trained himself to use seven languages (Chinese, Korean, and German to name a few) and he is capable of performing in foreign countries. He shared a story with me that he jumped at the opportunity to take part in a talent competition program at a local TV station when he was performing in Shanghai. He performed his favorite ventriloquist act at the show and

made it to the final round of competition, not once, but twice! It was unfortunate, however, that due to his conflicting return flight to Japan, he had no choice but to give up before proceeding to the final round.



After the performance at Novi Middle school, a welcome reception was held for Mr. Ikkokudou at the JBSD President's residence. There, I met many Japanese nationals who are residing here in Michigan, and some of them told me that they have resided in Michigan for as long as 20 to 30 years.

This was certainly a satisfying and interesting day in Michigan. Another thing I learned is that it is very difficult to get around the suburbs of Detroit without a car. In my former posts including Brussels, public transportation was readily available throughout the city. Being in the Detroit area, I am now keenly aware that I am residing in a society based around the automobile.

Vol. 4: Japanese Upper House of Councilors' Visit to Detroit

On September 24, a delegation of 5 nonpartisan councilors of the Japanese Upper House visited Detroit, led by Mr. Shinsuke Suematsu, and I was fortunate enough to accompany them. During their time in Detroit, they had an opportunity to exchange opinions with Ms. Saunteel Jenkins, Detroit City Council President, regarding the current situation of Detroit's filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. Their visit was also

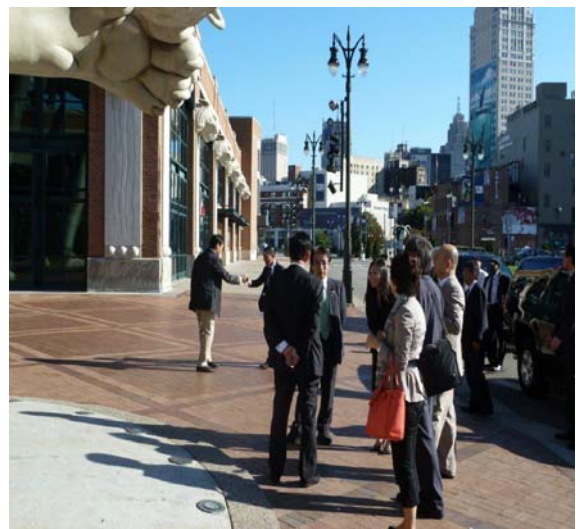
covered by local media.

In short, I have the impression that the current financial situation of Detroit was the result of accumulation of as much as 18 billion dollars in debt (about 1.8 trillion yen) due to old credit which had not been considered in annual expenditures, such as pensions and medical insurance, in spite of the decline in population and tax revenues. After the meeting with Ms. Jenkins, we were guided to the assembly hall, and were welcomed by each city council member. Also, we took time to take a careful look around one corner of abandoned buildings.

As for the bankruptcy of the city, it is not a problem entirely unique to Detroit, which is why the delegates were interested in learning more. There are some Japanese municipalities suffering from debt, and while not as high as Detroit's, the amounts are still significant. The sum of Japan's national debt and that of struggling Japanese municipalities is equal to more than double the amount of Japan's GDP.

Although there are differences in the local autonomy systems of Japan and the U.S., discussions and talks about Detroit's bankruptcy were exchanged among the members of the delegation during their trip. That evening, several Japanese business leaders including the president of the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, Mr. Sugi, and the delegates from Japan discussed the Japanese investment environment and the current situation of Japanese companies in Michigan.

In Japan, there is an image of the city of Detroit that is unsafe and rough, with a high crime rate. Certainly, there are some areas of the city where you should avoid going alone. However, it is seldom known in Japan that the suburbs in Metro-Detroit are safe, nice places with lots of trees and green. By accompanying the delegation, it was indeed a great opportunity for me to get to know more about the city of Detroit since their visit happened to be right after my arrival on September 20. I heard that our office rarely receives a Japanese Diet member conventionally visiting Detroit. Hence, I felt very honored to serve them as Consul-General of Japan in Detroit.



Vol. 5: Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) Board Meeting

On September 27, I attended a JBSD Board Meeting for the first time, which was in Livonia. There were about 30 members who attended the meeting that day. The meeting is held once every other month and it is the Consul General's position to serve as the Honorary President of the JBSD. At the meeting, it is my duty to provide information on behalf of Consulate General of Japan in Detroit.

In addition to discussing a bill, representatives of each committee share topics to report on. This time the topics were reported by the Chamber of Commerce Committee, the Public Relations Committee, the Young Professionals Committee, the Japanese Saturday School "Ringo-kai", and the JSD Women's Club.

The JBSD, formerly called the Japanese Society of Detroit, was founded in 1973 and this year marks 40th anniversary (JSD became JBSD on July 1, 1993). As of January 2013, there are 253 member companies as well as approximately 1,600 individual members registered with the JBSD. In addition to their primary duties to support their business, the JBSD has worked to improve Japanese communities in

Michigan, to enhance friendship among Japanese communities, to support Japanese Saturday School, and to contribute to the local community as a member of society.

I would like to express my sincere respect to each member of the JBSD for their long term commitment and contribution to both Japanese and local communities. By regularly attending JBSD Board Meetings, I would like to take the opportunity to provide useful information such as safety and security, and to work with the Board to enhance relationships between Japanese companies and local authorities.

Vol. 6: Renaissance Center

Our Consulate General of Japan in Detroit office is located on the 16th floor of the GM Renaissance Center (RenCen to the locals) in downtown Detroit. To gain a better understanding of the building where we work, on Tuesday, October 1st, I joined fifteen others in a free, guided tour of the RenCen. The one-hour tours are offered daily, Monday through Friday, at noon, and again at 2:00pm. The tour includes a magnificent view of the city from the top 72nd floor, where there is also a fine-dining restaurant, the Wintergarden atrium facing the Detroit River and the GM Showroom of the latest General Motors vehicles. The RenCen is located on the international riverfront of the Detroit River – bordering the US and Canada – and overlooks the cityscape of Windsor, Ontario. Henry Ford II, chairman of Ford Motor Company, completed the RenCen's first phase in 1977, with the hope it would revitalize Detroit's downtown district and inspire more development. The complex was made up of four 39-story office towers surrounding a 73-story Westin (now Marriot) Hotel. Our Consulate General of Japan in Detroit office is located in the 4th, or 400, Tower. In 1981 two additional towers, each 21 floors tall, were added. General Motors purchased the Renaissance Center in 1996, and it became their world headquarters. Thirty-six years ago the RenCen was a symbol of Detroit's revitalization. Today the city finds itself in the midst of new revitalization efforts and I look forward to its recovery and next renaissance.

Vol. 7: Detroit's Chapter 9 Bankruptcy Filing

The city of Detroit declared bankruptcy under Chapter 9 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code on July 18th, 2013. According to the emergency manager, the city's debt total is approximately \$18 billion. As a rough breakdown, \$9 billion is owed for general obligations, such as the repayment of municipal bond and interest payments, and another \$9 billion is owed for retiree pensions and health care obligations. According to the emergency manager, as of 2012, the Detroit's unemployment rate was 18.6% (regional MSA figure), or twice the national average. Detroit's population (currently at around 700,000) has decreased sharply (by about 63%) since 1950 when there were over 1.8 million residents. The city's crime rate is one of the highest in the country, and the average police response time is 58 minutes. It is also reported that about 40 % of the city's public lights are in disrepair. Thus, the city of Detroit is facing some serious challenges.

However, officials such as Mr. Sandy Baruah, President and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber, view the Ch. 9 filing as a positive development and a key turning point for Detroit.

When I had the privilege of speaking with him in Tokyo in September, he explained:

- Detroit's Chapter 9 filing is an opportunity to improve the situation of the city and a meaningful way for Detroit to succeed in the future.
- The filing does not affect everyday business activities nor the daily lives of residents.
- In fact, public services will not only continue, but are actually likely to improve, as funding can be redirected from debt-related expenses

Mr. Baruah also emphasized that the city of Detroit has attracted \$1.2 billion in investment since 2006; 12,000 new job opportunities have been created since 2010; the unemployment rate has dropped 12% since July 2009; and housing values have risen 25% since 2009.

Furthermore, when looking at Greater Detroit: it's home to 13 Fortune 500 companies; it has the #1 density rate of engineering jobs; 3 major research universities are located within its 90-mile radius; its residents have the 7th -highest (U.S. rank) of doctoral degree attainment; it has the 2nd -highest IT growth rate; and is the 4th -largest export base in the U.S. Using such figures, Mr. Baruah explained that Greater

Detroit remains very competitive, with much promise for future economic growth.

Hence, I believe that the declaration of Ch. 9 bankruptcy does not in fact mean the end of Detroit; rather, it is actually an historic opportunity to revive and transform an iconic American city.

Vol. 8: “Shin-Hanga” Exhibition at Toledo Museum of Art

On October 3rd I was privileged to visit Toledo, Ohio for the opening of a special exhibit titled “Fresh Impressions: Early Modern Japanese Prints,” being held at The Toledo Museum of Art through January 1, 2014.

The museum is located in the city of Toledo, Ohio, which borders the state of Michigan. It is only about an hour’s drive from Detroit, and has approximately 300,000 residents. Toledo is known as the Glass City, due to the immense impact that the glass industry has had on its development – economically and culturally. The museum is well known for its major collections of glass art and the highly acclaimed Glass Pavilion. Since the museum’s opening in 1901 it has been supported by generous individual and corporate donors and, still today, welcomes the public completely free of charge.

This evening’s event at the Toledo Museum of Art celebrated the opening of an exhaustive exhibition of over three hundred early modern prints, created in the traditional *ukiyo-e* style, by ten Japanese artists. In 1930 and 1936 the museum held groundbreaking shows introducing this *shin-hanga* style and Japanese printmakers such as Goyo Hashiguchi and Shinsui Ito, whose works flourished from the late Meiji to early Showa eras. Of the original shows’ 343 prints, the museum still owns all but five. Now, eighty years later, the legendary shows have been successfully recreated, through the careful preparation done by the director and curator of the Toledo Museum of Art as well as the generous support of individuals and corporate donors. The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit was fortunate to assist with this effort by organizing a networking event at the museum with local Japanese companies.

Following the opening ceremonies, attendees were privileged to view the exhibition, and it was such a pleasant surprise to have the opportunity to see the remarkable print collection of *bijinga* (beautiful ladies), *fukeiga* (landscapes), *yakusya-e* (actors), and even many prints in mid-west America, far away from Japan.

The evening’s celebration continued with demonstrations of Japanese tea ceremony, traditional dancing and a wonderful display of the museum’s *netsuke* collection. Some young American ladies wore *yukata*, or Japanese summer kimono, and I felt a very warm welcome by the people of Toledo. It was an unforgettable occasion. I truly hope many of you will visit the museum to enjoy this excellent collection of Japanese modern prints.



Vol. 9: Japan Festival, October 6th, 2013

In the afternoon of October 6th, I was honored to attend the 2013 Japan Festival at Novi High School. The annual event is organized by the Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) and JSD Women’s Club, and sponsored by the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario and Shiga Prefecture. The City of Novi, the Novi School District, and Consulate General of Japan in Detroit also cooperate with the organizers.

At the festival there are different event corners, including Japanese food stalls, Japanese games [such as ring-toss, gold fish catching, shooting games with toy guns made from chopsticks (*syateki*), flower arrangement (*ikebana*), Japanese tea ceremony, origami, and more. In the auditorium, Japanese cultural groups presented their favorite performances such as Japanese drums, songs, and dancing. From

our office, the Culture Section had a booth introducing the JET (Japan Exchange and Training) Program, and the Consular section opened a one-day consular service desk for Japanese residents.

The venue was full of visitors (estimated 3,000 people). The city of Novi has the largest population of Japanese residents in Michigan, and its number is close to 3,000. I heard that some people call the city of Novi Michigan's "little Japan" or "little Tokyo". At the festival site, I had the privilege to speak with the acting mayor of the city of Novi, the superintendent of the Novi School District, and staff members of Novi High School. I was glad that many people came to talk with me in such a friendly manner and share their experience and stories relating to Japan. Meeting and talking with them made me realize again that there is a particularly strong tie between Japanese residents and the local community in the city of Novi. The city and schools of Novi have warmly welcomed many Japanese students and their families for many years. The Japan Festival is indeed one of the best occasions to introduce Japanese culture and for Japanese residents to show appreciation to the local community.

In the hallways of Novi High School, I saw many framed pictures of graduates displayed on the wall. In comparison with photographs taken in the 1970s, I can tell that the community has become more ethnically diverse. According to the Novi High School demographics of 2012, nearly 20 percent of enrolled students are Asian. We, the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit, will continue to enhance relations with the local communities in the Novi region. Furthermore, I am hopeful that through the Japan Festival, it became a good weekend for Japanese residents to remember their home country, and for local Americans to enjoy Japanese culture.



Vol. 10: Annual Consulate's Soccer Tournament

I had the pleasure of attending the annual "Consulate's Soccer Tournament" which took place at the Ultimate Soccer Arena in Pontiac, MI on Saturday, October 12th and Sunday, October 13th. Sixteen teams participated including one Japanese team and 15 other teams representing different countries and regions. On the first day, during the first round of competition, the 16 teams were divided into 4 groups which played against each other. The top 2 teams in each group were able to move on to the 2nd round, and winners of the 2nd round then proceeded to the semi-finals.

After attending the opening ceremony, I went to see Group A's first game, which was Japan vs. Lebanon—the 2012 champion! Though it certainly was



not easy competing against last year's winner, the game ended up in a tie (1-1). The second game with Albania also ended in a draw (1-1). Finally, the Japanese team ended up winning the third game against Palestine (5-0). Thanks to this win, the Japanese team was able to move on to the 2nd stage of competition, held very next day. However, Japan unfortunately lost the first game of the 2nd stage to Yemen (0-2), whose team came in 3rd last year. After all games, Iraq achieved a victory of the 2013 tournament! Despite Japan not moving on, it was certainly great to watch so many dedicated international teams play against each other, all while displaying great sportsmanship!

I would also like to express my sincere respect to all the players and teams for their great performances in such a competitive tournament. On top of their daily duties as business people, As for the Japanese team, they regularly practice soccer in their free time on top of their daily duties as business people. I was truly impressed by these young professionals displaying such dedication to the sport. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the co-hosts of the tournament including the Consulate of Mexico, Wayne State University, and many local communities for organizing such a wonderful event which truly enhances cross-cultural friendship through sportsmanship and soccer.

Vol. 11: Driving for the first time in Michigan

Three weeks after my arrival to Detroit, my driver's license and license plate for my personal car were delivered. At last, during Labor Day weekend, I finally got a chance to drive around the greater Detroit area. Unlike my former posts in Brussels and Beijing, it was a bit of challenge for me to get out and about without a car, due to the long distance from one place to another in Metro Detroit. So, Labor Day weekend was my first chance to drive in Michigan. I drove to the Detroit Zoo and to the Henry Ford Museum and also had the opportunity to go shopping and dine with my family. First, we stopped by a cider mill. I was very much looking forward to this visit since autumn in Michigan is a popular time for apple picking and enjoying apple cider. The cold apple cider and warm doughnuts—which were fresh from the kettle—were delicious! By the way, apple cider is 100 % pure apple juice—not carbonated like pop or alcoholic beverages! As the leaves on the trees were turning colors, the beautiful autumn day reminded me of a lovely fall day in Japan. The familiarity was refreshing after my post in Brussels, where the fall season was quite different from autumn in Japan.



The Henry Ford Museum is located in Dearborn, where the founder of the Ford Automobile, Henry Ford, (1863-1947,) was born. The Museum's main focus is the history of America's automobile and vehicle industry and this year happens to mark the 150th year since Henry Ford's birth. In the museum, many monumental vehicles from American history are displayed. Some of the more famous vehicles include President Kennedy's limousine from the 1963 assassination, and the Montgomery city bus that Rosa Parks boarded

on December 1, 1955, which became an important symbol of the civil rights movement. Also, at a corner dedicated to the development of automobiles in other countries, the 1950's "Made-in-Japan" cars (which used to be synonymous with poor quality) were also displayed. There is also a panel showing how Japanese cars and automobile technologies have developed since then. The Henry Ford Museum is indeed one of the must-go places for automobile fans.

That day, we also visited Greenfield Village which is located right next to the Henry Ford Museum. Greenfield Village is like an outdoor museum where old manufacturing buildings, shops, and properties were rearranged in a village-like setting. All of the properties and buildings were transported from their original location and moved to Greenfield Village. Visitors can get around the Village by riding a Model T vehicle, one of Henry Ford's famous cars invented in the 1920's. Starting in 1908, more than fifteen million models of the Model T Ford were produced over twenty years. I believe that the Model T became a true icon for the automobile industry. Ford's Model T and assembly line exemplify the great success of mass production which, for the first time, made automobiles accessible to the middle-class population.

Vol. 12: Detroit Tigers' Regrettable Loss of the American League Championship

In the sixth game of the American League Championship, the Detroit Tigers lost to the Boston Red Sox 5-2. In the championship, Detroit won two games, but lost four, missing the chance to go to the World Series. Although I did not have a chance to go to see a Tigers' game at Comerica Park this season, I felt bad for the Tigers since I was supporting them in front of the TV. The Detroit Tigers were founded in 1901 and are famous as one of the legendary baseball teams. Ty Cobb had played for the team in the early 20th century. Interestingly, it is said that the *HANSHIN Tigers*, a Japanese professional baseball team based in the city of Hanshin, Hyogo Prefecture, was named after the Detroit Tigers since the City of Hanshin was an industrial city, a commonly shared characteristic with the City of Detroit. It has been almost 30 years since the last time the Detroit Tigers won the World Series, though they have made it to the World Series four times so far. From Japan, Yasuo Kida and Hideo Nomo used to play for the team 10 years ago. In recent years, Detroit Tigers won the regional championship three consecutive years. Furthermore, the Tigers won the American League playoff championship last year. I am looking forward to seeing Tigers winning victory of the World Series next year, though I truly wanted the Detroit Tigers to proceed to the World Series this year. For the Boston Red Sox, two Japanese pitchers, Kouji Uehara and Junichi Tazawa, played very well and Mr. Uehara was awarded the MVP of the 2013 season. I would like to congratulate on Mr. Uehara and feel very proud of those Japanese baseball players' success in Major League Baseball.

Vol. 13: Skate America 2013, Detroit



The first event of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series, Skate America 2013, took place at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, October 18 ~ 20. I had the privilege to attend and watch the pair freestyle skate and ladies' freestyle skate on Sunday, October 20. It was the first time for me to watch a live figure skating competition and I came to realize that it is one of the most show-like sports. Tatsuki Machida, one of the representatives of Japan, won the men's championship the day before I attended and I am glad to note that Mao Asada, also representing Japan, won the ladies' championship. At her freestyle skating, I was frightened when she failed her touchdown after a

triple-axel jump. However, as holding the highest score in the ladies' short program, she won an excellent victory with her total score of 204.55. At the venue I saw as many Japanese flags as that of the United States and there were many Japanese people who came to support the Japanese figure skaters. I heard that many of them traveled all the way from Japan to Detroit to watch the event. When the Japanese national anthem was played at the award ceremony for the ladies' program, I was very much touched. For Japanese players, it was indeed a good start for the season of 2013 and the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. Speaking of Winter Olympic Games, the U.S. figure skating national team has won a total of 46 medals, which is so far the highest from any other countries. Though it is a bit of an old story, I remember an American figure skater, Ms. Janet Lynn, the Bronze medalist of the ladies' figure skating competition in the 1972 Winter Olympic Games in Sapporo, Japan. Because of her charming smile, she was called the "Fairy of Ice". Even though she fell on the ice during the competition, she never gave up and earnestly kept her skating till the end. Many Japanese people including myself were encouraged by seeing her sincere effort and nevertheless liked her very much. I am looking forward to seeing the success of both Japanese and American players at the upcoming Winter Olympic Games.



Vol. 14: Courtesy visit to Michigan State Governor Snyder



On October 24th, I was honored to pay a courtesy visit to Gov. Rick Snyder, as a part of my business trip to Lansing, the capital city of Michigan. As it seems that many capital cities in the U.S. may be lesser known than other big cities, Lansing is one such case. With a current population of approximately 120,000, Lansing became the state capital in 1847, (Detroit had served as the previous state capital). Major employers within metropolitan Lansing include the state government, the manufacturing sector, as well as the healthcare and insurance industries.

Since 1969, Lansing has enjoyed a sister-city relationship with its capital city counterpart of Shiga-prefecture, Japan, the city of Otsu. As a matter of fact, I had the privilege to first meet Gov. Snyder in September in Tokyo on the occasion of the annual Japan-U.S. Midwest Association Conference. The recent Lansing meeting was my official courtesy call to him, following my arrival to Michigan as Consul General of Japan in Detroit.

Gov. Snyder took office in January, 2011, as the 48th governor of the state of Michigan. He was born in 1958 in Battle Creek, Michigan. With his business background as a tax accountant, as well as his experience as president of Gateway Computers, Gov. Snyder is a business oriented governor, as well as a member of the Republican Party.



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Speaking of Michigan politics, the Republican Party enjoys majority control of the State House and the State Senate. Nine of Michigan's fourteen U.S. House Representatives are also republicans. Nonetheless, the majority of statewide voters re-elected President Obama, (Democrat), in November of 2012, and also elected democratic U.S. senators in Michigan's previous two U.S. senatorial elections. I understand that Michigan differs politically from the state of Ohio (often referred to as a key "swing state" and a presidential election bellwether), but I nonetheless find Michigan politics to be very interesting.



As of 2012, there are about 12,000 Japanese residents, 480 facilities of Japanese companies, 28 sister-cities, and high number of Japanese language learners and institutions for Japanese studies in Michigan. In our very cordial meeting, Gov. Snyder and I reaffirmed our desire to continue to foster our good relationship

and to further strengthen Michigan-Japan ties via close collaboration and frequent dialogue.

In terms of foreign direct investment in Michigan, Japan is certainly a leading investor amongst all countries. When it comes to Michigan's exports overseas, Canada is the state's largest market. China is the state's third-largest export market, about twice as large as that of Japan. Gov. Snyder has also been working to enhance economic exchange with China, from which foreign direct investment in the automobile industry and real estate sector (including within the city of Detroit) has been gradually increasing.

Vol. 15: JET Program Returnees Reception

On October 26th, I had the honor of hosting the JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching Program) Returnees and Educators Networking Reception at my official residence. In total, around 60 guests including recent JET returnees, members of the Great Lakes JET Alumni Association, Japanese language

professors and teachers from both Michigan and Ohio, representatives of Japanese companies, human resource company members and representatives from local media outlets were in attendance. As a matter of fact, this reception marked the first official event that I had the privilege of hosting as Consul General at my residence. I was very pleased to host such an event as I am aware that the JET Program promotes long-term ties between the United States and Japan. In fact, there are even several local staff members working at our Consulate who happen to be former JET program participants.

This year, 16 JET participants completed their contracts in Japan and returned to our jurisdiction (Michigan and Ohio), while 39 new JET program participants were dispatched to Japan by our Consulate. I believe that the JET program is one of the most successful government youth exchange programs promoting cross-cultural exchange and mutual understanding, in particular for the youth in Japan. I understand that many JET program participants from various countries around the world established close relationships with Japanese nationals during their stays in Japan. I certainly felt this way when hearing stories from the many returnees I met at the reception. One of the returnees was an assistant language teacher, (ALT), posted in *Kesennuma*, Miyagi Prefecture. Our office was fortunately able to confirm his safety several days after the devastating Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami hit in March, 2011. Even after the disaster, he stayed in the city of Kesennuma and dedicated himself to his duties as an ALT for the next 2.5 years.

Ernest Hemingway once wrote in his book “Moveable Feast” that if you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast. In my remarks at the reception, I used this phrase from Hemingway’s book to



convey my hope that the city or town in Japan where those JET returnees spent wonderful days will be like Paris was for Hemingway. Our next step is to think about how to connect the experiences and language skills JET participants gained in Japan (and possibly in college) to their future careers. The Consulate General of Japan Detroit is committed to providing assistance to JET returnees and alumni by strengthening ties with JETAA (JET Alumni Association), Japanese language educators and Japanese companies throughout Michigan and Ohio.

Vol. 16: Holocaust Memorial Center

On October 27th I visited Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. There are about forty memorial centers of the Holocaust throughout the United States. The Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan, founded in 1984, has more than 125,000 visitors each year. The Center remembers and pays tribute to the six million people who perished and those who survived the Holocaust under the Nazi regime. Panels in the museum depict early European Jewish culture amid growing anti-Semitism, Nazism, camps and the Holocaust and the postwar lives of the survivors.

The museum also includes the International Institute of the Righteous, which honors brave individuals of non-Jewish heritage who risked their lives, and the lives of their families, to assist the persecuted. A Japanese diplomat stationed in Lithuania, Mr. Chiune Sugihara, is among those honored. Sugihara worked night and day issuing transit visas for six thousand Polish and Lithuanian Jews desperate to escape the Nazi regime.

While serving at my former post in Brussels, Belgium, I visited Auschwitz, in Poland, Dachau in Germany, and a deportation camp created by the Nazi regime in Mechelen, Belgium. When thinking of Holocaust, I cannot help thinking about the relationship between man’s wisdom and man’s insanity. In one of the most educated societies in Europe, where art, culture, philosophy, science and technology flourished on one hand, the ideology and practice of Nazism spread fanatically on the other.

I still remember vividly the strong impression I had after reading Viktor Frankl’s book “Man’s Search for Meaning” for the first time. Frankl, a neurologist and psychiatrist, was a Holocaust survivor of a camp in Poland where nearly ninety percent of the confined – approximately one million people – lost their lives. In his book, Frankl claimed that even in desperate and devastating situations, maintaining hope

for the future is an essential factor of survival. Furthermore, he wrote about an inner being that exists deep within each of us, which even despair and desperation cannot take away. Even in dire circumstances we can freely choose our actions based on the guidance of our inner self. For example, when faced with sacrificing one's own few morsels of food, though starving, for the sake of another, even weaker individual we are free to decide what action to take in accordance with our personal beliefs. To this day, the impression of that book still remains deeply and strongly in my heart.

Vol. 17: The President of Wayne State University and Minoru Yamasaki

On October 29th, I had the privilege of paying a courtesy visit to Dr. Roy Wilson, the newly elected president of Wayne State University (WSU) located in the city of Detroit. Dr. Wilson started his post as president in August of this year. Born from a Japanese mother, President Wilson spent his early years in Japan and developed a fondness for Japanese cuisine. A particular favorite of his is *Tendon* (tempura over rice) which I promised to serve him at my official residence sometime in the near future.

President Wilson is one of few Asian-American university presidents to serve at a major university and research institution in the United States. Through the years, our office has worked closely with Wayne State University and I sincerely look forward to working with Dr. Wilson on continued educational collaboration and cultural exchanges.

WSU was established in 1868 and is the third largest university in Michigan with an enrollment of more than thirty thousand students. On WSU's campus, there are four buildings designed by Japanese American architect, Minoru Yamasaki, who designed the World Trade Center in New York City. Yamasaki was born in Seattle in the early 20th century and later, as an architect, opened an office in the city of



Detroit. He also became the first Japanese American to appear on the cover of Time Magazine in 1963. Author Makiko Iizuka introduced an interesting story of Yamasaki in her book entitled: "The Man Who Created the 9/11 Target," (Koudan-sha).

Interestingly, back when Yamasaki tried to purchase a house in Bloomfield Hills in the 1940's (shortly after WWII), a real estate company rejected him based on his ethnic background. Now I am living in Bloomfield Hills and can attest to the fact that Bloomfield Hills is a very open, warm and welcoming community that people from all ethnic backgrounds call home. It is clear that much has changed in the past 65 years.

Vol. 18: Visit to Cincinnati

For the first time, from October 30th to November 2nd I had the opportunity to visit the city of Cincinnati in southwest Ohio. Together with Columbus, in the center of the state, and Cleveland in the northeast, these three major cities are known as Ohio's 3 C's.

Cincinnati borders the state of Kentucky along the Ohio River. Within the city, the population is approximately 320,000, with over 2 million in the greater metropolitan area. Many major corporations are headquartered in this region such as Proctor & Gamble and Macy's and Kroger's, as well as two professional sports teams – the Reds of the Major League Baseball and the National Football League's Bengals. As for Japanese investment, it is quite strong, with companies such as Toyota, Kao, Mazak and Mitsubishi Electric. And there is also a very active Japan America Society there.

On the 1st of November the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati hosted a special dinner and gala in celebration of their 25th year anniversary. Over 250 society members from Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana attended. I was grateful for the chance to meet so many people involved in strengthening Japan-US relations. I was also privileged to meet ardent supporters of earthquake and tsunami relief efforts in Ishinomaki, Japan.

The honored guests and featured speakers for the evening were Dr. Santa Ono, president of the University of Cincinnati who also happens to be Japanese American, and His Excellency Kenichiro Sasae, Ambassador of Japan to the United States. As the new Consul General of Japan in Detroit, I also had the opportunity to officially greet the Japanese and American citizens of Greater Cincinnati. It was a special and memorable evening.

During my visit I was surprised to discover that Ohio is sometimes referred to as the “mother of Presidents.” To date, seven of the forty-four U.S. presidents are native Ohioans. One such man was William Howard Taft, the 27th president who served from 1909 to 1913. I had the chance to visit the William Howard Taft National Historic Site, which was the original home where he was born and raised, and the adjoining Taft Education Center. There we could learn of Taft’s close ties to Asia.

From 1901 to 1903 Taft served as the governor general of the Philippines, a colony of the U.S. at the time. While living in Southeast Asia he visited China and Japan. He then became the Secretary of War under President Roosevelt, at which time he met with Japan’s Emperor and the Prime Minister. In 1905 he concluded the Taft Katsura Agreement with Japan. After his presidency, Taft went on to become the Chief Justice of the United States (the only person to hold both positions).

During his presidency, Taft accepted a gift from Tokyo of three thousand blossoming cherry trees as a symbol of US-Japan friendship. The trees were planted around the Tidal Basin in 1912, and were a result of many efforts and coordination of the First Lady. Now, every year, thousands of people visit Washington D.C. to enjoy the beauty of the blossoming trees.

In my short visit I learned of many close ties between Cincinnati and Japan.



Vol. 19: Freer House

On November 3rd, Culture Day in Japan, my wife and I were honored with a Welcome Reception in our behalf, hosted by the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario and the Freer House.

Freer House, now owned by Wayne State University, was commissioned in 1890 by successful, Detroit industrialist Charles Lang Freer. He built his home just north of the Detroit Museum of Art (now Detroit Institute of Arts), in midtown Detroit, to house the art collection he had begun to amass. The expansive and impressive collection, much of which was from Japan and China, is now displayed at the Freer Gallery in Washington D.C. as part of the Smithsonian.





Before Detroit became prosperous in the automobile industry, Freer and his partner Frank Heckler started a company which manufactured railroad cars. Their tremendous success allowed Freer to indulge in his art interests. He visited Japan five times to purchase some of the finest works of art comparable even to those deemed as National Treasures by such great artists as Ogata Kōrin and Tawaraya Sōtatsu. It is regrettable that we cannot enjoy these works in Detroit, but the Freer Gallery in Washington is known world-wide for its great Asian art collection.

Last year, the Japanese broadcasting company NHK, came to the US and Detroit to research renowned American collectors of Japanese art from the Meiji Period (1868-1912), such as Ernest Fenollosa and Charles Freer. Coincidentally, the program was broadcast one year ago on Culture Day in Japan.

I have been in Detroit one and a half months now and am delighted to find Detroit has many connections with Japan in a variety of areas. I will make it a priority to inform both Japanese and Americans of these unique links.

Vol. 20: The Meiji Woman Who Traveled the World

In my last diary entry, I wrote about my visit to the Freer House located in downtown Detroit. During my visit, I heard about a Japanese woman, Ms. Michi Nomura, who was born in Japan during the Meiji Period. Ms. Nomura is the writer of a book entitled: *The World Trip of a Meiji Woman: The First Overseas Japanese Tour Group*, which was published by the Kanagawa press. I was intrigued and so I decided to get a copy of my own.

After reading her book, I learned that in the early 20th century, Michi and her husband, Yozo (who later became chairman of Hotel New Grand in Yokohama) owned a Japanese antique shop called “The Samurai Company” which featured antiques catering mostly to foreign collectors.

In 1908, the Asahi Shinbun Newspaper organized a 96-day world trip in which Ms. Nomura and 55 other Japanese nationals took part. In her book, Ms. Nomura wrote about her many experiences during this unique voyage. As it turns out, while visiting the U.S. on her trip, the tour group happened to stop in Detroit. Because of her prominent antique business she already had a close relationship with Mr. Freer. So, during her stay in Detroit, rather than staying with the group, she stayed at the Freer House. Michi wrote in her diary that the night she spent at the Freer House was the first time she had enjoyed a calm, peaceful night’s sleep since leaving Japan.

The other day, when the Japan American Society hosted a welcome party for me at the Freer House, their event was held in the Peacock Room which Ms. Nomura also had a chance visit. As a matter of fact, while she was there, the famous painting by James Abbott McNeill Whistler, “The Princess from the Land of Porcelain,” was featured!

Ms. Nomura wrote in her book that Detroit was different from the other crowded cities she had visited, such as Chicago. She said that Detroit was a calm and elegant town with impeccably clean streets, boasting many green areas. She also wrote that while Detroit was a very safe place with very little crime, it was also a very convenient location where one could easily jump on a train to go to Chicago or New York. Ms. Nomura’s book also mentioned that, in the early 20th century, Detroit was the best city in which to own a house in the United States.

It is evident that Ms. Michi Nomura was greeted with warm hospitality by her friend, Mr. Freer, giving her a very good impression of Detroit and inspiring her to write about the many positive aspects of the city in her book. Now, 100 years have passed and I sincerely hope that my time in Detroit will allow me to convey my positive impressions of the city to the people of Japan and that the mutual friendship enjoyed by the city of Detroit and Japan will continue to flourish for the next 100 years.

Vol. 21: The Kakehashi Project– the Bridge for Tomorrow–

On November 9th, I had the opportunity to visit Kent State University in Ohio, where I attended an event celebrating an exchange program between the United States and Japan called the “Kakehashi

Project – the Bridge for Tomorrow–.” This program was initiated by the Japanese Foreign Ministry in close coordination with the Japan Foundation. Its main purpose is to encourage greater understanding between the youth of Japan and the United States and to foster long-term and ongoing interest in one another by providing firsthand experiences with each country’s culture. The program also allows American youth the opportunity to experience some interesting and “cool” aspects of Japan and its culture.

Through the Kakehashi Project, 2,300 young Americans were sent to Japan while the United States, in turn, played host to 2,300 Japanese youth. During their stays of nearly two weeks, the students were able to visit a variety of locations including cultural and historic sites, state of the art factories, and schools. They also had the chance to experience the local culture by staying with host families.

In the spring, 25 students from Kent State University visited Japan through this program, and this fall, 25 students from Kitakyushu University visited Kent State University. During the Kakehashi Project event that I attended, the students from Kitakyushu University gave presentations to American professors, teachers, students and the local community. In their presentations, they explained the relationship between traditional and contemporary Japan and also went into detail about Japanese attitudes toward nature and the environment all while making use of visual aids and videos.



During their presentations, the Kitakyushu University students touched upon interesting and unique aspects of Japan such as *shinise* shops—family-owned businesses that have been in operation for many generations. They also described sushi making machines and “modern” Japanese toilets that boast heated seats and bidets! The students also talked about the famous “Ise Shrine” which is reconstructed and moved every 20 years. I believe that the topics the students chose to touch upon reveal unique aspects of both traditional and contemporary Japanese culture that Americans may find interesting.

All in all, the students’ presentations were very impressive and I believe that they did an excellent job of conveying Japanese culture to an American audience. Naturally, some of the students were a bit nervous, but I was so impressed by their English proficiency as well as the delivery of their presentations. I can only assume that the most excellent students were chosen to participate in this Kakehashi Project! In our increasingly interconnected world, I am aware that knowledge of foreign languages and cultures is of the utmost importance. After attending the Kakehashi Project presentations, I can honestly say that I am now even more confident about the young generation in Japan who will soon become the nation’s leaders. That said, I am truly optimistic about the future of Japan.

Vol. 22: Courtesy visit to Mayor Virg Bernero

On November 13th, during a business trip to Lansing (Michigan’s state capital), I had the privilege of paying a courtesy visit to Mayor Virg Bernero. An energetic, Italian-American, Democrat, Mayor Bernero was recently elected to a third four-year term, garnering over 70% of the vote.

Since 1969, Lansing has enjoyed a sister-city relationship with Otsu, the capital city of Shiga Prefecture. In fact, Mayor Bernero shared fond memories from his 2011 goodwill and trade mission to Otsu and Tokyo, which included a homestay at the then-Otsu mayor’s residence. Mayor Bernero went on to express his strong affinity and admiration for Japan, its people, culture, and cuisine.



Although Japanese investment in greater Lansing is relatively modest in comparison to



southeastern Michigan, Mayor Bernero attaches great importance to the 12 Japanese facilities which have located there, and to economic ties with Japan overall. In April, Mayor Bernero hosted a Japanese cherry tree planting ceremony in Riverfront Park, followed by a business luncheon, which was attended by economic development officials, as well as current and prospective Japanese investors in greater Lansing.

Later that day, I was honored to attend the Lansing Regional Sister Cities Commission's new member orientation luncheon. Seven newly elected Commissioners were recognized by Mayor Bernero, who then gave remarks on his vision for a globally connected Lansing.

I very much appreciated the Commission's warm welcome, the opportunity to witness how strongly

Lansing values its cultural, governmental, and economic ties with Japan and how enthusiastically US-Japan relations are promoted at the local level.

Including the Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit, I believe there are a total of seven consulates-generals and consulates in the state of Michigan. In my capacity as consul general, I aim to take full advantage of my wonderful opportunity to broaden and strengthen Japan's ties with communities throughout Michigan and Ohio, via the kind of heart-to-heart, grassroots exchange I so enjoyed during my visit to Lansing.

Vol. 23: Saturday School Open House in Battle Creek, MI

On Sunday, November 16th I visited the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, for the first time, to attend an Open House held by the Japanese Saturday School. It had been three years since the last time the school invited the community in to see the school and express appreciation for Battle Creek's kind hospitality.

The local school district lends part of their high school to the Japanese school so Japanese students living here for only a few years can continue their Japanese studies on Saturdays in addition to attending American public schools. The school was opened in 1984, funded by Japan's Ministry of Education. Currently seventy students are enrolled in grades K through 12. Yet, at its peak, over one hundred students attended each week. The principal is dispatched from Ministry of Education of Japan, but the teachers are local Japanese residents and students. Currently, based on the low enrollment numbers, it is uncertain how many more years they will be able to sustain the number of teachers and dispatched principal from Japan.

Battle Creek's newly elected mayor attended the Open House, with a warm message that he will continue to support the Saturday School and the Japanese community. Guests observed the teachers and students in their classrooms, and took part in traditional activities such as origami and calligraphy. They watched demonstrations of tea ceremony and traditional dance, and feasted on Japanese curry and rice for lunch. Teachers, parents, staff, students and community guests all truly enjoyed the Open House at the Japanese Saturday School.

In our jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio there are eight such Saturday Schools, with over 900



students enrolled. Of all the Japanese consulates around the world, this jurisdiction ranks 1st in Saturday School student enrollment. As in other countries, education is very important in Japan, as it trains and develops our children for the next generation.

Our Consulate General of Japan in Detroit is glad to cooperate with the schools, school districts, Japanese American societies and business associations in tackling any issues they may face.

Vol. 24: Emperor's Birthday Reception: Monday, November 18, 2013

On Nov. 18, 2013, a large group of around 200 people, including members of local and state Governments, businesses, as well as members of the Consular Corps, and the Japanese community gathered with me as I hosted the Emperor's Birthday Reception (EBR) at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Together we all celebrated His Royal Majesty's 80th Birthday.

There were reasons why we decided to hold the reception so early, though the Emperor's birthday is actually on December 23rd and we normally hold the EBR earlier in the month because it is so close to Christmas. However, in my 30 year career, this is the earliest EBR event that I can recall. In fact, perhaps it is one of the earliest EBRs in the world.

In principal, the EBR is normally hosted at the Official Residence, but this year we decided to use the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to accommodate the large number of guests. We also thought that it would be especially important to hold the event within the City of Detroit. Recently, the city has filed for bankruptcy, and will begin its course toward financial revival. It is of utmost importance to show our support for the city of Detroit and we think that Detroiters appreciated the Consulate's choice of venue as a warm gesture of friendship.

Surrounded by valuable works of art, the reception went by smoothly. The White Pine Glee Club performed moving and beautiful renditions of the US and Japanese national anthems. I had a good opportunity to interact with my new friends in the area, just 2 months after my arrival here. This year's EBR in the DIA was also a good chance to publicize about the upcoming "Samurai: Beyond the Sword" exhibit. The Consulate and many Japanese companies are fully supporting this exhibit, and we hope that our guests will be able to spread the word to their colleagues, friends, and family. The exhibit is from March 9th to June 1st, 2014 at the DIA.

As I was greeting the guests together with my wife, I thought to myself that the size of Michigan and Ohio combined is about the same as Japan. I realized that some guests traveled a great distance to attend the EBR. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all guests who took time from their busy schedules to attend.



Vol. 25: Niagara Falls

On the weekend of November 23rd and 24th, my wife and I went to Niagara Falls by car. For the sake of crisis management, if a consul general leaves the jurisdiction he or she must inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters in Tokyo in advance. When we decided to take the short trip I was sure to notify headquarters and asked my Deputy consul general to stay here while I enjoyed two days in Niagara Falls.

Here in the Midwest, we are entering the winter season and soon after we crossed the Canadian border the weather became hazardous. After about 30 minutes of driving, we were stuck in a very long traffic jam. Later, I realized that about 500 yards ahead of our car there had been a major accident which led to a 60 car pileup! We waited patiently in our car for about two hours for crews to clear the accident. As I saw the vehicles involved in the accident being towed away, I realized that rather than feeling

frustrated about being stuck in traffic for such a long time, I should feel very thankful that our vehicle was not involved in the crash. Quite fortunately, I was relieved to learn that despite the large pileup, no casualties were sustained. If you happen to drive in the wintertime, I humbly advise you to be extremely cautious, especially in hazardous conditions.

Finally, after quite an adventure getting there, we arrived in Niagara Falls. The Falls were truly magnificent. It was unfortunate, however, that due to the very cold and windy conditions, being outside was not very pleasant and I regretted that I could not spend more time outside enjoying the falls. I had actually visited Niagara Falls twice before, but both times were from the American side. This was my first time visiting the falls from the Canadian side, so I am quite pleased that I finally had this opportunity.



Vol. 26: Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport

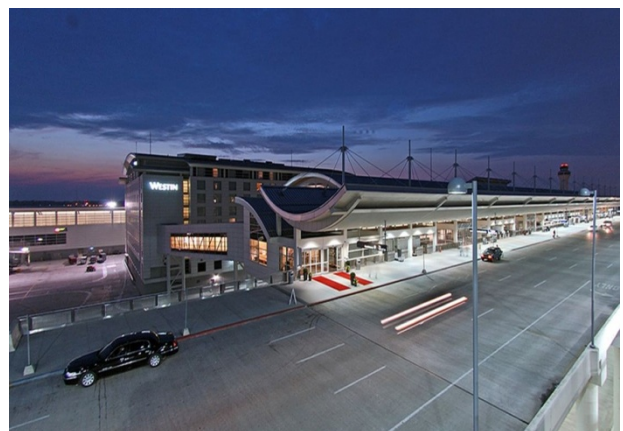
As mentioned in a previous entry, my arrival at the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport back in September left me with a great first impression of the region. I'd like to share a bit more detail on this fine facility—known by locals as Detroit Metro Airport, Metro Airport, or simply, DTW.

Located in the Detroit suburb of Romulus and operated by the Wayne County Airport Authority, DTW is one of the most-recently expanded and modernized airports in the U.S. It features six major runways, two terminals, 145 in-service gates and an on-site hotel and conference center. DTW occupies 2,900 hectares of land, hosts 443,000 landings/departures and services 32.2 million passengers annually (data as of 2009).

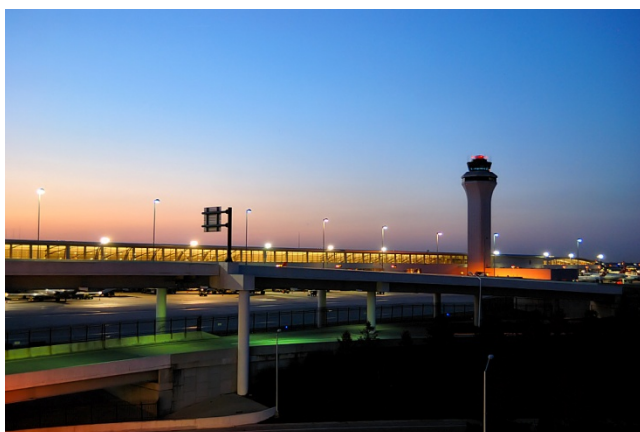
In comparison, Japan's main international airport, Narita, has just 2 runways, occupies only 940 hectares and about half of the annual landings/departures (209,000). Yet, Narita's passenger traffic is a comparable 32.8 million passengers annually.

As of 2009, DTW was the 16th-busiest airport in the U.S. (and 44th in the world) in terms of passenger traffic. About 80% of all planes flying in and out of DTW are operated by Delta Airlines. In fact, DTW is Delta's second-busiest hub, trailing only Atlanta's airport.

DTW's main terminal, known as the McNamara Terminal, was completed in 2002 and named after former Wayne County Executive, Mr. Ed McNamara. The terminal's one-mile long Concourse A is the world's second-longest airport terminal building. Known for its modern and open-air design, tall ceilings, wide corridors, "dancing water" fountain, Light Tunnel and overhead tram system, it receives rave customer reviews for not only its attractive architectural elements, but also for its ease of use, cleanliness, and abundance of interesting shops and eateries.



Japanese travelers are welcomed at DTW by public announcements and signage provided in the Japanese language. In fact, the airport serves as Delta's "Gateway to Asia", with frequent service to cities such as Narita, Nagoya, and Beijing.



The airline industry has faced various challenges in recent years and is gradually recovering. According to a recent *Detroit Free Press* article, since 2005, the number of DTW's domestic flights has actually declined 22%, and the number of seats sold dropped 27%, likely due to a less-than-robust Midwest economy.

My last post was in Brussels. Prior to my arrival there, Belgium's national carrier (Sabena) went bankrupt, the effects of which could still be felt ten years later. No direct flights to Tokyo were available. So, Japan-bound travelers had no choice but to connect through

cities such as Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich, or drive to Paris.

Thus, I feel fortunate to live here in Detroit with such well-established and convenient service to Japan. That said, I'm told by frequent travelers that, due to somewhat limited competition, ticket prices for those using DTW are relatively high, particularly for business travelers.

I feel there is great potential in this region to grow tourism, considering some very nice attractions not only in Detroit, the surrounding suburbs and beautiful northern Michigan, but also cities like Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Chicago, Toronto, Niagara, amongst others.

We cannot underestimate the value of an excellent, traveler-friendly facility like Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, towards the goal of attracting more visitors, including Japanese tourists.

Vol. 27: The Tokyo Olympics and Detroit

The December issue of the monthly Japanese magazine "WEDGE", carried a feature which mentioned that Tokyo and Detroit competed to host the 1964 Summer Olympics. This caught my attention, and I decided to look into the topic a little bit more.

Tokyo's history in the Olympics is well known. The city was selected to be the site of the Summer Olympics in 1940. Unfortunately, that year's games were a "phantom" Olympics, because they were ultimately cancelled due to the escalating tensions of the Sino-Japanese War and the Second World War. Japan would make its return to the Olympics 12 years later in 1952.



In 1959, the IOC General Assembly was held in Munich. There were four candidate host cities for the 1964 summer games: Tokyo, Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium) and Detroit. Vienna was facing slim chances of being selected, because another Austrian city, Innsbruck, already won the right to hold the 1964 winter Olympics at that very assembly. Brussels entered the competition only 6 months before the general assembly and was not well prepared to present itself as a candidate. Thus, Detroit was Tokyo's most formidable rival. When the results came in, Tokyo lead with 34 votes, followed by Detroit (10), Vienna (9) and Brussels (5). After the first round of voting, Tokyo became the first city in Japan and Asia to host the Olympics.

In light of the Olympic Games making their return to Tokyo for the first time in 56 years, the entire nation of Japan is starting to regain its vigor and dreams for the future. I sincerely hope that Detroit will successfully complete its restructuring, and will one day welcome an Olympic competition. ■

Vol. 28: Thanksgiving and Detroit Museums

The 28th of November was Thanksgiving Day. It had been snowing since the early morning, and the ground was covered in a blanket of snow. Thanksgiving is an annual holiday, celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. Many offices, organizations and non-retail establishments also take the following Friday off, resulting in a four-day holiday for many working people.

Thanksgiving, it is said, commemorates the first successful crop harvest by the Pilgrim Fathers in the New World after arriving in Plymouth from England in 1620. A traditional meal that families enjoy for Thanksgiving is turkey and gravy, with cranberry sauce and other side dishes. But, this year, I decided to save the turkey for Christmas dinner. I also decided to not to take part in the traditional day-after-Thanksgiving sales of Black Friday, which represents the kick-off of the Christmas shopping season. Instead, I enjoyed reuniting with an old American friend, and visiting some of the museums in the City of Detroit.

The first visit was to the Detroit Institute of Arts, or DIA. Actually, I had been there three times previously – once to greet the director, Mr. Graham Beal; then, for an on-site review of the setting to be used for the upcoming Emperor’s Birthday Reception; and, the third time, for the reception itself. But this was the first time to enjoy their magnificent collection of art. In addition to works by famous American artists, there are masterpieces by great artists of the world. The marble walls of the museum’s central court, where the Emperor’s Reception was held, are covered by an immense series of frescoes by the Mexican painter Diego Rivera. Works by Bruegel, Monet, Manet, van Gogh, Renoir, Degas, Modigliani, Picasso, to name a few, may also be found there. I am a bit concerned about the fate of these works as the Detroit undergoes the severe process of working out of their financial crisis and rebuilding their city.

Just across from the DIA is the Detroit Historical Museum, where visitors can learn about Detroit’s rich and fascinating history, from its early beginnings as a fur trading post through modern times. The exhibits chronicle the good times of city and its bad times. The museum’s gift shop offered many books on Detroit, and I managed to limit myself to two.

The final stop for the day was the Charles H Wright Museum of African American History. This museum has the largest permanent collection of African American culture in the world. One of the central exhibits is told through a series of dioramas beginning with life and culture in Africa, the often tragic crossing of the Atlantic and through the bondage of slavery. The severe conditions aboard the slave ships are evident in a replica on display. As I left the museum, I saw names displayed of companies who have donated financially to support the museum and was very happy to see the names of Japanese companies included in that list.



(Left Picture: Detroit Institute of Art (Courtesy of Michigan State University Press), Middle Picture: Detroit Historical Museum (Courtesy of Museum Home Page), Right Picture Charles H Wright Museum of African American History (Courtesy of “10 Things to Know About Visiting Detroit” <http://n4sa.com/arkiv/108320>)

Vol. 29: Detroit Bankruptcy

Since the City of Detroit’s petition for bankruptcy protection was filed on July 18, 2013, a series of public hearings were held in federal bankruptcy court, presided over by Judge Steven Rhodes. On December 3rd, Judge Rhodes ruled that the city did indeed meet eligibility requirements under Chapter 9 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, and thus permitted Detroit to enter into the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. The case will not only have significant impact on over 100,000 of Detroit’s creditors as well as valuable city-owned assets, but could also serve as a landmark precedent for other fiscally challenged U.S. municipalities.

One somewhat unexpected aspect of Judge Rhodes’ ruling was his particular decision regarding pensions. Although labor unions representing Detroit pensioners claimed that civil servants’ pensions are

guaranteed protection under Michigan's Constitution, Judge Rhodes concluded that pensions are actually a type of contractual agreement. As such, according to the federal law, these pensions are actually subject to impairment, according to the judge's opinion. While this particular portion of Judge Rhodes' ruling will be vigorously appealed—perhaps to the highest U.S. courts—the fundamental direction of the case has been set and the bankruptcy proceedings will continue in the meantime.

By early January, Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr will submit his "Plan of Adjustment." (This is a legal term for the bankruptcy emergence strategy, which will outline the cuts Mr. Orr plans for creditors, as well as how the city is to operate post-bankruptcy.) If this plan is ultimately approved by Judge Rhodes, and Detroit's finances are sufficiently restructured and stabilized, it is hoped that Detroit could emerge from bankruptcy protection by September of 2014.

Gov. Rick Snyder responded to the eligibility ruling quite positively. Although his decision to authorize the city's bankruptcy petition was most difficult, he stated that it was the last viable option to revive the city and provide residents with improved public services.

On a personal note, in addition to the fate of the city's pensioners, I am concerned about the future of the DIA's collection—one the best in the U.S. I sincerely hope that before my term ends as consul general, Governor Snyder's optimism will indeed be well-founded, and that we might all witness the beginning of an enduring renaissance in Detroit.

Vol. 30: JBSD Foundation Grant Awards Ceremony

On December 5th, I had the pleasure of attending the JBSD (Japan Business Society of Detroit) Foundation Grant Awards Ceremony in Novi. Through its grants, the JBSD Foundation helps to financially support the activities of about 40 local organizations each year. Since it was founded in 1991, the JBSD Foundation has awarded a total of over 1.7 million U.S. dollars to organizations located in the Detroit metropolitan area and throughout the state of Michigan. In addition, the Foundation also provides scholarships to American high school and university students for studying in Japan. Since the year 2000, more than 120 students have been awarded these generous scholarships.

At the JBSD Foundation Grant Awards Ceremony, I was so pleased to witness around 50 cultural, educational, artistic, civic and charitable organizations receiving financial support through the Foundation grant awards. During the ceremony, representatives from recipient organizations gave an overview of their activities and were then awarded their grants which ranged from about \$1,000 to several thousands of dollars.

I believe that awarding such grants is of great importance and significance in terms of promoting U.S.-Japan relations. I learned that the activities and outreach conducted by these award recipients are very meaningful because they promote mutual understanding between our two countries and help local American people feel closer to the Japanese community here and to Japan itself.

I would like to express my great respect to the JBSD Foundation for its long term and steady social contributions to the local area. I am very happy to support the Foundation and help expand its network of grant recipients in any way possible. I also hope to assist in strengthening the ties between grant recipient organizations and the local Japanese community.

(Pictures: JBSD)



On December 7, 2013 I visited Detroit Ringo Kai, the Japanese Saturday School. The school was founded in 1973 for the children of Japanese expatriates working for their companies' Detroit area offices. To assist the children in keeping up with their classmates in Japan, Japanese courses were taught on Saturday. Eventually a principal and vice principal were sent by Japan's government to oversee the children's education. Today there are about 90 locally employed teachers at the school and 860 students: 149 in kindergarten, 570 in elementary grades, 110 junior high students and 31 high school students. This is the second largest Japanese Saturday School in the world, behind only the school in New York.

As the Consul General is the honorary chairman of Ringo Kai, at first I received briefings from the school's board president, the principal and other staff members and then toured the building and visited various classrooms. Since the end of the year was approaching, the kindergarten classes were having fun making *mochi* (Japanese rice cakes) by pounding rice flour and water into a smooth, sticky dough with a huge mallet. They kindly let me join in their fun as well. In the higher grades I was a bit surprised to discover they were studying such difficult subjects. I wondered if I, too, studied such subjects at their age. These students attend the American local public schools during the week and the Japanese school on Saturday. As they grow older the burden becomes heavier, physically and mentally. There is much preparation before class and studying afterward. But I believe in the future they will be thankful for having had such a great experience.

The Japanese Saturday School holds its classes in a local elementary school which they rent. Some spaces are designated for the Japanese school only, but classrooms, corridors, restrooms, etc. are shared with the school. Each Saturday morning teachers, parents and other volunteers hang signs, arrange tables and chairs, display students' work, and set up classrooms before the students arrive. Later, everything is returned to its original position at the end of the day. Parents take turns each week monitoring the halls and doors, and registering guests. I was only there for two hours, but those two hours fully convinced me that the functioning of the Saturday School here is only possible with the complete understanding and assistance of local residents, staff, parents and school board members. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to those who provide this great support to Ringo Kai.

As with other Japanese Saturday Schools, challenges do exist. A major issue the school faces is maintaining a sufficient number of qualified teachers, as many experienced staff return to Japan within a few years. The Japanese school in Battle Creek expressed the same concern on my recent visit to them. In addition to teaching, the staff must be able to advise and counsel students. At the time Japanese students enter high school they must decide whether they will attend a university in Japan or in the U.S. Their high school education is directly affected by this decision, as the needs for each path differ. Also, students living here temporarily and students who are Japanese permanent residents in the U.S. have different expectations from the school. Teachers must be able to meet these needs and expectations.

Our office will continue to work closely with Ringo Kai to further improve its administration.



(Pictures: Japanese School of Detroit)



Vol. 32: Visit to Findlay, Ohio

On December 9th, I had the opportunity to visit the City of Findlay, Ohio which is about a 2 hour drive south of Detroit. When I first arrived, I attended a luncheon meeting hosted by the Findlay Rotary Club where I gave a guest lecture to an audience of 150 people about U.S.-Japan relations and the rise of China. Although China's investment in Ohio is not so sizeable when compared with Japan's, local American companies' investment to China as well as their exports are increasing, so the audience very intently listened to my lecture.

In the afternoon, Mayor Mihalik kindly accompanied me and showed me around Findlay. I was so pleased to see the cherry trees which were planted in Riverside Park last year to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the founding of Findlay as well as the 100 year anniversary of the first gift of cherry trees from Japan to the United States. Later, we visited the Marathon Oil Company which is the largest company in Findlay and also a Fortune 500 company.

After bidding Mayor Mihalik farewell, I then head to the University of Findlay where I once again had the pleasure of seeing the President of the University, Dr. Katherine Fell, who I had met in Tokyo this past September. The University of Findlay is a Christian Liberal Arts College founded in 1882 and there are about 30 students who currently study Japanese language there. In addition, students from Saitama and Fukui Prefectures in Japan also attend classes at the University of Findlay each year. Upon my arrival, an American student named Mike welcomed me in Japanese. Mike spent some time studying at Kibi International University in Okayama, Japan and I was truly amazed by his excellent Japanese! I also had a chance to enjoy speaking with professors and students and to learn more about the University.

In the evening, I visited a Japanese company called Nisshin Brake which is the largest Japanese company in the city, employing around 1,000 local people. As a matter of fact, it also boasts an internship program for Japanese students who are studying at the University of Findlay. Finally, I attended a dinner meeting with the Friends of Findlay—a group of Japanese company representatives from the local area. We discussed various issues including life in Findlay for Japanese residents as well as conducting business in Ohio.

The population of Findlay is slightly more than 40,000, but in a sense, it has a small town feel. The close link and relationships between the mayor, city government officials, university faculty and representatives from Japanese companies were truly impressive to me. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Kawamura from the University of Findlay for arranging my visit to Findlay. I learned a lot and really enjoyed meeting so many people during my visit.



(Pictures: Findlay University)

Vol. 33: Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario Annual Holiday Dinner

On December 11th my wife and I attended a holiday dinner hosted by the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario. The party was held at Meadow Brook Hall - the former residence of Matilda Dodge Wilson, widow of the cofounder of the Dodge Motor Car Company. She built the house between 1926 and 1929 for nearly \$4M. The Tudor-style mansion has 110 rooms, many of which were beautifully decorated for the Christmas season as if it was like being in a fairytale.

Meadow Brook is located on the campus of Oakland University, which was also founded by Mrs. Wilson. We spent a wonderful evening there with friends, looking back on the year and enjoying the songs of Christmas sung by the White Pine Glee Club. In November, the Society kindly hosted a welcome reception for us in another magnificent, historic home - the Freer House in Detroit. These carefully-selected venues, among others, provide fascinating backdrops to the events of the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario.

JASMSO has about 70 member companies, and is chaired by Mr. Chuck Little, President and COO of INOAC USA, Inc. The Consul General of Canada and I, together, serve as Honorary Co-chairs. There are 38 Japan America Societies in the United States - 3 of which are in our jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio. In addition to JASMSO, in Ohio there are the JAS of Greater Cincinnati and the JAS of Central Ohio. Each society plays a very important role in promoting grassroots level of business and cultural exchanges between Japan and the U.S. by raising financial support from various business and individual donors.

Already, in the short 2.5 months since my arrival, I have attended various activities organized by the Japan America Societies, including a holiday dinner and a welcome party by JASMSO, the 25th Anniversary Gala by JAS of Greater Cincinnati and an economic seminar by JAS of Central Ohio. I am very happy to strengthen our cooperation with the Japan America Societies in their respective regions, which provide very strong support of US-Japan exchanges.



(Picture: Meadowbrook Hall (Courtesy of Oakland University))

Vol. 34: The Appointment of Honorary Consul, Dr. Santa Ono

After completing the necessary internal procedures through both the U.S. and Japanese governments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan appointed Dr. Santa Ono, President of the University of Cincinnati, as Honorary Consul of Japan in Cincinnati (with statewide jurisdiction) on December 16th.

Our office's jurisdiction covers both Michigan and Ohio and I, myself, do my best to visit various cities in Ohio as often as possible. But because our office is situated in Detroit, we regularly invite a prestigious American citizen residing in the State of Ohio to serve as honorary consul. The honorary consul provides our office great support for promoting cultural, educational and economic exchange between Japan and the State of Ohio. However, the honorary consul does not issue passports or visas.

The State of Ohio has a very close relationship with Japan with more than 12,000 Japanese nationals residing in the state. Japan is the leading foreign investor in Ohio boasting about 420 Japanese facilities which have created more than 66,000 local job opportunities. In addition, there are five Japanese Saturday schools and 26 colleges and universities that offer Japanese language courses with more than 2,500 students enrolled in Japanese.

President Ono, who was appointed President of the University of Cincinnati last year, was born in Vancouver, Canada and is a distinguished scholar in the field of medicine.

The University of Cincinnati's hospital is famous for its high level of medical research and technology and is ranked among the top 10 university hospitals in the country. President Ono, one of the few Japanese American university presidents in the United States, is also actively involved in the activities of the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati. He is known for communicating regularly with the community through his very active accounts on Facebook and Twitter. As a matter of fact, I've heard that he is extremely popular among University of Cincinnati students! I am truly delighted to have such a wonderful individual serve as Honorary Consul of Japan in Cincinnati and am very much looking forward to working closely with President Ono in the future.



*(Picture: Dr. Santa Ono
Honorary Consul of Japan in Cincinnati for the State of Ohio
(Courtesy of Cincinnati University))*

Vol. 35: Detroit Sports

The four major professional sports leagues and associations in the United States include the MLB, the NFL, the NBA and the NHL (baseball, football, basketball and hockey). Besides baseball which is currently off season, I had the opportunity to watch the other three sports back in December. Detroit is a very convenient location for sports fans since it boasts all four professional teams right here in the area. Other than the Detroit Pistons who are located in the suburb of Auburn Hills, the Tigers, the Red Wings and the Lions are all located right in downtown Detroit.

On December 14th, I went to Joe Louis Arena to watch the Detroit Red Wings play the Pittsburgh Penguins. There are 30 teams in the NHL, 7 of which are Canadian teams. However, I heard that half the NHL players are actually Canadians, so I realized that ice hockey is a very popular sport in Canada. The Detroit Red Wings are a strong team and have been the Stanley Cup Champions 10 different times! Regrettably, that day, the Red Wings lost the game 4-1.

On December 16th, I went to Ford Field in downtown Detroit to watch the Lions take on the Baltimore Ravens in "Monday Night Football." Each football game has an average of 67,000 people in attendance. Football is quite a strenuous sport and each football team only plays 16 games throughout the entire season. Despite the relatively small number of games, 8 out of 10 of the most watched televised programs in 2012 happened to be football games. The NFL is so popular among Americans that it is not always easy to obtain tickets. Fortunately, the former Mayor of Detroit and former President of the Japan American Society, Mr. Dennis Archer, kindly invited my wife and I to be his guests at this special Monday night football game. It was snowing outside, but the field was covered so watching the game was very comfortable. To be honest, before this game, I was not very familiar with the rules of American football, so I bought a book ahead of time which explained the rules. That way, I could better follow the game. The stadium was truly a sea of blue since most Lions fans wore blue that evening. This was a very close game, but in the end, the Ravens (last year's Super Bowl champions) scored a touchdown and unfortunately, the Lions ended up losing 18-16. I understand that the Lions have not yet won a Super Bowl but I am rooting for them and sincerely hope that during my time in Detroit, I will have the opportunity to witness the Lions become the Super Bowl champions!

On December 21st, I went to the Palace of Auburn Hills to watch the Pistons take on the Houston Rockets. The Pistons have a long history here in Detroit and have been the NBA champions on three different occasions. Unfortunately, that day, the Pistons lost to the Rockets 114-97.

Well, all three games that week were a bit frustrating since Detroit did not win, but I did enjoy having the opportunity to watch such exciting and dynamic sports games. After watching professional football, hockey and basketball, I got the impression that (unlike baseball) it might be quite difficult for Japanese teams to compete with American teams in these sports.

(Left Picture: Red Wings,
Middle Picture: Lions,
Right Picture: Pistons)



Vol. 36: Graeter's Ice Cream

A friend of mine in Cincinnati kindly sent me a package of Graeter's Ice Cream as a Christmas present. Though not as well-known as Haagen Dazs or Baskin Robbins, it is very popular in the greater Cincinnati area. The local residents never neglect to recommend Graeter's to people visiting their city. It is said that more than three thousand years ago the Chinese made treats using snow, ice and syrup and the method was later introduced to Italy through Marco Polo. Ice cream that we enjoy today was likely to be derived from this. In Japan, ice cream was first sold in Yokohama in 1869.

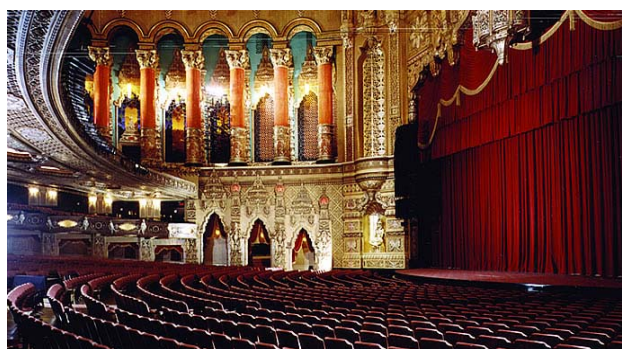
The Graeter family began selling ice cream in Cincinnati in 1870. To this date, the company continues to be owned and run by the Graeter family – now in its fourth generation. Including 14 shops in the City of Cincinnati, as of 2010 there are a total of 45 of the quaint Graeter's ice cream parlors in the region. The company uses a special "French Pot" Process, creating only small quantities of ice cream at a time. The taste is very thick and delicious. Among their many flavors I especially like Black Raspberry Chocolate Chip, which is the most popular of their standard flavors.

Various celebrities, such as Sarah Jessica Parker, George Clooney and Kevin Costner are also great fans of Graeter's. I highly recommend that you try Graeter's ice cream if you have the chance to visit Cincinnati area.



(Picture: Graeter's Black Raspberry Chocolate Chip Ice Cream)

Vol. 37: The Ballet and Fox Theatre



(Right Picture: Fox Theatre Interior)

Left Picture: Fox Theatre Exterior

(Courtesy of <http://www.broadway.org>)

Before Christmas, on the 22nd, I visited the Fox Theatre in Detroit's city center, where I enjoyed the Great Russian Nutcracker performed by the Moscow Ballet Company. Local children were also selected to join the stage performance. It was a ballet both adults and young people could enjoy very much.

Surprisingly, even after the curtains were opened there were still members of the audience who were not yet seated. They continued to enter in the darkness and it took some time for the audience to be settled.

The Fox Theatre began operations in 1928, one year prior to the Great Depression, as a flagship movie house for the Fox Theatres. Years of wear led to a complete restoration in 1988, and the following year it was designated a National Historic Landmark. The area surrounding the Fox is called Foxtown after the theatre. The theatre seats over 5000 and is the largest existing theatre of that era.

The City of Detroit could greatly benefit from such remarkable venues. Increased cultural and entertainment programs would draw more arts patrons to the city. The power of culture is an essential part of a city's attraction.

Vol. 38: Eastern Market

For the New Year's holiday, I decided to stay at home in my quiet suburb of Detroit, Michigan. After considering how best to spend the holiday, I decided to spend some time sightseeing and visiting area attractions that I had not yet had the opportunity to see since arriving in Michigan three months before. So, on Saturday, December 28th (the last Saturday of 2013) I paid a visit to Eastern Market, situated east of downtown Detroit. As it was my very first visit to this area, I was a bit concerned since the neighborhood was unfamiliar to me. Upon arriving at Eastern Market however, I was quite glad to see numerous people walking along the streets as well as many cars parked along the side of the road.

Eastern Market became a farmer's market back in 1891 and has a long history here in Detroit. As a matter of fact, it is one of the largest markets of its kind in the United States, measuring nearly 12,000 square yards. Eastern Market boasts all kinds of goods including: vegetables, fruit, fresh meats, flowers, bread, jams, cheeses, artisan wines and even antiques. There are also several well-known restaurants nearby. Overall, the prices were quite reasonable.

There are around 250 shops in the market and I've heard that tens of thousands of people gather there on Saturdays. The day I visited, I saw quite a number of visitors there, but due to the cold, the outdoor shops were not running at that time. The shops inside the building were not too crowded either.

After spending the day at Eastern Market, I truly felt that if this area were redeveloped along with neighboring areas, Eastern Market and its surroundings could really be a top sightseeing destination which would attract people from all over.



(Courtesy of [Move to Detroit.org](http://Move.to.Detroit.org))

Vol. 39: Casinos in Detroit

There are three casinos in Detroit: the MGM Grand Detroit, the Greektown Casino Hotel and the MotorCity Casino Hotel. I, myself, am not particularly interested in casinos but decided to look into area casinos a bit. According to various sources, the bill which legalized the opening of casinos in Detroit passed the Michigan State Congress in 1996, with the first casino in Detroit opening in 1999. According to news reports, the City of Detroit gains \$11 million in tax revenue generated by these casinos every month. From the window of my office, I see the City of Windsor, Canada, across the Detroit River. Windsor is also known for its casino.

There are more than 120 countries around the world in which casinos are legal. In the United States, casinos were first legalized in the State of Nevada back in 1931. Now, there are 36 states (including those with Native American-run casinos) in which casinos are legal. When one thinks of casinos, Las Vegas immediately comes to mind. If you examine current sales statistics however, Macao is now #1 in the world for casino revenue. According to the latest figures from the Government of Macao, casino revenue in 2013 was more than \$47 billion, an 18.6% increase from the previous year. Macao has been boasting double digit increases for the past four consecutive years and it is estimated that Macao's casino revenue is 7 times that of Las Vegas. Singapore (which legalized casinos in 2010) is the city which boasts the #2 casino revenue in the world. Las Vegas comes in third.

So, it would seem that the trend in the world casino market is shifting towards Asia. As a matter of fact, given the upcoming 2020 Olympics and Paralympics which will take place in Tokyo, there is now

a movement to legalize casinos in Japan. I wonder if Japan will follow the current trends in Asia and eventually legalize casinos as well.

Vol. 40: College Football

Part of the New Year's festivities in the States includes several big college football games which mark the close of the season and culminate in the crowing of a national champion. It's also the time when the NFL playoffs begin, a double treat for football fans.

As sub-freezing temperatures and heavy snow made it difficult to travel or sightsee locally, I decided to stay put and catch some of the college football games on television.

In years past, four major "bowls" (Rose, Sugar, Fiesta, and Orange) were designated as Bowl Championship Series (BCS) games, with the championship game rotating to one of these venues every four years. More recently, the BCS national championship game has been independently held, featuring the top two ranked teams, in order to determine the national collegiate champion. Other highly ranked teams, including various conference champions, face-off in these four traditional bowl games.

Within the consulate's jurisdiction states of Michigan and Ohio, two universities were represented in these popular games: The Michigan State University Spartans (vs. Stanford University) in the Rose Bowl on January 1, 2014 in Pasadena, California; and The Ohio State University Buckeyes (vs. Clemson University, located in South Carolina) in the Orange Bowl on January 3, 2014 in Miami, Florida.

Having attended Stanford for a six-week summer term 28 years ago and taken up residence in a jam-packed student dormitory there, many fond memories came to mind. Considering my current post, however, my allegiances were definitely with the Spartans. And the "Green and White" didn't disappoint, claiming an exciting 24-20 victory. It was a great way to start the New Year!

Upon my November visit to Columbus, I took in the impressive 100,000-seat capacity Ohio Stadium (nicknamed "The Horseshoe") and really look forward to catching a game there someday.

In the Orange Bowl, the Buckeyes unfortunately came up a little short against Clemson, 40-35, but it was very hard-fought, seesaw game.

As for the BCS championship game on January 6th, which featured the top-ranked University of Florida Gators vs. the second-ranked University of Auburn Tigers, the Gators prevailed in an excellent and historic match-up, 34-31, and captured the national championship.

Vol. 41: Local Asian American Organization Exchange

On Wednesday, January 15th I hosted a dinner for representatives of various local Asian American organizations. Specifically, members of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPPAC), Council of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA), Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC), Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote Michigan (APIA) and the Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) attended with their spouses. Approximately thirty guests in all enjoyed a variety of Japanese dishes and drinks. I enjoyed many warm conversations with various groups expressing their desire to work together with the Japanese community, furthering relationships and possibly collaborating on projects.

In 1982 there was a tragic murder case in which a Chinese American, who was celebrating his upcoming marriage, was mistaken as Japanese and severely beaten by vengeful, laid-off autoworkers. It was a difficult time of escalating trade friction between the US and Japan. Unlike today, most of the Japanese auto companies did not have plants in the US. The trade and investment structure differed, in that Japanese cars were imported from Japan and not produced here. Today Japanese cars are manufactured in the United States predominantly by Americans.

Vincent Chin died from the injuries, and the subsequent court case raised the issue of hate crimes against Asian Americans as a whole and the realization of the need to fight for their civil rights. Asian-Americans, including Japanese-Americans, are American, with issues and interests that are distinctly American. Yet as a citizen of an Asian country I sincerely respect the tremendous contributions Asian Americans have made in the United States and feel certain that there are common challenges which we can work on together to overcome. Learning the history of Asian Pacific Americans and enhancing further cooperation and exchange will be of great benefit to both the Japanese and Asian American communities. I believe one of the roles of the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit is to help bridge our

communities and strengthen our networks.

Recently, the tension among nations in East Asia has unfortunately been rising over some political matters such as territories and the recognition of historical issues. But here in the US, I sincerely hope for increased collaborations and enriched relationships among the Asian Pacific related communities.

Vol. 42: 2014 North American International Auto Show

This year's North American International Auto Show (abbreviated as NAIAS and also known as the Detroit Auto Show) was held in downtown's recently renovated Cobo Center from January 13th-26th.

The NAIAS is considered to be one of the world's top-three shows, along with those in Frankfurt, Tokyo, or a top-five show if Paris and Geneva are included. And, as China is now the world's largest market for vehicle sales (22 million units sold there in 2013), its Shanghai and Beijing shows have also grown in importance.

This year marked the 25th Anniversary of the NAIAS. Although the Motor City has hosted an annual show for much of the past century, the event did not become "The North American International Auto Show" until 1989, the year that Toyota and Nissan introduced their Lexus and Infiniti luxury cars respectively to the U.S. market.

The hallmarks of the Detroit show are its numerous vehicle unveilings and huge global media contingent. In fact, this year there were 50 vehicle introductions and over 5,000 journalists covering them!

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the media and industry preview days, as well the Charity Preview Gala. I took in the displays of the Japanese OEMs and suppliers, including: Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Mazda, Subaru, Denso, Aisin, and Panasonic.

I had the chance to see Toyota's FT-1, the Honda Fit (North America production version) and Infiniti's Q50 Eau Rouge concept. Viewing such cool vehicles brought back memories of my childhood days of dreaming about cars.

It is not unusual for the Detroit Show to also attract high-ranking governmental officials and this year was no different. In fact, federal level visitors included Vice President Biden, Commerce Secretary Pritzker, Transportation Secretary Foxx, Labor Secretary Perez and Environmental Protection Agency Director McCarthy.

Representing the state of Michigan were several members of its congressional delegation along with Governor Snyder; Ohio's Governor Kasich; County Executives Patterson (Oakland); Ficano (Wayne); and Hackel (Macomb); as well as the recently elected Detroit Mayor, Mike Duggan.

I had the chance to chat with several of these leaders and also attended VP Biden's speech. The vice president's message was that it's again time for the U.S. to be a world leader in manufacturing, particularly, automotive manufacturing. VP Biden has a special affinity for the auto industry, as his father was a manager of a GM dealership.



Governor Snyder kindly visited the displays of several Japanese companies and even held a press conference at the Denso booth. I asked for the governor's continued support of the Japanese firms here.

I was encouraged by his reply: his strong support is a given, and he appreciates Japan's presence in the state of Michigan. Oakland County Executive, L. Brooks Patterson, whose county enjoys the largest concentration of Japanese investment, also reaffirmed his hope to further strengthen the region's deep ties with Japan.

In conversations with other dignitaries, such as Commerce Secretary Pritzker and Mayor Duggan, I emphasized that Japan is one of only a few countries with a Consulate General office in Detroit, an indication of Japan's commitment to build relations in the region. My comments seemed to be very well received.

I came away from the show with an optimistic sense that U.S. auto industry continues its strong recovery. And as for the show itself, which had over 800,000 attendees and a reported economic impact of \$365 million, it is hugely important and symbolic event for Detroit, which is enjoying a comeback of its own!

Vol. 43: A Young Japanese Pianist

On January 18 I was invited to a piano concert held in a Protestant church near my residence. The pianist was 9-year-old Naomi Yamaguchi, a Japanese girl born here in Michigan. Naomi is extremely talented and has received numerous awards, not only for her exceptional ability to play, but also for compositions that she personally wrote. Actually, this concert was her solo debut. She performed works by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Debussy, Haydn and Chopin, as well as her own work and a duet with her teacher Catherine Rollin.



According to one of the church members, rarely are the pews filled, even for Sunday Services. But Naomi's concert not only was the sanctuary filled with people, but the balcony as well. I wish Naomi, with her charming smile, great success as she continues to develop her art. It was a true delight to discover such a grassroots US-Japan exchange occurring in this local area. Little diplomat Naomi, good luck!

Vol. 44: Shinnenkai

This past January, I had the pleasure of attending several local Japanese associations' New Year's parties in both Michigan and Ohio. I went to Battle Creek on January 11th, to Cleveland on the 12th, to Toledo on the 19th and to Dublin on the 24th. In addition, I also had the opportunity to attend the Japan American Society of Greater Cincinnati's New Year's party on the 23rd, followed by the Japan Business Society of Detroit's party on the 26th. It was quite a whirlwind, but I enjoyed having the opportunity to visit so many different places.

I heard that Michigan has experienced the coldest winter in 20 years, but despite this, I very much enjoyed welcoming the New Year along with local Japanese residents. We tasted traditional Japanese New Year's cuisine catered by Japanese restaurants along with some homemade dishes as well. We also had the opportunity to take part in some games and enjoy performances such as taiko drums and Japanese traditional dancing all whilst wishing for a prosperous new year.

These days, thanks to many advances in technology, we can now watch Japanese TV programs on Japanese cable TV, we can easily get information about Japan on the internet and we can be in Japan in just 13 short hours thanks to the direct flights from Detroit. In spite of the world becoming increasingly smaller, there is something inspirational about welcoming the New Year in a traditional Japanese manner along with other Japanese people whilst living overseas. For me, this is the 8th consecutive year I have celebrated New Year's overseas, but I always enjoy ringing in the New Year in somewhat of a traditional Japanese manner, enjoying shinnenkai (New Year's parties).

I also realized that here in Michigan and Ohio, each Japanese association is different from the other, whether in terms of size, finances, or even the challenges they face. I have noticed however, that the

activities put on by these associations are very strongly supported by local volunteers and Japanese companies. I also found that there are permanent Japanese residents who have lived in the area for 20, 30, or even more than 50 years who truly serve as the backbone for these organizations. Through the years, they have helped immensely when it comes to bringing Japanese investment to Michigan and Ohio.

2014 is the Year of the Horse and I sincerely hope that it will be a great one for everyone. As Consul General of Japan, I would like to help Americans realize that Japan is truly their reliable partner and friend. I would also like to let the Japanese people living in Michigan and Ohio know that our office, the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit, is here for you and we will do our best to provide you with the most excellent of service.

Vol. 45: Symposium Hosted by the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati

On January 23rd, The Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati hosted a symposium entitled "Japan in Mid-America: Renewal, Challenges, and Opportunities," at the University of Cincinnati. I attended as a speaker. In my speech, I looked back on the history of US-Japan economic relations, including trade friction and "Japan bashing" stemming from the introduction of Japanese exports to the US in the 70's and 80's, the Japanese vehicle and automotive component makers' strategic change from exports to investment, and the current situation in which Japanese companies have become regional job creators in the Midwest (423 facilities providing over 66,000 job opportunities in the state of Ohio). I added that we should not take this success for granted and stressed that the effort of both sides is needed for the continuation and further development of US-Japan relations.

In this symposium, there were other speakers, all of whom were experts in their fields: Chairman of the National Association of Japan-America Societies and Former U.S. Trade Representative Ira Shapiro; President and Founder of the Economic Strategy Institute Clyde Prestowitz (a familiar voice during the Japan bashing days); former Ohio Governor Bob Taft (a descendant of William Taft, 27th US President); Senior Advisor and former President of Mitsui Sumitomo Marine Takeo Iguchi; VP of Accounting and Finance at Toyota Charles Brown; and Lawyer Mikio Nishizu. The recently appointed Honorary Consul of Japan in Cincinnati and President of the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Santa Ono, was also in attendance. There were so many interesting speakers gathered under the same roof, but regrettably only a short amount of time. Nevertheless, I enjoyed listening to the talks that were filled with insight for the future of Japan-US Midwest relations.

Vol. 46: A Day in Dayton

On January 24th, while on a business trip to Ohio, I stopped by the city of Dayton. Dayton is located in the western part of the state and has a population of over 140,000. It is the hometown of the famous Wright brothers (although, their first successful manned flight actually took place in Kitty Hawk, N.C. in 1903). Dayton is also home to the Wright Patterson Air Force Base, where the 1995 Dayton Accord was signed, resulting in the cease fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I enjoyed conversations over lunch with several of Dayton's leaders including representatives from the local government, the chamber of commerce and the Japanese Association. We were honored to be joined by former-Ohio Governor, Mr. Bob Taft, who serves as the honorary chairman of Dayton's "Operation 1000 Cherry Trees." All of these leaders play important roles in the cherry tree plantings. Mr. Taft (the great grandson of President William Howard Taft) and his family have a long-held and close bond with Japan and a tradition of planting Japanese cherry trees in the U.S., most famously, along the Tidal Basin in Washington D.C.

Later that afternoon, I visited the site on base where the cherry trees have been planted and later stopped by the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The Museum, the world's oldest and largest museum of military aviation, is the depository for the Air Force's National Historical Collection and features more than 400 U.S. and foreign aerospace vehicles. With over one million visitors each year, the museum is the most visited free tourist destination in Ohio and one of the most visited in the country. I was impressed by the variety of large and small aircraft on display in its three huge hangars, including a Japanese Zero and Sindenai.

Also on display is the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb (code-named, "Fat Man") on Nagasaki. Seeing this in person weighed heavily on my heart. Yet, I was reminded of the long history of US-Japan

relations, from Commodore Perry's late-19th century landing on the shores of Japan, through our various ordeals and challenges, to our mutual exchanges, partnerships and collaborations, all of which have culminated in the establishment of the strong alliance and lasting friendship of today.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my great thanks to Mr. Alex Hara of the Japanese Association of Ohio (JAOH) for kindly arranging a most interesting visit.



For more information on “Operation 1000 Cherry Trees”: <http://en.operation1000cherrytrees.com/>

Vol. 47: Patrick Lafcadio Hearn

Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (also known as Koizumi Yakumo) is famous among Japanese people as being a pioneer when it comes to introducing Japanese culture to people abroad. He wrote a series of books including a very famous story about Miminashi Hoichi or The Boy Without Ears.

Hearn was born in modern day Greece in 1850 from an Irish father and a Greek mother. He journeyed to Japan as a journalist and later married a Japanese woman and lived in such cities as Matsue, Kumamoto, Kobe and Tokyo. He was engaged in English language education while also writing articles about Japanese culture. While in Japan, he was eventually naturalized as a Japanese citizen and passed away in Tokyo in 1904, the year which marked the beginning of the Russo-Japan War.

There is a reason for me, as Consul General of Japan in Detroit, to write about Lafcadio Hearn. In 1869, before he went to Japan, Hearn left Europe for the United States and worked as a journalist for the Cincinnati Enquirer for 8 years. In this sense, he can truly be considered one of the first links between Japan and Ohio.

I recently read his book, entitled *Kokoro*, which he wrote in 1896. *Kokoro* delves into the Japanese way of life, the heart and mind of Japanese women and also the Japanese reaction to Western Civilization following the victory of the first Sino-Japanese War. Hearn's perspective was quite interesting and remains relevant to this day.

I would like to introduce to you a few interesting aspects of Hearn's writings that are quite impressive to me. At the time, Japan was learning quite a bit about Western technology and was beginning to produce its own high-quality products. Hearn's friend asked him about the fate of such products and what would happen if China learned the same technology and was able to start taking over the production of such products in the international market. When asked, Hearn replied that China could perhaps become successful in the sector of inexpensive products. However, he felt that Japanese high-quality products and high standards of technology would not be strongly affected by Chinese competition because Japan would continue to produce excellent products that people around the world would still purchase, even if they were more expensive.

In addition, after the victory of the first Sino-Japanese War, it was Hearn's view that Japan should not be lulled into a false sense of confidence. While winning this war was a great achievement for the Japanese and it was quite normal to become confident about a bright future ahead, Hearn wrote that

Japan's true danger was, in fact, becoming overly confident. Although there are several critiques about Hearn's Japanese language ability as well as his view of Japanese society, I could accurately see through his writing how sharply Hearn observed Japanese society at the time.

If you would like to learn more about Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, I encourage you to visit our Consulate's website which highlights unique connections between Ohio and Japan in our "Ohio Connections" section:

<http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/bilateral/Ohio/OHhearn.htm>

Vol. 48: *My Life in Gambier* by Junzo Shouno

Junzo Shouno is a famous Japanese writer who wrote a book entitled *My Life in Gambier, Ohio*. Gambier is a small town in Ohio located about one hour northeast of Columbus. I have not yet had the pleasure of visiting this town, but in 1957, Junzo Shono and his family lived there for about 1 year, from the fall of 1957 until the following summer. Shono is a recipient of the Akutagawa Award, the most famous literature award in Japan (similar to the Pulitzer Prize) for his 1955 book entitled *A Small Poolside Scene*.

Shono came to the United States with his family to study abroad at Kenyon College thanks to an invitation from the Rockefeller Foundation. At that time, Japan was just emerging from the 10 year post-war reconstruction period and the Japanese economy was finally starting to get back on its feet and entering its new phase of economic growth. Japanese people were still restricted from traveling abroad, except for official purposes. One can only imagine that Shono's experience in small town Ohio must have been quite unique back in the 1950's.

Shono wrote about Gambier in his book entitled *Gambier Taizaiki* or *My Life in Gambier* which was first published in 1959 by the Chuo Koron Publishing Company. The town of Gambier is a small college town, home to prestigious Kenyon College. At that time, the population was only 600 and there were about 200 houses in the entire city. I imagine this was the first time a Japanese family lived in this small town in Ohio.

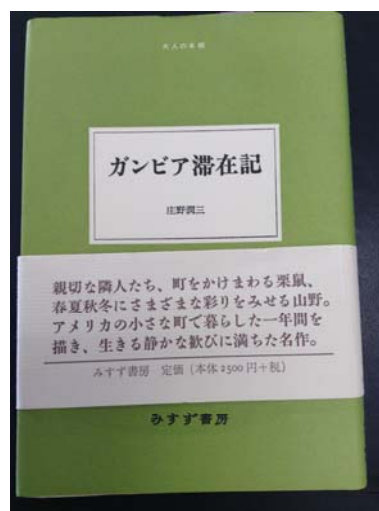
According to his writings, the people of Gambier were very kind to the Shono family. Shono wrote that Gambier was a tight-knit community and gave some examples of how close the community truly was. For example, mail was not delivered directly to people's houses, but rather, to the central post office where people had to venture to pick up their mail. There were only two restaurants and two grocery stores in town as well! Shono grew close to his neighbor who happened to be an Indian researcher from Mumbai who was married to an American woman. Shono also wrote about his experiences inviting two college students, Jeanne and Tom, to his house where he introduced them to Japanese style cuisine. He also enjoyed close chats with his barber, Jim.

Shono's essay reminds us of the warm exchanges and tight-knit community enjoyed by residents of small towns in Ohio in the 1950's. I am very interested in what modern day Gambier is like and I'm looking forward to visiting this town if I have a chance.

Vol. 49: Japanese Woodblock Print Lecture/Demonstration

The Japan Foundation dispatched two experts of the traditional art of Japanese woodblock printing, or ukiyo-e, to the U.S. from February 3rd through February 11th: Ms. Yukiko Takahashi, President of the Takahashi Kobo, a print publishing house; and woodblock printer, Ms. Kyoko Hirai. While here, they presented lectures and demonstrations on woodblock printing at various locations in Boston and Detroit, including the Detroit Institute of Arts and the University of Michigan, Dearborn Campus with the full support of our Consulate office.

I personally took part in the UM Dearborn event. And the school's Chancellor, Dr. Daniel Little, attended as well. Using a Power Point presentation and many sample prints, Ms. Takahashi presented a clear and concise explanation of the history and production of ukiyo-e. Her informative lecture was followed by a live demonstration of the traditional printing technique by Ms. Hirai. Using replicated



woodblocks of the famous print by Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, Ms. Hirai demonstrated the multi-step process of applying various colors and subtle shading until the superb print was completed. Since great physical strength is required in printing this world has traditionally been male-dominated. So, it was an even greater pleasure to meet these two women who have achieved great success in the printmaking world. More than fifty students and guests attended and thoroughly enjoyed the presentation.

When I lived in Europe I developed a personal interest in ukiyo-e prints, exploring the many antique shops, art dealers and museums. I have also had the opportunity to enjoy the pristine shin hanga (new edition prints) collection at the Toledo Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts' world-renowned collection in Boston. But this is the first occasion I have had to see the actual process of printmaking and experience the production. It was very interesting and informative.

During the Edo Period ukiyo-e was simply a newsletter of sorts for the common people. The price of one copy was the about the same as a cup of noodles. However, with the birth of Japonisme in Europe, ukiyo-e fascinated Impressionist painters, such as Van Gogh, and influenced his work.

It is a bit embarrassing that the ukiyo-e collections in Europe and America, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are superior to those held in Japan. I truly believe it is necessary for Japanese to study the long history and tradition of ukiyo-e prints to be able to explain this part of our culture to others.



Vol. 50: Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest

The 2014 Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest was held on February 8th at Hinoki International School in Livonia. I had a chance to not only observe the contest, but also serve as a judge. According to the Japan Foundation, there were about 4 million people studying Japanese at schools around the world in 2012. In the United States there were 156,000, reflecting a nearly 10% increase from 2009. In the State of Michigan there were 60 K-12 schools and 17 colleges and universities offering Japanese language courses to nearly 6,500 students in 2013. I am quite pleased that Japanese language education is so popular right here in Michigan.

Language is the most essential tool for mutual understanding. I feel that it is important to continue the strong trend of students studying Japanese because language is truly the gateway to understanding Japan.

The Speech Contest featured 11 high school students and 12 university students who chose their favorite themes, wrote original speeches and recited them for the audience. Following each 3-5 minute speech, there was a brief Q&A from the judges. I listened to each speech with great interest and enjoyed their talks about such subjects as Japanese culture, Japanese cuisine, Japanese fairytales, Japanese characters, comparisons between the U.S. and Japan, Sino-Japanese relations, racial discrimination and even difficult subjects such as mental imagery drawing or “shinshoezu.”

I very much enjoyed all the speeches and was especially impressed by the high standard of the university students' performances. I was also pleasantly surprised to see not only American students participating in this contest, but also students from various countries in Asia. It seems that international students studying here in the U.S. also choose to study Japanese language! In addition to the Consulate General, the Japan Business Society of Detroit; the JSD (Japanese Society in Detroit) Women's Club; the Japan American Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario; the Japanese Teachers Association of Michigan; the Japan Foundation; and Delta Airlines all supported this great event. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to these organizations for making this contest possible. I hope that those who

participated in this year's Speech Contest will continue to deepen their interest and knowledge of Japan. I believe that all of today's participants play an important role in expanding the special relationship enjoyed by the United States and Japan and I hope that they will become future leaders in terms of U.S.-Japan relations.



(Left Picture: Opening Speech by Consul General Dr. Katayama, Right Picture: Contestants and Judges of Speech Contest)

Vol. 51: First Tea Gathering for the New Year

On February 9th I was invited as the guest of honor to the hatsugama (first tea gathering for the New Year) of the Michigan Chado Urasenke Tankokai (a local group who study and practice 'the way of tea' in the Urasenke style). It was an enjoyable event with Tea Master Nabeta Soyu, her husband and other guests.

Just after entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thirty-one years ago, I remember attending a lecture by Urasenke Sen Shoshitsu XV at our Foreign Ministry Training Institute as well as visiting the Konnichian Tea House during a training tour of Kyoto with the Institute. Later, I had several more opportunities to take part in tea gatherings in my activities as a diplomat, but am embarrassed to say, I never learned the proper etiquette of being the guest of honor. And, since I had not sat in the seiza-style in a long time, my legs quickly became numb, so I was permitted to sit cross-legged instead.

In the course of the event it became clear how deeply rooted various elements of the traditional Japanese arts and culture are in the study of chado. As we sipped the delicious thick tea and thin tea, prepared with great sincerity by the host, we enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime encounter and conversation with new friends. We also admired the elegant selection tea wares, calligraphy, ceramics and flowers. And, we were very touched by the host's discerning taste, careful preparation and thoughtfulness.



I came to realize that the host of a tea gathering truly must not only have a comprehensive knowledge of tea, but also an acute eye for the many related cultural arts. Perhaps the occasion to experience this essence of Japanese culture is one of the attractions of tea ceremony for non-Japanese. It was a great opportunity for me to have such an experience at a hatsugama here in the United States.

Vol. 52: Cold Wave in the Midwest

For the first time in 45 years, Tokyo was hit by a severe snow storm in February. In the Midwest, we are also going through an exceptionally cold, record breaking winter. Temperatures haven't been this low in 2 decades. At my home in the suburbs of Detroit, the snow hasn't stopped piling up since the end of the year, and after our experience of a real "White Christmas," the so called polar vortex descended upon the region, leaving schools and several government offices closed. When the roads freeze over, driving conditions become quite dangerous and traffic often slows down to a crawl, making the usual 30 minute commute snowball into 2 hours.

So far, the cold wave of the polar vortex has been followed by several snowy days. When enough of the white stuff piles up, the local government sends out snow plows to clear the roadways, but after the trucks have gone away there are often large piles of snow along the roadsides. Some are over 1 meter tall!

The temperatures have often fallen below -20°C (-4°F) and lately they have stayed in the negative range of the Celsius scale. The Detroit River, which runs by my office, has been affected by these frosty conditions and as you can see, it's covered with ice. I'm no stranger to this kind of weather and have experienced it before in places like Shiogari Pass, Hokkaido, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and Harbin, China, but this is the first time for me to face the cold weather as a regular feature of my daily life. A few days ago, my colleague's car broke down on the highway, at night, as she made her way home from a business trip. The tow trucks were so busy that it took a while for them to assist her and she almost had too close of a brush against the freezing cold. Nevertheless, by simply experiencing this severe winter, it makes me anticipate spring, followed by summer, even more. The local people often recommend Michigan's Upper Peninsula for a trip in the summer and I look forward to taking such a trip as I endure this historically intense winter.



(Picture: The ice-covered Detroit River. Windsor, Canada is visible on the other side)

Vol. 53: Skating at the Sochi Olympics and Detroit Connections

Michiganders, Meryl Davis and Charlie White, finished with a world record score of 195.52 to capture the first ever U.S. gold medal in ice dancing at the Sochi Olympic Games. Congratulations!

In total, 13 native Michiganders participated in the winter Olympics. And of the 24 U.S. figure and ice dance skaters, 15 of them train at metro Detroit rinks.

Davis and White grew up 10 minutes apart in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak, have partnered since 1997 and won silver in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. That year, a Canadian pair of friendly rivals, Virtue and Moir, who train in Canton, Michigan under the same Russian coach, won gold, but were runner-ups to Davis and White in Sochi.

The charming Japanese-American brother-sister team, Alex and Maia, nicknamed the “Shib-sibs,” also under the same coach, reside in Ann Arbor and, like Davis and White, attend the University of Michigan.

Japanese pairs skaters, Ryuichi Kihara and Narumi Takahashi, are locally coached in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, by former world champion and Japanese Olympian, Ms. Yuka Sato; in fact, they all left for Sochi directly from here. Several other Japanese skaters have chosen metro Detroit as a place to train.

Although the U.S. unfortunately did not medal in the individual skating competitions, overall, there were a total of 16 medal-winning athletes with “Pure Michigan” connections: 4 Americans, in the events of ice dancing, group skating, and bobsled and, 12 non-Americans, in men’s ice hockey (including members of the gold medal-winning Canadian team and the silver medal-winning Swedish team, all of whom are affiliated with the Detroit Red Wings).

I might add that Japan’s Hanyu Yuzuru, in rather stunning fashion, won the gold medal in men’s figure skating.

As skating’s popularity grows in Japan, it is my great hope that even more Japanese athletes and fans will take notice of this region’s abundance of world class coaches and training facilities, as metro Detroit has indeed become a center of the figure skating and ice dancing world.

Vol. 54: Japan’s Modern Art Exhibit at the Cleveland Museum of Art

On February 15th I attended the preview gala of *Remaking Tradition: Modern Art of Japan* from the Tokyo National Museum. The exhibition is currently on display at the recently renovated Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio and will run from February 16th through May 11th. The Japan Foundation is generously supporting the partnership between the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Tokyo National Museum in organizing this valuable event.

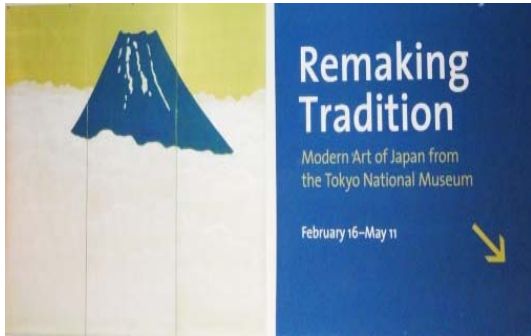
The remarkable exhibit was truly worth the six-hour round trip from Detroit. Over fifty masterpieces from the Tokyo National Museum are featured, including six “Important Cultural Properties of Japan”: Kuroda Seiki’s *Maiko* and *Reikozo* by Kishida Ryusei, are two such examples. Works by major painters such as Yokoyama Taikan and Shimoura Kanzan are also shown, as well as by sculptor Hiragushi Denchu, a graduate of the same elementary school I attended in Fukuyama city in Hiroshima. I can still remember clearly about 45 years ago when he re-visited our alma mater as a lecturer. I believe he was nearly 100 years old at that time.

According to Zeniya Masami, the director of the Tokyo National Museum, this exhibition is the largest of modern Japanese art from their permanent collection being held outside of Japan. He travelled from Tokyo for the opening events, as did the staff from the Japan Foundation New York office.

Just recently, from January 15th through February 23rd, the Tokyo National Museum held a special exhibition titled *Admired from Afar: Masterworks of Japanese Painting* from the Cleveland Museum of Art. The Cleveland Museum of Art is among the nation’s leading museums, along with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. They are known for their Japanese art collections. The very popular exhibition included more than forty important works from the Heian to the Meiji Eras, together with paintings by European and Chinese masters.

Incidentally, I learned from Director Zeniya that Mori Ogai, the famous Japanese author, was also the Director General of the Imperial Household Museum (the forerunner of the Tokyo National Museum) from the Taisho period until his death in 1922.

I sincerely encourage everyone to visit the Cleveland Museum of Art and enjoy this wonderful exhibition.



(Left Picture Cleveland Museum of Art's Japan Modern Art Exhibit, Right Picture Recently Renovated Section of Cleveland Museum of Art)

Vol. 55: Detroit Kendo Tournament

On February 16th, I had the pleasure of attending the 16th annual Detroit Open Kendo Tournament which was held at Novi High School. Thanks to the longtime efforts of 8-dan Kendo Master and Chairman of the Detroit Kendo Dojo, Mr. Yoshiteru Tagawa, this tournament has been held annually for the past 16 years.

There were many participants at the tournament, including people of all ages. Participants hailed not only from this region, but from across the entire country as well as some parts of Canada. Other than the National Kendo Tournament (which is held every 3 years) the Detroit Open Kendo Tournament is the largest of its kind in the United States. This year, 8-dan Kendo Master, Mr. Masaru Yamazaki, was invited from Japan to attend this tournament as well. He is currently teaching kendo at a police academy in Aichi Prefecture.

I heard that kendo was first practiced in the United States before WWII, when 1st generation Japanese Americans chose to pass along the traditional Japanese spirit to their children through teaching them the art of kendo. After overcoming difficult periods following the War, the kendo exchanges between our two countries resumed. As a matter of fact, in 1970, when the International Kendo Federation (IKF) was founded, the first World Kendo Championship also took place. This championship is held every three years and has been hosted by the United States several times. The U.S. men's team has claimed the 2nd place prize twice in the past.

Kendo and judo are both traditional Japanese sports. But if you compare the two, there are noticeable differences. Judo has been an official Olympic game since 1964's Olympics held in Tokyo. Since then, a variety of new rules have been introduced, such as separating competitions based on weight classes, initiating point systems and using blue uniforms. Due to globalization, judo was transformed from a uniquely Japanese sport to becoming more of an international sport.

In contrast, kendo has maintained its fundamental Japanese spirit and guidelines. In kendo, one must train his/her mind and body all while being respectful, courteous and truly honoring the sport. Both are unique, but I hope that in the United States, not only Japanese residents and people with Japanese roots enjoy the sport, but that Americans also learn to more deeply understand the Japanese spirit and way of thinking through practicing kendo.

Vol. 56: Eastern Michigan University Japanese Student Association Dinner Show

On February 16th, I was fortunate enough to be invited to the EMU Japanese Student Association's Annual Dinner Show in Ypsilanti (which is about 35 miles from Detroit). The theme of this year's dinner show was "There is always tomorrow." The Japanese Students Association is comprised of approximately 80 members including both Japanese students and American students studying Japanese language. I understand that the JSA has been organizing this wonderful event for the past 15 years. The Dinner Show was supported by professors from the Japanese language department, the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, the JSD Women's Club and some Japanese companies.

I have heard that Eastern Michigan University (which boasts 220 students studying Japanese language) is one of the premier institutions in terms of Japanese language education right here in

Michigan.

Recently, the number of Japanese students choosing to study abroad has been declining. There are now approximately 240,000 Chinese students studying in the United States, while there are only about 20,000 Japanese students studying here. This inward looking attitude of the Japanese youth is a concern of mine. However, after enjoying today's event, I realized that the Japanese students at EMU are very enthusiastic about their lives studying here in the United States. They collaborated so well with their American counterparts in the JSA and successfully organized a variety of events including tea ceremony, traditional games, speeches, dances, song performances and even Japanese cuisine. The ability of the students to nicely prepare the event and connect so effectively with the audience was truly impressive and encouraging to me. I very much enjoyed my night at Eastern Michigan University and I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to those students who included me in this event. I wish all of them the best of luck with their studies!

Vol. 57: *Like Father, Like Son*

Over the weekend I had the opportunity to see the Japanese movie *Like Father, Like Son* at the Royal Oak Main Theatre. While Hollywood movies are plentiful and also the major attraction for moviegoers, I did not expect that we could see a fairly new Japanese film so close to my home. For the size of the theater regrettably, the audience was quite small. It must be difficult to compete with Hollywood.

The 2013 drama was directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda and starred Masaharu Fukuyama in the leading role. At the 2013 Cannes Film Festival it was awarded the prestigious Jury Prize, and the movie is widely known throughout Japan.

It is a story of two families, from quite differing social and economic backgrounds, who were contacted by a hospital administrator and told a mistake had been made six years prior when their sons were born. It was discovered that their sons were switched at birth and that each family was raising the other's child. The movie explores how the relationships between, and within, the respective families were affected and importance of family bonds in nature vs. nurture as the universal theme.

When the movie was screened last year in Japan it grossed over three billion yen in revenue, not only for its touching story, but also its Cannes prize-winning production and very popular leading actor. For a movie of this kind it was an unprecedented hit. In fact, Steven Spielberg was also impressed and bought the rights to remake it in Hollywood.

As previously mentioned, the theme is universal. Yet, I would be interested to learn the perspectives of Americans who view the movie. There is much diversity in America, even within the family. Adoption of children of nationalities or races different from the parents is not unusual here in the U.S. But, in East Asia, particularly in China and Korea, the continuation of the father's bloodline is what is most important.

In Japan, on the other hand, continuation of the family takes precedence to the bloodline. If a family does not have any children, adoption is relatively accepted for the continuing the family.

I think the various perspectives on this movie will be as diverse as the audiences.



(*Like Father, Like Son* Please see the following link for information on screenings and times:
http://events.detroitnews.com/royal_oak_mi/venues/show/39174-landmark-main-art-theatre)

Vol. 58: Results of the Consulate Service Improvement Survey

A consulate service improvement survey was conducted at 150 embassies and consulates worldwide with 300 or more nationals in their jurisdictions as of Oct. 1, 2013. Thanks to the combined efforts of workers and visitors, 16,412 responses were received. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for their time and efforts.

There are around 25,000 Japanese nationals residing in the jurisdiction of the Detroit consulate,

and we received 627 responses, placing us in 6th place for the number of survey respondents. For your reference, the 1st through 5th ranked are the embassy/consulate offices in The United Kingdom, New York, Shanghai, China and Malaysia.

The cumulative results of all consulates were favorable and for your reference here are a few pieces of data from the overall ratings: “Ease of finding,” 79%; “Entry treatment,” 67%; “Satisfaction with clerk service,” 78%; “Satisfaction with telephone service,” 73%; “Website content,” 63%; and “Email newsletter content,” 73%.

The results of our consulate were, in general, on the same level for the majority of the evaluation points. In particular, our one-day consular services were highly praised, but on the other hand, our office unfortunately proved to be a bit difficult to locate. Right after my appointment as Consul General, even I had a hard time making it to the office without getting lost, so I understand the burden that our visitors feel. I know that the Renaissance Center can be hard to navigate, but I’d like to do our best to make it easier for visitors to find us. Moving forward, I’d like to use the feedback from our visitors to improve our face-to-face and telephone service. I would also like to conscientiously address the individual needs and concerns of survey respondents with our fullest capacity.

(For more information about the overall results of the survey (in Japanese), please visit the link below at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/tokei/questionnaire/index.html>)

Vol. 59: JASCO Japanese Speech Contest

After having the opportunity to serve as a judge at the Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest, I was fortunate enough to also judge the 15th annual JASCO Japanese Speech Contest held by JASCO (Japan America Society of Central Ohio), on March 1st in Dublin, Ohio. The contest co-hosted by JASCO and Consulate General Of Japan also received great support from the City of Dublin, the Central Ohio Japanese Association of Commerce, the Japan Foundation, The Ohio State University’s Institute for Japanese Studies, the OSU Japanese Student’s Association, along with local Japanese restaurants and shops in the area. The Japanese Student’s Association from OSU played a crucial role in helping to prepare for this contest and also volunteered at the event itself. I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude to all the cosponsors and volunteers who helped make this event possible.

According to the Japan Foundation, there were about 4 million people studying Japanese around the world in 2012. In the United States, there were 156,000, reflecting a nearly 10% increase from 2009. In the State of Ohio, there were 16 K-12 schools and 29 colleges and universities offering Japanese language courses to nearly 3,100 students in 2012. I am quite pleased that Japanese language education is so popular right here in Ohio.

The Speech Contest featured 10 high school students and 9 university students. I would like to mention that a student named Natalie came in first place in the high school portion of the competition. I was so pleased about her victory because I heard that this was Natalie’s third time participating in the contest. Both she and her parents were elated that she took home the 1st place prize after participating in the contest three years in a row. I also found that, like in Michigan, several students of Asian origin also took part in the speech contest.

JASCO invited representatives from universities and colleges in Ohio with Japanese studies programs as well as recruiting companies to set up booths outside the competition. I think this is a great idea as it can help high school students learn more about Ohio colleges and universities with strong Japanese language programs. It also allows students and parents to see how Japanese language study can lead to promising career paths in the future. JASCO is trying to create a network between Japanese language education and career paths where students can utilize their knowledge of Japanese language and culture.

The Dublin City Government very kindly provided us the venue for the Speech Contest free of charge. Mayor Keenan, who was appointed Mayor of Dublin in January, graciously came to the Speech Contest during the lunch break and I had the chance to speak with and get to know him. I expressed my sincere gratitude to him for providing such great support to the local Japanese community residing in Dublin. Currently, there are about 2,000 Japanese residents living in Dublin, making it the largest Japanese community in Ohio. Mayor Keenan and I are committed to further strengthening the ties between Ohio

and Japan as well as between the City of Dublin and the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit.

That morning, I left my home in metro Detroit around 6am and did not return home until around 7:30pm due to some snowy conditions. Despite the slightly hectic schedule that day, I was very much encouraged to see such bright students taking part in the JASCO Japanese Speech Contest and so pleased that Japanese language education seems to be quite strong in Ohio. I firmly believe that all of the contest's participants play an important role in expanding the special relationship enjoyed by the United States and Japan.



Vol. 60: *Live Your Dream*

When I think back to March 11th, 2011, I can clearly remember being in my office in the early morning at the Embassy of Japan in Brussels, intently watching NHK live on television. I cannot even describe the shock and sadness I felt as I heard the news unfold. At the time, I could not clearly imagine the damage and heartache that would ensue. Now, the third year anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake has arrived.

On March 4th, a film screening event showcasing the documentary, *Live Your Dream*, was hosted by Eastern Michigan University and the Great Lakes JET Alumni Association. Two American JET Program participants fell victim to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami: Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson. The film delved into the courage and sacrifice displayed by both Taylor and Monty who were working as Assistant Language Teachers. On March 11th, 2011, Taylor Anderson was teaching at an elementary school in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture. Even after the earthquake hit, Taylor stayed at school and made sure that her students were safely returned to their families. After ensuring the safety of her students, she head home on her bicycle. Unfortunately, this was the last time her colleagues and students saw her.

Following the screening, they held a Q&A session with Mr. Regge Life, the film director; Andy Anderson, Taylor Anderson's father; and Shelley Frederickson, Monty's Dickson's sister. 140 people attended this film screening and Q&A including Eastern Michigan University students and faculty, JET Program alumni and community members.

After watching the film, I clearly understood how deeply Taylor was loved by her students, her colleagues, her friends and the entire community where she was living. I could also see that Monty was such a sincere person with a great sense of humor. Taylor's father, Andy, has visited Ishinomaki 5 times since the disaster and he told me that he actually just recently returned from Japan where he attended a film screening event. Taylor's family has stayed very involved with the community in Ishinomaki and has

even donated the “Taylor Library” to local schools. They have also been instrumental in U.S.-Japan grassroots exchanges, just as Taylor would have wished. Shelley, Monty’s sister, flew in all the way from Alaska to attend this screening event which happened to be held at her Alma Mater, Eastern Michigan University. She also remains heavily involved with U.S.-Japan relations.

In my short remarks, I touched upon the great support provided by the American government through initiatives such as Operation Tomodachi. I also thanked the people of Michigan for their great assistance following the earthquake and tsunami. I can assure you that the Japanese people will never forget the love and support shown to them by the American people, nor will we forget the commitment to U.S.-Japan relations shown by both Taylor and Monty.

The JET Program is truly one of the most successful grassroots exchanges of its kind and has been promoting goodwill between the United States and Japan for nearly 30 years. Two weeks ago, my office interviewed about 100 talented applicants from both Michigan and Ohio to take part in the 2014-2015 JET Program. I truly look forward to sending another bright batch of JET Program participants to Japan to take part in the friendship and heart to heart exchanges between American and Japanese people, just as Taylor and Monty and would have wished.

Watching this film screening left me with a heavy heart, but I believe that Taylor and Monty left behind them a seed of friendship between our two countries which will never disappear, but rather, continue to blossom. Despite the sadness and emotions felt when watching the documentary, I was very moved by the positive and forward looking presentation and the enthusiasm displayed toward the U.S.-Japan exchanges that are still taking place thanks to Taylor and Monty’s families. I was very much encouraged by their positive attitude and thank them for all the work they are doing to promote exchange between our two countries. I hope you will also have a chance to watch this moving documentary.



(For more information, please see the following websites:

Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund: www.TaylorAndersonMemorialFund.org

Articles about the movie and Taylor: <http://jetwit.com/wordpress/?s=taylor+anderson>

Order the film or find out more about the film at: <http://transitmedia.net/searchtitle.lasso>

The JET Program/ JET Alumni Association: www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JET/www.jetaausa.com)

Vol. 61: Results of the 2013 Japanese Direct Investment Survey

The results of our annual survey of Japanese businesses in the consulate's jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio as of October 2013 were released. For detailed information, please visit our website at the link below. For your reference, I'll briefly outline the overall results.

In the state of Michigan, there were 469 Japanese owned facilities (a decrease of 12 from the previous year) providing 37,020 jobs (an increase of 1,232), 95% of which were held by local residents. 55% of all surveyed facilities were manufacturers, with the majority of manufacturers (64%) involved in the production of automotive-related goods. 81% of the surveyed facilities were concentrated in southeast Michigan, including the cities of Novi, Farmington Hills, etc. The number of Japanese nationals residing in Michigan has been increasing in recent years and there were 12,027 surveyed in 2013. The top 3 cities were Novi (2,941); Ann Arbor (1,584); and West Bloomfield (974).

In Ohio, there were 425 Japanese owned facilities (a decrease of 1 from the previous year) and a total of 69,138 jobs (an increase of 2,852), 98% of which were held by local residents. 60% of the surveyed facilities were manufacturers, with the majority of them (51%) involved in automotive industry related manufacturing. The facilities were spread over wide areas of the state, but are concentrated near Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland. The number of Japanese nationals residing in Ohio is also increasing and 12,320 were surveyed. The top 3 cities in Ohio are Dublin (2,002); Columbus (705); and Cincinnati (501).

Japan is the largest foreign investor in Ohio and is a leading foreign investor in Michigan. The immense economic contributions from Japanese businesses, as well as enriching cultural exchange activities between local residents and Japanese nationals are reflected in the results of this survey.

(Please follow the link to this website for the detailed findings:

<http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jp/kankatsu/index.htm#investment>)

Vol. 62: How Did the Architects Respond Immediately after 3/11? (The Great East Japan Earthquake)



From March 7 through March 21, Wayne State University in Detroit is hosting an exhibit commissioned by the Japan Foundation entitled *How Did the Architects Respond Immediately after 3/11? - The Great East Japan Earthquake*, on the third floor of the Undergraduate Library.

On March 7th I had the privilege to attend the opening reception. The university's strong support of the exhibit, and of Japan, was clearly evident by the presence of several of the school's administrators, including President and Mrs. Wilson.

The original exhibition was planned to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the 2011 disaster. It depicts projects, in three phases, undertaken by architects following the unparalleled earthquake and tsunami, which devastated northeast Japan. The projects are divided into three phases: Emergency Responses, Temporary Housing and Reconstruction Projects. Many explanation panels were used to summarize each phase with an outline, drawings and photographs. There were also models, actual samples of cardboard shelters and furniture, videos and so on.



Contributions by several architects from outside of Japan were also displayed, including the work of a Belgian architect I happened to meet while posted in the Embassy there. He is married to a Japanese woman originally from Ishinomaki, one of the most seriously damaged cities. His interest in the

reconstruction of his wife's hometown was very strong and he participated in workshops and submitted ideas. My wife and I were pleasantly surprised to discover a panel describing his work, as we became close friends of the couple during our stay.

Dr. Taro Igarashi, professor at Tohoku University and curator of the exhibition, hoped to communicate several things through the exhibit:

- Architects should carefully consider their role in the event of a natural disaster.
- Architects from all over the world contributed ideas and plans for the affected areas. One country in Africa offered to construct a complete village in their country for Japanese evacuees.
- The architects in Japan did send a message to the world that they responded immediately, standing up to the disaster.
- The exhibit clearly demonstrates the necessity for every country to carefully consider, from an architectural viewpoint, how to best respond if such a natural disaster occurred on their soil.

For those without some background in architecture the exhibit may be a bit challenging – the panels have many technical terms – but the rich text is still very interesting and informative, as are the models, samples and videos. I hope you have the chance to visit the exhibit before it closes.



(For dates, times and directions please check our event calendar at: www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp)

Vol. 63: Detroit Institute of Arts Samurai Exhibition

From March 9th through June 1st the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) is holding a special exhibition titled *Samurai: Beyond the Sword*. It is the first time in 25 years such an exhibit of Japanese art has been held at the DIA. This time the emphasis is not only on the art in relation to the warriors' physical strength, ornate armor and weaponry, but also the beauty created by the elite samurai class through traditional arts such as Noh theater, tea ceremony and paintings. About 130 works of art are displayed to tell the story of the samurai. In addition to pieces from the DIA's collection, art works from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and private collectors are included in the exhibit.

The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit and the DIA have enjoyed a close partnership for many years. In 1993, the year our office was established in Detroit, we selected the DIA to hold our first Emperor's Birthday Reception. Following my arrival last September, my first Emperor's Birthday Reception was also held at DIA. In addition, we have partnered with the DIA on various US-Japan cultural exchange events, including events being presented in conjunction with this exhibition.

In only six months, since my arrival, I have been very fortunate to see wonderful collections of Japanese art including modern Japanese prints at the Toledo Museum of Art, a modern Japanese art exhibit at the Cleveland Museum of Art and the samurai exhibit here at the DIA. I never imagined I could enjoy such rich works of arts from Japan here in America's Midwest!

By all means, I strongly encourage readers to visit



the DIA's samurai exhibit. And, certainly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation, once again, to the sponsors who have made this exhibit possible: Toyota, Denso, Yazaki and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

(For more information about *Samurai: Beyond the Sword*, please visit the DIA website: <http://www.dia.org>).

Vol. 64: Central Ohio

At 9 a.m. on March 13th, I departed my residence for a daytrip to central Ohio. Returning at 1 am the following morning, it marked my fifth visit to the region in the past six months. I visited Honda's Marysville plant and later attended the 17th Anniversary Dinner of the Japan America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO) in Columbus.

According to company literature, since 1982, Honda has produced 15.3 million vehicles, 19 million engines and 15 million transmissions at its four central Ohio-based plants. Over 10,000 jobs have been created there and these numbers only continue to grow! In fact, last year Honda became a net exporter from the U.S., a most impressive achievement for a Japanese company.

At the Marysville plant, a site three times larger than any of Honda's Japan-based plants, I got an up-close look at Honda's renowned manufacturing processes, all skillfully executed by an American workforce. There is no better place to witness U.S.-Japan collaboration in action, with a 30-year tradition of excellence.

Honda soon plans to open a separate on-site facility at which the long-awaited NSX sports car will be made. It's an exciting "dream" for Honda, which I sincerely hope comes true.

From there, I moved down to Columbus to attend JASCO's anniversary reception, where I was greeted by JASCO President, Mr. Allen Kinzer. Mr. Kinzer is a partner of a law firm which has advised Japanese companies in the region for many years. Included amongst the many distinguished guests were the president of Columbus 2020—the region's premier economic development agency—and two former honorary consuls of Japan for the state of Ohio. It was a wonderful event and I was delighted to visit with so many active supporters of Ohio-Japan relations.

Japanese companies account for about 70,000 jobs across the Buckeye State, about 30% of which are concentrated in central Ohio. I'm very happy to build upon the impressive economic and cultural ties there and welcome future opportunities to partner with JASCO towards that goal.

Vol. 65: Ohio and the Japan Scholars

Recently, I learned that two giants of Japan studies in America have deep connections to Ohio.

One of them was Edwin O. Reischauer. He was the son of missionaries, and was born in Tokyo in 1910 (Meiji 43). In 1927, he returned to America and entered Oberlin University, a prestigious liberal arts school west of Cleveland. After that, he moved on to Harvard then he returned to Japan again to continue his research at, what were at the time, the Tokyo Imperial University and the Kyoto Imperial University. Following the end of World War II, Dr. Reischauer worked in several positions, including the head of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the American Ambassador to Japan under the Kennedy Administration and the head of Harvard's Japan Institute. During my days as a university student, I read Dr. Reischauer's book entitled *The Japanese*. I was so impressed by his sagacious knowledge about Japan, that I was compelled to give a copy of the book to a friend from America who had just arrived in my country, hoping that it would increase his understanding of Japan. In the mid 1980's, when I was at Harvard, I received my own desk at the library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and I spent just about every day there. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to meet Dr. Reischauer while he was alive, but I did meet his wife, Haru Matsukata Reischauer. In 1986, there was a book signing in Boston for her book, *Samurai and Silk*, which was a family history written about her maternal and paternal grandfathers. She signed a copy of the book that I bought from her, and I remember that we chatted for a bit.

By the way, it is said that a graduate of Ohio's Oberlin University founded Obirin University (桜美林大学) in Tokyo, which he named after his alma mater.

Another Japan scholar with connections to the Buckeye State is Ezra Vogel. He was born in 1930

in Delaware, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. He graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, a high ranking liberal arts college in his hometown, and continued his research at Harvard University. Even today, he is actively researching and a few years ago published a magnum opus about Deng Xiaoping. During the Clinton era, he served with the government as a leading information analyst of the East Asia region. In the 1980's, when I was a university student, his book, *Japan as Number One* became a best seller and I still remember discussing the work as part of my international political science class. At the time, I had no idea that he would be my advisor at Harvard. As an already distinguished researcher on East Asia, he lead an extremely busy life, but I was able to visit his office and his home and have very fond memories of receiving his guidance on my master's thesis.

Thirty years ago my life crossed paths with these two great scholars of Japan, and now it amazes me that through Ohio our paths cross again.

(Oberlin University: <https://home.oberlin.edu/>

Ohio Wesleyan University: <http://www.owu.edu/>)

Vol. 66: Ringo Kai (Japanese Saturday School) Commencement Ceremony

There are eight Japanese Saturdays schools located in the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit's jurisdiction (Michigan and Ohio). Among them, Ringo Kai—the Japanese Saturday school located in metro Detroit—is the largest.

On March 15th, I had the pleasure of attending the commencement ceremony at Ringo Kai at which I witnessed 59 elementary school students, 32 junior high school students and 7 senior high school students receive their graduation diplomas, a total of 98 graduates! In addition, that morning, I also saw 91 kindergarten students graduate. Dr. Steve Matthews, the Superintendent of the Novi School District, was also in attendance. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Matthews and the many local authorities in Novi for their understanding and support of the Japanese Saturday school.

In my previous posts, including Kuala Lumpur and Brussels, I also had the opportunity to attend Japanese Saturday school and Japanese regular weekday school commencement ceremonies. Many of these students faced culture shock and had to overcome obstacles after moving to a new country at such a young age. Each time I attended these events, I found it so refreshing to meet these students and to see that they were thriving after having acquired the skill sets needed for acclimating oneself to a new culture.

Three years ago, when I was posted in Belgium, I recall attending a Saturday school commencement only one day after the Great East Japan Earthquake. I still remember that those young graduates naturally had very deep concerns about the future of Japan. This was certainly an emotional time to be attending a graduation ceremony and one I will never forget.

In the case of Japanese Saturday schools, most of the students attend local K12 schools on weekdays while attending the Saturday school in order to take classes in the Japanese language. I am sure that this is no easy task and that these students have a hectic schedule to balance. I firmly believe, however, that the experience studying at both the local school and the Saturday school will be a valuable asset for these students in the future. Now that Japan is becoming closely connected to the international community, children with a multicultural background will no doubt play an important role in the future of international relations.

As I mentioned earlier, there are 8 Saturday schools throughout our Consulate's jurisdiction and it is unfortunate that the graduation and entrance ceremonies of these schools tend to be held on the same day, making it impossible for me to attend all of the ceremonies. However, I will try my best to be at as many events as possible in order to express my congratulations to these students during such a milestone event in their young lives.

Vol. 67: Ikebana International and Hinamatsuri (Doll Festival) Gathering

Though March 3rd had passed, we invited members of the local Ikebana International chapter to our residence on the 14th of March to celebrate Japan's Doll Festival. Ikebana International is an organization of practitioners of Japanese-style flower arranging from various schools and nationalities, based on the motto "friendship through flowers." It was founded in Tokyo by Mrs. Ellen Gordon Allen in 1956 and has spread around the world to over 60 countries and 7800 members. Southeast Michigan has

three chapters, Detroit, Ann Arbor and Lansing, with quite long traditions. The Lansing chapter celebrated its 45th anniversary last year and next year the Detroit chapter will celebrate its 50th!

On this day, Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura, a master of the Ikenobo School, created three ikebana arrangements welcoming the coming spring, and the very talented 9-year-old Naomi Yamaguchi delighted everyone with mini piano concert. Spring bloomed throughout the residence.

It naturally reminded me that the basic spirit of ikebana is to express harmony between nature and people, a universal value that goes beyond national borders and is a basis for deepening friendships and mutual understanding.



Vol. 68: University of Michigan Museum of Art

On March 25th I visited the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA). This was my third visit to the University, but each time the day has been cold with snow flurries. The UMMA, which opened in 1856, nearly 160 years ago, is older than both the Art Institute of Chicago and the Detroit Institute of Arts. A major expansion project completed in 2009 more than doubled its original size. It is one of the leading university museums and home to over 18,000 works of art, including works by Picasso and Monet.

I was accompanied on my visit by Dr. Natsu Oyobe, the Associate Curator of Asian Art. UMMA's Asian and Middle Eastern art collection is comprised of more the 6500 objects, about 1800 of which are Japanese, 2000 are Chinese and 400 from the Korean Peninsula. Central to the collection are Japanese paintings, particularly of the Edo Period, Chinese paintings and Asian ceramics. Approximately 10% of the entire collection is exhibited at one time and is rotated on a regular basis. Comparatively, the Chinese and Korean Peninsula exhibition spaces seem a bit larger than the Japanese, probably due to the support received from donor companies, groups and individuals. I believe developing a strategy to increase Japanese partnerships would be advantageous for the collection. For this, Dr. Oyobe can be very helpful.

After the tour, I had the opportunity to discuss many things with the museum's director, Mr. Joseph Roza. On the Japan-related special exhibits the UMMA often works together with the university's Center for Japanese Studies. Last year there was an exhibition which focused on the creative relationship between Japanese-American architect Isamu Noguchi and Chinese painter Qi Baishi, dealing with their encounter in Beijing before World War II. Later this year the museum will present Paramodel, a collaborative exhibit by two contemporary Japanese artists from Kyoto; and in two years there are plans for an exhibit of Japanese woodblock prints and a kabuki demonstration. The director and I also discussed

strengthening the relationship between our Consulate General of Japan office and the museum.

I highly encourage everyone, if you happen to be in Ann Arbor, to visit the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

(For information on their location, hours and more please visit their website:

(<http://www.umma.umich.edu/>)).

Vol. 69: Taste of Japan and the University of Toledo

On March 30th, my wife, Yukari, and I had the pleasure of attending a special food tasting event at the University of Toledo. Taste of Japan was co-hosted by the Japanese Studies Program at the University of Toledo and Toledo Sister Cities International. Through an introduction by the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the cities of Toledo and Toyohashi established a sister city relationship back in 2000 and have been enjoying close ties ever since.

Mayor Michael Collins and his wife also kindly attended this enjoyable event. Mayor Collins was recently elected Mayor of Toledo and while he has never been to Japan, he expressed that he is firmly committed to the exchanges between the city of Toledo and Japan. Since his appointment as mayor, he has been very warm and welcoming toward the local Japanese community. Our Consulate looks forward to working closely with Mayor Collins and is very happy to continue to support the activities of the Japanese community in Toledo.

For this event, a young chef from Toyohashi, Mr. Kohei Noro, was specially dispatched to demonstrate how to make fresh sashimi as well as various other kinds of Japanese specialties for a local audience. For our first dish, we enjoyed stewed daikon, soft squash, freeze-dried tofu and marinated eggplant. The second dish included tuna and salmon sashimi samples. We then had a third appetizer dish which was called 'Yakihassun' and included a variety of different Japanese grilled foods. For the soup dish, we enjoyed warm somen noodles with green onion and plum. The main dish was a delicious filet mignon tataki with citrus flavored sauce called 'ponzu'. Finally, we finished off the meal named 'Hanazushi' with sushi rice, edamame and crab. The six dishes were delectable and all came in beautifully decorated bento boxes, which allowed us to not only enjoy the flavor of our food, but the visual aspect as well. Other than a few ingredients which were brought from Japan, most ingredients were purchased locally.

'Washoku,' or traditional Japanese cuisine, has been added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list and its popularity has been increasing throughout the world. Japanese cuisine has also played a very important role in foreign relations as a tool to attract people to Japan. As for myself, I am doing my best to entertain numerous local American leaders at Consul General's official residence to enjoy Japanese cuisine and sake. The food that I enjoyed at today's event has given me some inspiration and new ideas for when I entertain guests at my official residence in the future.



Vol. 70: Cleveland State University Visit

On April 2nd, I had the pleasure of visiting Cleveland State University where I enjoyed a round-table discussion over lunch with the provost and other university administrators. In the afternoon, I was also fortunate enough to visit a Japanese language class where I had the opportunity to interact with American students studying Japanese.

Cleveland State University was established as a state university in 1964 and is relatively new to the downtown Cleveland area. The total student population is around 17,000. While there are approximately 100 Chinese international students enrolled at CSU, there are only three total Japanese international undergraduate and graduate students enrolled. I hope that this number will increase in the future. When speaking with Provost Mageean, I expressed to her the importance of organizing networking opportunities between university administrators, local Japanese companies and local Japanese residents in order to promote awareness of CSU not only with Japanese people living in Ohio, but throughout Japan as well.

In the afternoon, I had the opportunity to interact with about 20 students who joined a 2-hour Japanese class given by Professor Lena Vidahl, Cleveland State University's only Japanese language instructor. There are two Japanese language classes offered at CSU with a total of 34 students enrolled. In the class I attended, Vidahl-sensei used cards for students to practice Japanese adjectives and adverbs. They also practiced some translating from English to Japanese. In addition, I got to hear their spoken Japanese as they gave short speeches introducing their families. I was very impressed by the enthusiasm and the advanced Japanese level of these students as well as how smoothly they were able to write even complicated Japanese characters (such as "beautiful" 奇麗) on the blackboard.

When speaking with students about why they chose to study Japanese, many expressed to me that it began from a young age simply enjoying various aspects of Japanese culture such as anime, manga, J-Pop and Japanese pop culture in general. One female student of Hispanic descent gave me this touching answer, "English is the language of my country, Spanish is the language of my heart, and Japanese is the language of my soul."

Through the classroom experience, I realized that such talented students will grow to become great contributors to the relationships and exchanged between U.S. and Japan. I firmly hope to support such students of Japanese to the best of my ability.

Vol. 71: Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum

During a visit to Cleveland, Ohio on April 2nd, I had time in the evening to visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. It is one of Cleveland's most popular attractions. Musicians, their music and music producers who have significantly influenced the development of rock and roll are featured in the Hall of Fame, as well as memorabilia and costumes of the genre throughout the museum. There are two theaters and various kiosks where you can re-live the sights and sounds of the era. I do not know much about rock music, but it seems fans' interest in Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, Janis Joplin, Madonna, etc. is endless. The reason such a museum as this was built in Cleveland is credited to Alan Freed, a Cleveland area disc jockey who first coined the phrase 'rock and roll' and the fact that the first major rock and roll concert was held in Cleveland. Designed by I. M. Pei, the pyramid-shaped building, which reminds me a little of the Glass Pyramid of the Louvre in Paris, stands prominently on the shore of Lake Erie. Upon entering the museum, I posed for a photo holding an electric guitar, as if I were a real 'rock-and-roller' and though it was a bit expensive, purchased the souvenir to bring home.



Vol. 72: Lecture at the University of Mount Union

On April 3rd, I had the pleasure of visiting the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio. Alliance is a town of about 20,000 people and is located about one hour driving to the south of Cleveland. At the campus of the University of Mount Union, I had the opportunity to meet with the Provost as well as other university administrators. Also, I gave a lecture entitled "Japanese Education and Business Relations in Ohio," to an audience of nearly 100 people. The majority of attendees were students majoring in and studying Japanese, but the audience also included students from other departments, professors and local people. The purpose of my visit was to help students, staff and locals understand how deeply important the economical, cultural, educational and person-to-person exchanges between Ohio and Japan truly are. I also wanted to help students of Japanese language to gain useful information regarding career opportunities that will be opened up to them in the future.

Established in 1846, the University of Mount Union is a small, liberal arts school with about 2,000 enrolled undergraduate students. Despite its relatively small size, it is one of the few universities in Ohio which offers a Japanese language major. As of October of last year, there were 89 students enrolled in Japanese language courses taught by Professor Hamako Furuhashi-Turner and Lecturer Elizabeth Bender. Although the University of Mount Union offers courses in quite a few foreign languages including Spanish, French, German, Chinese and Arabic, I was so pleased to learn that Japanese language boasts the highest foreign language enrollment! I realized, once again, that those students who elected to study

Japanese language truly did so because of a pure and genuine interest in not only the language, but also Japanese culture.

During the Q&A session following my lecture, most of the questions were focused on how students of Japanese language can get in touch with recruiters and eventually land jobs at Japanese companies following graduation. The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit is very willing to cooperate with local Japanese companies and organizations to help connect them with these students who will surely become future leaders of U.S.-Japan relations.

I would also like to mention that I was very glad to meet some local residents of Alliance during my visit and lecture as well. One audience member happened to be an elderly man who was stationed in Japan as a soldier during the 1950's. During our conversation, he shared with me some of his unforgettable memories from living in Japan.



(Left Picture: Professor Hamako Furuhata-Turner and Consul General Katayama, Middle Picture: Professor Furuhata-Turner introducing Consul General Katayama, Right Picture: Lecture Hall View)

Vol. 73: Mitsuko Uchida and the Cleveland Orchestra

I had a wonderful time on the evening of April 3rd in Cleveland, Ohio where the world renowned pianist, Mitsuko Uchida, performed Mozart's Piano Concertos No. 18 and 19, together with the very prestigious Cleveland Orchestra. The collaboration was brilliant, as if the Cleveland Orchestra existed only for Mitsuko Uchida, and Ms. Uchida only for the Cleveland Orchestra. This was my first time to hear the fresh, bright 18th and 19th Concertos. Brimming with such life it is easy to understand that they were composed at the peak of Mozart's career. The crystal beauty of Ms. Uchida's piano, together with the orchestra's pure symphonic sound, produced a delicate melody so splendid it was like being invited to a celebration of spring's splendor.

My wife and I were kindly invited to this wonderful concert by Hiroyuki Fujita, the CEO of QED (Quality Electrodynamics). QED is a medical equipment development and manufacturing company, which, I understand, exports 90% of its products. Dr. Fujita established the firm after receiving his doctorate in physics at Case Western Reserve University. Ever since, he has contributed greatly to the Cleveland community, including serving on the board of directors for the Cleveland Orchestra. At the beginning of this year, he was invited by President Obama as an honored guest to attend the State of the Union address. If you are interested in his life story, please read his book, *Take the Pathless Road*, published last year by Shogakukan.

It is my strong hope that, like Dr. Fujita, many Japanese youth will challenge themselves to reach their goals.



Vol. 74: Entrance Ceremony of the Cincinnati Saturday School

On April 5th, I was invited as the main guest to the formal entrance ceremony of the Japanese Language School of Greater Cincinnati. This school accommodates the second-largest number of students in the state of Ohio, trailing only the Columbus Saturday School.

In total, there are eight Japanese Saturday schools within the two-state jurisdiction (Michigan and Ohio) of the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. This year, six of them were holding entrance ceremonies on the very same day. I attended the Cincinnati event this time, since I just recently attended the commencement ceremony of Metro Detroit's Ringo-kai Saturday school, which happens to be Michigan's largest Japanese Saturday school.

Although the Cincinnati Saturday School actually sits across the Ohio border in the town of Highland Heights, Kentucky, the consulate remains responsible for its administration, as there used to be a facility located in Cincinnati proper. This particular event honored 30 kids who were entering first grade of elementary school, another 18 entering junior high school, and 15 more entering senior high school.

It is my great hope that these students will cherish the anticipation and excitement of this next stage of their educational journey and that they will always put forth their best efforts.

Considering the varying age differences of the entrants, I was at a bit of a loss as to what message I might deliver; however, I would certainly encourage all of them by stating that in this ever globalizing world, if they can manage the rigors of their Saturday school workload along with their regular studies at their local school, their well-rounded education will serve them extremely well in the future. To this end, I feel strongly that these kids can take full advantage of the excellent educational facilities and teachers available to them here in the Midwest, and that their hard work will be well worth it!

Vol. 75: Bowling Green State University Cherry Blossom Festival

On April 6th, I had the pleasure of attending the Bowling Green State University Cherry Blossom (Sakura) Festival in Bowling Green, Ohio—about an hour and a half drive to the south of Detroit. Founded in 1910, BGSU is a state university with around 20,000 undergraduate and 3,000 graduate students enrolled.

In its 13th year, the BGSU Cherry Blossom Festival is organized by Professor Kawano-Jones with support from the BGSU Japanese Language Club as well as the Asian Studies Program. A gift of cherry trees was donated by BGSU alumni living in Tokyo in 2001. Throughout the years, several local Japanese companies also donated cherry trees to the University and now the campus boasts dozens of sakura trees!

Unfortunately, because of the unusually cold winter, it was a bit too early in the season to enjoy the blossoming cherry trees. Nonetheless, more than 600 guests gathered in the venue hall and enjoyed performances of the American and Japanese national anthems, a choir's rendition of "Sakura Sakura," taiko drum, martial arts, origami, Bon Odori dances, traditional Japanese games, as well as Japanese cuisine (such as sushi). I was so amazed to find out that guests came from as far as New York, Cleveland, and Columbus!



I am so happy to know that Bowling Green is home to such an excellent professor as Dr. Kawano-Jones. She has truly devoted herself to teaching her students as well as organizing this great festival which has been enjoyed by so many students, staff members and locals through the years. In addition, I also learned that Dr. Kawano-Jones graciously created and invested her own resources into a scholarship fund for students who wish to study abroad in Japan. That day, I truly got a feel for the importance and great power of grassroots efforts in U.S. society.

Vol. 76: Beer Brewing in Japan & a Visit to John Carroll University

On April 8th, I had the opportunity to visit John Carroll University (JCU) located in suburban Cleveland. Founded by the Jesuits in 1886, this liberal arts university has an enrollment of about 3,000 students and sits on a compact but beautiful campus, with stately red brick buildings and abundant greenery throughout.

I was guided by Professor Susan Long, who in high school studied in Kobe, Japan, as an AFS international exchange program student. I also had the pleasure of meeting with Provost and Vice President, Dr. John Day.

Although there are unfortunately no Japanese students currently attending JCU, the school enjoys exchange programs with three Japanese universities: Kansai Foreign Language University, Nanzan University and Sophia University.

That evening, I attended a lecture by University of Wisconsin Parkside Associate Professor, Dr. Jeffery Alexander, entitled "Brewed in Japan: The Evolution of the Japanese Beer Industry." The event was generously sponsored by the Japan Foundation and Mitsui Foundation. (Please note that there is no direct relationship with the beer industry and the university in any way.) JCU's East Asian Studies Director, Professor Keiko Nakano served as the moderator of Professor Alexander's lecture, which focused on the interesting history of Japanese beer production after the Meiji Restoration.

As a background note, beer was first introduced to Japan by the Dutch during the Edo Period (1600-1868). Japan-based production was established in 1870 by a Norwegian-American born in Yokohama, an operation that would later become the Kirin Brewery Company. Several Japanese-owned breweries emerged thereafter: Sapporo Beer Co. and Osaka Beer Co. Ltd., which became Asahi Beer, Co. in 1889; and Nippon Beer Co., Ltd. in 1887 in Tokyo, which became Ebisu Beer Company. In 1906, these three Japanese companies merged into a single company known as the Dainippon Beer Co., which then separated after WWII. Later entrants to the market included Suntory, a Japanese beer and whiskey maker which happened to make news recently for its purchase of the U.S.'s Beam Inc. for \$16 billion. Professor Alexander's lecture covered recent trends in Japan's beer market, such as the micro-brewing boom of the 1990s, which had some commercial success, followed by a low-malt beer trend known as the sparkling drink (in Japanese, "Happoushu") industry of the early 2000s. Thereafter emerged a trend of so-called '3rd genre beer'—drinks that have beer-like taste, but are not made of hops or wheat. In Japan, higher taxes are now levied on beer with higher wheat or hop content, thus, low and no-malt versions have grown more popular due to their lower cost. Professor Alexander emphasized this peculiarity of the Japanese beer market.

If you are interested in learning more on the topic, I'd encourage you to read his book, *Brewed in Japan* (UBC Press, 2013).



Vol. 77: Detroit's Arab American Community

On April 12th, as a member of the Honorary Host Committee, I took part in the annual dinner of ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) held at the Marriott Hotel-Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. ACCESS is the largest Arab-American organization in the United States. On that day about 1700 people attended, including Michigan's governor, Rick Snyder and the mayor of the City of Detroit, Mike Duggan. This event is the second largest seated dinner hosted in

Michigan, with an event for the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) being the largest.

Centered in Dearborn, the metro Detroit region is home to the largest population of Arab Americans in the nation. Lebanon and Iraq are two of the only seven Consulates General here, including Japan. At the dinner Ray LaHood, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and Dr. Fawwaz Ulaby, a University of Michigan award-winning professor were honored as Arab-Americans of the Year. And, in addition, a local philanthropist announced he would be making a \$2 million gift to the Arab American National Museum.

I would like our consulate office to focus on relationships with the ethnic communities here, as I believe one of the sources of strength of America's society is the vitality of its interwoven diversity.

Vol. 78: Mount Pleasant and Okaya

About two and a half hours north of Detroit there is a city called Mount Pleasant with a population of 26,000. Nearly 50 years ago (in 1965), a sister city agreement was signed between Mount Pleasant and Okaya City in Nagano Prefecture, Japan, a relationship which all stemmed from a pen pal relationship between two high school students. Mount Pleasant is one of the 27 Michigan cities which have sister cities in Japan (in addition to Michigan, Shiga's sister state). Each year the cities take turns sending high school students to enjoy home stays in their sister city.

This year, Mayor Imai of Okaya, city council members and other Okaya citizens are visiting Mount Pleasant and next year, in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary, a delegation from Mount Pleasant will go to Okaya. Mount Pleasant's Mayor Tillman kindly invited me to join Mayor Imai and the delegation on April 14th for an all day visit to the city. Our first stop was a factory tour of Mitsuba, a Japanese auto parts manufacturer in Mount Pleasant. The company opened thirty years ago and has brought over 300 jobs to the area. Mayor Tillman joined the tour and expressed appreciation for the Japanese investment in her city. It is one of the Japanese companies to invest in the northern part of Michigan.

Afterward we visited Central Michigan University and attended a luncheon meeting hosted by President and Mrs. Ross. The president told us a story about his last visit to Japan, and how, because of his size, while out walking he was mistaken for a major league baseball player and asked for his autograph. Based on student enrollment, CMU is one of the top 100 state universities in the nation. In addition, it is Mount Pleasant's largest employer (Second is a huge casino hotel also in the city).

In the afternoon we toured a local sports facility, then visited the park where trees had been planted to commemorate the 40th anniversary. We moved from there to the city hall and were welcomed by the local school band to an event hosted by the mayor. Due to inclement weather we held a new tree planting ceremony indoors.

I am reminded by this one-day trip to Mount Pleasant that the investment of Japanese companies and the grassroots sister-city exchanges are truly great assets for the promotion of bilateral relations.

Vol. 79: Cherry Blossom Festival in Dublin

On April 18th, my wife and I were fortunate enough to be invited to attend the annual Cherry Blossom Festival which took place at the Hidaka, USA Inc. Plant located in Dublin, Ohio. It was a beautiful spring day with temperatures nearing 70 degrees! Unfortunately, however, because of the historically cold winter in this region, we were a bit too early to enjoy the blooming cherry blossoms. Nonetheless, many people gathered including City of Dublin government executives, leaders from the local Japan America Society, university professors, as well as many American and Japanese local residents. All of us enjoyed tented lunches and a truly pleasant day spent outside.

Our host, Mr. Hidaka (President and CEO of Hidaka USA, Inc.) was selected Dublin's, "2014 Business Person of the Year," by the Dublin Area Chamber of Commerce. Through the years, Mr. Hidaka has played a very important and vital role in connecting the Japanese community with local people. According to the survey conducted by the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit, Dublin is home to 25 facilities of Japanese companies and approximately 2,000 Japanese residents. Among those 25 Japanese facilities, Hidaka USA, Inc. is the only Japanese plant located in Dublin.

In the seven months that I have been serving as Consul General of Japan in Detroit, this was my fourth visit to Dublin, Ohio and I am very glad to continue to contribute to the close ties enjoyed between Dublin and Japan. Once again, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Hidaka for

inviting us to join this wonderful event.



Vol. 80: Detroit Tigers

On April 19th, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending a day game between the Detroit Tigers and the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim at Comerica Park. Since my appointment as Consul General began last September, I already had the opportunity to attend a Red Wings hockey game, a Pistons basketball game and a Lions football game. This was the first time I was able to enjoy a Tigers baseball game at Comerica Park, so I splurged a bit and purchased seats located right behind home base so I could very closely watch the players. Along with a great view of the game itself, I was also able to enjoy the ballpark atmosphere and typical game food such as hotdogs.



It was interesting for me to see the difference between Japanese and American professional baseball games. For example, in the United States, the National Anthem is sung before the game begins. In addition, during the 7th inning stretch, people sing the famous American tune, “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.” In Japan, fans often use drums and other loud instruments to show their excitement; whereas here, it seems the audience enjoys freely cheering on the team.

The temperature on that day was a bit cool, but it was quite sunny and pleasant and I even got a suntan! We left the stadium at the end of the seventh inning because of a previous engagement, but during our time there we were able to witness three home runs! I also was surprised to see two very close calls in which one team protested the umpire’s decision. Upon reviewing video footage, however, they ended up overruling their first decision. In Japanese professional baseball, they do not use video replays to make decisions. They do use video footage for making calls in sumo wrestling though.

The Tigers have been playing quite well since the opening of the season. As of April 30, 2014, they have won 13 games and lost 9, ranking them in first place in the American League Central Division. The Tigers ended up winning this particular game 5-2.

Thanks to my previous posts in the United States, I have now had the chance to visit seven different ballparks throughout the country. So far, I have visited Camden Yards (home of the Baltimore Orioles), Fenway Park (home of the Red Sox), Progressive Field (home of the Cleveland Indians), Yankee Stadium (home of the New York Yankees), Turner Field (home of the Atlanta Braves), PNC Park (home of the Pittsburgh Pirates) and now Comerica Park! I hope that the Tigers will eventually have more Japanese players playing for them so they can enjoy a larger Japanese audience in the future. Next time, I will be sure to research a bit about each player before attending another game at Comerica Park.

Vol. 81: Spring in Detroit

This winter it snowed almost every week from late November through late March. Deep snow piled upon the roof of our house, the garden and the roadside. But, finally, on April 12th the snow had completely disappeared, and I thought spring had finally come. But then, it snowed again, almost 4 inches. The total snow depth this season in metro Detroit was 94.8 inches, which broke a 130-year record – the highest recorded here.

After several days the last of the snow melted and recently we have been enjoying warmer temperatures, sometimes as warm as 70 degrees. In fact, when I went to the Tiger’s game on the 19th it was so warm and bright my face became suntanned.

I arrived in Metro Detroit in late September last year, but couldn’t enjoy the beautiful autumn season as I was so preoccupied with settling in. Then came the lengthy, cold winter blanketed in snow. I am delighted to welcome the long-awaited arrival spring.

In Belgium, where I was previously posted, spring is a season of white asparagus, parks and forests filled with colorful flowers and crowds of people enjoying the longer days, drinking wine and beer in sidewalk cafes until late into the night. I am looking forward to experiencing and enjoying spring in southeastern Michigan. And I am also looking forward to an opportunity to visit northern Michigan, which many friends have highly recommended.



(Picture: Bell Isle Flowers (Shot by Hotel Staff last May))

Vol. 82: A Visit with the Mayor of Detroit

On April 22nd, I made a courtesy call visit to the new mayor of Detroit, Mr. Mike Duggan. The mayor's office is housed in the Coleman A. Young Municipal Building, a stone's throw from the Consulate General of Japan.

I previously had a very brief conversation with Mayor Duggan at a local reception; however, this time we were able to sit down for about thirty minutes—ample time to learn more about one another and our respective missions.

Elected last November, Mayor Duggan took office in January. He will eventually have full authority to run the city of Detroit upon the conclusion of Emergency Manager Orr's term—predicted to conclude around the end of September. Regardless, Mayor Duggan is already in charge of most of the city's operations. He is zealously tackling some of the city's most vexing, decades-old, challenges including decreasing population and tax revenues and a high rate of unemployment. Yet, it remains unclear as to whether Detroit can smoothly emerge from bankruptcy; specifically, how the matter of its \$18 billion worth of debts and obligations will be resolved; and whether long-term growth and a financial stability can be realized.

Regardless, as many young professionals, entrepreneurs, and artists are relocating to Detroit, there is growing momentum in the city, particularly in the downtown and midtown and in neighborhoods such as Indian Village and Palmer Woods (where Mayor Duggan resided before moving into the official mayor's residence).

I am deeply hopeful that Detroit will realize a full renaissance, spirited by the vitality and enthusiasm of Mayor Duggan.

Japan is one of three countries that have established a full consulate-general in the city of Detroit (the others are Canada and Lebanon). Michigan's two other full consulates-general (Iraq and Macedonia) are located in the suburbs. Mexico and Italy have consulate offices downtown, although they are not consulates-general.

In addition to the commitment of an established consulate-general within the city borders, Japan has hosted a number of important events at Detroit-based venues. Several times, Emperor's birthday receptions were held at the Detroit Institute of Arts and Detroit Athletic Club. We also enjoy a strong relationship with Wayne State University (whose President M. Roy Wilson is of Japanese lineage) the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Detroit Economic Club, amongst others.

Furthermore, since 1960, an active sister-city relationship has existed between Detroit and Toyota City, featuring an annual exchange of high school delegations. In fact, Toyota City, as well as the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, gifted dozens of cherry trees to Detroit, whose blossoms can be enjoyed every spring on Belle Isle.

Mayor Duggan expressed a great desire to welcome more Japanese investment in the city. Toward achieving this goal, as Consul General of Japan, I pledge to do my best to explain and promote the advantages and positive aspects of locating here. Mayor Duggan has not yet visited Japan. I hope he gets the chance to do so in order to directly appeal to Japanese people and personally deliver the message of Detroit's revival.

Although political and governmental systems differ in our two countries, the future of Detroit is not just something that lies 'on the other side of the river.' Indeed, Detroit's experiences are shared by cities across the globe—its challenges, lessons, and hopes are Japan's as well.



Vol. 83: America's Cultural Power

In the seven months since my assignment, I have had many opportunities to visit the museums and concert halls of Detroit, Ann Arbor, Toledo and Cleveland. Each time, I strongly feel the greatness of the people, foundations, industries, local governments and others that are supporting America's diverse and sophisticated culture.

From a foreign perspective, American culture seems to be promoting unification of cultures all over the world through the commercialism, which is represented by Hollywood movies, as well as globalism. The US, which has no Ministry of Culture, is often contrasted against France, which under the powerful national guidance tries to promote its multinational culture through tactics. However, if we take a microscopic look at the preservation and education efforts which surround American culture at the national level, we can get a sense of exactly what is supporting culture in America. A flexible tax policy, a variety of independent and spontaneous non-commercial activities including charitable donations and support services from individuals, business people, non-profit organizations and industry philanthropic groups all support national culture, while avoiding direct governmental influence. If we consider America's culture within its own national boundaries, which on the surface appears to promote globalism, we also can well understand that its special social characteristics deeply take root with the most diversified people and cultures in the world.

Recently, I had the opportunity to read *On American Culture** (French title: *De la culture en Amérique*) by the French researcher Frederic Martel. It was written with De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America** in mind. The book is a report on how American culture functions and is the result a practical survey which consisted of 700 interviews from 35 different states. It is a formidable text of over 600 pages in length (both French and Japanese versions), but is an outstanding document for its grasp on American culture. I heartily recommend reading this book at least once, if you have an interest.



*The French titles of the works are *De la culture en Amérique* (Frederic Martel, 2006), and *De la démocratie en Amérique* (Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835-1840).

Vol. 84: Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce Gala

On May 3rd, I had the pleasure of attending the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce's (APACC) 13th annual gala which was held at the MGM Grand Hotel in Detroit. Established in 2000 and headquartered in Troy, MI, APACC's mission is to facilitate business relationships among Asian and U.S. based companies and to promote the economic advancement of Asian Pacific Americans. At the evening's event, Ms. Juju Chang, a Korean American broadcaster for ABC Nightline, was invited as a guest speaker.

Several Japanese companies sponsored the gala and the Japan Business Society of Detroit's, (JBSD), chairman and other executives were in attendance. I submitted a congratulatory letter that was printed in the event program along with my photo. There were also congratulatory messages from Mayor Duggan, Governor Snyder and several federal and state legislators. At the gala, I was introduced to an audience of 600 people and I believe that through these Japan's involvement, we were able to exemplify the Japanese community's commitment to APACC from both the public and private sectors.

The majority of Japanese people living in the area had been dispatched temporarily from Japan to Japanese companies located here and would eventually return to Japan along with their families. Because of this trend, the Japanese community members were a bit different from other people of Asian descent rooted here permanently as American citizens. From the point of view of APACC's board members and its activities, the presence of Japanese people (as well as second generation Japanese) was, unfortunately not as strongly felt as that of people of other Asian ethnicities.

Through the years, our Consulate has been striving to promote good relations with APAAC and the local Asian community by inviting APACC members to my Official Residence for a variety of dinners

and special events. However, I hope to even further deepen our cooperation with various Asian organizations in the area as I believe we can work together to further our common goals.



Vol. 85: Freer House Lecture

On May 4th I attended a lecture at the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) sponsored by the Freer House. Charles Freer built the Detroit house to showcase his famed collection of fine art, including that of Japan. Unfortunately, we cannot enjoy the collection here, as it was willed to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. and the house eventually became part of the Wayne State University. The program was supported by the Freer House, Wayne State University, the DIA, Japan America Society, UM Center for Japanese Studies and others.

Dr. Yukio Lippitt, a professor of Harvard University, presented the lecture. Like Wayne State University President, Roy Wilson, Dr. Lippitt is a Japanese American. After graduating college he worked at the Guimet Museum in Paris where his eyes were opened to the art of Japan and captured his full attention, eventually becoming the focus of his research. The lecture explored the Kan school of painters in 17th century Japan. As there was a very popular exhibit of Samurai life and culture at the DIA and various Kanō school works on display, the timely presentation drew a large audience. For about four hundred years, from the Muromachi era to the Edo era, the Kanō school of painting in was dominant in Japan. Until now, I hadn't known much about the Kanō school and benefited greatly from the presentation by an American scholar, here in Detroit.

(For more event information related to the Freer House please visit the website of the WSU Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute at <http://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events.php>).

A poster for the Freer House Lecture Series. At the top, it says "THE FREER HOUSE" and "71 East Ferry, Detroit Michigan, 48202 | 313.664-2500". Below this is the text "SPRING 2014" and "An International Landmark... A World Class Lecture Series". The main image is a reproduction of a Japanese painting, likely a Kano school work, showing a landscape with figures. To the right of the painting is a small text box that reads: "Lecture Series: The Art of the Japanese: From the Edo Period to the Present. Spring 2014. Lecture Series: The Art of the Japanese: From the Edo Period to the Present. Spring 2014. Lecture Series: The Art of the Japanese: From the Edo Period to the Present. Spring 2014." Below the painting, the text reads: "In Attendance to the Realm: the Kano School of Painters in 17th Century Japan". The date and time are "SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2:00 PM". The speaker is "Yukio Lippitt, PhD, Professor, History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University". The lecture is at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Marvin & Betty Danto Lecture Hall, 2:00 pm. Free with DIA admission. Reception & Tours are at The Freer House, 3:30 - 5:00 pm. \$5 students, AIAF and Freer House members. Pay at the door. For more information contact Rose Foster at 313.664-2500 or rfoster@wayne.edu. See reverse for lecture & reception details. The program host is David R. Weinberg PhD. Logos for the Japan America Society, Detroit Institute of Arts, Asian Islamic Foundation, MISA, Americana Foundation, Blossoms, The Freer House, and Wayne State University are at the bottom.

(Resource: The Freer House, Wayne State University:

<http://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events.php>)

Vol. 86: NAACP Dinner

I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation to attend the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP's) annual dinner held on May 4th. The Detroit branch of the NAACP is the biggest chapter and its annual dinner is the largest of its kind in the world, with more than 10,000 people in attendance.

This was my first time attending such an event and I must say that it was spectacular. Hundreds of round tables for guests were arranged throughout Cobo Hall in the same grand hall in which the North American International Auto Show is held. In each corner of the room there were rectangular tables on platforms, which sat 45 people each. As I was invited as a special guest, the NAACP Chairperson kindly provided me a seat at one of such tables. I was also introduced to all of the attendees during the dinner program.

Established in 1909, the NAACP is the longest standing civil rights organization in the United States. The Detroit Branch was established in 1912 while this annual dinner was launched in 1956, making this year's the 59th annual dinner. Many notable keynote speakers have attended this event including former Vice President Al Gore in 1999, President Bill Clinton in 2000, Senator Hillary Clinton in 2004, President Barack Obama in 2005, and Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, in 2013. This year's keynote speaker happened to be Dr. Charles J. Ogletree from Harvard Law School.

Many local politicians were also at the event including Senator Carl Levin, Senator Debbie Stabenow, Mayor Duggan of Detroit, Congressman John Conyers Jr., Representative Gary Peters and Representative John Dingell. Interestingly, I noticed that all the politicians at the dinner happened to be democrats.

The Consulate General of Japan is focused on meaningful cooperation and exchange with the City of Detroit. Being invited to attend the annual NAACP dinner was a great honor for me and I believe that we must strive to promote further cooperation and relations between the Japanese and African American communities in this area.

(NAACP Homepage: <http://www.naacp.org/>)

Vol. 87: Deputy Mayor of Detroit, Dr. Isaiah (Ike) McKinnon

On May 6th, I had the pleasure of hosting the deputy mayor of Detroit, Dr. Isaiah McKinnon, and his wife, along with other guests, to a dinner at the official residence. We had a wonderful time getting to know one another and our respective missions.

Last year, while teaching at the University of Detroit Mercy, Dr. McKinnon was tapped by then-mayoral candidate, Mike Duggan, to join his campaign team. Upon Mayor Duggan's eventual election victory, Dr. McKinnon accepted the post of deputy mayor. He has become the mayor's right-hand man, appearing in many public events on behalf of Mayor Duggan and assisting in various revitalization efforts.

Born in 1943, Dr. McKinnon, has led a most impressive life, as detailed in his inspirational autobiography *Stand Tall*. After serving in the U.S. military, Dr. McKinnon joined the city's police department in 1965, becoming one of the first African American police officers in Detroit. Dr. McKinnon's book describes how his encounters with racial discrimination, both in childhood and while on the police force, and also includes humorous and heartwarming anecdotes, including the story of how he met his lovely wife, Patrice.

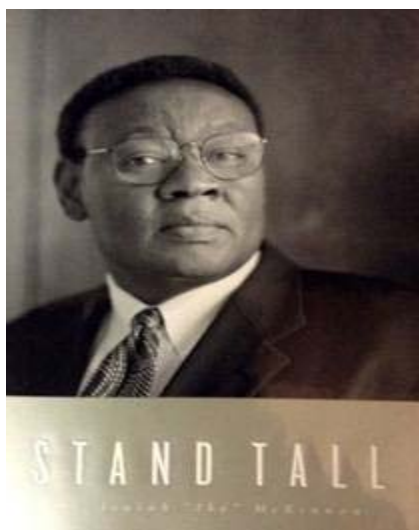
While serving as a policeman, Dr. McKinnon pursued higher education, an unusual path for officers at that time. Eventually, he earned a doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Michigan State University.

From 1994-1998, upon the appointment of then-mayor, Mr. Dennis Archer, Dr. McKinnon was named chief of the Detroit Police Department, (on his first day on the job, the infamous attack on figure skater Nancy Kerrigan occurred at Cobo Hall)!

Dr. McKinnon's father was a catcher in baseball's Negro Leagues and even caught the great Satchell Page. A great athlete and baseball fan himself, Dr. McKinnon has a deep knowledge of both U.S. and Japanese ballplayers. In fact, he presented me with an official Detroit Tiger jersey (a Justin Verlander

model) which I plan to wear when joining Dr. McKinnon at a future game at Comerica Park.

Upon reflecting on Dr. McKinnon's life of challenges, his positive approach to life, faith in humanity and his many personal triumphs and achievements, one cannot help but feel amazed and inspired.



(Left Picture: Dr. McKinnon's Autobiography, Right Picture: Deputy Mayor McKinnon, his wife and others)

Vol. 88: Tulip Time in Holland



On March 7th, with invitation in hand, I headed out with my wife to the west side of Michigan's peninsula to attend the Tulip Time festival in Holland. As its name suggests, Holland is a town that was founded by immigrants from Holland. It is said that Dutch Calvinist migrants founded the town in 1847. Currently, the town has a population of about 33,000 residents and is well known for having an abundance of churches (there are 170 houses of worship in the Greater Holland area alone). The world's largest pickle factory (Heinz Co.) also happens to be here. Holland has local connections to Japan; it is a friendship city to Nagahama in Shiga Prefecture and I hear that the local college offers Japanese language courses.

2014 marks the 85th year for the Tulip Time festival and this year the town was bustling with people who came to view the 6 million tulips that were on display. It was a bit unfortunate that the stars of the festival, the tulips, were a bit late in blooming due to the historically chilly “polar vortex” of this past winter.

The first part of my day was spent at the gymnasium of Hope College. I attended a luncheon with the Mayor of Holland, the Governor of Michigan, local elected officials, the Dutch Ambassador to the US, the Consul General of the Netherlands in Chicago and the Consul General of Mexico in Detroit. In the afternoon, I joined in the Tulip Time parade and from an open car waved to the thousands (perhaps tens of thousands) of festival-goers who lined the sidewalks. Both sides of the car that we were riding in were decorated with placards that identified me as the Consul General of Japan. I thought that it would become a nice little advertisement for Japan. This was a very wonderful event that I had the honor of participating in, but I must admit that I felt a bit shy.

After that, I went sightseeing around a windmill that was brought over from this town’s eponymous country in Europe. The cumulative scenery brought back to me many fond memories of the times that I visited Keukenhof and the Kinderdijk windmills in Holland during the days when I was posted at the Embassy in Belgium, the country next door.

During our visit, we were accompanied by Mr. Christopher Stevens, who learned Japanese at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities in Hikone. He was with us for the entire trip, and he kindly explained the City of Holland to us. I was surprised and impressed by his skillful Japanese speaking ability.

Vol. 89: Ikebana International Event

As I mentioned in Episode 67, there is Ikebana International Chapter 85 here in Detroit and they will celebrate their 50th anniversary next year. In addition, in the State of Michigan there are also chapters in Ann Arbor and Lansing.

On May 14th there was an event organized by the Detroit Chapter in the City of Southfield, which I attended with my wife. About 60 to 70 people interested in ikebana gathered for the event, which made me a bit nervous since all but 2 or 3 were women. Ikebana International welcomes all styles of ikebana and on that day we enjoyed demonstrations by teachers of various schools including ikenobo, sogetsu and ichiyo. Ikebana International, founded in Tokyo in 1956 by an American woman, has grown to more 160 chapters throughout 60 countries and regions around the world and now has about 8000 members. An American woman, inspired by Japanese culture, introduced this traditional Japanese art to the world and it is now received by many as global culture, which continues to promote deeper understanding of Japan and has become a great means to heighten the friendly exchanges between countries and regions around the globe. The Consulate General truly values our great friendship with Ikebana International.



Vol. 90: CAPA Cultural Evening

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and each year, during the month of May, a variety of events celebrating Asian Pacific Americans are held. On May 17, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the Council of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA) *Splendor of the East* Cultural Evening event held at the Performing Arts Center in Dearborn.

Established in 2001, CAPA's mission is to unite Asian Pacific Americans and the community at-large through culture, education, and community service. Since its establishment, CAPA has been steadily strengthening its partnership with the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC) as well.

The State of Michigan has taken note of the important contributions to the Michigan economy by Asian immigrants as well as Asian American residents. In fact, Governor Snyder was also an honored guest at the *Splendor of the East* event. While JBSD and Toyota contributed to the event as sponsors, I was specially introduced as the only Consul General from an East Asian country in this area. As such, I believe we were able to showcase Japan's presence at this event; nonetheless, the number of Japanese and Japanese American residents in this area remains small in comparison with other Asian American groups.

During the show, we enjoyed cultural performances from China, Korea, the Philippines and even Oceania. As for Japan, there was one act which featured a Filipino and a Polynesian woman (wearing kimono-like dresses) who sang and danced to a Japanese song entitled "Koko Ni Sachi Ari," or "I Found Happiness Here." While it was an unexpected and surprising performance, I felt that the performer sang quite nicely and I would like to express my humble appreciation to CAPA for including a Japanese performance in this event.

While in the immediate future, the number of Japanese and Japanese American residents in this area is not expected to increase significantly compared with residents of other Asian ethnic origins, I would sincerely like to see the local Japanese and Japanese American community have a significant presence and play a strong role in activities among Asian American groups.

Vol. 91: Sekishu Ryu Tea Ceremony

On May 18th, a delegation of Sekishu-Ryu tea masters from the Ikei-kai group came to Detroit all the way from Niigata in order to give two tea ceremony demonstrations at the Detroit Institute of Arts as part of the *Samurai: Beyond the Sword* exhibit.

While the Sekishu School may not be as well known as other tea ceremony schools (such as Uransenke), it is a distinguished school that started from samurai lineage and is still popular today, especially in castle towns. Another interesting feature of Sekishu-Ryu is that, unlike other schools, practitioners need not be bloodline descendents of former masters.

One of the members of the delegation had been a practitioner of Sekishu Ryu Tea Ceremony for 65 years and this was her 5th visit to Detroit. In the seven member delegation, two of the members were in their 80's. I must say that they all were healthy and looked great. The women mentioned to me that on their way to Detroit, their flight was delayed at Narita airport for four hours. Although they were originally supposed to board a direct flight to Detroit, because of the long delay, they had to stop in Seattle. I sincerely thank them for making the long journey to Detroit.

The Sekishu-Ryu tea ceremony demonstration at the DIA attracted many American participants and I truly feel that the event partnered perfectly with the ongoing Samurai Exhibit. In fact, one audience member was so impressed by the demonstration that he decided to begin studying the art of tea ceremony himself. Our office was so pleased to receive this distinguished delegation from Japan as it was a wonderful way to share Japanese culture with the local community. The Consulate General of Japan looks forward to continuing to support such cultural events for years to come.



If you haven't yet heard, the Shinola brand has become quite a sensation. Originally a shoe polish brand dating back to 1929, Shinola was purchased by the owner of Fossil, Inc. three years ago. Leveraging the image and history of Detroit as the quintessential American manufacturing center, Shinola's headquarters and factory were established in a former General Motors research lab, within the College for Creative Studies. Timepieces, bikes, and leather goods are now produced there daily.

As the U.S. government aims to boost domestic manufacturing, Shinola's investment is an intriguing opportunity for Detroit to contribute to this goal—just as it has done so strongly in the past.

In addition to creating much needed manufacturing employment in the city, Shinola has quickly become an active player in the resurgent midtown area and recently donated and installed four large clocks throughout the city at different locations including Eastern Market, Cobo Center, Midtown and the College for Creative Studies. The clocks are reportedly inspired by city clocks that became popular attractions on sidewalks of American cities in the 1800s.

Shinola watches are generally priced in the range of \$500 - \$1,000. While their movements are made in Switzerland, all design and assembly is done in Detroit. Retail outlets are located here and in New York City and online purchasing is also available; there's a Japanese website, and overseas retail shops, including in Japan, are in the works.

On May 20th, the MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) kindly arranged a facility visit for the consulate and other Japan related organizations. We witnessed many passionate craftsmen engrossed in very precise work. According to TIME magazine, Shinola produced 50,000 timepieces last year and is on track to produce 150,000 this year, with \$100 million in sales and an initial annual profit predicted for 2017.

Shinola watches are quickly becoming favorites of well-known figures such as former-president Bill Clinton, Gov. Rick Snyder, actress Kerry Washington, amongst others. In fact, Mr. Clinton toured the facility just a few weeks prior to our visit.

I recommend you to make your next watch purchase a Shinola--in the spirit of a rebounding U.S. manufacturing sector and a resurgent Detroit! And, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my great thanks to Mr. Peter Shin (pictured below) who treated us to a fascinating and most inspiring tour.



Vol. 93: The Smart 50 Awards

On May 22nd, I had a pleasure to attend a reception, which was held in Cleveland to honor outstanding entrepreneurs. Fifty entrepreneurs from small, medium and large scale firms in northeast Ohio that excelled in the categories of innovation, impact and sustainability (the “Smart 50”) were awarded during this ceremony. Dr. Hiroyuki Fujita, CEO of QED (Quality Electrodynamics, a medical device manufacturer and developer) was the only Japanese person chosen to be one of the Smart 50. This was certainly very noteworthy, but even more notable than this was the fact that Dr. Fujita was presented with a special award for the impact category among small-sized firms. The consulate is very proud that the contributions of the Japanese to the local community have been praised so highly. At this event, I cannot but recognize the presence of American culture as a motivator, which supports, encourages and respects entrepreneurs who incessantly create new value and wealth for society. This culture, which has birthed successful business models such as Amazon, Google, Facebook and countless others, is surely becoming a leading, world-wide driving force.



Vol. 94: Grand Rapids and Japanese Garden

A little more than a two hour drive northwest of Detroit is the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is the second largest city in the State of Michigan with a population around 190,000 people. It is also the hometown of former President Gerald Ford, and the location of his Presidential Museum where he is interred. The region’s abundant lumber resources led to a flourishing furniture industry (currently predominantly office furniture) the headquarters of Amway Corporation is nearby and Grand Rapids is the sister city of Omihachiman in Shiga, Japan.

On May 23rd I visited the Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park, just 5 miles away, and received a tour of the park with the Director, David Hooker. Meijer is a supermarket chain throughout Michigan and is credit with being among the first self-serve markets as well as the first hypermarket in the U.S. The company also made very generous donations to Japan for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The vast Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park with its various outdoor themed gardens, huge conservatory, outdoor amphitheater, and world-class sculptures (scattered throughout are works by renowned sculptors as Rodin and Mirō, and a Spider by Bourgeois as in Roppongi Hills) drew 600,000 visitors last year.

Currently under construction is a Japanese garden, which will be the largest in the Midwest when it is completed next June. Designed by a Japanese American, the much anticipated garden and teahouse is surely becoming a reality. Next January, preceding the garden’s completion, Meijer Gardens will host *Splendor of Shiga* a special exhibition of Shiga Prefecture, Michigan’s sister state. By all means, please try to visit.

(Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park website: <http://www.meijergardens.org/>)

Vol. 95: The Mackinac Policy Conference (MPC)

There is a place called Mackinac Island, located on Lake Huron, just east of the straits which separate Michigan's two peninsulas. "Mackinac" is a Native Indian/French word (modified later by the English) the pronunciation of which often confuses newcomers. A unique feature of the island is its lack of motor vehicles (only emergency vehicles are permitted); instead, horse-drawn carriages and bicycles are the common modes of transportation.

The island is home to a well-known policy meeting called The Mackinac Policy Conference (MPC) sponsored annually by the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce. I was fortunate enough to attend this year's MPC from May 27th-30th.

Conference events are held at the island's premier hotel, known as The Grand Hotel. Established in 1887, The Grand Hotel is famous for its "world's longest porch", which measures about 200 meters. The hotel is closed in the winter, as the island's surrounding waters often freeze; however, it is crowded with tourists from spring to autumn. I'm told that a number of former presidents and many famous people have stayed there over the years. In fact, the 1980 movie, *Somewhere in Time* (a film quite popular with Japanese audiences) was shot there.

At this year's conference, about 1,500 participants, representing the state's top government officials, business people, academics, non-profit leaders and media members joined various lectures, workshops, receptions and networking events. The two dominating conference themes were Detroit's revitalization and the upcoming mid-term elections.

Considering the many powerful leaders gathered and the ability to interact intimately, I feel that the MPC is a prime forum at which to raise the visibility of Japan and promote the impressive economic, academic and cultural relations we enjoy here.

(Further information about Mackinac Island can be found at:
<http://www.michigan.org/hot-spots/mackinac-island/>)

Vol. 96: Dublin Memorial Golf Tournament Reception

On the 31st of May, I co-hosted a luncheon reception with the City of Dublin at the Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio on the occasion of PGA's 2014 Memorial Tournament. We had a very enjoyable time with a Dublin councilman (and former mayor), the President of the Japan America Society, the former Honorary Consul General of Japan, Japan-affiliated company leaders and other Japanese and American friends.

This course was designed by Major Champion Jack Nicklaus, who was born and raised in nearby Columbus. He was the winner of 18 major tournaments and is still regarded as the greatest professional golfer of all time. Mr. Nicklaus once said, "The longer you play, the better chance that the better player has of winning." Personally, I discovered more than ten years ago that I was not good at golf and gave up the sport. But his statement reminds me there is great similarity between golf and life.

Dublin is home to the greatest number of Japanese residents in the state of Ohio (about 2,000) and I truly appreciate such opportunities to have these kinds of goodwill exchanges with the residents here.

The weather was perfect for this third round and I had the chance to watch the play of Ryo Ishikawa and Hideki Matsuyama. Both golfers advanced to the final round and I was delighted when Mr. Matsuyama, with 13 under par, won First Place in a sudden-death playoff, making him the 4th Japanese player on the US PGA Tour ever to win it.

(2014 The Memorial Tournament:
<http://thememorialtournament.com/>
Muirfield Village:
<http://www.nicklaus.com/design/muirfieldvillage/>)

Vol. 97: Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan

Japan's Cabinet Office initiated a new project called Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan this year. Participants were selected through an open-application process to take part in goodwill missions to the United States aimed at deepening and furthering Japan-US mutual understanding at the grassroots level.

The first delegation, led by former ambassador of Japan to the United States Ichiro Fujisaki, visited the State of Ohio and held panel discussions in the Columbus suburb of Dublin on June 2nd and in Cincinnati on June 3rd. The team was comprised of an expert in the field of energy resources, a female entrepreneur and two university freshmen, in addition to the Ambassador, for a total of five. The local Japan America Societies kindly supported the events with nearly 100 people from various fields attending. A wide variety of topics were discussed, such as entrepreneurship, Abenomics, TPP, security and East Asian issues, energy resources and the status of women in Japanese society. I hope the diverse panel and frank exchange of views has disproved some of the stereotypical views of Japan.

Thanks to the Japanese investment in Ohio, these areas are very friendly toward Japan, however I believe this delegation has played a valuable role in deepening and furthering the relationship between Japan and Ohio. The energetic delegation members were interviewed by the local media in each city and also visited the home of the Moore family in Lebanon, Ohio who had worked diligently promoting a park reconstruction project in Ishinomaki of Miyagi Prefecture, after being destroyed in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami disaster. It was a great honor for me to receive Ambassador Fujisaki, who was a former boss of mine in Ohio – part of my jurisdiction.

In addition, during the reception, I was happy to introduce the appointment of Dr. Santa Ono (president of the University of Cincinnati) as Japan's Honorary Consul of Japan in Cincinnati.



Vol. 98: White Pine Glee Club Family Concert

On June 1st. White Pine Glee Club (WPGC) held its 16th annual family concert. Unfortunately, I was away on a business trip so my wife attended the event on my behalf. First, the choir showed off their great singing voices with the “WPGC Anthem.” They then sang some family-friendly songs that were enjoyed by children and adults alike. The men’s voices were robust and my wife was quite fascinated by the a cappella songs which were so clear and smooth.

For this special event, the women’s choir group Trillium also performed. According to my wife, their voices were mellow and lovely, giving her the feeling that fresh violets were blooming right there in the concert hall. In addition, a women’s taiko drum group called “Shuon,” which was formed especially for this concert, also performed. This taiko drum performance was powerful and inspiring. Finally, the men’s and women’s choir groups joined together and sang in perfect harmony for a sweet ending to a

wonderful concert. All of the performers had a special twinkle in their eyes, as though they had returned to childhood. Their enthusiasm and sincerity truly warmed the audience members' hearts.

After hearing about this concert, it became clear to me that White Pine Glee Club, Trillium and Shuon are very important contributors to the metro Detroit community.



Vol. 99: Meeting of Japanese Language Supplemental Schools

On the 3rd and 4th of June, there was a meeting of Japanese language Saturday schools from the Midwest held in Metro Detroit. After the meeting, I invited the members to a small round-table conference and buffet luncheon at my official residence. In addition to the principals and school administrative representatives from the nearly 20 schools, this time I also had the pleasure of greeting representatives of other groups, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, from Tokyo. This was an excellent opportunity to exchange opinions and meaningful information regarding education. Establishing an educational environment for the Japanese schools overseas is a critical point that will prepare the next generation of Japanese to play an important role in the global society. I would like not only to broadly share the challenges of overseas Japanese language Saturday schools with the people of Japan, but also to coordinate with the stakeholder to make improvements to the educational environment, starting with the maintained stability of excellent teaching staff.



Vol. 100: The Annual Dinner of Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario

On June 4th about 90 guests enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario Annual Dinner held at the Oakland Hills Country Club in Metro Detroit. The Governor of Michigan, as well as the Consul General of Canada and I are appointed as honorary chairmen; the president of the Japanese company INOAC USA, Mr. Chuck Little is the Chairman and Ms. Liseann Gouin is the society's president.

Former Detroit mayor, Dennis Archer, who previously served as the JAS chairman, kindly joined us though he had just returned from a New York business trip. In addition, Mr. David Hooker, director of the Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, was invited as a special guest. That evening he presented a slideshow of the smooth progression of the Japanese Garden currently under construction in the park and slated to be completed next June. As I touched upon in Volume 94, when completed it will be one of the largest Japanese gardens in the Midwest region and hopefully will become a center for cultural exchange.

The Japan America Society will celebrate its 25th Anniversary next year, and together we are closely collaborating to organize various exchange programs. Within my jurisdiction the states of

Michigan and Ohio have three Japan America Societies: JAS Greater Cincinnati, JAS Central Ohio and JAS Michigan and Southwest Ontario. Each of them hosted a special event in their respective regions on consecutive days: June 2nd, June 3rd and June 4th and I was happy to attend them all. We truly value our strong partnership with the Japan America Societies.



Vol. 101: JANO Sakura Picnic

On June 8th, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the annual Sakura Memorial Picnic sponsored by the Japan Association of Northeast Ohio (JANO). The picnic was held at the Cleveland Metroparks Brookside Reservation, located about three hours from our home. JANO was founded in 1991 and currently there are 17 Japanese companies as well as 80 Japanese families (around 200 people) residing in Northeast Ohio who have become JANO members.

Unlike the Southwest and Central Ohio areas, there is no longer a Japan America Society located in Northeast Ohio. Thankfully, JANO has been playing an important role in promoting U.S.-Japan exchanges throughout Northeast Ohio. Since 1996, to show its gratitude to the local community, JANO has been providing residents the opportunity to experience the true beauty of cherry blossom trees by planting them throughout the community. JANO also gained support from the Mitsui Environment Fund last year and has planted a total of 234 cherry trees, so far – 159 in Cleveland and 75 in Akron. Because of its great contributions to the local community, JANO was chosen as a recipient of the prestigious Foreign Minister's Commendation back in 2012.

I was a bit worried about the weather that day since it had been raining quite heavily in the morning, but quite fortunately, the rain stopped shortly before the event and it turned out to be a pleasant day! Guests at the picnic had the opportunity to try Japanese cuisine while also enjoying various traditional games and dances.

Since visiting Cleveland for the first time back in January to attend JANO's New Year's party, I have returned to Cleveland frequently in order to meet various local government, education and business representatives, making this my sixth, or once a month, visit to the area. The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit looks forward to strengthening cooperation with JANO in order to further promote U.S.-Japan relations and exchanges.

Vol. 102: Ohio University Visit

On June 10th, I made the journey to Athens, Ohio (located more than 5 hours by car to the south of Detroit) in order to pay a visit to Ohio University. Though it may sound like it, there is no connection between Athens, Ohio and Greece. Established in 1804, Ohio University is the oldest University in Ohio. In fact, the Executive Vice President showed me a picture of Murayama Sakitarou, the first Japanese student, who graduated from OU all the way back in 1895.

Currently, there are 4,200 graduate students, more than 17,000 undergraduate students, and 1,700 international students studying at OU. Among them, 600 students are from China while only 40 are from Japan. Despite this, I was pleased to learn that there are 180 students enrolled in Japanese with 17

language classes being offered.

Dr. Thompson (professor of Japanese Studies) and Mr. Sugiyama (president of the Japanese Students Association) kindly showed me around the campus that day. I was so pleased to see the 200 cherry blossom trees, which were a gift from Chubu University, planted throughout the campus. Following the tour, I enjoyed lunch with Vice President Pam Benoit at the Yamada House, which was named after Dr. Yamada, the former President of Chubu University.

Following the lunch, I gave a speech about Ohio-Japan relations to 25 people including American students of Japanese, Japanese international students and faculty members involved with Japanese studies. The university was very enthusiastic about supporting the idea of matching Japanese language students with Japanese companies located in Ohio.

Following the OU visit, I attended a fundraising event in the Columbus area held by the Japan America Society. That day, I left home at 6:45am and returned around 11:45pm. While I spent more than 10 hours roundtrip in the car, I feel that this voyage was worthwhile and am very glad that I had the chance to visit Ohio University.

(Ohio University Official Website: <http://www.ohio.edu/>)

Vol. 103: Japanese Investors' Reception Co-host with the Governor of Ohio

In the great state of Ohio there are 425 Japanese owned facilities. Japanese firms collectively provide around 70,000 jobs to local residents and Japan is the largest foreign investor in the state. As Ohio is such an active part of the consulate's jurisdiction, I find myself traveling there quite frequently.

On June 13th, I traveled to the capital city of Columbus to attend, as co-host together with Governor John Kasich, a reception to honor the investment of Japanese companies to the Buckeye state. On the way there, I visited the office of Senator Rob Portman (former Congressional Representative and U.S. Trade Representative) and had a short meeting with his staff members, who very kindly took time from their day to meet with me.

Later on that afternoon, the Governor kindly opened his official residence to host the reception. There were over 100 guests in attendance: Representatives from Japanese companies, the state government of Ohio, the Jobs Ohio economic development corporation and its affiliated regional agencies, as well as the Honorary Consul General of Japan in Cincinnati and the President of JETRO's Chicago office. I delivered some short remarks about the Japanese presence in Ohio by giving specific numbers, and invited the Governor to visit Japan (we are looking forward to his first visit).



The event was much more than a simple reception. For close to an hour, the Governor himself called all attendees to attention and directly asked for and listened to the opinions and questions from the guests. He also had the government/economic development representatives provide answers, and, in response to many of the concerns, Governor Kasich setup a follow-up meeting for the attendees. I was thoroughly impressed to see the Governor's keen business sense and results-focused actions. Consequently, many of the companies in attendance seemed to be suffering from a shortage of workers.

Overall it was a wonderful event, and I am looking forward to nurturing deeper ties between Ohio and Japan.

Vol. 104: Ringo Kai Sports Field Day

On June 14th, I had the pleasure of visiting the Detroit Japanese Saturday School's (Ringo Kai's) sports field day which was held on the school's athletic field. About 900 students are enrolled at Ringo Kai from kindergarten all the way through high school. This event was well attended with about 2,000 people including parents, friends and other guests. The local staff from the Novi Board of Education also joined as special guests. This was my first time taking part in a Japanese school's sports field day in about 30 years and I even had a chance to enjoy performing musical gymnastics for the first time in decades.

Many high school students took part in the festivities as volunteers that day. The competitions included running races, tug of war games, relays as well as other exciting events. The kindergarten children even danced to the recent popular song "Fortune Cookie Love" as well!

This day reminded me fondly of when I was an elementary school student in the Japanese countryside. I recalled the excitement and nervousness I always felt before the annual sports field day. Back then, it was truly a festival enjoyed by the entire community. I sincerely hope the students at Ringo Kai will continue to exercise their bodies and minds by practicing sports and studying hard!



Vol. 105: Detroit River Cruise

On June 14th my wife and I enjoyed a wonderful evening cruise on the Detroit River aboard the Detroit Princess Riverboat. We boarded about 6:30pm from the dock near Cobo Center and were greeted with a buffet dinner and cocktails from the cash bar. The boat departed around 7:30pm and cruised along the river until we passed Belle Isle when it turned back, reaching the dock around 9:30pm.

Along the riverside the City of Detroit glowed in the evening light. It is the first time for me to see downtown Detroit around the GM Renaissance Center this beautifully. The return route allowed a view from near the Canadian riverbank. As this cruise had a Motown Dinner theme, we were entertained

with a hit parade of live Motown music.

Though the food was fairly standard, the impressive boat, lively music and splendid scenery make this a very worthy excursion to try. The boat operates mainly on weekends.



Vol. 106: 2014 Michigan Consular Corps Forum

The 2014 Michigan Consular Corps Forum was held on June 16th at The Henry Ford in Dearborn. Participants included consular corps members: consuls general, consuls and honorary consuls general; Michigan governmental officials; leaders of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; chambers of commerce representatives; and local entrepreneurs, amongst others.

Following several presentations and panel discussions, Governor Snyder delivered a speech then hosted a lovely reception. I learned that this gathering was previously held at the governor's official residence in Lansing and was more ceremonial in nature; however, this year—at the suggestion consular corps—a new locale and more substantive format were introduced.

Governor Snyder's remarks were typically upbeat and emphasized his desire to grow business and investment between Michigan and its international partners. I was particularly impressed with the governor's strong belief that diversity—and in particular, welcoming highly educated and entrepreneurial immigrants—is key to powering Michigan's growth.

I wish to again express my admiration and appreciation for Governor Snyder's forward-looking policies and his tireless leadership of Michigan's great comeback.



Vol. 107: Novi Public Library

On June 19th I visited the Novi Public Library at the kind invitation of Mr. Ramesh Verma, who is a member of the board of directors as well as a member of the MAPAAC (Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission). I took a tour of the library with the Director, Ms. Julie Farkas. I found the wonderful two-story establishment also has a café on the first floor. To make the library more accessible to

the roughly 3,000 Japanese residents in the city of Novi, there are library guide pamphlets written in Japanese and a corner of the library full of Japanese books and resources. The library is open seven days a week, including Sundays. The hours of operation vary based on the day, but because it is a public library anyone can gain access. On the day of my visit the library opened at 10:00 am, but there were already people waiting outside before then. Novi residence and members of other public libraries in partner cities are free to use the library, and there does not seem to be a limit on the number of books they can borrow. In addition to books, they have DVDs, computers, and an Internet access, contributing to the pleasant feeling of the library. Every time I see this kind of establishment, I feel the strength of the foundation for the American society. I hope everyone will actively use this establishment.



Vol. 108: Slovenian Statehood Day Reception hosted by the Consul General of Slovenia

On June 23rd I went to Cleveland, Ohio in order to attend the Slovenian Statehood Day Reception hosted by the Consul General of Slovenia. This reception was held to commemorate Slovenia's independence which was established in June of 1991.

My jurisdiction includes the states of Ohio and Michigan. Seven countries have consulates/consulates general located in the state of Michigan, while Slovenia boasts the only Consulate General located in the state of Ohio. Along with Ohio, the Consulate General of Slovenia has jurisdiction over 10 states including: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

According to the Consulate General of Slovenia's website, in the year 2000 there were about 175,000 people of Slovenian descent living in the United States while three quarters of these Slovenes lived in six states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin and California. Unofficial estimates of the number of Slovenes in the United States and their descendants are even higher, varying from 300,000 to 600,000. The first wave of immigrants from Slovenia came to the United States during the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century while the second wave came following World War II.

I had a pleasant evening and especially enjoyed the performance by a local Slovenian choir group called Mi Smo Mi. I very much look forward to inviting the Consul General of Slovenia to attend my office's Emperor's Birthday Reception which will be held in the Metro Detroit area this coming fall.

Vol. 109: Japan-US Baseball Exchange and the Detroit Tigers

It has been 106 years since the first time a professional baseball team from the United States

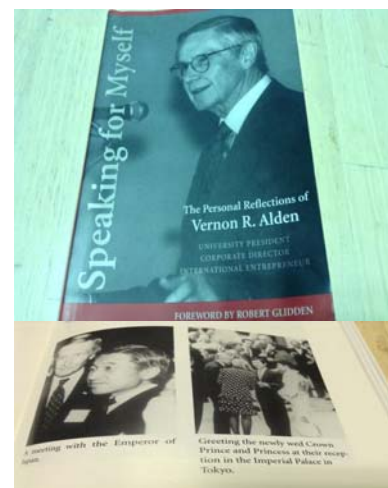
visited Japan in 1908. However, the image printed in my mind from books and television is of the US delegation including Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig visiting Japan in 1934 and of the Japanese pitcher Eiji Sawamura striking out those famous US players. Although Japan was beaten in that game 0-1, it was a historic game for Japan and signaled the start of the Japanese professional league. Unfortunately, in those dark times, Sawamura died in the war and the revival of Japan-US exchanges had to wait until after the war was over. In 1962, the Detroit Tigers visited Japan. In an interesting coincidence, this year the Hanshin Tigers won the Central League championship. Also, in the game series with the Japanese team and Detroit Tigers, Minoru Murayama of the Hanshin Tigers pitched in the starting lineup of the All-Japan team. For the first time in history, Murayama won the game by pitching from beginning to end in a complete game shutout and the Hanshin Tigers won without the US team getting any points and with only one pitcher. The Cincinnati Reds, another team in the jurisdiction of our consulate, also went to Japan in 1978. Since 1995, when Japanese pitcher Hideo Nomo joined the Los Angeles Dodgers, professional baseball players in Japan are now actively joining in the major leagues in earnest. The World Baseball Classic, (WBC), championship has also started. In the United States and Japan, I am reminded that baseball is a very powerful tool to promote exchange.

(Reference: Masaru Hatano's 日米野球史—メジャーを追いかけた70年— (translation: *Baseball History Between Japan & America: 70 Years Catching Up with the Major Leagues*), published 2001, PHP Publishing)



Vol. 110: Mr. Vernon Alden

In Vol. 102 I introduced the story of my visit to Ohio University. Vernon Roger Alden, a former president of the school, has long had a very active and close relationship with Japan. Mr. Alden was born in Chicago in 1923, studied Japanese at Naval Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado and during the Second World War served on the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga. Following the war, he graduated from Harvard Business School, later becoming its associate dean. He left Harvard, and at 38 years old, became the 15th president of Ohio University. His presidency had a great impact on the university with significant growth in student enrollment and broad campus expansion during the 60's. Later he became chairman of the Boston Company, and additionally served as the president of the Japan America Society of Boston (for forty years) as well as president of the National Association of Japan-America Societies. During his time at Harvard Business School



he helped to establish the Keio University Business School, and following President Carter's inauguration, was one of the two remaining candidates for ambassadorship to Japan, which ultimately went to Mike Mansfield. In 1985 The Order of the Rising Sun was conferred upon Mr. Alden and I saw the certificate at Ohio University hanging in the library that bears his name. Mr. Alden is now over 90 years of age and in good health.

Vol. 111: Michigan's Upper Peninsula

My wife and I took a summer vacation from June 28th to July 3rd and enjoyed a six day, five night trip in northern Michigan. As Consul General it is preferred that we remain within our jurisdiction in the event of an emergency, so I chose to explore a bit more of Michigan. In particular, I wanted to visit the Upper Peninsula, since I had heard so much about it and had not yet had the opportunity to go.

After spending the first three days in Traverse City and on Mackinac Island, we finally crossed the Mackinac Bridge into the U.P. While driving along, the air became noticeably cooler and surprisingly, I had to switch from air conditioning to heat. We spent one night in the City of Marquette and one night in Munising; we visited the Tahquamenon Falls and took a boat cruise on Lake Superior to view the Pictured Rocks along the shoreline; and, we truly relaxed – enjoying nature's beauty and strolling leisurely through the towns. Abandoned mines and rustic lighthouses recall the bustling days long-past of Michigan's copper and ore rushes.

In the Upper Peninsula, the forests and lakes continue on as far as the eye can see, and as for the population, only Marquette has more than 20,000 people. Lake Superior is the largest fresh water lake in the world – greater in size than the entire area of Hokkaido. Its amazing size seemed to continue far beyond the horizon, even larger than the Seto Island Sea in Japan that I frequented as a child.

The Upper Peninsula is generally snow covered in winter, but summer offers fresh air, wide blue skies, beautiful lakes, rich forests, delicious fresh fish and gentle, warm-hearted people. For a relaxing change-of-pace it is a wonderful place to enjoy a summer holiday. I highly recommend to the Japanese people living in Michigan and Ohio to take an opportunity to visit the U.P. during their stay here. Even though the roundtrip from Metro Detroit was about 1,200 miles, it is a very impressive trip!



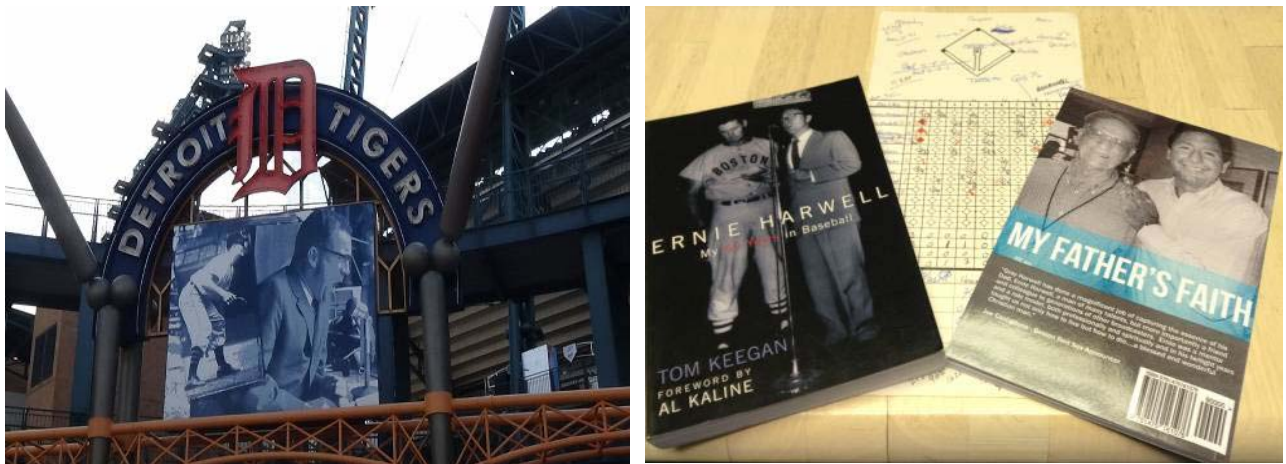
Vol. 112: Mr. Ernie Harwell

A recent dinner guest at our official residence kindly presented me with an autographed photo, scorecard and audio scorebooks of Mr. Ernie Harwell. Although I had not previously heard of this legendary baseball broadcaster, I've since learned just how beloved he is by local baseball fans, and even non-fans, alike.

Mr. Harwell was born in the state of Georgia in 1918. In 1948 he became the only broadcaster in baseball history to be traded for another player, moving to the Brooklyn Dodgers organization. He arrived in Detroit in 1960 and became the voice of the Tigers. Over the next 40 plus years Mr. Harwell made tremendous contributions to the ball club and community, until his retirement in 2002.

Mr. Harwell was known for his soothing, low-key, southern drawl; a deep knowledge of the game and its unique characters; and his trademark "Long Gone" homerun call. He was honored by the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1981 and elected to the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame and the National Radio Hall of Fame in 1998.

Although Mr. Harwell unfortunately passed away in 2010 at the age of 92, we can learn more about his fascinating life in *Ernie*. This local play frequently runs at The City Theatre, which is walking distance to Comerica Park. I am looking forward to seeing it soon.



Vol. 113: Toyota City and Detroit's Sister-City Exchange

Next year will mark the 55th Anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Toyota City and the City of Detroit, which began in 1960. A Toyota City delegation led by Mayor Ota and Mr. Tsuzuki of the Toyota City Council visited Detroit and met Mayor Duggan and other officials of the City of Detroit to discuss commemorative events for the 55th Anniversary. I was fortunate to meet with Mayor Ota and his delegation on July 9th and 10th which provided me an opportunity to exchange ideas with them and local Japanese business leaders.

Between Michigan and Japan, there are 28 sister relationships, including a sister-state relationship enjoyed with Shiga Prefecture and the sister cities of Detroit and Toyota. In alternating years Detroit and Toyota dispatch high school student delegations for a two-week exchange.

Currently, Toyota City is planning special events for the upcoming 55th Anniversary, including a concert tour by their Junior Orchestra. I believe this initiative from Toyota will be a great encouragement for Detroit as it emerges from its financial crisis. Although I understand that Mayor Duggan is busy, I sincerely hope that he has a chance to visit Japan, including the City of Toyota, during this special anniversary. In a prior meeting with him, even in the middle of the severe financial situation, he confirmed the importance of continuing our exchange with the City of Toyota. The sister relationship is an integral part of the grassroots exchange between the U.S. and Japan.

Recently, I wrote letters to all the leaders of the 28 sister cities. While explaining the recent outline of exchanges between Japan and Michigan, I also requested that they share information relating to sister city exchanges, since we, as the Japanese Consulate, would like to actively participate and support such events. While collaborating with our local Japanese businesses, I want to further support the

development of the relationship between Toyota City and Detroit.



Vol. 114: Opinion Exchange Meeting with Mayor Duggan and the Consular Corps

On July 15th, the City of Detroit kindly hosted an opinion exchange forum between the Mayor Mike Duggan and members of the Consular Corps at City Hall. The event was attended by consuls general, consuls and honorary consuls who represent around 20 countries including Iraq, Lebanon, Macedonia, Italy and, of course, Japan.

Further strengthening our economic relationships with the city of Detroit was the central theme of the event. Building upon this subject, I invited the mayor to visit Japan as Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture will be celebrating the 55th anniversary of continuous sister city relations with Detroit next year. Such a visit would become an important opportunity for the mayor to directly address the Japanese people to explain how Detroit is making progress toward recovery, and to attract investment from Japan. Mayor Duggan was enthusiastic about visiting Japan.

I also announced a project to drive home the message to Japan and the world about Detroit's comeback. A group of Japanese volunteers has been hard at work on making a music video of the Detroit version of a Japanese hit song, "Fortune Cookie in Love." The mayor, deputy mayor and members of the Consular Corps expressed great interest.



Vol. 115: Yasu-Clinton Township Sister City Exchange

On July 15th, I had the opportunity to attend the Clinton Township Japan Festival which was held at the Township's local library. Clinton Township, which is about 45 minutes northeast of Detroit, has been enjoying friendly sister-city relations with the city of Yasu, Japan since 1993. Delegations of both Clinton Township and Yasu have been alternating visits each year in order to take part in home stays and learn about each other's cultures. This year, 12 Yasu citizens, children and adults, are visiting Clinton Township and are staying with home stay families in the area.

Many people, including the Township Supervisor, the Director of the Yasu International Friendship Association and local members of the community, gathered together for the Japan Festival. Guests had the chance to enjoy a variety of Japanese cuisine, traditional games and activities including calligraphy, origami and dressing in kimono and yukata. We also had the opportunity to watch some traditional taiko drum performances. Yasu is very famous for its "mukade" or "centipede" drum.

We were fortunate enough that Mr. Matthew Richards, who once lived in Yasu City, fascinated by the "mukade" drum and worked as a president of its preservation club, came all the way from Cleveland with his taiko group. Amazingly, his team performed together with the young drummers from Yasu for the first time that day. Despite having very little chance to practice, I was amazed by how well Matthew Richards' team and the Yasu children were able to collaborate and perform so passionately for the crowd.



Vol. 116: Heidelberg Project

On July 18th, I went on a tour of the impressive Heidelberg Project on Detroit's east side. In an interesting coincidence, my guide has a younger brother who is in the U.S. Navy and is stationed in Sasebo, Japan where he lives with his Japanese wife.

The Heidelberg Project is an outdoor art exhibit that uses abandoned houses and spans two city blocks. It was started by Tyree Guyton and his grandfather in 1986. When Mr. Guyton returned to Detroit from serving in the Army, he was shocked by the blight that had encroached upon his neighborhood. He was inspired to make something that would improve the lives and sense of community in the area, so he started painting and decorating the abandoned building with his artwork. To this day, many people from hundreds of countries have come to visit this art project—even some notable celebrities including Madonna and the late Michael Jackson.

There has been word that the Heidelberg Project has faced great difficulty. It has been closed twice due to the city's redevelopment plans and, just last year, there were six incidents of arson. Nevertheless, I was impressed by the team of dedicated people behind this project which demonstrated the creativity of Detroit residents and their hopes for a bright future. I highly appreciate they are doing their very best in the face of adversity.



Vol. 117: Visit to Kalamazoo

On July 27th, I visited the city of Kalamazoo, which is located about two-and-a-half hours from Detroit. The city is actually situated equidistant from Detroit and Chicago and I'm told that its economy is more somewhat influenced by Chicago than by southeastern Michigan. Kalamazoo is also the place where some 110 years ago, the famous Japanese novelist, Nagai Kafu, studied for one year. His experiences there were reflected upon in his famous work, *Amerika Monogatari* (*American Stories*) 1908.

For over 50 years Kalamazoo has enjoyed sister-city ties with Numazu city, which is located in Shizuoka Prefecture. Goodwill delegations are alternately dispatched each year. This time, 18 delegates were in town from Numazu. Comprised mostly of young people, these delegates enjoyed various activities with their Kalamazoo hosts including homestays, sporting events, museums, and enjoying the local culture of southwest Michigan. I was honored to be included in the Welcome Dinner at the kind invitation of sister-city president, Mr. Robert Meilinger. Other attendees included U.S. Congressman Fred Upton, Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell, various community representatives, host families and, of course, the Numazu delegates. A great time was had by all!

In my brief remarks at dinner, I touched upon the fact that Michigan has a wonderful sister-state relationship with Shiga Prefecture and 27 statewide sister-city relationships with Japan—much more than any other state in the Midwest. I am always so happy to attend such grassroots exchanges and to witness the warm friendships between our people. Indeed, the consulate gladly promotes and provides any possible support for such sister-city activities.

Prior to the Welcome Dinner, I had the chance to sit down with Congressman Upton, Mayor Hopewell and several state and local economic development and academic leaders, to discuss ways to strengthen Kalamazoo-Japan ties including economic, cultural, educational and person-to-person exchange. I wish to express my thanks to Congressman Upton's office for arranging this excellent meeting, and to Southwest Michigan First for graciously hosting us.

Vol. 118: Sister Library Exchange Program

West Bloomfield Township Public Library was selected as one of just 51 recipients of the prestigious National Medal for Museum and Library Services in the United States. In addition, since 1999, it has been enjoying sister library exchanges with Higashiura Library in Awaji City, Japan. While we often hear about sister city exchanges, sister library exchanges are quite unique.

On July 28, a delegation of 10 people (including eight high school students) from Awaji City, visited West Bloomfield Township as part of the sister library exchange. The delegation came to West Bloomfield Township after first visiting and taking part in home stays in St. Mary's, Ohio—Awaji City's official sister city. The group's original flight was canceled so we were a bit worried they would not make it. Fortunately, they made it safely with just a short delay.

To welcome the delegation, West Bloomfield Township Public Library hosted a welcome BBQ in a park located on a beautiful lake. The weather was chilly and below average for a typical Michigan summer. However, the delegation was able to receive a warm welcome from the library president and director, the township supervisor, the superintendent, members of the local high school's Japanese Club and Japanese residents. The Awaji delegation donated several books to the West Bloomfield Township Public Library as well. To end the evening, the Awaji students enthusiastically performed a dance to AKB48's song, "Fortune Cookie in Love," and enjoyed an enthusiastic round of applause from the audience.

West Bloomfield Township is home to more than 1,000 Japanese residents, third only to Novi and Ann Arbor in the state of Michigan. While the delegation's stay in the area was only for two nights, they were still able to tour downtown Detroit and even attend a Tigers game at Comerica Park! I have no



doubt that the high school students will leave Metro Detroit with wonderful memories and stories to share with their family and friends back in Japan.

Vol. 119: Toyota High School Students Visit Detroit

Summer vacation is the time when many city leaders and youth groups make goodwill visits to their sister cities as part of the sister city exchange program. In the case of the City of Detroit and the City of Toyota, this year will mark 54 years of exchanges since signing a sister city agreement in 1960. In alternating years, about ten high school students are dispatched to learn about a different culture and way of life while enjoying a home stay.

This year was Toyota's turn to visit Detroit. Eight students accompanied by two chaperones came for about two weeks, from July 23rd through August 7th. During their stay they had various experiences and enjoyed American life with their host families. They visited many sites such as the African American Museum, Detroit Historical Museum and The Henry Ford; toured Niagara Falls and Detroit Zoo; met with Mayor Duggan and the city council; observed several local Japanese companies and watched the Tigers play in Comerica Park.

On the 29th of July they visited my office, where I gave them a briefing about the functions of our Consulate and the relationships between Japan and the State of Michigan, as well as the City of Detroit. It was very encouraging when one student told me that he wants to become a diplomat in the future. That evening I invited the visiting delegation, host families, city government officials and some business leaders to a reception at my residence where we had a good time while enjoying Japanese food. I was delighted to see how close these high school students had grown to their host families and were being treated as family members by their host parents, brothers and sisters. It is wonderful that all of these high school students, with such great aspirations, are actively participating toward international exchange.

Next year marks the cities' 55th Anniversary and it will be the City of Detroit's turn for high school students to visit Toyota City. I sincerely hope for many more exchanges between the cities, and our Consulate is eager to assist.



Vol. 120: A Visit to Pewabic Pottery

On July 31st I visited Pewabic Pottery (a pottery studio and school) just a ten minute drive east from my office in downtown Detroit. Ms. Heather Simmet, interim director, kindly guided my wife and me, along with William Coburn, director of the Freer House and Dr. Thomas Brunk, art historian, on an hour tour of the studio.

The Pewabic Pottery Company was founded in 1903 by Mary Chase Perry Stratton and her partner, Horace James Caulkins, an inventor of a new kiln. It was named after a copper mine in Stratton's hometown of Hancock, Michigan. In 1906 the studio was moved to its present location. The production of architectural tiles brought much fame to studio. Pewabic Pottery products and tiles can be found in various museums, churches, libraries, concert halls around the City of Detroit and in landmark buildings such as the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Guardian Building, Washington D.C.'s Freer Gallery and the Louvre in Paris.

In 1964 the building and property was deeded to the Michigan State University. And in 1981 the non-profit Pewabic Society, Inc. assumed ownership. The Society continues to work to protect Pewabic's

cultural heritage and preserve the techniques for future generations; it holds exhibitions and provides ceramics classes. Pewabic Pottery has been designated as a National Historic Landmark. The studio is even open on Sundays, so I encourage you to visit when you have a chance.

(For more information, please visit their website: <http://www.pewabic.org>).



Vol. 121: JET Pre-departure Reception

On August 1st the JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching) Program Pre-departure Orientation and Reception was held at my residence in honor of the 62 outgoing JET Program participants hailing from Michigan and Ohio. They were set to depart for Japan the following day and I was very pleased that, although some were nervous, all of them appeared to be very much looking forward to their new lives in Japan.

JET is a youth exchange program in which young college graduates from 42 countries around the world are sent to work either as assistant language teachers or as coordinators for international relations in various communities throughout Japan for one to five years. JET is implemented by local governments under the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Since its inception in 1987, nearly 60,000 people from around the world have participated on JET, roughly half of whom are American. I truly feel that the JET Program is one of the most successful grassroots exchange initiatives of its kind.

Guests at the reception included Japanese teachers and professors, members of the local JET Alumni Association and also volunteers who helped interview the JET Program candidates back in February. As a matter of fact, several of my Consulate's staff members in attendance happened to be former JET Program participants as well.

I very much look forward to hearing about the JET participants' experiences upon their return to Michigan and Ohio in the coming years and truly hope that the JET Program will play an important role in opening the doors to a variety of career opportunities for them.



Vol. 122: Ms. Toshiko Shimoura's Beiju Celebration

On August 2, at the Birmingham Community House, my wife and I, along with many more friends and family, had the pleasure of attending a Beiju celebration (88th birthday celebration) for Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura. Mrs. Shimoura is the current President of the Detroit Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, a master of the ikenobo style of ikebana and long-time instructor for Ikebana International Chapter 85 – whose students also attended.

In my greeting during the celebration, it was a pleasure to publically share a formal announcement which was made in Tokyo just one week prior. In light of her many years of contributions to Michigan/Japan relations, Mrs. Shimoura will receive the Foreign Minister Commendation for promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and the United States. Being honored this year is an especially good omen, as eighty-eight is also the number of individuals from outside of Japan receiving the 2014 award. Mrs. Shimoura looked very delighted, surrounded by many friends and family.

I am looking forward to hosting an award ceremony and formally presenting the commendation as soon as it arrives.

Vol. 123: International Champions Cup

On August 2nd, I went to a pre-season soccer game at the University of Michigan's Michigan Stadium, where Manchester United faced Real Madrid at the International Champions Cup.

This was my first time to see a pro soccer game at a stadium, so naturally, I felt quite excited. Michigan Stadium can hold about 110,000 spectators and is the largest American football venue. There were 109,318 spectators present on this day, and it turns out that it may have just been the largest recorded crowd at a soccer game in American history.

The tournament was set-up with two groups of four European teams and there were round-robin style matches within each group. The two champions who would emerge in both groups would face each other in a final match.

Manchester United was the victor of this match—which featured an assist from Shinji Kagawa—with a score of 3 to 1. With 3 consecutive wins, Man U took the top rank in Group A. Real Madrid was eliminated, but I did get to see Ronaldo's impressive dribbling towards the end.

The final match of the Champions Cup was held on August 4th and Manchester United achieved a first-rate victory against Liverpool, the Group B victor, with a score of 3 to 1.



Vol. 124: CAR Management Briefing

From August 5th-7th I attended the 2014 Center for Automotive Research (CAR) Management Briefing Seminars (MBS) held in Traverse City, Michigan.

CAR was established in Ann Arbor in the late 1970s at the University of Michigan and became an independent non-profit organization in 2003. CAR's main mission is to research various issues and trends within the global automotive industry, from international, national, state and local perspectives.

Several Japanese automakers and suppliers sponsored this year's MBS, as you can see in the photo below. Representatives from Toyota, Nissan, Honda, Denso and Yazaki attended, several of whom also served on some very interesting panel discussions. This year, about forty American university students were included in the event, sponsored by private companies.

Held annually during the first week in August in lovely Traverse City, MBS is CAR's flagship event. It consistently attracts many of the top automotive industry leaders—both from overseas and within the U.S. As this region is the epicenter of the U.S. automotive industry, CAR's Management Briefing Seminar is an essential forum for deepening one's knowledge and contacts within this very important industry.

In a previous blog post, I also shared my impressions of the Detroit Regional Chamber's annual Mackinac Policy Conference (held in May). In my opinion, that conference—and CAR's Management Briefing Seminar—are the two most influential, informative and effective conferences in Michigan by which the consulate can strengthen its relations and networks with key industry and governmental leaders. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend both, and seek to maximize my experiences to further promote and support Japan's economic and business activities within my two-state jurisdiction.



Vol. 125: “Fortune Cookie in Love, Detroit Version.” is Now Completed!

“Fortune Cookie in Love,” or “Koi Suru Fortune Cookie,” is a mega hit song and music video by one of Japan's most popular groups, AKB48. The very catchy song and dance has swept Japan, with many organizations, businesses and individuals making their own video. And now, “Fortune Cookie in Love,” is sweeping the world and a Detroit version of the video has been just completed! This video was created to demonstrate the support of the local Japanese community for revitalization of the City of Detroit and the project was supported by many groups of Detroiters, community leaders and Japanese residents who love the City. You can view the video, “Fortune Cookie in Love, Detroit” on YouTube. Hope you enjoy it! If you would like, share it with your family and friends!

Go! Go! Detroit!

(Access the video at: <http://youtu.be/m07zUu6na34>)

Vol. 126: Meeting with Congressman Justin Amash

On August 12th, I visited the Grand Rapids district office of U.S. Congressman Justin Amash to meet with the congressman and his staff. A young and energetic Republican representing Michigan's 3rd District, Congressman Amash was born in 1980. Now just 34 years old, he is serving in his second term

and was first elected in 2010. Congressman Amash's father, a Christian businessman from the Middle East, immigrated to the U.S., established a family business and realized the American dream.

Within Congressman Amash's 3rd District, there are now 32 Japanese facilities which account for over 6,400 jobs. In addition to this fact, I mentioned Japan's various contributions to the state of Michigan and the importance of our bilateral relations. I was encouraged by Congressman Amash's strong willingness to further strengthen our great economic and cultural ties. We also discussed economic conditions in Japan, Prime Minister Abe's policies, ongoing TPP negotiations, as well as the security situation in East Asia.

Congressman Amash visited Japan during his high school years and I am very much hopeful he will have the opportunity to make a return trip in the near future.



Vol. 127: Gerald Ford Museum

On August 12, when I visited the City of Grand Rapids in Michigan, I stopped by the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, where the Vice President of the Museum, Jim Kratsas, kindly gave me a tour of the facility.

President Ford was born in 1913 in Nebraska, but moved to Grand Rapids when he was a small child. He attended the University of Michigan and played football, and was so skilled that he even received an invitation from the pro-leagues. During World War 2, President Ford served aboard the USS Monterey in the US Navy. The ship happened to sail into the path of a powerful typhoon near the Philippines, but he was able to stay out of harm's way in such a perilous situation.

After serving in the House of Representatives, he was appointed as Second in Command by President Nixon in 1973. After the Watergate Scandal, and Nixon's resignation, Ford served as President from '74 -'76. In 2006, when he passed away at the age of 93, he was the longest-living holder of the U.S. Chief Executive Office.

American Presidents have a tradition of building memorial libraries after they finish their tenure. However, in the case of President Ford, the library that would house his materials and records would go to the University of Michigan, his alma mater, and his museum would be established in Grand Rapids. Ford is a President with significant connections to Japan. In 1974, he was the first President of the U.S. to visit Japan, and upon Emperor Showa's visit to the United States in 1975, President Ford welcomed him. There are symbols of this connection on display at his memorial museum. Near the plaque that marks the location of Mr. and Mrs. Fords' place of eternal rest, a maple tree that was donated by Japan is growing.

For those of you who may have the opportunity to visit Grand Rapids, I highly recommend that you drop-in and see this exceptional Presidential Museum.



Vol. 128: Downpour in Detroit

On August 11th, Detroit was blitzed by rounds of heavy rain that started in the evening and lasted until late at night. The 4.57 inches (116 ml) of water that fell would become the 2nd highest amount ever recorded. Houses and residential areas saw serious flooding and some major roads were totally submerged.

On a regular day, I can make it to the suburbs from downtown in just thirty minutes, but on this day it took me 2 hours and 45 minutes to get home. Some of my colleagues spent four to five hours just to make it home, driving around until midnight, searching for roads that were not flooded or blocked off; others decided not to take the risk and stayed overnight in a hotel. Nevertheless, we are thankful that we were only slightly inconvenienced by this weather event, which no doubt caused considerable damage over such a short period of time.

On that very day, I happened to be hosting two groups of guests from Cleveland at my residence for dinner. One group arrived an hour and a half late and, thankfully, safe. The other group very unfortunately lost their car under the flood waters, and was forced to take shelter at a nearby restaurant. After the waters receded a little bit, I set out in my own car to rescue them. With the roads still in a state of turmoil, I welcomed them to spend the night at my house.

When I think about this recent deluge, and last winter's historic cold snap, I feel that we must not let our guard down, and instead we should stay ready to respond to natural disasters.

Vol. 129: Olympic Figure Skaters

On August 13th, I had the pleasure of hosting a very special dinner at my official residence. My invited guests included two pairs of Japanese Olympic skaters who had recently competed in the Sochi Winter Olympics as well as a Japanese business representative. We all had a very nice time dining together and getting to know each other.

The guests, Narumi Takahashi and Ryuichi Kihara, train and compete as a figure skating pair; while Cathy and Chris Reed (who happen to be siblings) train and compete as an ice dancing pair. Both of these duos have been regularly training at Metro Detroit area ice rinks. As introduced in diary entry #53, the Detroit area is a virtual Mecca for 1st class figure skaters.

I must mention that both pairs kindly volunteered to be videotaped skating for the Detroit edition of the "Fortune Cookie in Love" video that was recently filmed in the area. I am so appreciative for their exciting cameo appearances in the video!

I truly had a great time getting to know the skaters and realized that they are not only fantastic athletes, but they are wonderful people as well! I very much hope that they enjoyed the Japanese food and sake served that evening. The local Japanese community strongly supports these young Olympic athletes and I wish them the best of luck and much success in the future!

Vol. 130: Visit to Saginaw

On the 14th of August I travelled to Saginaw, Michigan, located about 90 miles northwest of Detroit, to visit the Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), the Japanese Cultural Center, Tea House and Gardens of Saginaw. It was a good opportunity to meet and exchange views with the university president and other administrators, locally elected politicians and board members of the Cultural Center.



The City of Saginaw has a population of 60,000. In the past, the city flourished from strong lumber and manufacturing industries and today, much effort is directed toward the development of clean energy.

In regard to Japan, after sending young farmers to Saginaw for training, the cities of Tokushima, Japan and Saginaw signed a formal sister city agreement in 1961.

Just two years later, in 1963, Saginaw Valley State University was founded, making it the youngest public university in Michigan. In 1981 SVSU formed a sister school relationship with Shikoku University in Tokushima. Last fall there were three Japanese language course offered at SVSU and 59 students enrolled. Regrettably though, there are only three full-time international students from Japan studying here.

After leaving SVSU I visited the impressive Japanese Cultural Center which has an authentic Japanese tea house. I was welcomed by Mrs. Yoko Mossner, the executive director, who has lived in Saginaw for more than fifty years and, three years ago, was awarded Japan's Foreign Minister Commendation. She also invited two more guests – locally elected lawmakers – and graciously prepared green tea for us in the traditional Urasenke style. The tea house was completed in 1986 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of sister city relations. It was built in the sukiya architectural style, characterized by the use of rustic, natural materials, with the assistance of Japanese craftsmen invited from Kyoto.

Each fall the Center holds a Japan Festival, jointly hosted by our office. This is a great opportunity to introduce Japanese culture to local residents. This year it will be on September 21st, and I invite all of you to come join us!

(For more information and location please visit: <http://www.japaneseculturalcenter.org>).



Vol. 131: Historic Base Ball

August 16th was a day of historic and modern baseball for me. First, I visited Greenfield Village located in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, where I had the honor of throwing the first pitch of a historic base ball game. Historic base ball is an earlier version of the modern game which is so popular in both the U.S. and Japan. It is played based upon rules established in 1867.

In historic base ball no gloves are used; the ball is a bit softer than the modern hardball; pitchers throw under-handed, bouncing the ball to home plate; and, as you may have noticed, the word baseball is

separated into two words: base ball.

There are two historic base ball teams in the Detroit area, whose season runs from June to September. The style of play tends to resemble sandlot baseball. As it's relatively easy for batters to get hits, nearly everyone can reach base and the games tend to be high-scoring affairs—this particular day, the final score was 14-12.

The setting is very relaxed and leisurely. The audience enjoys the game while seated on Greenfield Village's grassy hillsides, alongside the diamond. It's a great way to spend a summer Saturday afternoon!

That evening, I went to Comerica Park to cheer on the Detroit Tigers, as they defeated the Seattle Mariners 4-2. After the game, there was a splendid fireworks show at the stadium. I highly recommend you to take in a local baseball or base ball game in the near future, while the warm Michigan summer is still with us!



Vol. 132: Shiga Goodwill Delegation Visit



On August 22nd, a welcome reception was held at Governor Snyder's official residence in Lansing, in honor of the Shiga Prefecture Goodwill Delegation's visit to Michigan.

Back in 1968, the State of Michigan and Shiga Prefecture established sister-state relations and have been enjoying a close friendship ever since. There are currently 27 sister-city relationships between cities

in Michigan and Japan, 13 of which are between cities in Michigan and Shiga Prefecture. In addition, there is a permanent Shiga Prefectural Representative whose office is located in Lansing.

Despite his busy schedule, Governor Snyder graciously played host to more than 50 delegates from Shiga Prefecture, mayors from both the Michigan and Shiga sides, chairs of various sister-city committees, state government officials, Shiga officials and host family members at the welcome reception. During their week-long stay here, the Shiga delegates have had the opportunity to enjoy home stays with local Michigan families. I truly feel that this experience will be an unforgettable one, especially for the young students visiting Michigan for the first time.

In my opinion, this type of person-to-person exchange has become the foundation of the bilateral

relations enjoyed between our two countries. I personally wrote a letter to all of the sister-city mayors (on both the American and Japanese sides) letting them know that our Consulate General office is more than happy to provide support to them as well as promote their sister-city relationships.

(Michigan Shiga Sister State Program Homepage: <https://sites.google.com/site/michshiga/home>)

Vol. 133: Amish

On August 23rd I enjoyed a one-day trip to Amish villages in the Indiana towns of Middlebury and Shipshewana – about a three hour drive southwest of Detroit.

As you know, Amish are German immigrants who have settled, primarily in Pennsylvania and Ohio, as well as other regions of the Midwest, and maintain a traditional, self-sufficient way of life. The Amish men generally have beards and the women wear simple, blue or pink dresses with a small prayer cap to cover their heads. Horse-drawn carriages and bicycles are their main means of transportation.

We first stopped at a restaurant for tourists and enjoyed a buffet lunch of simple Amish food, which was quite good. We then browsed the souvenir shops, such as those featuring Amish-made quilts, baked goods and antiques. We even tried a ride in a horse-drawn carriage.

One the way home we could see the homes of Amish families from our car windows. What I hadn't expected was how the Amish communities were not clearly detached from the general population. I even saw many Amish families enjoying hamburgers and ice cream at the Dairy Queen. I had imagined they would have lived a more secluded and isolated life.

As you can see from the photos, on that day I happen to wear denim overalls and a Panama hat and was mistaken by an American tourist as a Japanese Amish man.



Vol. 134: Lawrence Institute of Technology Convocation Ceremony

On August 24th, I attended as an invited guest the Lawrence Institute of Technology Convocation Ceremony in the Detroit suburb of Southfield. This private technological university, which was started in 1932, has about 4,000 students. The university has doctoral courses in fields such as engineering, science, mathematics, and architecture. Investment from Japanese companies has produced 1,200 local jobs in Southfield and the community has a strong relationship with Japan. The number of graduates from this university who find work in Japanese companies is not small either. At the convocation ceremony, U.S. Senator of Michigan, Carl Levin, who is announcing his retirement, was also invited and he was awarded the Global Citizen Award.



Two of the Consul General of Iraq's children are also studying at the university. The freshmen, dressed in tee shirts and casual shorts, were an impressive contrast to the traditional academic costumes

that the university officials wear. It was agreed by University President Moudgil with the university executives and guest members of the city council that the university and the city of Southfield would like to further strengthen their collaboration with the Japanese community.

Vol. 135: The Japanese Way of Management

Lifetime/long-term employment, a hierarchical seniority system, industry-separate union, and bottom-up decision making process, the so-called Japanese way of management, has come to be negatively and positively appraised in tune to the ups and downs of the economy and within the context of the era.

Recently, I had a chance to read *The American Automotive Industry* written by Dr. Kenichi Shinohara, a professor at Kyoto Sangyo University, and published by Chuko-shinsho. According to him, Dr. Shinohara has made frequent visits to Detroit to write this book.

Generally speaking, America's ability-centrism and Japan's equality-centrism are often compared. It may be applied to the white collar workplace, however, the author focuses on the "Same Work and Same Pay" rule of the American blue-collar workplace, or rather, that his most interesting indication was that ability-centrism/competition-centrism is at play in Japan's automotive workplaces.

The seniority system is often called a unique characteristic of Japanese industry. Dr. Shinohara observes that in the American workplace, layoffs were carried out starting from workers with the least level of experience and rehiring began from employees who had the highest number of accumulated years of service. In this manner, a seniority system appears to be functioning in America as well.

America's labor market has a division of blue/white collar and clear roles. One should take caution in concluding, only by comparing the white collar, that Japan's system is equality-oriented while US's is ability-oriented, or the latter has a much more competition-centric principle than the former. This book made me think about how improper it is to make a light comparison of the two.



Vol. 136: Tigers vs. Yankees



On August 28th, my wife and I were invited by Dr. Isaiah ("Ike") McKinnon, Deputy Mayor of Detroit, to attend a matinee game between the Detroit Tigers and the New York Yankees. This was my third time to enjoy a ballgame at Comerica Park. Before the game, Dr. McKinnon kindly arranged for us to access the infield area, which allowed us to get an up-close glimpse of Ichiro Suzuki warming up. (Later, Ichiro would actually strikeout to end the Yankee's chances in the top of the 9th inning!)

The game marked the final time that Yankee captain, Hall of Fame shoo-in and

Kalamazoo-native, Derek Jeter, would play a regular season game in front of the Detroit fans. Before his final at bat in the 9th inning, he received a standing ovation from the appreciative crowd. A day earlier, Jeter along with his family, friends and old coaches from the Kalamazoo region, was honored in a special on-field ceremony.

But, in the end, this day belonged to the Tigers. Despite a strong start by the Yankees' Hiroki Kuroda, the game was decided in the bottom of the 9th by a "walk off" single by Tiger catcher, Alex Avila, knocking in Victor Martinez, who had previously doubled. In Japanese, we call this a "Sayonara Win." Final score: Tigers 3 Yankees 2.

The Tigers took two of three games from the visiting Yankees, and it's my great hope they can continue to fend off the Kansas City Royals on their way to another Central Division crown and hopefully, a long playoff run.



Vol. 137: Detroit International Jazz Festival

The Detroit International Jazz Festival was held on Labor Day weekend, which was August 29th through September 1st. During the Opening Night Party I enjoyed the first musical performances of the festival at the main venue in Campus Martius. The Detroit International Jazz Festival began in 1980 and this year will be its 35th anniversary. The festival is held at several venues in downtown Detroit and is said to be the largest free jazz festival in the world. Currently, it is owned and operated by the Detroit International Jazz Festival Foundation, a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2006. I heard that in the past at least one Japanese jazz band had also been invited and performed in the festival. There is elegance to listening to jazz outdoors in Detroit on a night when the refreshing cool breeze feels like autumn. There are many enjoyable events and places here in Detroit. I hope that everyone has a chance to come and enjoy Downtown Detroit.

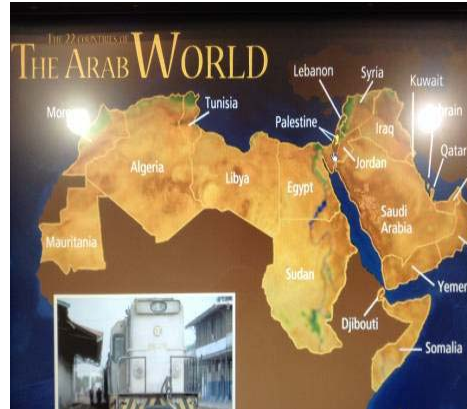


Vol. 138: Arab American Museum

On August 30th I visited the Arab American National Museum in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn. There are about 3.5 million Arab-Americans living throughout the United States. The majority are

immigrants who have come from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. Among them, with over 400,000 Arab-Americans, the Metro Detroit area has the nation's largest Arab population. In particular, 40% of the residents in Dearborn are Arab Americans. This is followed by New York (370,000), Los Angeles (300,000) and Chicago (180,000). Of these, 60% of the Arab population seems to be Christian and 25% Muslim.

The museum introduces the various countries which make up the Arab world, the history of the Arab immigration which began in the 16th century, how they lived, where they worked, etc. The museum is the first and, so far, the only museum dedicated solely to the Arab-American history and culture.



Vol. 139: Labor Day Weekend

Each year, Labor Day falls on the first Monday in September. Labor Day is a federal holiday that was originally created for workers, but has also come to symbolize the end of summer for many Americans. During the 3-day weekend, many Americans take their final summer vacations, attend local parades and enjoy barbecues with friends and family. For school children, Labor Day also signifies the end of their long summer vacation and the beginning of the new school year.

This past Labor Day weekend, my wife and I were invited to an American friend's home where we enjoyed barbecued food and bid farewell to a pleasant summer while readying ourselves for the upcoming fall season. We even roasted marshmallows and made s'mores. This was quite a treat for me since I hadn't eaten s'mores in many years!

Now, it's been nearly one year since I came to Michigan, late last September, and I've had the opportunity to experience all four seasons here in Detroit. I feel that this past year was quite productive and I look forward to an even more meaningful second year here in Michigan.



Vol. 140: Governor Ueda from Saitama

On September 4th, the Governor of Saitama Prefecture, Kiyoshi Ueda and his delegation paid a visit to their sister state of Ohio. I was there to welcome him in Columbus, the capital city, and on that evening we gathered together with executives from the local Japan-America Society to exchange views. The following day, Governor Ueda met his Ohio counterpart, Governor John Kasich. I was able to



join in this meeting as well.

The governor actively spent his two-day trip to Ohio visiting a local Japanese business and a university with connections to Japan, and took part in an opinion exchange with economic development and career fair organizations. After that, he stopped at Detroit before proceeding to Des Moines, Iowa to attend the 2014 U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference. Tokyo and various cities throughout the Midwest take alternating turns hosting this annual conference, which he has never failed to attend over the last 11 years. We are very encouraged by Governor Ueda's initiative to further strengthen our bond with Midwest.

Vol. 141: Annual Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference

As Consul General of Japan in Detroit, I had the privilege of attending the 46th annual Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference, held in Des Moines, Iowa, from September 7th-9th.

Nine Midwestern states were represented and nearly 300 Japanese and American attendees from public and private sectors gathered to renew old acquaintances, forge new relationships and exchange views on key issues.

This prestigious, long-held event, along with its Southeastern U.S.-Japan counterpart, is one of the most active bilateral regional conferences of its kind.

Under the chairmanship of The Honorable Robert Thompson (former Governor of Illinois) and Mr. Yuzaburo Mogi (Honorary CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Kikkoman Corporation) many dignitaries were assembled including governors from the states of Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and Wisconsin; Japanese governors from Saitama and Yamanashi prefectures; Japan's ambassador to the U.S.; and the Consul General of Japan in Chicago. Leaders of private companies, state and local governments and academia also participated. Many constructive discussions were held in accordance to the conference theme: "Building a Robust and Sustainable Future."

I vividly recall last year's meeting in Tokyo, as it was my first official duty as consul general, despite the fact that I had not yet stepped foot in the Midwest.

Time truly flies! Now one year removed, I have witnessed first-hand and have come to greatly appreciate the importance of the strong economic, cultural and academic ties so enjoyed by Japan and the U.S. Midwest.



Vol. 142: The City of Southfield and Japan

On September 12th I invited Mayor Brenda Lawrence of the Detroit suburb of Southfield, as well as some other members of the Southfield community, to enjoy a Japanese meal and sake at my residence. Seventeen Japanese companies have invested in Southfield, and in total 1,200 jobs have been created. A kimono that was a gift from Denso greatly adorns the lobby of City Hall. The mayor shared words of thanks for the long-standing contributions to Southfield from the Japanese companies as well as for the role of the Consulate



General. It is my wish that Southfield will have even more developments through the diversity of the citizens that compose it. By the way, Southfield appointed Mayor Lawrence as its first female mayor in 2001, but in the mid-term elections of the coming November, she will be running to become a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Michigan's 14th district.



Vol. 143: 9/11 & 3/11

Thirteen years have passed since 9/11. On the anniversary, I flew my American and Japanese flags at half-mast at my official residence in order to pay my humble respect to the victims. I still remember September 11th, 2001 as though it were yesterday. I can clearly recall my disbelief as I sat in my office at the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. (where I was working at the time) watching the live broadcast on CNN. About 10 years later, Japan also suffered a national tragedy with the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami which struck on 3/11/11.

On September 13th, a local screening of *Live Your Dream: The Taylor Anderson Story* was held at Cinema Detroit. This documentary depicts the lives and dreams of two Jet Program participants, Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson, who sadly lost their lives while fulfilling their dreams of living and working in Japan. As introduced in my 60th diary episode, I had the opportunity to see the first local screening of the documentary back in March when it was held at Eastern Michigan University. Though this was my second time, I was once again profoundly touched by this moving film showcasing the lives of two brave Americans living their dreams.

On this film screening occasion, Reggie Life, the film's director, and Shelley Fredrickson, Monty's older sister, came all the way from New York and Alaska, respectively, in order to attend this screening and take part in a Q&A session with the audience.

I was pleased the film was being shown in Metro Detroit, but regretted that the location of the theater was a bit inconvenient for people not familiar with the area. Although the theater was small in size, there were still many vacant seats with just about 30 people in attendance. I expect there will be more screenings throughout major cities in both Michigan and Ohio and I sincerely hope that many local American and Japanese residents will have a chance to view this important film.



Vol. 144: Countryside Lifestyle in the United States

On Sunday, the 14th of September, my wife and I were invited to the home of friends living in a small Michigan town, about a 45 minute drive north of our residence. The couple is both retired and enjoying their “second life,” on property so vast they cannot see their neighbors’ houses. Their land has woods and a pond, as well as a barn for cows, chicken coop, a storage house for farm implements, vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

We had a wonderful lunch with fresh ingredients from their garden such as tomatoes, potatoes, cucumber, Japanese shiso (type of mint) and mioga (type of ginger) along with turkey, homemade bread and apple pie. Then, in the evening we roasted marshmallows over a campfire in the garden and enjoyed the season’s special donuts and apple cider. Returning home, we relished in the very pleasant and memorable fall day.

The husband is talented in many fields, harvesting trees from their woods to fuel their house and forging his own tools. From his garden we received many vegetables as we left. As soon as we arrived home we boiled some of the fresh-picked edamame and enjoyed them with a glass of beer. They were delicious!

On that day, I had a glimpse of an ideal retirement lifestyle.



Vol. 145: Mexican National Day

On September 16th, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending a Mexican National Day dinner celebration commemorating the 204th anniversary of Mexico’s independence. The Mexican Consulate in Detroit hosted this wonderful event which was held at a hotel in downtown Detroit.

Mexico is one of seven countries (including Japan) which has established a consulate office in Metro Detroit. I was so surprised to learn that in addition to the Embassy of Mexico in Washington D.C. and the U.N. Mission in New York, Mexico has established 20 consulates general as well as 24 consulate offices throughout the United States.

According to the Pew Research Center, in 2012, there were 33.7 million people of Mexican descent residing in the United States. Of those, 11.4 million are Mexican-born immigrants, while the other 22.3 million people were born in the United States. As such, Mexican Americans currently account for 11% of the total population in this country. It’s amazing that back in 1970, the U.S. was home to less than 1 million Mexican immigrants while now the number of Mexican immigrants has reached 11.4 million. This sharp increase exemplifies the changing demographics in the United States.

Typically, National Day events which are organized by Embassies or Consulates are hosted as standing receptions. The Mexican Consulate, however, organized a sit-down dinner for nearly 200 guests. During the event, the Consul Juan Manuel Solana Martinez gave an overview of their activities and guests



were able to enjoy a video of a Mexican opera singer as well as traditional Mexican song and dance performances. Time passed so quickly that we went an hour beyond the original schedule without even noticing!

Vol. 146: Polish Art Center

On my way home from the office on September 17th, I decided to pay a visit to the Polish Art Center located in Hamtramck (a small city surrounded by the city of Detroit). I've heard that there are around 10 million Polish Americans living in the United States, most of whom live in major cities such as Chicago—which is home to the largest Polish speaking population outside of Poland. Michigan is third in number to New York and Illinois with 850,000 Polish Americans residing here. As a matter of fact, some of the local staff members at our Consulate happen to be Polish American.

Since the Dodge plant was opened in the early 20th century, the city of Hamtramck has become home to many Polish immigrants. As a matter of fact, at one time, 90% of Hamtramck's population was Polish. More recently, however, due to an increase in South Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants, Hamtramck is now only about 15% Polish. In any case, Hamtramck has always been quite a cosmopolitan city. When Pope John Paul II (who was born in Poland) visited the United States in 1987, he even made a stop in Hamtramck.

The Polish Art Center sells a variety of products including Polish books, traditional souvenirs and even Catholic books and items. I also learned that the Polish Art Center occasionally offers cultural lessons and workshops to the public. When speaking to the young shop attendant (featured in the photo below) I learned that his older brother recently departed for Japan to take part in the Japan Exchange & Teaching (JET) Program this past summer and is currently working as an assistant language teacher in Ishikawa Prefecture. I was so pleased to find that there is such a link between the local Polish community and Japan.

In Hamtramck, one can find a variety of Polish bakeries and restaurants, Polish shops and several Catholic churches. I strongly encourage you to visit if you have a chance.



Vol. 147: Oakland County and Japan

On September 18th, Oakland County Executive, Mr. L. Brooks Patterson, hosted the annual Oakland County Consular Corps Reception, which I was delighted to attend.

This year the event was held at Michigan Motion Picture Studios in the city of Pontiac. (I had no idea that such a facility even existed in the area!) During a fascinating guided tour, I learned that this studio employs 2,000 people and major movies such as *Oz the Great and Powerful*, *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, and most recently, *Batman v. Superman* are regularly filmed there.

Situated northwest of Detroit, Oakland County is also home to approximately 6,000 Japanese nationals, nearly half of Michigan's entire Japanese national population, along with 229 Japanese business facilities, which provide over 10,000 direct jobs (source: *2013 Japanese Direct Investment Survey; Consulate General of Japan in Detroit*). Japan is Oakland County's leading foreign investor, followed by Germany. China has also begun investing there, as economic and cultural exchange missions take place with increased frequency these days.

Oakland County has indeed established a well-earned reputation as an attractive destination for

foreign direct investment and a great place for foreign nationals, and locals alike, to live, work, study and play. In fact, shortly after I arrived last September, County Executive Patterson kindly invited me to dinner as a way to personally welcome me and express his appreciation for Japan's significant presence there.



Vol. 148: One year has Passed

Time flies! It has been one year since I arrived here directly from Europe on September 20th of last year. It was my first time living in the Midwest and, frankly speaking, I had not only strong expectations, but also a little bit of anxiety about my new life here. I soon realized that the anxiety was not necessary at all. Thanks to your strong support and the warm hospitality of local Americans as well as the contributions by Japanese businesses and people to the local communities, I have enjoyed both my official work and my private life. In the last year, I have visited Ohio 34 times and Michigan beyond Metro Detroit 21 times. I have visited universities 27 times, Japanese weekend schools 7 times in total, and have also been to 17 Japanese companies and factories.

Michigan and Ohio combined are about the same size as Japan in terms of area, and I sometimes spent 12 hours roundtrip to go to a remote area and come back after attending events on the same day. Still, I have not yet covered many places in my jurisdiction. I am looking forward to further widening and deepening my understanding on the Midwest and continuing my communication with Americans in Michigan and Ohio during my second year here. Thank you for your continued assistance.

Vol. 149: Saginaw Japanese Festival



On September 21, I participated in the annual Japan Festival located in Saginaw, Michigan at a Japan garden and teahouse, about one-and-a-half hours' drive north of Detroit. This annual event is also one of the regular cultural activities of our Consulate, and, in close cooperation with local administrators, the Japanese Cultural Center, local Japanese and American companies and individual volunteers, we

enjoyed cultural exchange with many guests from the local American community. Japanese tea ceremony, flower arranging, taiko drumming, kendo, jujitsu, calligraphy, origami, children's games, Japanese men's chorus, Japanese food and traditional dances of Okinawa and Awa were highlights of the event. Unfortunate though, we also had heavy rain.

Sister city exchanges have been ongoing between the cities of Saginaw and Tokushima for more than fifty years and this wonderful Japanese garden and teahouse is among the many fruits of these exchanges. Others asked to participate in the program on that day were Saginaw Mayor Dennis Browning, Japanese Cultural Center Board President Todd Hall and various community members. I truly appreciate the Center's Director, Mrs. Yoko Mossner, for such a great job, as well. My sincere thanks to each of you!

Incidentally, President Todd Hall also happens to be the vocalist of the heavy metal rock band, Riot, and is scheduled to perform in concert at the Saitama Super Arena in October. No wonder he seemed so dynamic.



Vol. 150: Michigan & its Auto Industry

On September 23rd, I attended the 2014 MICHauto Summit, hosted by the Detroit Regional Chamber at downtown's Cobo Center. This major conference highlighted the critical role that the automotive industry plays in Michigan, and conversely, how important the state of Michigan and its people are to the industry. As you likely know, metro Detroit is the birthplace of the traditional "Big 3"—though nowadays referred to as the "Detroit 3," in a nod to the industry's globalization.

Michigan boasts the highest level of auto production amongst all U.S. states: 2.5 million vehicles produced, according to 2013 data. Sixty-three of North America's top 100 auto suppliers have located their headquarters here. Furthermore, 375 automotive R&D facilities, 120 of which are foreign-owned, now call Michigan home. Seventy-six percent of all R&D business conducted in Michigan (nearly \$9 billion) is automotive related. And, for about the last 50 years (1964-2012) nearly 30% of all U.S. automotive related patents have been awarded to Michigan-based applicants.

As for the human resources needed to sustain this massive industry, Michigan enjoys abundant engineering talent. Fourteen in-state universities offer undergraduate engineering programs, and four of which offer graduate level degrees, including the University of Michigan.

Michigan's geographic location itself, neighboring Canada, and within a single day's drive (500 miles) to one-half of the U.S. population, is also a huge benefit.

Having resided here for about a year, I can attest that Michigan is full of gearheads and those passionate about manufacturing. Thus, it's no surprise that so many Japanese and Japanese companies, themselves very much enamored of building and driving motor vehicles, have become an integral part of this vital state industry.



Vol. 151: Foreign Minister's Commendation

September 27th, on behalf of Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, I hosted a Foreign Minister Commendation Ceremony at my residence, honoring Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura. The Foreign Minister's Commendation is bestowed upon individuals and organizations for significant contributions to the promotion of friendly exchanges between Japan and foreign countries. This fiscal year, worldwide, 88 individuals received the award, including 10 from the United States.

After spending much of her youth in an internment camp during World War 2, Mrs. Shimoura came to Michigan, where she worked hard as a member, then President, of the Detroit Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). For many years, she has also played leadership roles in Ikebana International and the Ikenobo Society. Through these activities she has made great contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and Michigan, and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

On that day, nearly 90 people from both Japan and the U.S. gathered to personally express their congratulations to Mrs. Shimoura and celebrate her more than 60 years of contributions.

Mrs. Shimoura just celebrated Beiju, her 88th birthday, in August (see Vol. 122) and I am very happy that we could present this award to her in such an auspicious year. I wish her many more years of health and happiness.



Vol. 152: The Detroit Tigers, Central Division Champions

On September 28th, at Comerica Park, the Detroit Tigers hosted the Minnesota Twins in the final game (the 162nd) of the regular season. By securing a superb 3-0 win, the Tigers clinched the Central Division, their 4th consecutive division championship.

Getting to the postseason was not easy, as the team started the season very strong and seemed poised to run away with the division, but the second half grew challenging. At one point the Tigers fell several games behind the Kansas City Royals.

Incredibly, the division title came down to the last game of the last series. Had the Tigers lost it and the Royals won their own game, an extra game and possible wild card play-in would have been required. So, I was both thrilled and relieved by Sunday's result.

This past season I made it to three ballgames at Comerica Park, one in April and two more in August, luckily, all were victories. I hope the team can keep rolling into the American League Division and Champion Series, and all the way to the World Series. If so, it will be the first time since 1984 that the Tigers have won it all.

Go Tigers!

Vol. 153: Toyota Visiting Professor Program



On September 29th, I joined a welcome reception for Professor Katsumi Nakao from J.F. Obirin University in Tokyo. Professor Nakao is the new Toyota Visiting Professor for 2014-2015 and will be

doing research at the Center for Japanese Studies at Michigan University in Ann Arbor. Actually, Professor Nakao is an old acquaintance of mine who I first met in Beijing in the late 1980s. We were both still young back then and he was a researcher at the Japanese Consulate in Hong Kong while I was a second secretary at the Japanese Embassy in China. After that we had a chance to meet once in a while, but it is very interesting that our paths would cross again here in my jurisdiction of Michigan. Currently, Professor Nakao is doing a comparative study of the problem with radioactive contamination at the nuclear power plants in Fukushima, Japan and in the Gaoshanzu region of Taiwan.

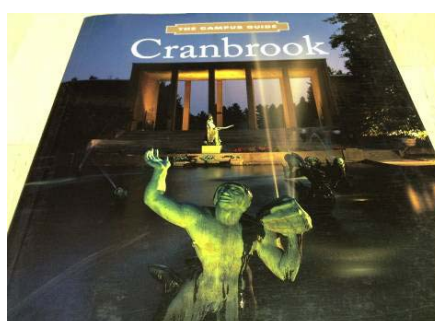
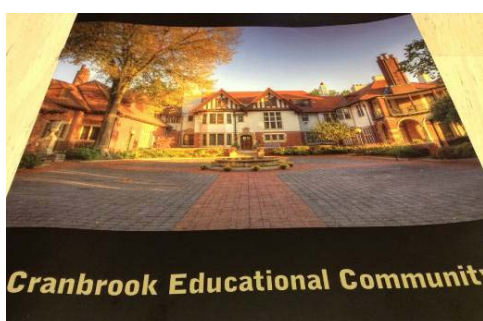


Vol. 154: Cranbrook Art Museum

On September 30th, I toured the Cranbrook Art Museum, just a five minute walk from my residence. Originally owned by Ellen Scripps Booth and George Gough Booth, founder of The Detroit News and Booth Newspapers, the grounds on which the museum resides is expansive. The vast site also includes a science museum; private elementary, middle and high schools; an art academy for graduate students; dormitories; and the Booths' Cranbrook House and Gardens, including an Oriental garden, pond and open-air sculptures, all encompassed by lush, green landscaping. I enjoyed the tour through the museum together with the President of the Cranbrook Educational Community, Mr. Dominic DiMarco; the Director of the Art Museum, Mr. Gregory Wittkopp; and Ms. Margarite Fourcroy, the Chief Development Officer.

The Cranbrook Museum opened at this site in 1942, and became known in the region for its collection of contemporary art. Likewise, the graduate school, the Cranbrook Academy of Art, is renowned for its focus on contemporary American design and draws students from all over the world, including Japan.

The Cranbrook Educational Community is truly unique, and I can highly recommend the beautiful grounds as an ideal place to enjoy an afternoon stroll, especially during the splendor of changing fall leaves.



Vol. 155: Detroit Boxing Gym

Downtown Detroit is home to an initiative entitled the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program, which provides Detroit youth the opportunity to take additional after-school classes as well as a chance to learn and practice boxing. On October 1st, my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting this boxing gym in order to learn more about the programs they offer.

There are currently around 65 students enrolled who are



both committed to after-school studying and practicing boxing at the gym. These students are quite lucky because I heard the program is so popular that there is currently a 400 student waiting list to join! The program stays true to its slogan of Books before Boxing because, as you might imagine, students are required to study before they are able to practice boxing. I was so impressed by how polite the students were and how enthusiastic they seemed about both studying and boxing.



This program was created in order to offer Detroit students a productive and enriching after-school option that can help lead to a bright future. The Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program is available to students at no charge and is entirely financed by donations from Detroit-based companies such as Quicken Loans. I even heard that Madonna and Chelsea Clinton have also visited the Boxing Gym Youth Program and are enthusiastic supporters of this initiative.



Vol. 156: Consular Soccer Tournament

Time sure does fly! I have already experienced all four seasons here in Michigan and I believe I attended many of the important events that took place this past year. Last year, I remember one of the first events I attended after my appointment as Consul General was the Annual Consular Soccer Tournament which is hosted by the Mexican Consulate, Wayne State University and Ultimate Soccer Arenas in Pontiac.

On October 4th, I had the pleasure of once again attending this exciting soccer tournament. I witnessed the opening ceremony along with the Canadian Consul General, the Mexican Consul and several colleagues. This is a two-day competition and the 16 competing teams are initially divided into four groups. At first, each team in each group plays one another. The two top teams from each group then proceed to the second day of competition. On Sunday, the quarter finals, semi-finals and final tournaments are held with a separate match preceding the final round in order to determine the 3rd place team.

The Japanese team, which is mainly comprised of employees from auto-related companies, played quite impressively! On the first day, they played against Italy, Brazil and Mexico and won all three games which allowed them to proceed to the quarter finals. During the quarter finals, they beat Romania but eventually lost to the United States in the penalty kick portion of that match. In any case, I was so pleased that Japan came in third place overall! The Italian team



was the runner-up, while the U.S. team took first place.

I very much appreciate all of the athletes for their strong performances and dedication. I heard that many other countries are interested in joining this soccer tournament so the organizers are planning to expand the number of countries that participate in future years.

Vol. 157: Japan Festival 2014 (Novi)

On October 5, with the help of Novi High School in suburban Detroit, this year's Japan Festival was outstanding! My sincere gratitude to the organizers: Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD); JSD Women's Club; the supporters; Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario; Shiga Prefecture and partners; the City of Novi; and everyone from Novi Schools, for all your hard work and preparation! And great thanks to the several thousand Japanese, Americans and others who visited the festival!

Our Consulate office participated with a consular services desk and a JET Programme Photo Contest/Exhibit. In addition to the various exhibits, entertainment and demonstrations of Japanese culture, this year, Akinori Ogata, the only Japanese driver in NASCAR joined us all the way from North Carolina and brought his race car, which was displayed outside. He kindly let children sit in the car, posed for photos and signed autographs. Mr. Ogata is a very polite sports figure.

As there are more than three thousand Japanese residents in Novi, this type of annual exchange between the Japanese and local community is very meaningful.



Vol. 158: The End of the Tigers' Season

On October 5th, the third playoff game between the Detroit Tigers and Baltimore Orioles was played at Comerica Park. Trailing two games to none in this best-of-five, division series matchup, the Tigers were in a must-win situation. Unfortunately, they came up a bit short, losing 2-1 to the Orioles and missing out on an opportunity to pursue the American League Championship (since the time of this writing, the Orioles were swept by the Kansas City Royals, who will represent the American League in the World Series against the San Francisco Giants).

So, despite clinching the Central Division in dramatic fashion just one week prior, the Tigers' luck ran out and the season is now over. I will hold out hope that they'll be able to achieve their championship goal in the 2015 season!

Vol. 159: US Citizenship Swearing-in Ceremony

From the 10th to 12th of October, the City of Southfield, a Detroit suburb, hosted an International Festival. On the first day, as a guest I attended the swearing-in ceremony for new U.S. citizens. As I had mentioned in previous posts, there are not many Japanese residents within the Southfield community; however, there are seventeen Japanese companies which have created 1200 jobs.

Approximately fifty people became citizens of the United States on that day, from twenty-one different countries. The variety from Asia alone included India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. Incidentally, there were no Japanese.



It felt a bit unconventional as I the only non-American invited on the stage to shake hands and congratulate the newly naturalized citizens. But I had the strong impression that I was witnessing, first-hand, the continuance of American society's strengths, diversity and vitality, at its core.

According to one of the speakers, there are currently about 200,000 Green Card holders (generally a prelude to citizenship) living in Michigan.

Vol. 160: *Paramodel* Exhibition at the University of Michigan Museum of Art

This past week, I visited the University of Michigan over three consecutive days. During my final visit on October 10th, Dr. Oyobe (Associate Curator of Asian Art at the University of Michigan Museum of Art) kindly showed my wife and me the *Paramodel* exhibition which is on display from August 30th, 2014 until January 4th of next year.

Paramodel is an art collaborative established by two contemporary Japanese artists, Yasuhiko Hayashi and Yusuke Nakano, who are both graduates from the Kyoto City University of Arts. While the collaboration began in 2001, it did not take on the name *Paramodel* until 2003. Mr. Hayashi and Mr. Nakano have been making artistic oeuvres through the creation of scale models of trains, railways, cranes and other Styrofoam replicas.

The *Paramodel* exhibits at the University of Michigan Museum of Art were intricately placed throughout the entire exhibition room on all four walls and even on the ceiling and floor. I originally assumed the artists were inspired as to what to create upon arrival at the site of the exhibit. I was surprised to learn that they actually started preparing very detailed designs a few months before even setting foot on-site! One of the artists actually came to the University of Michigan and it took him another month before being able to fully complete the exhibit.

The University of Michigan, the Center for Japanese Studies, the Japan Foundation and other generous organizations provided financial support for this fantastic exhibit. While you can of course enjoy *Paramodel* from inside the exhibit space, guests can also view it from the outside through the windows as well. I truly encourage anyone who is interested to pay a visit to this great exhibition anytime between now and the beginning of next year.



Vol. 161: Antique Show

On October 10th and 11th, the 51st annual Bloomfield Antique Show was held at Cross of Christ Church in Bloomfield Hills. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to drop by the show on the 11th and take a look around.

When I lived in Belgium, I often went to antique shops, visited the antique market which was open regularly on weekends and also occasionally attended special antique shows. Here in the U.S., the history is significantly shorter than in Europe, so the antique assortment here tends to be more modern than what is available in Europe. However, because of the short history here, I feel that Americans are more enthusiastic and passionate about collecting antiques.

My wife and I did not buy anything, but just enjoyed window shopping that particular day. A few months ago, however, we visited an antique shop during a trip to Indiana where I came across the same manual German-made alarm clock that I used when I was studying in Boston some 30 years ago. Finding this clock made me feel so nostalgic about my student days in Boston, that I could not resist purchasing it for the going price of \$25.



Vol. 162: Cleveland Orchestra's Gala

On October 11, a Japanese business person, who is a trustee member of the Cleveland Orchestra, invited my wife and me to the annual gala concert. The trip to the concert took three hours one way from Detroit. We enjoyed the performances by Franz Welser-Most of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" and "Piano Concerto No. 1". At the later performance, the world-famous Chinese pianist Mr. Lang Lang made his appearance, and he was received many times by a standing ovation from the audience. His performance was visually impressive and full of great technique. This was my second time hearing the Cleveland Orchestra at this concert hall and both times I was greatly impressed by the high quality performance of the orchestra as well as the good acoustics in the hall. I have great respect for the citizens and patrons who have made financial contributions in order to maintain such a splendid orchestra.



Vol. 163: The City of Windsor, Canada

On October 12th I took a day trip to Windsor, Ontario, in Canada, which is located directly across the Detroit River from the City of Detroit. I admire the city every day from my office window, but for more than a year I had not had the opportunity to visit until that day.

The landscape in this area is fairly flat, but interestingly, at this point, Canada is actually south of the United States. Like Detroit, Windsor is an automotive city with about 200,000 residents. It is known as "The City of Roses," and has one of the lowest crime rates in Canada. The names of its streets reflect the city's French influence from the 1700's.

Both a bridge and a tunnel connect the Windsor and Detroit shores, and for this trip I used only the tunnel both there and back. The underground tunnel was completed in 1930 and is 5,150 ft. (1570m) in length. On average, 13,000 vehicles pass through the tunnel daily. The privately funded Ambassador Bridge opened a year prior, in 1929, and is 7,500 ft. (2300 m) long.

It is said that 25% of the amount of trade between Canada and the United States is transported across this bridge alone. Currently, a plan to construct a second bridge is underway.

There was a time when Detroiters would take the tunnel to Windsor for Chinese dim sum on

their lunch hour, but that has greatly changed since 9/11 and the strict border controls has made it more cumbersome. Windsor was also popular for its casinos, but since three casinos have opened in the City of Detroit, crossing the border is no longer necessary.

What was particularly impressive was seeing the skyline of the City of Detroit from Windsor's riverfront. It was very nice, indeed.



Vol. 164: Visit to Kalamazoo

On October 14, I visited Michigan Kalamazoo for my second time. This time, my main focus was on visiting Western Michigan University (WMU). First, I had a meeting with six English language teachers from Japan who are taking part in six months of training through the Japan-U.S. Training and Exchange Program for English Language Teachers (JUSTE). The English teachers are staying with American host families and seem to be enjoying this valuable time by learning more natural English and about the American way of life. President Dunn kindly hosted lunch for me where I enjoyed conversing with him and with scholars on Japan. As there are about 30 Japanese students at the school, but around 300 Chinese students, one topic of discussion was on how to strengthen relations with Japan and increase the number of students coming here to study. In the afternoon, I visited the old boarding house where the famous Japanese writer Mr. Nagai Kafu had lived during his study at Kalamazoo College, from 1904 to 1905. Lastly, I gave a lecture at the university on the topic of "Japan-US Relations". Kalamazoo has a population of 70,000 people. In 1963, they started a sister-city relationship with the Japanese city of Numazu. Although WMU started as a fairly normal school in 1903, it has now grown into a large and impressive state university with about 25,000 students. It is also famous as a mecca of Medieval European Studies and every year the college hosts an international conference in this field. In addition, it has enjoyed more than 50 years of academic and student exchange with Keio University in Japan. Every year, WMU receives one student from Keio University. In fact, a friend of mine from 30 years ago and a daughter of my university classmate were among those who studied at WMU through this exchange program. Indeed, this is a university that I have a personal connection with.



Vol. 165: Kitarou Shirayamadani

When I visited Cincinnati on October 16, Dr. Kinji Tanaka, President of the Japan Research Center of Greater Cincinnati, and his wife, who have been in Cincinnati since the 1950s (except for a short period of absence) kindly showed me and my wife the works of art done by ceramic artist Kitarou Shirayamadani (1862-1948) that are being displayed at the Cincinnati Art Museum. In addition to the

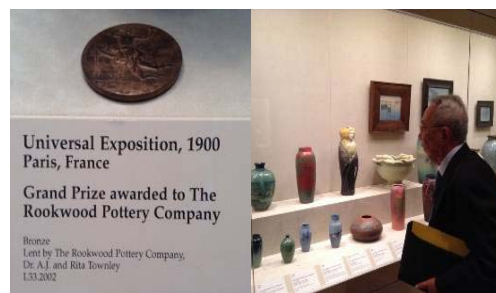


detailed explanations, they also took us to the studio and apartment where he used to work and live in at the time (the studio is now a restaurant).

Shirayamadani came to America in 1887 to work at the Rookwood Pottery Company in Cincinnati and his contributions to the World Expo helped make his company's name famous. He was a bachelor all his life and he lived in Cincinnati until his death. In a recent auction, one of his works sold for about \$350,000. Although he is virtually unknown in Japan, Dr. Tanaka did research on him in

various places including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Archives in Japan. There, Dr. Tanaka found a record of Shirayamadani's passport. According to those records, he was born in Ishikawa Prefecture and was of the samurai class. Unfortunately, no more information on him could be found. He may very well have been the first Japanese to live in Cincinnati.

As a Japanese person, I am very proud of the contributions that Shirayamadani was able to make to Cincinnati throughout his lifetime.



Vol. 166: Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati Gala

It feels like just yesterday that I attended the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati, together with Japan's Ambassador Sasae, on my first visit to Cincinnati, just a month after my arrival in Detroit, last year. But time flies quickly and on October 16th I traveled 4½ hours to Cincinnati to attend the annual event once again. Over the course of the year I visited Ohio a total of 36 times, including 5 visits to Cincinnati.

About 200 people attended the grand event from the greater Cincinnati area, which includes Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. In total, there are three Japan America Societies in my Michigan-Ohio jurisdiction: JAS of Central Ohio, JAS of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario and JAS of Greater Cincinnati. In the evening's remarks I spoke of the development of the Japan-Ohio relationship, and Japan-Cincinnati specifically, that I have witnessed over the past year.

Former Governor of Ohio and great-grandson of President Taft, Mr. Bob Taft II, came from Dayton, Ohio to join the Gala as the honorary chairman of the JASGC. The President of Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing, North America Inc., Mr. Osamu (Simon) Nagata, also attended.

I would like to express great thanks to Chairman Tony Webb and other JAS board members and officers for a very enjoyable evening.



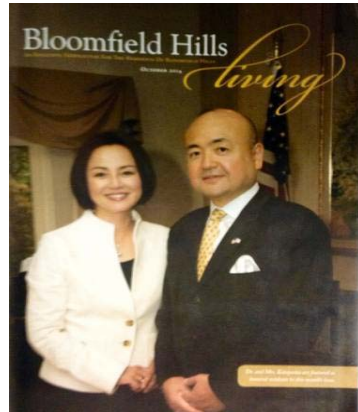
Vol. 167: Front Cover of Local Magazine

The other day at the Official Residence, which is situated in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills, we hosted Mayor Patricia Hardy and other city officials to dinner. On that lovely occasion, Mayor Hardy kindly proposed that I participate in an interview with a local magazine (Bloomfield Hills Living)

so to publicize the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit and U.S.-Japan relations.

I accepted the mayor's offer with delight and did a written interview and photo shoot at the residence. After some weeks passed, it was with great surprise, and admittedly, some embarrassment, to find my wife and me on the front cover!

But, I am more than happy if this experience helps local Americans to better understand the importance that Japan attaches to this region and how we continue to make contributions to the development of strong relations between Japan and Michigan—and with the U.S. as a whole—via economic, cultural, and people-to-people exchange.



Vol. 168: ETJ Program

On October 18th, the Japanese School of Detroit (Ringo Kai) held its annual open house. During the open house, four Metro Detroit teachers who were selected to visit Japan for two weeks under the ETJ (Educator to Japan) program shared about their experiences during their stays. The audience learned about their encounters with Japanese culture, warm interactions with host families and their impressions of Japanese schools and cities.

The teachers expressed that they were very surprised by the politeness of Japanese students and impressed with Japanese school lunch camaraderie and the fact that students clean their schools daily rather than janitors. They also mentioned how clean the city streets in Japan were. During their visit they enjoyed singing karaoke, marveled at the fish auctions at Tsukiji (the largest fish market in the world) enjoyed visiting shrines and temples in Kyoto and felt emotional whilst visiting Hiroshima. Overall, the teachers said they had a great stay in Japan and got to learn in depth about Japan and its culture.

While five teachers took part in the ETJ Program, only four presented at the open house since one could not attend due to an illness. Each teacher encountered their own version of Japan, but they all said that their trip created unforgettable memories and stories they will be telling throughout their lifetimes. Hearing each teacher present about their time in Japan and how meaningful it was to them made me feel warm inside and so glad that they had this opportunity.

I would like to sincerely thank the Japan Business Society of Detroit Foundation, the Japanese School of Detroit (Ringo Kai) and other participating Japanese companies for supporting this program which gives back to local K-12 schools that have opened their doors to Japanese students and made them feel welcome.



As Consul General, I am also very happy to support the great relationship between the Japanese community and Americans created through these types of grassroots exchange programs. If you happen to know of any interesting grassroots exchanges, I would greatly appreciate if you could provide our Consulate with information about these programs so we may support them to the best of our ability.

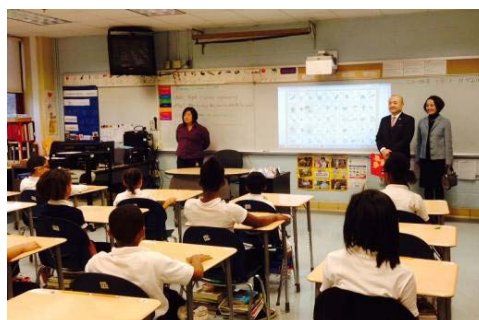
Vol. 169: FLICS Visit

Detroit is home to FLICS (Foreign Language Immersion and Cultural Studies School) a public immersion school which offers Japanese language immersion courses to students K-8. It is one of three schools in Michigan which boasts Japanese immersion education. FLICS also offers immersion courses in Chinese, French and Spanish.

On October 21st, I had a chance to visit FLICS where I was warmly welcomed by Principal Todd Losié and several parents. At FLICS, students not only study Japanese language, but they also learn about Japanese etiquette and culture. While there, I visited several classrooms from kindergarten all the way through middle school and got to experience the curriculum first-hand. In addition, I was pleased to meet with several students who visited Japan through the Kakehashi Project which is a fully-funded youth exchange program between Japan and the United States promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan.

I think that such a school at which Japanese language and culture is taught to students through immersion at such a young age is a great asset for Japan regardless of whether or not these students work in Japan-related fields in the future.

It is possible that, like many other schools, FLICS may be facing some financial difficulties and experiencing decreasing enrollment in Japanese due to an increase Chinese language education. I would like to emphasize, however, that our office is firmly committed to supporting FLICS by providing them with useful materials and co-hosting events that introduce Japanese culture in order to help maintain the students' interest in Japan.



Vol. 170: Cultural Envoy Eitetsu Hayashi comes to Dublin, Ohio

On October 26th Mr. Eitetsu Hayashi, a Japanese drum performer, or taiko player, was dispatched by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs as a cultural envoy to Dublin, Ohio, where he stayed for two nights and three days to hold a workshop at the Davis Junior High School. Due to a conflicting business trip, I unfortunately could not participate in the workshop, but had the chance to greet Mr. Hayashi at a welcome reception held the day of his arrival.

Mr. Hayashi kindly stopped in Dublin during a tour of various cities across the U.S. as well as Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago. The trip was funded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and support was

also received from the Japan Foundation.

I learned that Mr. Hayashi has had a close relationship with Dublin for about ten years. In the 2004-2005 academic year he held a series of taiko workshops for twenty students at the school. One of the teachers was so inspired by the lessons she continued her own study and holding classes. From that, Dublin Taiko was born. In the past ten years Dublin Taiko has grown to nearly 100 members and continues to flourish. Through practicing taiko these young people have discovered a new passion, which contributes greatly to expanding interest in Japan and Japanese culture.

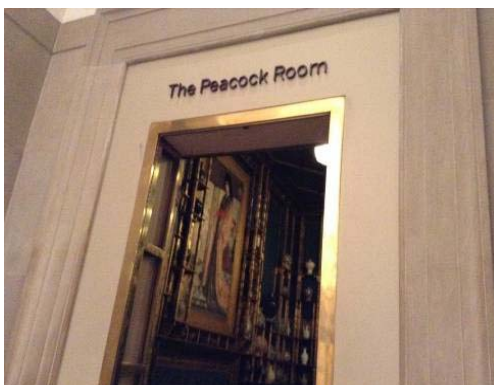
Coincidentally, Mr. Hayashi and I are both from Hiroshima Prefecture. Also, coincidentally, in 2005 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the Japan-Korea Friendship Year. At that time I happen to be the director of cultural affairs at the Ministry and Mr. Hayashi participated in the commemoration music festivals which were held in Osaka and Tokyo.

It was a great honor to have the opportunity to reconnect with Hayashi Sensei, this time in Dublin. I sincerely hope Mr. Hayashi will continue to play an important role in international exchange through his guidance and performance of taiko.



Vol. 171: The Freer Gallery

During a recent business trip to Washington, D.C., I used some of my free time to visit the Freer Gallery. Mr. Freer was originally a businessman from Detroit and one of his hobbies was gathering art from around the world, including Japanese art. In his will, he left his entire collection in Washington, D.C., so unfortunately none of it remains in the Freer House in Detroit. James Whistler's famous Peacock Room is also in Washington, D.C. It seems he amassed over 2,000 works of Japanese art. In the end it may have been a good decision to display the art in Washington, D.C., as this way the art is seen by more people from around the world.



Vol. 172: Let's Go Blue

On November 1st, I enjoyed my first live college football game at Michigan Stadium. Nicknamed “The Big House,” this stadium is the largest in North America, with a seating capacity of about 110,000. Amazingly, on game day, the number of fans inside the stadium eclipses the entire population of Ann Arbor, the city where the stadium is situated.

Before the game, a U-M regent kindly invited my wife and me to enjoy a tailgate party inside neighboring Chrysler Arena, which is where the Wolverines basketball teams play. During the tailgate party and later at halftime, I had wonderful opportunities to chat with several high-ranking university officials, including U-M President Schlissel, Wayne St. University Board Chairwoman Debbie Dingell (recently elected to U.S. Congress), along with several other regents and professors.

When thinking of the Michigan Wolverines’ rival, the team that immediately comes to mind is the Buckeyes from Ohio State University—their annual matchup will be played at the end of the season on Nov. 29th in Columbus. Japan’s version of this kind of heated rivalry is the Keio University vs. Waseda University baseball game. As for the Wolverines’ in-state rivals, of course, it is the Michigan St. University Spartans, who in recent years have had stronger teams. Another longtime foe, the University of Notre Dame Fighting Irish, who play in nearby Indiana and rank second only to U-M in terms of total number of wins and winning percentage in college football history. The Midwest clearly boasts a long, successful college football tradition.



despite sub-40 degree temperatures. We had a lot of fun cheering on the Maize and Blue and hope to enjoy the experience again someday!

The Wolverines belong to the Big Ten Conference, although at least in football, there are 14 conference teams. Unfortunately, the current season has been a challenging one, as U-M now has 4 wins and 5 losses overall (and a 2-3 record in conference). Big news was made recently upon the resignation of U-M’s athletic director, which took place the day before I visited. Perhaps I brought the team some luck, as the Wolverines pulled off a superb 34-10 victory over the Indiana Hoosiers,

Vol. 173: The World Cup of Gardening

In June of 2015, the World Cup of Gardening will be taking place for one week on Belle Isle, which is located in the Detroit River.

On November 4th, famous landscape designer and Chief Executive Director of the World Cup of Gardening, Mr. John Cullen, and Managing Director Mike McClelland, paid a visit to my office in the Consulate General in order to explain their plans for this exciting upcoming event. Prominent landscape designers from 10 countries around the world have already confirmed their attendance including one Japanese landscape designer, Mr. Kazuyuki Ishihara, who was born in Nagasaki. Mr. Cullen has visited Japan many times and became well acquainted with Mr. Ishihara over the course of his visits. Mr. Ishihara has been awarded three consecutive gold medals at the Royal Horticultural Society’s annual Chelsea Flower Show held in the U.K.—a premier location for authentic gardening.

I am very much looking forward to this event and think it would be a great idea for the local Japanese community to become involved with the World Cup of Gardening through various cultural

exchange events and activities. Our office is happy to support this event in close cooperation with the local Japanese business community in Metro Detroit.

(The World Cup of Gardening, Belle Isle, Detroit: <http://worldcupofgardening.com/>)



Vol. 174: Japanese Companies' Donation to the Detroit Institute of Arts

As part of the bankruptcy proceedings for the City of Detroit, the Grand Bargain plan specified that the Detroit Institute of Arts itself was required to raise \$100 million in order to protect its valuable collection.

Major contributions were made by American companies and foundations toward the steep goal. To assist in reaching the target, contributions by Toyota in August, followed in November by Denso, Aisin, and several more Japanese companies, 21 in total, pledged nearly \$3.2 million in contributions, (please refer to the following link for the complete list). The story immediately became headline news in all the local newspapers. A portion of the funds raised is also designated to be used for a new Japan exhibition space in the museum.

There are many Japanese companies and residents in Metro Detroit, but, in fact, there are few within the city itself. However, as corporate members of communities within this metropolitan region, these companies not only contribute economically, but also socially, through such actions as helping protect Detroit's valuable heritage and joining together with many others in strong support of the city's revitalization, which, as Consul General, makes me very proud. Once again, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the people of these companies.

I, together with everyone else, am looking forward to seeing how the revitalized Detroit will look in ten and twenty years from now.

Reference:

- DIA Press Release

<http://www.dia.org/news/1685/Japan-Business-Society-of-Detroit-Members-pledge-more-than-%242-Million-for-Detroit-Institute-of-Arts%E2%80%99-Grand-Bargain-Commitment%2c-Japanese-Gallery-at-the-Museum.aspx>

Related Articles:

- Detroit Free Press story

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- Detroit News story

<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/wayne-county/2014/11/06/japanese-businesses-back-detroits-bankruptcy-deal/18582541/>

Vol. 175: Novi's New City Manager

On November 7th, I greeted the new city manager of Novi, Mr. Peter Auger, who had been appointed in the middle of September. The current mayor, Mr. Bob Gatt, recently visited Japan. Although the city manager has not yet had the chance to visit Japan, I hope that Mr. Auger will have the opportunity early on to visit the country. Because Novi adopted the city manager system, the city manager is in charge of the day-by-day substantial administration affairs. Mr. Auger previously served as the city manager of Auburn Hills for six years. The city of Novi currently has 3,200 Japanese residents, which is the largest Japanese population in the Michigan and Ohio jurisdiction. The number of students in Japanese language schools is the third largest in the United States and there are over 80 Japanese company locations which provide about 1,500 jobs. In addition, the Japan Festival in Novi brings in about 3,000 participants to their annual event every October. The Novi Public Library also provides a Japanese book corner. Since beginning my current position, I have strived to strengthen ties with the Novi community through relations with city officials including mayors, police chiefs, superintendents, library directors, and others. The city manager said that he would like to share about various events and activities the city of Novi is planning with the Japanese community in a timely manner and I agreed to help him share this information with a larger audience. We would also like to expand on co-sponsored cultural events that take advantage of the Novi Public Library.



Vol. 176: Detroit's Financial Restructuring Plan Approved

On November 7, a federal judge, The Honorable Steven W. Rhodes, approved Detroit's comprehensive financial restructuring plan (legally referred to as: "The Plan of Adjustment") which enables the city to clear the highest hurdle of its legal case just sixteen months after filing for Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy. By his ruling that the plan of adjustment met the criteria of "fair and feasible," the city will have the legal authority to eliminate more than \$7 billion in unsecured liabilities and reinvest up to \$1.7 billion towards public services and blight removal over the next 10 years.

Thousands of the Detroit's original creditors sacrificed greatly during the course of negotiations,

including the general government retirees, who accepted a 4.5% reduction in their monthly pensions; an elimination of their COLA (cost of living) increases; and higher charges for healthcare coverage. Bond insuring companies, Detroit's biggest creditors, accepted about a 14% rate of return on their original claims.

A truly unique feature of the bankruptcy case is the so-called "Grand Bargain". This heavily negotiated agreement resulted in better-than-expected settlements for Detroit's retirees and the transition of the previously city-owned Detroit Institute of Arts—and its exquisite collection—into a protected charitable trust. Many key stakeholders participated in the Grand Bargain, including over 20 Japanese companies and several Japanese individuals, who donated more than \$3.2 million to the DIA. As consul general, I am so proud of their generous contributions.

Detroit is continuing work on various exciting projects such as the M-1 Rail streetcar line and the new Red Wings Arena District. We now see broken streetlights steadily repaired, reduced police response times and the removal of blight and abandoned homes.

I look forward with great optimism to witness the full recovery of this wonderful and iconic American city.



(Picture: Standing about 8 meters tall in front of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center is the "The Spirit of Detroit" statue, a symbol of the city).

Vol. 177: JET Program Returnees Networking Reception

On November 8th, I hosted a networking reception at my official residence for the JET Program participants who returned to the area this past summer. JET stands for the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program. Through this Program, the Japanese government invites young people from all over the world to Japan for a period of 1-5 years in order to work as Assistant Language Teachers at the K-12 level or as Coordinators for International Relations in local government offices. Since 1987, 60,000 youths (roughly half of whom are from the United States) have lived and worked in Japan through this great program.

This reception was held in order to welcome back the JET returnees who have recently returned to their hometowns in both Michigan and Ohio. In addition, we hosted university professors and high school teachers who have been dedicating themselves to enthusiastically teaching Japanese language; members of the JET Alumni Association; representatives from JBSD (Japan Business Society of Detroit); high school students who visited Japan through the JET-MIP Program, which was created to commemorate the JET Program participants who sadly lost their lives during the Great East Japan Earthquake; and finally Japanese junior high school teachers, who are currently studying English pedagogy at Western Michigan University through JUSTE (Japan U.S. Training & Exchange Program). Including staff members from the Consulate General, several of whom are JET alumni themselves, over 60 people were in attendance.

I'm pleased to mention that this past summer, our office sent 62 new JET's from my jurisdiction to live and work in Japan. I have no doubt that the JET's are making lifelong friends and creating

unforgettable memories during their time in Japan and I firmly believe that they will play a significant role in grassroots exchange between the United States and Japan in the future.



Vol. 178: Frankenmuth



About one and a half hours north of Detroit is a German city called Frankenmuth. On November 9th, through a frigid cold wind, I revisited the city for the first time in over a year. Originally, the ancestry of this area was largely German. The October Fest and Bavarian Festival, which are reproductions from the village of Bavaria in the southeastern corner of Germany, are especially active times in Frankenmuth. For lunch, I enjoyed a traditional chicken and potato dish in a downtown restaurant.

Nearby was a Christmas goods store called Bronner's Christmas Wonderland. Throughout Europe, traditional Christmas markets are open from late November through December. I enjoyed visiting the Christmas markets in Nuremberg and Rothenburg in Germany. However, Bronner's Christmas

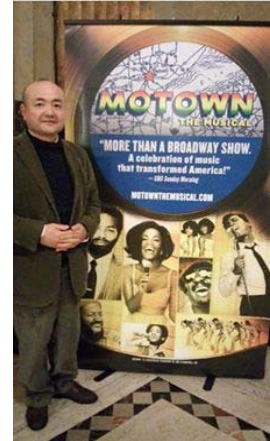
Wonderland which is open throughout the year is probably the world's largest Christmas store. As we are starting to enter Christmas mode, it is getting harder to find parking spaces in large parking lots and stores are now crowded with visitors. I can feel that we are nearing the end of the year.

Vol. 179: Motown: The Musical

On the evening of Veteran's Day, November 11th, I went to the Fisher Theater, in downtown Detroit, to see the hit show *Motown: The Musical*. The production is based on *To Be Loved*, the 1994 autobiography by famed music producer Berry Gordy, who founded Motown Records in Detroit in 1959 and launched the careers of Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, the Supremes, the Temptations, the Commodores, the Jackson Five and more.

The musical has been very well received since its opening on Broadway in April 2013 and, from April of this year, began a national tour. During the open auditions in Detroit, the long lines of young talent eager for a part in the musical was front page news in the local papers.

We could enjoy about sixty Motown songs. The whole audience seemed intoxicated by the nostalgic sounds and anticipated revival of Detroit, many singing along with the cast. The exciting evening was filled with the true spirit of Detroit.



Vol. 180: Reunion with my Mentor

On November 12th, I had the pleasure of visiting Dr. Ezra Vogel, (professor emeritus from Harvard), who came to the University of Michigan on a business trip. I met Dr. Vogel at his hotel where we enjoyed breakfast together while reminiscing about the past and catching up on each other's lives. It had been 13 years since we last saw each other.

As I mentioned in my previous entry, Dr. Vogel was my academic advisor when I was a graduate student studying at Harvard during the 1986-1987 academic year. Even before I met him in person, I knew his name very well during my university days in Japan because his book, *Japan as Number One*, became a bestseller in Japan and was very popular throughout the country.

Coincidentally, Dr. Vogel is a native of Ohio who grew up in Delaware and attended Ohio Wesleyan University before going to Harvard to pursue his PhD. It was truly a great honor for me to connect with him again in my office's jurisdiction here in the Midwest. Dr. Vogel was born in 1930, making him 84 years-old, but he looks very young and is in stellar health. He continues to be extremely enthusiastic about his academic research which I have admired for many years.

Dr. Vogel has been donating the proceeds from his books to his Alma mater, Ohio Wesleyan. Each year, Ohio Wesleyan invites Dr. Vogel to give a lecture in order to commemorate his great donations and contributions to the campus. I very much look forward to greeting Dr. Vogel at Ohio Wesleyan in the coming year the next time he visits.



Vol. 181: Deco Japan Exhibition

On November 12th I was honored to attend a reception and sneak preview of Deco Japan, an

exhibition opening November 15th at the Dayton Art Institute in Dayton, Ohio.

Though the art deco movement enjoyed worldwide popularity from the 1920's through 1940's, this special exhibit of nearly 200 works, including paintings, posters, pottery and crafts, focuses solely on art deco in Japan. The show provides a great opportunity to see how Japan was influenced by this new art style, as well as how Japan contributed to the art deco movement.

This exhibit particularly piqued my interest since, in my prior post in Brussels, Belgium, for three years I happen to live in a 1930's art deco style apartment building.

And, in conjunction with the DAI, I was delighted to assist in the promotion of Deco Japan, together with former governor Bob Taft and Alex Hara, the founder of *Operation 1000 Cherry Trees*. Once again, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all the corporate and private sponsors who made this rare exhibit possible.

In just one year since I have arrived here, I am delighted that Toledo, Cleveland, Detroit and now Dayton have hosted special exhibits of Japanese art and next February there will be another in Cincinnati. The Deco Japan exhibition will be open from November 15th through January 25th. I highly recommend everyone visit if you have a chance.



Vol. 182: University of Michigan Global MBA Program

On November 14th, I gave a lecture on Japan-China relations at the University of Michigan Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies at the request of the Center's director, Dr. Gallagher. There, I met several students who had been sent from Japanese companies and are enrolled in the Global MBA program at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. This program is a 1.5-year MBA course of study designed for Asian exchange students dispatched by companies in Asia. The program currently has 46 students, including 16 Japanese, 11 Korean, 6 Thai, 6 Taiwanese, 5 Indonesian, 1 Indian, and 1 Chinese student. From February through May, the students in the program traveled to Korea, Japan and China for special training sessions lasting 1 month in each country. I think that it is a very useful and instructive course, giving the opportunity to study in the United States and Asia, to learn about Asian business and society, as well as to meet and build connections with people from around the world. I had assumed that the Japanese presence would be small, so I am encouraged to see that many Japanese companies are sending exchange students to the program. I look forward to speaking with the participants in the Global MBA Program in greater depth in the future.

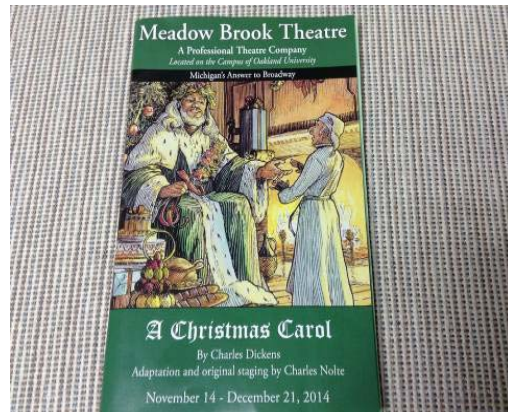


Vol. 183: A Christmas Carol

On November 15th the enjoyment of the Christmas holiday came a month early at the Meadow Brook Theatre on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester, north of Detroit, with the performance of *A Christmas Carol*. The stage play, based on the 19th century work, *A Christmas Carol*, of the famed UK author Charles Dickens.

A festive mood was set about 30 minutes before the play began, when seven of the actors came on stage singing Christmas carols and members of the audience accompanied them by jingling their keys or ringing bells they had brought. The play is the story of Scrooge, the cruel and miserly main character, who transforms his life after coming face-to-face with his past, present and future.

During the Christmas season everyone tries to change their ways and be kind to others, and while watching this play, I, too, regretted the selfishness in my own daily life.



Vol. 184: Saginaw and Simon & Garfunkel

On November 16th I went to Orchestra Hall to hear the “Sounds of Simon & Garfunkel,” concert performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO). Though not the actual duo, the orchestra was joined by two vocalists with guitars, singing and playing the iconic songs.

As a student, the songs of Simon & Garfunkel were among my favorite music, however, I recently learned the City of Saginaw and State of Michigan are in the lyrics of the song “America.” The song is based on a road trip taken by Paul Simon and his girlfriend, hitchhiking and riding the Greyhound around the U.S. in search of America and himself. In fact, Simon wrote the song in 1966 while visiting Saginaw and it was first recorded in 1972. “Michigan seems like a dream to me now,” and “It took me four days to hitch-hike from Saginaw,” are lines from the song.

It seemed the majority of the audience members were in their youth around 1970.



Vol. 185: The Emperor's Birthday Reception

In celebration of the Emperor's birthday (Japan's "National Day") I hosted my second Emperor's Birthday Reception on November 19th at the official residence. We scheduled the event more than a month earlier than His Majesty's actual birthday (December 23rd) so to avoid the holiday rush and inclement weather. That day, however, all 50 U.S. states recorded sub-freezing temperatures. In Metro Detroit, snow fell from noon and the thermometer read a chilly 23° F. I imagine many of our guests had difficulty traveling in these conditions, so I'm very grateful to the 183 attendees who managed to make it.

In the previous three years, the reception was held at outside venues, so it was nice to have it once again at the official residence; however, due to capacity restraints, our invitation list was unfortunately limited. I hope all who joined enjoyed themselves. The event provides a good opportunity to share updates with U.S. friends on the many contributions of local Japanese companies and residents in Michigan and Ohio, as well as to explain some of the consulate's own activities. At various display tables, we provided written material and videos on His Majesty's life and official duties, in addition to information on Japanese culture.

One advantage of holding the Emperor's Birthday Reception at the official residence is the ability to make use of our chef, who prepared authentic Japanese cuisine for the guests. We were also able to introduce various Japanese beverages, including sake, beer and whisky.

The reception was not only a wonderful occasion to express our best wishes and prayers for the long life of His Majesty—who will soon turn 81 years old—but also to celebrate Japan's strong ties and friendship with the great states of Michigan and Ohio.



Vol. 186: JASCO Economic Seminar



I was invited to attend the Japan America Society of Central Ohio Economic Seminar as a guest on November 20. I made a day trip to Dublin, Ohio to attend the event. The theme of the seminar was supply chain management in Ohio. I spoke about recent developments in the relationship between Japan and Ohio and Mr. Willoughby of Honda; Ms. Tanner of Jobs, Ohio; and Professor Gray of Ohio State University gave very informative presentations. I spoke about the growing economic importance of Ohio: How businesses in Ohio can reach 60% of the American population within a day by car or truck; the

revival of Ohio's manufacturing sector; and ongoing development of the shale gas industry. This seminar gave the audience a valuable chance to see the business opportunities available in central Ohio. I would like to thank JASCO for the hard work they always put into their seminars and projects.

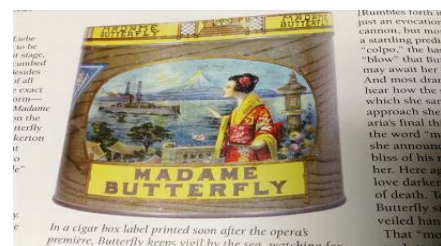
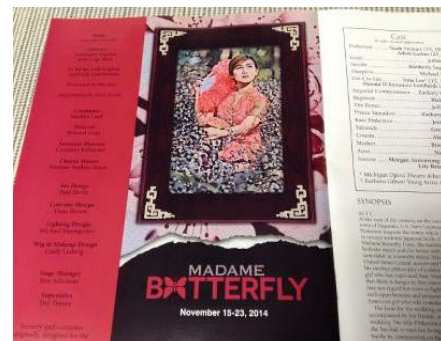
Vol. 187: *Madame Butterfly*

On November 23rd, I had the opportunity to visit the Detroit Opera House to watch the famous opera, *Madame Butterfly*, for which my wife and I purchased tickets long in advance. However, when we attended a football game at the University of Michigan a few weeks ago, we happened to meet Mr. Wayne Brown (director of the Detroit Opera House). When I let him know that my wife and I were planning to see the opera, he asked what our seat numbers were so he would be able to find us that evening. On the 23rd, as my wife and I were waiting for the performance to commence, Mr. Brown came to greet us and kindly invited us to view the opera from the box seats in the center of the 2nd floor. It was such a wonderful surprise!

As you know, *Madame Butterfly* is a 2-act opera that was composed by Puccini based on the short stories written by American author, John Luther Long. The opera has a long history having first premiered in 1904 and features the aria, "Un bel di" or "One beautiful day." In addition to this famous aria, there were also several original Japanese songs arranged for the opera including "Miya-san Miya-san" and "Sakura Sakura".

Madame Butterfly was composed for a Western audience and is often perceived as exotic from a Western point of view. From a Japanese point of view, however, the actors' mannerisms, the costumes and even the set seemed to have a mix of Chinese and Japanese influences. Although the feel was not completely Japanese, Japanese values do present themselves in the last scene when, in order to preserve her honor, *Madame Butterfly* takes her own life with a small knife which was left behind by her father. Overall, *Madame Butterfly*'s theme is one that is universally felt around the world: love.

I very much enjoyed having the opportunity to view this opera. After the performance, the audience gave a standing ovation for the performers who concluded by taking their bows on stage. I couldn't help but feel a little sorry for the actor who played Pinkerton who was given a "boo" from the audience. Of course, this was not based on the actor's performance, but based on his character.



Vol. 188: Lebanese Independence Day

On November 24th, I was invited to a Lebanese Independence Day Reception to celebrate Lebanon's 71st anniversary of independence. The reception was held at the Arab American National

Museum located in Dearborn and was hosted by the Consul General of Lebanon who I had a chance to speak with and congratulate that evening.

Dearborn and its surrounding areas are home to one of the largest Arab American populations (including many Lebanese Americans) in the United States. As such, Lebanon is one of only 7 countries to have established a Consulate General office here in Metro Detroit.

Last week, I hosted the Emperor's Birthday Reception at my residence and the evening went quite smoothly despite the inclement weather. Having successfully completed such an important event, I was relaxed and able to fully enjoy myself at the Lebanese Independence Day Reception. I had a nice time conversing with attendees at the reception and very much enjoyed the Lebanese food that was served.



Vol. 189: Southfield's Japanese Business Breakfast

On the 25th of November, a "Japanese Business Breakfast" event was hosted by the City of Southfield, along with Lawrence Technological University and in cooperation with the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. It was my pleasure to participate and offer some opening remarks.

Located just north of Detroit, Southfield is home to 17 Japanese facilities, including Denso International America, Inc. In fact, over 1,200 direct jobs are now provided by Southfield-based Japanese investors.

Many distinguished participants were on hand, including Mayor Brenda Lawrence, who was recently elected to represent Michigan's 14th district in the U.S. House of Representatives, congratulations congresswoman-elect Lawrence! City Council President, Mr. Donald Fracassi, who will become acting-mayor in January, and Councilwoman Sylvia Jordan, along with other city leaders; Lawrence Technological University President, Dr. Virinder Moudgil; Oakland County officials; officers of the Japan Business Society of Detroit and Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario; as well as many key executives of Japanese companies were all in attendance.

This event provided a very meaningful opportunity to exchange views, network, and learn more about the steadily strengthening economic and investment climate in Southfield and Oakland County. As I've reported several times, the Japanese community and the Consulate General of Japan enjoy long-held, excellent relations with Southfield. And, the fact that the city took the initiative to host such this Japanese Business Breakfast, which I'm told will become an annual event, clearly shows its strong commitment to Japan.

Thank you again to our gracious hosts!



On November 25, I visited the Ohio State University Business School in Columbus, Ohio, and delivered a lecture to about 45 students. The lecture was entitled Japan and Ohio: Enduring Business Partnership and covered economic relations between Japan and Ohio. As you probably know, Honda is one of 420 Japanese companies to directly invest in Ohio, creating jobs for more than 70,000 people among them. Together, they make Japan the largest source of foreign direct investment in Ohio. Furthermore, Ohio has a sister-state relationship with Saitama prefecture and 14 communities in Ohio have sister-city relationships with Japanese cities. Including OSU, there are 26 universities and 16 K-12 schools teaching Japanese to more than 3000 students throughout Ohio. Ohio has one of the most business-friendly tax codes in America and is within one day's drive (600 miles) by car of 60% of the population of the United States and Canada. The state has a strong labor market, with a workforce of more than 6,000,000, as well as over 200 colleges and universities. All of this leads to Ohio having the fifth-highest manufacturing output in America. One of the students attending the lecture had experience as an intern at Honda. Despite the fact that my lecture started at 7:00PM, many students eagerly participated in the following Q&A discussion, too. I am grateful for their enthusiasm.

There was a football game at Ohio Stadium between the rival Buckeyes (OSU) and Wolverines (University of Michigan) on November 29th, just a few days after my visit to OSU. As Consul General with jurisdiction over both states, I felt somewhat like Hamlet.



Vol. 191: Thanksgiving

On November 27th, my wife and I were invited to a friend's home to celebrate Thanksgiving and enjoy a lovely feast together with their family. The event that Americans commonly call the "First Thanksgiving" was celebrated by the Pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World one year after they arrived in 1620. That day, the White House also held its annual presidential turkey pardoning ceremony as well.

Like many traditional Thanksgiving celebrations, we enjoyed turkey and cranberry sauce. In addition to the traditional Thanksgiving cuisine, we also had the opportunity to try turkey flavored tofu which could be enjoyed by vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike. It was surprisingly quite tasty!

For most Americans, much like Christmas, Thanksgiving is a time to gather with family. This is quite similar to how the New Year's holiday is celebrated in Japan. Our



evening spent in the warmhearted household of our American friends was quite precious and truly gave me the opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving as it is typically spent in North America.

The following day, the spirit of Christmas was in the air with many people flocking to shops and malls in order to start their Christmas shopping. Before the end of the year, I hope to review all that happened this past year before making plans for the upcoming year.

Vol. 192: U-M Wolverines vs. OSU Buckeyes

On November 29th, the annual football game between The University of Michigan Wolverines vs. The Ohio State University Buckeyes was held at Ohio Stadium in Columbus. These longtime rivals traditionally face-off in the last regular season game of the Big Ten season.

I learned that the first game between them was played back in 1897 (a U-M win) and in the overall series, the Wolverines maintain a 12-game edge over the Buckeyes (58 wins to 46 losses).

In the past decade, the Buckeyes have dominated the matchup, winning 9 of the 10 last games. And on this particular day, the outcome was much the same: a 42-28 Ohio St. victory. While the Wolverines managed to keep the game close in the first half, eventually, the Buckeye's talent was too much to overcome. An Ohio Stadium record crowd of 108,610—mostly scarlet and gray-covered—fans were clearly overjoyed.

(Note: Since the time of writing, the Buckeyes defeated the Wisconsin Badgers 59-0 in the Big Ten championship game and qualified as one of the four teams who will participate in the first ever college football playoff in January. Go Bucks!)



Vol. 193: JSD Women's Club

I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation to attend the JSD (Japan Society of Detroit) Women's Club's Christmas luncheon which was held on December 3rd at a golf club located in a Detroit suburb. Since its inception in 1991, the JSD Women's Club has been serving as an important bridge between the Japanese and local communities through volunteer activities and cultural exchange events here in Metro Detroit. The Women's Club currently boasts 124 members.

That day, I was slightly nervous because I heard that only two men would be in attendance at the luncheon: Mr. Shosaku Ueda, Executive Director of the Japan Business Society of Detroit, and myself. Despite being the only men, we were both very glad to support the activities of the JSD Women's Club and had a very nice time at the Christmas luncheon.

The JSD Women's Club and the Consulate General are important partners and have collaborated on such activities as tea ceremony presentations, kimono demonstrations, Japan Festivals held in both Saginaw and Novi and other cultural events which promote mutual understanding between the United States and Japan. In addition, the JSD Women's Club has also created and routinely edits a *Michigan Living Guide Book* to serve as a guide for Japanese residents living in Michigan.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mrs. Sugama, Chairman of the Women's Club, and all of the members for their many contributions to the local community and for including me at their wonderful Christmas luncheon. I look forward to once again working closely with the Women's Club in the coming year.

Vol. 194: Speech at the City Club of Cleveland

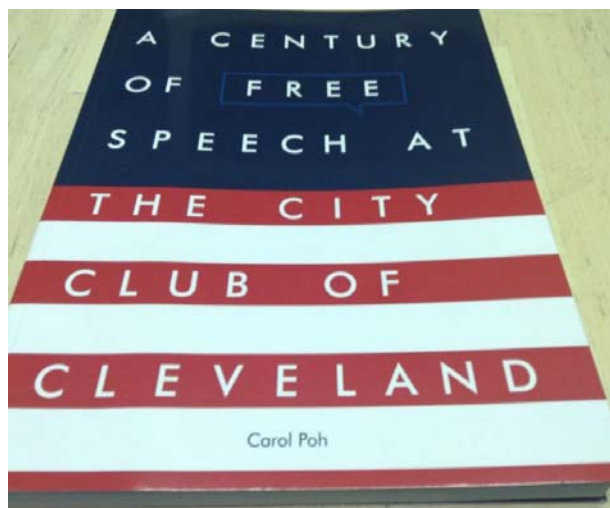
On December 5th, before an audience of 150 members and guests, I was invited to the City Club of Cleveland to present a speech entitled Why Japan Still Matters. The address focused on U.S.-Japan relations, Ohio-Japan relations and Japan's ongoing revival.

Founded in 1912, the City Club has hosted several U.S. presidents over the years, including Theodore Roosevelt, so, it was a huge honor to speak at this prestigious venue. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Hiroyuki Fujita (a Japanese entrepreneur who established his medical equipment production company in Cleveland) and Dr. Fujita's American friends, who made this opportunity possible for me.

The Cleveland region does not have a Japan America Society and the overall Japanese presence is smaller when compared to other Ohio metro areas such as Columbus and Cincinnati; thus, I hope my presentation helped the audience better and more accurately understand Japan's importance to the state and will ultimately strengthen our bilateral relations.

During the Q&A session, I fielded several questions on difficult topics such as Sino-Japan relations, Japan's immigration policy and the challenges of its ageing population. Admittedly, I felt a bit nervous, as the entire presentation was broadcast on local radio and television (in fact, here is a youtube link for your reference: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANs6rHnDGww>).

Hopefully, I managed to deliver Japan's message in a positive and clear way to the club members in attendance, the 20 high school students who joined as guests, as well as to any metro Clevelanders who may have heard it.



Vol. 195: Detroit Public Television Broadcasting

On December 6th, I went to visit the Detroit Public Television (WTVS) broadcasting station in Wixom by arrangement of the Harvard Club. This station is a member company of the National Public Broadcasting network of PBS. I saw the mobile broadcasting van, the studio and the editing room and I also had the opportunity to witness a television recording. They appear to have remodeled a warehouse and converted it into a state-of-the-art acoustic studio. I am not very familiar with these daily local public broadcasts, but I think I will make a conscious effort to try watching them in the future.





Vol. 196: Detroit Lions

On December 7, I went to Ford Field in downtown Detroit to watch a Detroit Lions NFL game. As it happens, December 7 was the 73rd anniversary of the beginning of the war between Japan and America with the attack on Pearl Harbor. In America, I find that it is common for veterans to be honored at sporting events, and on that day, there was a silent prayer observed during the game. I deplore that America and Japan were forced into such a catastrophic conflict, but at the same time proud of the strong US-Japan alliance that has grown in the 70 years since the war ended.

This was my second time attending an NFL game in Detroit, but the first time this season. Each NFL team only plays 16 games per season, roughly one tenth played by major-league baseball teams. With only half of those games played at home, tickets can be very hard to come by. This time, Deputy Mayor Mike McKinnon of Detroit kindly invited my wife and me to the game. Ford Field is not as big as Michigan Stadium, but it still boasts indoor seating for 65,000 people and was nearly full for this game. The Detroit Lions were facing the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Lions played impressively, winning with a score of 34-17. I enjoyed watching them adeptly score several touchdowns. The Lions have been doing somewhat poorly in recent years, finishing third in the NFC Northern Division last year and fourth in the 2012 season. Sadly, they have never played in the Super Bowl. However, after this game, they were in second place; they are now in first place with only two games left in the season. I sincerely hope that this trend will continue, and they will proceed to the playoffs as division champions or a wild card team.

Additionally, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan was supporting the Lions from a different box seat. I visited his box to greet him, and we took this picture.



Vol. 197: Urban Revitalization

I recently read two interesting books on the topic of urban revitalization: *The Challenge of City Downsizing* (Iwanami Publishing Co.) by Hiroshi Yahagi, and *Yubari Revival Mayor* (Kodansha Publishing Co.) by Naomichi Suzuki, the mayor of Yubari City.



The former focuses on Detroit and Torino, two well-known cities trying to recover from the challenges of industrial and population decline. The book highlights what lessons Japan might learn from these cities' efforts to revive.

The latter, written by a young mayor, features the city of Yubari (Hokkaido Prefecture). Yubari was once a booming coal mining town whose population is now one-tenth of its peak, due to the shuttering of its mines in the 1980s. Like Detroit, Yubari was forced to declare municipal bankruptcy (in 2007). Mayor Suzuki, elected in 2011, has been at the forefront of revitalization initiatives.

While Detroit and Yubari differ in their size and traditional industries, they do have much in common: both were once prosperous cities and both were largely dependent on a single industry. When these industries could no longer sustain their respective hometowns, critical population losses occurred and eventually bankruptcies were declared. Fortunately, both Detroit and Yubari are now seeing signs of revitalization, though their challenges remain great.

Japanese society now faces a declining birthrate and an ageing population. It is predicted that, as was the case in Yubari, roughly half of Japanese local governments will have trouble maintaining their administrations if the current situation continues. The experiences and experiments of Detroit and Torino therefore, are not isolated. Indeed, these cities are addressing the issues and resolving the problems which many municipalities now, or may someday, face and their experiences as pioneers of urban revitalization remain most relevant and instructive.

Vol. 198: Studio Ghibli Collection Screening

In order to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Japanese animation film studio, Studio Ghibli, the University of Michigan's Center for Japanese Studies has been hosting a film series at The State Theatre in Ann Arbor since October. On December 10th, I had the opportunity to attend a screening of *The Wind Rises*, a Japanese animated historical drama film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, that was released in 2013.

The Wind Rises is an animated film about the story of Jiro Horikoshi, designer of the fighter aircraft entitled the Mitsubishi A6M Zero, used by Japan during World War II. The film also incorporates aspects from the novel entitled *The Wind Has Risen* by Tatsuo Hori. A major theme explored in this animated film is how one should fulfill his or her life. With a runtime of two hours, this was the final film directed by Miyazaki before his retirement in September, 2013.

The University of Michigan fall semester had just ended and students were taking final exams throughout the entire week. Despite their busy schedules, the movie theatre was full of University of Michigan students who were clearly dedicated fans of Hayao Miyazaki's films.



Vol. 199: Battle Creek Visit

On December 11th, I visited Battle Creek, which is about a two-hour drive west from Detroit. Battle Creek is famous for being the hometown of Kellogg's headquarters—in fact, its nickname is “Cereal City.”

I am proud to mention that Battle Creek is also home to nearly 20 Japanese owned facilities, which have created 6,000 direct jobs there. That morning, I visited the local economic development agency known as Battle Creek Unlimited, where I was briefed by the interim-President, Mr. Jim Hettinger. I later enjoyed



lunch with Mayor Deb Owens and other city officials. Afterwards, the mayor kindly gave me a guided tour of the historic city hall. In Mayor Owens' office, one can see a Japanese "Daruma" figure on display, which was gifted to Battle Creek by its sister-city, Takasaki. Later that afternoon, I visited two impressive manufacturing facilities (Denso and Tokai Rika).

My visit concluded with a lovely dinner gathering, attended by the mayor and many other key players in Battle Creek, including former U.S. Representative, Dr. Joseph Schwartz. I was even presented with a key to the city, which was indeed a great honor.

Throughout the day I strongly felt the warm hospitality extended by my hosts. Their friendship with Japan and appreciation for its long commitment to their city was unmistakable. Likewise, I came away most impressed by the many contributions of the local Japanese companies and Japanese community in Battle Creek.

In the upcoming weeks, I'll have more occasions to visit Battle Creek and have already returned there previous to this blog entry. I feel very fortunate to have established relationships with these kind people and to have learned more about their wonderful city.

Vol. 200: Battle Creek and Denso

When I went on a business trip to Battle Creek, I received a signed Japanese copy of *Denso and Small Town: Challenge of Battle Cree*, (Japan Management Association, 1998) from James Hettinger, interim President of the economic development organization Battle Creek Unlimited. This book is a translation of the original English, *Small Town: Giant Corporation* (James F. Hettinger & Stanley D. Tooley, University Press of America, 1994) which I have had on the bookshelf of my office for some time. After I returned to Detroit, I decided to read it.

I learned a great deal from the book. It covered many topics, starting with DENSO's decision-making process as it considered investing in Battle Creek in the 1980s. Battle Creek made great efforts over quite some time to encourage DENSO's investment and the book also explained the conditions necessary to encourage foreign investment. It covered some issues in the investment process, as well, including conflicts and coordination between US and Japanese management, labor disputes and racial issues. Furthermore, it talked about DENSO's contributions to the local community, the qualities of Japanese executives living in America, the living situations of Japanese expatriates and the education of their children in America and local sentiments toward Japan resulting from WWII experience. Ultimately, the book is a case study on foreign investment in the United States. The sincerity and enthusiasm of those who received that investment, as well as mutual trust they have created, laid an important foundation for the great success story that is DENSO and Battle Creek.



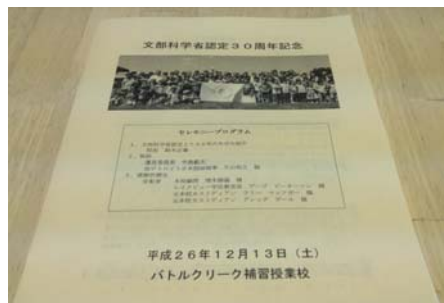
Vol. 201: 30th Anniversary of the Battle Creek Japanese Language School

On December 13th I attended the 30th Anniversary event of the founding of the Japanese language school in Battle Creek, Michigan. The school began in 1980 with only four students. Just four years later, with nine students, the school became certified by Japan's Ministry of Education as a Japanese supplementary education school. In the 1990's with attendance numbering more than one hundred and local support, the Ministry dispatched a principal from Japan for the Saturday school. As Consulate General, we support the school in various ways such as providing honoraria for the locally recruited instructors and facility rental fees.

Although I believe that attending the local schools all week and Japanese school on Saturday is quite tough and very demanding for the students and their parents, the international community of the future will require global talent; and, I believe the children growing up here will play a big role in the future of Japan, the United States and the world.

An unfortunate circumstance coinciding with the 30th Anniversary is that recently the number of students has been dipping below one hundred. As a result, since the term of the current principal will end next March, for now, a successor will not be dispatched from the Ministry of Education to replace him. Though it is unavoidable due to the budget, we need to understand that education is the key to developing Japan's workforce and Japan's future as a nation. Along with the efforts to increase the number of students, I want to continue to work together with the public and private sectors to try to maintain the quality of the education environment.

Also, during the anniversary celebration, four people including Advisor Katsuyoshi Masumoto and the Peterson School District Superintendent were presented a letter of appreciation from the Saturday School principal.



Vol. 202: Consular Corps Holiday Gala

On December 13th, I attended the Detroit Consular Corps year end gala dinner in the historic building of the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. Including Japan, seven countries have consulates in Detroit and roughly 50 honorary consuls (generals) reside here. Of those individuals and including their spouses and partners, about 50 people attended this event. The dean of the consular core is the Consul General of Iraq, and the Honorary Consul General of Turkey takes care of arranging consular events. Unfortunately, my wife and I were the only other representatives from a Consul General present that day. I had a very enjoyable time at the event thanks



to the careful arrangements of the coordinator for the Swiss Honorary Consul General and his wife. Although Detroit Deputy Mayor McKinnon and his wife were our special guests at the event, after dinner we all joined in with a wonderful singing performance led by the deputy mayor.



Vol. 203: 2014 IEJ Program

On December 15th, I hosted a dinner at my official residence in honor of this year's International Educators to Japan (IEJ) Program participants. Through this program, five teachers and administrators from local public schools visited Japan from June 22nd-July 3rd this past summer. I also invited the Principal of the Japanese School of Detroit as well as the Executive Director of the Japan Business Society of Detroit as both of these organizations were instrumental in sponsoring and organizing the educators' visit to Japan. This was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the program participants' experiences in Japan.

The IEJ program was initially established in the 1970's when Japanese companies were increasing their overseas presence. With many Japanese students attending public schools in foreign countries, the IEJ Program was created in order to express appreciation for the warm support of local schoolteachers to Japanese expatriate children as well as help teachers to gain a better understanding of Japanese education policy and school culture. On the Japan side, the Institute for International Studies and Training (IIST) coordinates the program.

Including the five teachers/administrators who participated from metro Detroit, a total of 24 people hailing from the United States, Canada and Belgium took part in this year's program. The program allowed these educators to visit schools and experience Japanese culture. The educators also enjoyed interacting with Japanese teachers and students, staying with Japanese host families and sightseeing in both Hiroshima and Kyoto. Since 1992, the Japan Business Society of Detroit has been sponsoring the local teachers who have been



selected to participate in this program. Since its inception, nearly 160 American educators have participated in the IEJ Program.

While speaking with the five local educators who recently participated in the program, I learned that they had a chance to witness Japanese school cleaning time (during which students clean their schools) and they had the opportunity to eat lunch in the classroom with the Japanese students and their homeroom teachers. The program participants said that, in comparison with students in the United States, they were extremely impressed by Japanese students' good manners and the courtesy and respect shown to their teachers.

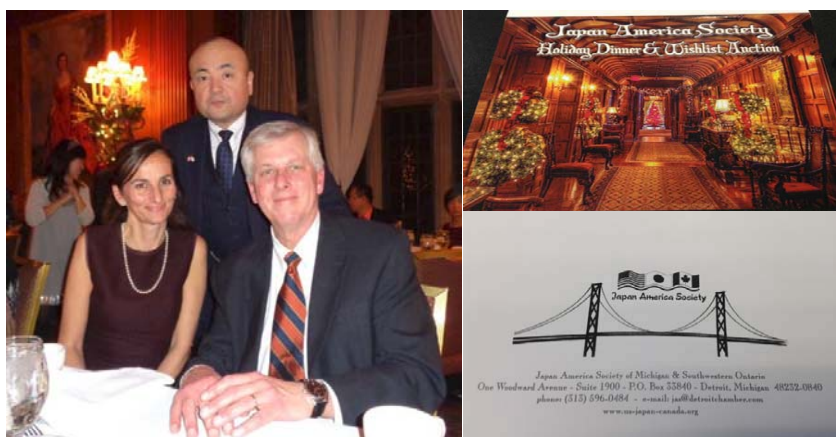
I truly believe that the IEJ Program provides a meaningful experience for local educators and that their time spent in Japan will prove very valuable for them when working with Japanese students in the future.

Vol. 204: Japan America Society Holiday Dinner and Wish-list Auction

The Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario hosted their annual Holiday Dinner and Auction on December 16th at Meadow Brook Hall, on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester, north of Detroit. The Tudor-style mansion was built in the 1920s by Matilda Dodge Wilson, widow of the famous automaker John F. Dodge, who co-founded Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company. The Hall is renowned for its stunning holiday décor each year. During the dinner, a silent auction was held to raise funds for the Society's programs.

The evening also marked the completion of Mr. Chuck Little's four consecutive terms as chairman and the announcement of his successor, the 2015 incoming chair Mr. Bruce Brownlee of Toyota. It was a great evening with many supporters of Japan-US relations participating, including Canadian Consul General Douglas George, with whom I serve together as honorary chairman of the society; Mayor Bob Gatt of Novi, the city with the highest number of Japanese residents in Michigan; and former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer and his wife, Judge Trudy Archer. Next year, the Society will celebrate its 25th Anniversary of linking together Michigan, Southwest Ontario and Japan.

The Japan America Society is a key partner of our Consulate office, and I look forward to continue working closely with them in the upcoming year.



Vol. 205: Visit to Adrian College

On December 17th I visited Adrian College, which is located an hour-and-a-half Southwest of Detroit, in a city with a population of over 20,000. I was invited by Mayor Berryman, whom I met through the Shiga Prefecture and Michigan sister-state exchange events,

as well as by university officials. First, I received an overview from President Docking of Adrian College during a guided campus tour. Founded as a Christian college in 1859, Adrian College is a private liberal arts institution with a current enrollment of about 1,700 students. There were unfortunately no students as winter vacation has already begun, but the college offers Japanese courses and during my next visit I hope to have an opportunity to interact with the students. I was greeted by many officials at the luncheon, including President Docking, Mayor Berryman, an Economic Development Corporation representative, Japanese company representatives (for Hi-Lex and a Mitsui Chemicals subsidiary named Anderson Development) officials from the sister-city program, the superintendent, as well as Japanese residents. We reminisced on our previous visits to Japan, and also exchanged ideas and opinions on the middle school student exchange with the sister-city of Moriyama, a visit from the Mayor of Moriyama, as well as ways to increase the number of Japanese exchange students at the college. Adrian College is also famous for its ice hockey team, and I was shown the arena in the afternoon. I am very grateful to all of the officials who showed me such heart-warming hospitality throughout my visit to Adrian College.



Vol. 206: Honda Heritage Center

On December 18th, I went to the opening ceremony of the recently-finished Honda Heritage Center in Marysville, Ohio, the production center of Honda North America. Honda has been producing motorcycles in the area since 1979 and four-wheeled vehicles since 1982 and

became a net exporter from the United States just last year. Next year, the world's only NSX production facility is scheduled to open here, as well. In addition to exhibits about the history of Honda, the Heritage Center also has training facilities, robotics and small jet aircraft exhibits. Despite his busy schedule, Governor Kasich also gave a short speech and cut the ribbon during



the ceremony.

Afterward, I met with Mayor John Gore Jr. of Marysville for lunch. He showed me around the new City Hall, including the under-construction Friendship Garden in front, that includes a 3.5-ton stone sent from Marysville's friendship city of Yorii in Saitama Prefecture. Honda and Marysville are an excellent example of a successful Japanese investment in America, much like I recently saw with DENSO in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Vol. 207: 2015 New Year Greeting

Happy New Year! My warmest greetings to each of you as we welcome the year of 2015. This marks my second New Year's greeting as Consul General of Japan in Detroit. And, I am happy to say, these past fifteen months since my arrival have been both eventful and fruitful. In this New Year, we at the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit will continue to work diligently toward two major objectives: clearly demonstrating our countries' true bilateral partnership through building and reinforcing the bonds between Michigan, Ohio and Japan and providing the best possible public service to the Japanese citizens residing in both states.

Already on the agenda, some of the areas of focus for me in 2015 will include the City of Detroit's revitalization; the 55th anniversary celebration of the Detroit-Toyota sister-city relationship—which, hopefully, will include a visit to Japan by Detroit's Mayor Duggan; this spring's visit to Japan by Mayor Keenan of Dublin, Ohio as part of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs invitation program in March; the special Japanese art exhibition at the Cincinnati Art Museum starting in February; the opening of the Japanese Garden at the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids in June, Michigan and, at the same venue, a very special art exhibition from Shiga, Japan—Michigan's Sister State starting in January; the Silver Anniversary of the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario; September's Japan-US Midwest Conference in Tokyo, which, hopefully, one or both governors and several mayors will attend; and, more broadly, U.S. policy negotiations on TPP and the 2016 presidential election.

The year, 2015, also marks the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. Since that time, the U.S. and Japan have constructed a solid alliance and strong bond upon which we will continue to build as strategic allies, economic partners and close friends. I sincerely hope 2015 will further enrich Japan's warm relations with Michigan and Ohio.

May prosperity, health and happiness be yours in the New Year!

January, 2015
Kazuyuki Katayama
Consul General of Japan in Detroit



Vol. 208: College Football on New Year's Day

I enjoyed the snow on New Year's Day 2014, but while 2015 has brought below-freezing temperatures, little snow had fallen by New Year's Day. I spent New Year's Day eating traditional Japanese New Year's food (sent from Japan in vacuum packs) while watching college football on television at home. Within the states of my jurisdiction, Michigan State University played in the Cotton Bowl in Arlington, Texas and Ohio State University played in the combined Sugar Bowl/College Football Playoff Semi-final Game in New Orleans, Louisiana.

At the end of the third quarter, MSU was behind by 20 points, but they made a dramatic, last-minute recovery, winning 42-41 over Baylor University. OSU, ranked 4th, impressively defeated the 1st-ranked Alabama University 42-35 in a close game. The finals will

be held on January 12 in Arlington Texas, where Ohio State University will play against Oregon University (winners of the Rose Bowl, another semifinal match) in the College Football National Championship game.

Unfortunately, in the NFL, the Detroit Lions suffered a come-from-behind playoff defeat to the Dallas Cowboys on January 4th, losing 20-24.



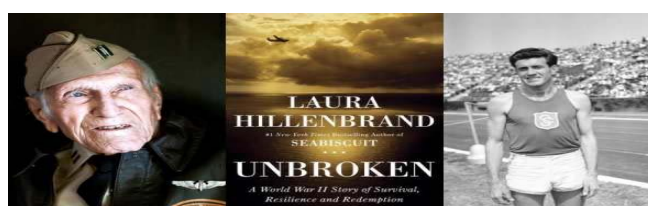
Vol. 209: The Movie *Unbroken*

On the second day of the New Year, I went to a theatre in Birmingham near my residence to see the film *Unbroken*. The famous actress, Angelina Jolie, produced and directed the movie, which was based on the non-fiction work of Laura Hillenbrand, written in 2010. Since I had read the book a few years ago I was also/quite interested in seeing the movie.

As some of you may be planning to see the movie or read the book, I will not go into great detail, however, to briefly summarize, it is the story of Louis Zamperini, the son of an Italian immigrant. He was an Olympic athlete, who had run the 5000-meter event for the United States in the 1936 Summer Olympics held in Berlin. In 1943, during World War II, his B-24 bombardier crashed into the Pacific Ocean, where he drifted for 47 days in a life raft until he was captured by the Japanese military. Zamperini was sent to various prison camps where he endured severe conditions and abuse as a prisoner of the Japanese army, but, his courage and determination to survive triumphed and he returned home after the war. Zamperini eventually returned to Japan to meet with his former prison guards, not for revenge, but rather in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. Years later, on his 81st birthday in 1998, Zamperini ran a one-kilometer leg carrying the Olympic torch in Nagano, Japan for the Winter Olympics torch relay. As the Japanese Imperial Army at the time of the war were instructed “never to live in shame as a prisoner” it is not difficult to imagine how brutally the soldiers treated enemy captives and this was clearly depicted in several scenes of a particular sergeant’s repeated abuse of Zamperini.

Frankly speaking, personally, I would have liked to see more of Mr. Zamperini’s post-war activities and accomplishments also included in the film. Mr. Zamperini lived a long life, to the age of 97, and passed away on July 2, 2014.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. I am very proud that the United States and Japan, together, have overcome this dark period to build a strong alliance and it is now our responsibility to strengthen it even more for our passing on to the next generation.



Vol. 210: Battle Creek Japan Club New Year's Party

During January, I received invitations to attend several New Year's parties being held by various Japanese associations within my jurisdiction as well as the Japan Chamber of Commerce. I would like to say thank you to everyone for the kind invitations. As much as physically possible, I would like to celebrate the New Year with the many Japanese residents who live across this region. My wife and I attended the first New Year's party on the 10th, which was hosted by the Battle Creek Japan Club. Among those in attendance were President Kuwamura of the Japan Club, with his wife; Principal Suzuki of the Battle Creek Japanese School, with his wife; and including all of the other members, over 150 attendees enjoyed the evening's event. Some special attractions of this event were the endless amount of great Japanese food prepared by Japanese chefs, a skit competition with high-quality performances between two opposing companies and the fact that more than half of the attendees won special prizes in a lottery. The main highlight was the skit performances of the movie *Frozen* and of the Japanese music program "The Best Ten" of the top ranked songs from 25 years ago.



Vol. 211: Japanese Association of Northeast Ohio (JANO) New Year's Party

On January 11th, my wife and I traveled three hours by car in order to attend the Japanese Association of Northeast Ohio's annual New Year's party which was held in Akron. As Northeast Ohio is not home to any Japan America Societies, JANO plays a primary and key role in Japan-U.S. exchange and relations throughout the region. Currently, JANO is comprised of 17 corporate members and 180 individual members. Back in 1996, JANO began a local beautification project involving planting cherry trees throughout Northeast Ohio. JANO members have already planted 240 trees to date.

Around 65 people were in attendance at the New Year's party. At first, Chairman Hashimoto gave an overview of JANO's budget report, briefed us on their activities throughout the past year, and shared the upcoming year's goals and plans. Guests had the opportunity to enjoy a Japanese cuisine buffet while also participating in a variety of activities and games. My wife and I



both had a pleasant time at the party.

I was happy to learn that many of the JANO members feel that they have a strong relationship and bond with our Consulate General as a gate to Japan. Of course, our office remains firmly committed to cooperating with and supporting JANO in 2015 and beyond.

Vol. 212: College Football #1!

January 12th was a day of joyous celebration for Ohioans. It was the day of the College Football Playoff National Championship at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. 105,000 people packed into the stadium and many more watched on television. Unlike previous years, the top four teams played in the semifinals, with the 1st-ranked team playing the 4th-ranked team and the 2nd-ranked team playing the 3rd-ranked team in the semifinal games (the Sugar Bowl and Rose Bowl, respectively). 4th-ranked Ohio State University and 2nd-ranked University of Oregon went on to the finals on January 12th and OSU won an overwhelming 42-20 victory over Oregon, becoming the #1 college football team in America. Buckeyes banzai! Go Bucks!



Vol. 213: NAIAS (Detroit Auto Show)

Once again, auto show season has come to Detroit – specifically, the North American International Auto Show. Held in Cobo Center, the event is open to the general public from January 17 – January 25. However, the press got a preview January 12-13, the industry preview January 14-15, and the charity preview is on January 16. Japanese companies with major booths in the main hall include Toyota, Scion, Lexus, Honda, Acura, Nissan, Infiniti, Mazda, Subaru, Aisin, and Denso. Others, such as Panasonic, had industry-oriented booths upstairs, as well. Chinese auto makers weren't present last year, but this year Guangzhou Automobile Group (GAC Group) had a small booth in the concourse.

Last year, more than 16.5 million cars were sold in the USA, topping 16 million for the first time since 2006. I noticed many new pickup truck and sports car models on display at the show this year, perhaps due to the decline in gas prices. I hope that the auto show will boost Detroit's revival.

(Note: The photos are of new models displayed by Japanese auto makers for the current model year).



Vol. 214: The Japan Business Society of Detroit Meets with Governor Snyder

On January 13th, on the sidelines of the North American International Auto Show at Cobo Center, I joined a meeting between the Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) and Michigan's top governmental leaders, including, Governor Rick Snyder, Lt. Governor Brian Calley and other key administration and economic development officials.

It was a nice opportunity for the JBSD to formally introduce its incoming chairman, as well as to explain the organization's historic and ongoing philanthropy via the JBSD Foundation. The foundation's contributions include funding for numerous local non-profit causes; student and teacher scholarship and invitation programs; and most recently, its significant donations to the Detroit Institute of Art.

Although the meeting window was rather brief—due to the Governor's very hectic auto show related schedule—I think it was a good occasion to directly articulate to Gov. Snyder the great work of the JBSD. And, despite suffering from a recent Achilles tendon injury, the governor graciously received us at the outset of the New Year, which I think is an indication of his strong commitment to Michigan-Japan relations.

The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit gladly serves as a representative of the local Japanese residents and businesses and is eager to publicize and promote their many contributions to the community.



Vol. 215: *Detroit's Quickenning Revival* (Japanese Magazine Contribution)

I recently published a special contribution entitled *Detroit's Quickenning Revival* on the website of the PHP Policy Review. This article highlights the positive progress being made since Detroit's rebirth out of bankruptcy, the large Japanese presence in the area and the importance of Japan's relationship with this region. I wrote this article in hopes that my Japanese readers would develop a more positive image of this area. I would truly appreciate if many individuals took the opportunity to read this article. As the article is written in Japanese, I apologize to any English speakers reading this.

(The Japanese article can be accessed here:

<http://research.php.co.jp/policyreview/vol9no67.php>).

Vol. 216: North American International Auto Show Charity Preview

On January 16th, the North American International Auto Show Charity Preview was held. According to the Detroit News article published on January 16th, the Charity Preview has raised about \$96 million for area charities that benefit children, nearly half of which been raised in the last 10 years alone.

It is difficult to directly compare the United States and Japan when it comes to volunteerism and charity events since the systems are quite different. Some of the fundraising and activities performed by charities here in the United States are thought to be the responsibility of the government in Japan. As evidenced by the strong support for charities, I firmly feel that the spirit of self-reliance is alive and well here in the United States and is truly a core foundation of U.S. society.

The evening of the 16th took an interesting turn for me. The Charity Preview is a formal black tie event. As such, I decided to bring my formal suit to the office with me that morning and planned to change shortly before the event. As luck would have it, just before I left the office, the sole of my tuxedo shoe became detached, making it very difficult to walk. Quite unfortunately, I did not have another pair of shoes with me that day.

Alas, I was unable to attend the Charity Preview that evening. I was, however, at least able to achieve my purpose since I had previously purchased tickets to the event. Knowing that the proceeds of those tickets will be donated to charity left me feeling satisfied.



By the numbers

Since 1976, the Charity Preview has raised about \$96 million for area charities that benefit children. More than \$45 million was raised in the last 10 years alone.

	Ticket cost	Number of tickets sold	Money raised (in millions)
2004	\$400	17,500	\$7
2005	400	17,500	\$6.9
2006	400	17,500	\$6.7
2007	400	15,000	\$6
2008	400	15,000	\$6
2009	400	6,747	\$2.7
2010	250	8,584	\$2.1
2011	250	10,649	\$2.7
2012	250	12,000	\$3
2013	300	13,069	\$3.9
2014	350	13,826	\$4.8

Sources: Internal Revenue Service, DADA

The Detroit News

(Reference Courtesy of *The Detroit News*, January 15 edition, (Online edition)

(<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/detroit-auto-show/2015/01/15/auto-show-gala-charities/21838485/>)

Vol. 217: Japanese Association of Toledo New Year Party

On January 18th, my wife and I were invited to Ohio to attend the Japanese Association of Toledo (JAT) New Year Party. About 65 members gathered for the celebration including the

JAT Chairman and University of Toledo Professor, Dr. Joseph Hara; Vice Chairman, Dr. Akiko Kawano-Jones of Bowling Green State University; Principal Johnston of the Japanese Language School; and Ms. Susan Miko, Chairman of the Sister City Committee.

The warm, 'at home,' atmosphere with everyone contributing homemade dishes and desserts in potluck style, along with the participation of many Americans, make this New Year Party very unique. The many Japanese dishes were so delicious, I just couldn't stop eating. We also brought about 50 cream puffs, which we prepared at home, and were relieved to see them quickly disappear.

Many Japanese language students of the University of Toledo attended and we also enjoyed a great performance by the Bowling Green State University Taiko Ensemble. At the end, we formed a large circle for a traditional Tokyo Ondo dance, took some commemorative photos, then finished with sanbonjime, a ceremonial clapping of hands that marks the official close of celebrations and special events.

My best wishes to all members of the Japanese Association of Toledo a very good new year!



Vol. 218: The Problem Facing Japanese Schools

There are eight Japanese supplementary schools within the Ohio and Michigan jurisdiction of the Detroit Consulate General of Japan (there are no full-time Japanese schools). Students continue going to their local public school while attending Japanese school on Saturday or Sunday. This can be a challenge for the students and their parents, but much is gained from their hard work. These students will one day play a very valuable and active role in an increasingly globalized international community. The board of directors/steering committees, faculty, parents, locals and students all work hard to support their schools. However, the number of teachers dispatched from Japan has been limited by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and one school was told to suspend the dispatch of a new principal from Japan due to a recent decline in student numbers. Conversely, as the number of students has begun to grow in other schools to more favorable levels, those schools are finding it a struggle to secure local and stable instructors.

The schools are happy to receive inquiries from any native Japanese speakers who may be interested in teaching.

(Information on all of the Japanese supplementary schools can be accessed on the following page: http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jp/life/schools_job.html).

Vol. 219: The passing of Dr. Bradley Richardson

Dr. Bradley M. Richardson, professor emeritus of Ohio State University, passed away on January 16, 2015 at the age of 86. Professor Richardson was born and raised in Ohio, educated at Harvard, Columbia and U.C. Berkeley and also spent time at the University of Tokyo.

Throughout his life Dr. Richardson was instrumental in developing the relationships between Ohio and Japan, and the U.S. and Japan, beginning with his career as a professor of Japanese studies and political science at Ohio State University. He later founded the school's Institute of Japanese Studies, became the director of the East Asian Studies Center and the founding director of the Japan America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO).

He served as the Honorary Consul General of Japan in Columbus from 1999-2004 and received the Order of the Rising Sun commendation from the Government of Japan in 2008.

I met the professor shortly after arriving here, while in Columbus with Ambassador Sasae, and together we shared a meal and very interesting conversation. I was privileged to have the opportunity to meet him a few more times since then and was very shocked and saddened by the sudden news of his death.

On the 22nd of January, I attended the family visitation held at a church in Columbus to express my sympathies to Mrs. Richardson, and their son and daughter, and to convey messages of condolence from Japan's Foreign Minister Kishida and Ambassador Sasae.

Dr. Richardson, may you rest in peace.



Vol. 220: JBSD New Year's Party

On January 25th, I was among about 450 Japanese and American officials who attended the Japanese Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) New Year's Party in Novi. This year, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder and Novi Mayor Bob Gatt also attended the event. This is the second occasion the governor has interacted with JBSD since the New Year began and I am very pleased to see this kind of close relationship between the State of Michigan and Japan.

After the meal, the main event was a nearly one-hour concert by the Japanese singer, Ms. Junko Yagami. When I was in high school and college during the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Junko Yagami was a singer known for her beauty and her singing voice which I nostalgically associate with that time of my youth. Ms. Yagami has also actively participated in and supported charity concerts in the afflicted areas after the Tohoku Earthquake.



Two days before the New Year's concert, we had a chance to speak at my official residence over dinner. Below is a photo from that evening. It felt so strange and moving to be sitting here in Michigan beside this Japanese celebrity from my youth after all this time and distance.

Vol. 221: Splendors of Shiga Exhibition

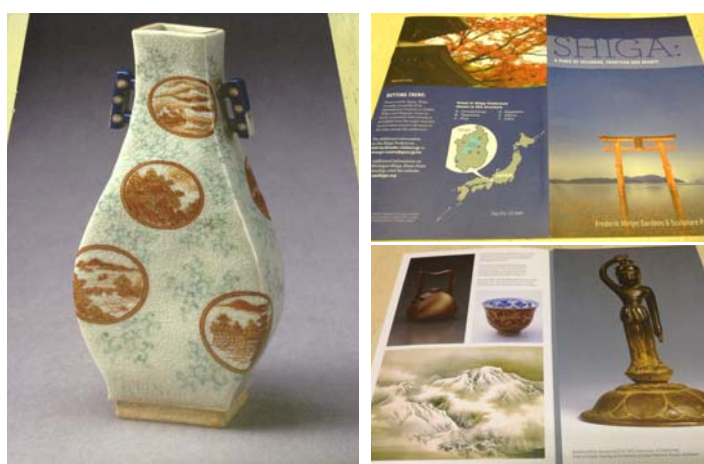
From January 30th through August 16th, the Frederick Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with support from the Japan Foundation and others, will host the art exhibition *Splendors of Shiga: Treasures from Japan*. A few days prior, on the 28th, I was invited to attend a special preview event. President and CEO, David Hooker, along with Hiroshi Haizumi, Director General of Shiga Prefecture's Department of Commerce, Industry, Tourism and Labor, who was representing Shiga Governor Taizo Mikazuki, greeted about 100 Meijer Garden donors, sponsors, associates and friends. We heard an introduction of the exhibition from its curator and others who traveled from Shiga's museums, then enjoyed the many artworks.

The initial sister state/prefecture relationship was established 47 years ago through the common bond of fresh lake water issues and the relationship between State of Michigan and Shiga Prefecture has been flourishing ever since. Among the 27 sister-city pairings between Michigan and Japan, the sister exchanges with the cities of Shiga have been playing an important role.

In June, also at Meijer Gardens, the Midwest's largest Japanese garden is scheduled to open. In such an auspicious year, it is wonderful that here in Michigan, for more than six months, we can enjoy the first-ever overseas exhibition of 75 of Shiga Prefecture's most valuable works of art. By all means, I urge everyone to visit this exhibit and Meijer Gardens.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park opened in 1995 with the generous support of Fred Meijer, former chairman of the Midwest's famous hypermarket chain, Meijer. Meijer also sent significant monetary donations and disaster aid supplies to Japan following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Sadly, Fred Meijer passed away in November 2011, but I heard that he had the Japanese garden built, with an authentic Japanese tea house, for his wife, Lena Meijer, who had a deep interest in Japanese tea ceremony and culture.



Vol. 222: JAPIA Women's Club

The JAPIA (Japan Auto Parts Industries Association) North American office (directed

by Mr. Ted Kawashima) holds meetings several times a year for the JAPIA Women's Club, giving working Japanese women from local affiliated companies have the opportunity to meet. I was very grateful that they kindly invited my wife to attend their previous meeting. In turn, we hosted the group's first meeting of the year at the Official Residence on January 30th. In attendance were Director Kawashima and his wife, President of JAPIA's Woman's Club, Ms. Natsuko Miyamoto, with about 20 members and a few female employees from our office. I have worked at consulates and embassies in Hong Kong, Beijing, Washington D.C., Kuala Lumpur, Brussels and now in Detroit. And I recognize the fact that a diplomatic mission which values and makes the most of the local staff's ability can provide the high-quality services. I believe the same holds true in the private sector. I image that everyone in the Women's club faces hardships everyday working between two different cultures of Japan and the U.S., as they stand in different positions from expatriates sent from Japan and local American executives. At this meeting we listened to interesting stories on the subject while eating a buffet lunch. I hope an opportunity like this will provide those hard workers, and all Japanese women supporting JAPIA members, a place to reduce some stress, leading to more vitality in the workforce in the future.



Vol. 223: Grand Rapids New Year's Party

This year I received New Year's event invitations from six different Japanese associations within my jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio and the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, from which I was able to attend five.

On January 31st, I attended the last of those New Year's events in Grand Rapids, which was hosted by the Grand Rapids Japanese Heritage Society and with the support of the Grand Rapids Area Japanese Business Association. This was my forth visit to Grand Rapids, but just a few days before I had visited Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park to attend the sneak-preview opening exhibition of *Splendors of Shiga: Treasures from Japan*. Grand Rapids is Michigan's second largest city after Detroit and has a museum in honor of President Gerald R. Ford who grew up there. In June, one of the largest Japanese gardens in the Midwest will also be

Michigan



opening up in the same park. When completed, it is expected to become a new important site for cultural exchange between the US and Japan. I hope that this opportunity will further strengthen the cooperation between the Japanese residing in Grand Rapids, the local community and our Consulate.

Just before the New Year's party, news was released of the murder of Mr. Kenji Goto, who had been captured by ISIS. These outrageous acts of brutality are inexcusable. At the beginning of the event we all shared in a moment of silent prayer. In my greetings, I appealed to the Japanese living outside Japan to pay close attention to their own safety and I also expressed the importance of information sharing among the Japanese community and with our Consulate.

Vol. 224: "Heart Placard—Bridging Japan & U.S. Version (from Michigan & Ohio)"

It has been six months since the completion of "Fortune Cookie in Love (Detroit Version)," a local production featuring participants singing and dancing to "Koisuru Fouchunkukkii," the mega hit of Japan's very popular music group, AKB48.

We are now pleased to announce the completion of a local version of AKB48's new music video, "Heart Placard—Bridging Japan & U.S. Version (from Michigan and Ohio)". In this video, enthusiastic Japanese language students and Japanese community volunteers reveal, on placards, messages hidden in their hearts while singing and dancing to the song's tune. The video features students who, unfortunately, were not able to participate in the "Fortune Cookie" production.

This "Bridging Japan & U.S." version focuses on young people who will play key roles in further strengthening the friendly relations between Japan and the United States. Please enjoy the video and share it with your friends.

("Heart Placard—Bridging Japan & U.S. Version": <http://youtu.be/wyGLmCykEGU>)

Vol. 225: Governor Ueda of Saitama

During my first visit to Japan since my appointment to Detroit, I met with Governor Ueda of Saitama Prefecture over a lunch of eel and other local specialty foods at his office. Since his inauguration in 2003, Governor Ueda has attended every annual US Midwest-Japan Conference, which alternate each year between Tokyo and the Midwest. Saitama and Ohio are sister states, and I welcomed Governor Ueda in Columbus before last year's conference, held in Des Moines in September. We discussed how Saitama Prefecture would be providing the venues for the soccer, basketball and marksmanship competitions at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and the benefits this would have on the local economy.



Vol. 226: Visit with the Governor of Shiga

On February 12th, I visited the Shiga Prefectural Government and spoke with Mr. Mikazuki, the governor of Shiga Prefecture. The young governor is only 43 years old and was first elected to be a Member of Parliament at age 32. Shiga and Michigan are sister prefectures and about half of the 27 Michigan-Japan sister cities are located in Shiga Prefecture. I am hoping Governor Mikazuki and I will have the chance to meet again at future events such as the grand opening of the Japanese garden at Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids in June, or the Annual Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference in Tokyo during September. It is my hope that our consulate could also provide support for Governor Snyder of Michigan if he decides to visit Shiga Prefecture in the future. It was indeed my pleasure to meet such a young and energetic governor.



Vol. 227: Japan Center for Michigan Universities Visit



During my stay in Shiga Prefecture, I had the pleasure of paying a visit to the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) on February 12th. Located in Hikone, the Center provides exchange students the opportunity to study Japanese language and culture.

On that day, I had the opportunity to present a talk on Japan and Michigan to about 40 people including students from 15 Michigan universities, as well as Japanese students studying English. Following the talk, each of the students gave their self introductions and Q&A session for the audience was held.

Located in a very amazing facility alongside Lake Biwa, JCMU has been effectively facilitating disciplined study of the Japanese language for over 25 years. As a matter of fact, JCMU celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. Not only American students, but there are also some Chinese students from Universities in Michigan study at JCMU as well. I hope that these students will create memories that will last throughout their lifetimes and I wish them the very best of luck for their remaining time studying at JCMU.

Vol. 228: Visit to City of Toyota

On February 13, I traveled to the City of Toyota to meet with Mayor Ota and City Council Chairman Tsuzuki. I had last met them last July in Detroit. This year marks the 55th Anniversary of the signing of the Detroit-Toyota Sister-city agreement, and Mayor Duggan is planning to visit Toyota City to take part in the commemorative events. In addition, our consulate office is excited to work together on related exchanges and events that are being planned in Detroit.



Vol. 229: Fuel cell vehicles "MIRAI"

During my visit to Toyota City, I was lucky enough to have the chance to test drive Toyota's new fuel cell vehicle called MIRAI (meaning "future" in Japanese). I must say it was a very comfortable ride. Currently, there are only four MIRAI in operation located in Tokyo's Kasumigaseki (the national government ward); one in Aichi Prefecture; and one in Toyota City, for a total of just six on Japan's roads. In ten or twenty years from now, I wonder how large this number will grow.

Vol. 230: Courtesy visit to Chairman Mogi of the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference



On February 23 I visited Honorary Chairman Mogi of the head office of Kikkoman in Shinabashi, Tokyo—near the Toranomom Hills building. Mr. Mogi has long served at the side of

the Chairman of the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference as Kikkoman operates for a soy sauce factory in Wisconsin. The last time I met him was at the 2014 conference, held in Des Moines, Iowa. The next conference is scheduled to be held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo this September. Governor Snyder of Michigan once again promptly committed to attending this year, so we discussed ways to bring Governor Kasich of Ohio to the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference for the first time.



Vol. 231: Ohio Wesleyan University

On March 2 I visited Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware, Ohio and attended the Vogel Lecture and Dinner, which was established by a fund set up by Harvard Professor Ezra Vogel. Professor Vogel is popular in Japan for publishing a book titled *Japan as Number One* in the late 1970s. To me personally, he was my academic instructor during my Master's studies at Harvard University. When I met him for the first time in more than 10 years at the University of Michigan last November, he told me about this event at his alma mater, Ohio Wesleyan University, and I later received an invitation from the university. On the day, Professor Vogel's son, Professor Steven Vogel of UC Berkeley, President Jones of Ohio Wesleyan University, Dr. Gingerich, Dean of History, and about 70 other researchers and students gathered to listen with interest to the guest lecturer's presentation.



Vol. 232: The Passing of Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura

We recently had some very sad news. Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura, a local Japanese American woman, passed away on February 28th while visiting family in Japan, at the age of 88. As a second generation Japanese, Mrs. Shimoura experienced life in an internment camp on the west coast during WWII. Soon afterward she moved to the Midwest, and through the years tirelessly strived to better U.S.-Japan relations and cultural exchange, holding such positions as president of the Detroit Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, president of the Ikenobo Society of Michigan and past president of the Detroit Chapter of Ikebana International. In honor of her many contributions and achievements, last year, she was awarded Japan's Foreign Minister Commendation. I also have fond memories of her last summer's Beiju, (88th birthday) Celebration. The last time I had the opportunity to see Mrs. Shimoura was in November at my residence for the Emperor's Birthday Reception. She seemed so well at then, that



this was a great shock. May you rest in peace!

Vol. 233: Statement by Dr. Kazuyuki Katayama, Consul-General of Japan in Detroit, on the Occasion of the Fourth Anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake

Four years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, an unprecedented disaster which resulted in a tremendous loss of precious life and property, mainly in Japan's Tohoku region. On this most somber occasion, I wish to offer my heartfelt sympathy to all of those affected.

In the aftermath of the earthquake and resultant tsunami, we were overwhelmed by the outpouring of compassion and support from the international community, particularly from the U.S., including both Michigan and Ohio. Taking this opportunity, may I once again express my profound gratitude, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan. I assure you that the Japanese people will never forget this kind outreach.

Tragically, two American JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching Program) participants, Ms. Taylor Anderson and Mr. Monty Dickson, dispatched respectively to Ishinomaki City and Rikuzentakata City, perished in the tsunami. To honor their legacies, we held the film event *Live Your Dream*, on March 10, 2015, at the Novi Public Library. The film portrayed the lives and dreams of these two JET participants; it is the third time I have seen it. Viewing together with American and Japanese residents in Novi, along with many JET alums, I was extremely moved and thankful to see so many American friends express their enduring support and compassion for Japan.

As just one example of the heartwarming response from within the consulate's jurisdiction then-8-year-old Lebanon, Ohio resident, Ms. Mia Moor, held a wristband fundraiser called 'Gaman' (translation: Fortitude) and established "Playground Project in Ishinomaki", which provided for the construction of new playground facilities in a destroyed park of Ishinomaki City, her great grandmother's home. With the generous assistance of the University of Cincinnati's architectural department, the playground equipment was constructed in May of 2014, in commemoration of the third anniversary of the earthquake. Mia, her parents, as well as volunteers from Cincinnati, visited Ishinomaki City to celebrate the project's completion, joined by many local residents. This event has become a symbol of our peoples' enduring friendship and Japan-U.S. grassroots exchange.

Last December, Japan launched the asteroid explorer *Hayabusa 2*, continuing its pursuit of space exploration. The core technology which made this mission possible was conceived in Fukushima. The government of Japan is encouraging Fukushima's rebirth as a region for world-leading research and new industries. The government stands at the fore and is undertaking maximum efforts to decommission the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and to implement measures to address the issue of contaminated water. In March, the Joban Expressway, which runs through the affected areas of Tohoku, has finally been connected and open. Work has begun on 90% of the projects to transfer housing to high-elevation areas and on 80% of the public housing projects for disaster victims.

After gathering asteroid samples, *Hayabusa 2* will return to Japan in 2020. That same year, Japan will host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We seek further development and growth in the future, hand in hand with citizens of the international community, so to witness the complete transformation of the Tohoku region.

Vol. 234: JETRO Monozukuri Seminar

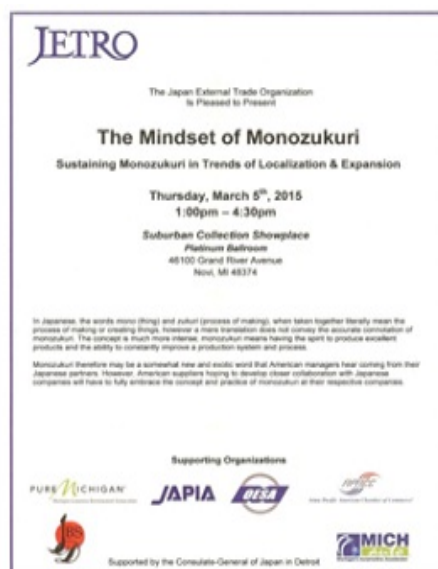
On March 5th, JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) hosted a Monozukuri Seminar in the Detroit suburb of Novi. JETRO's Executive Vice President, Mr. Tsuneyuki Kato, travelled all the way from the Tokyo headquarters and was joined by JETRO's Chief Executive

Director from Chicago, Mr. Ichiro Sone, along with several other JETRO representatives.

The event attracted both U.S. and Japanese auto industry businesspeople, as well as officials from the MEDC, (Michigan Economic Development Corporation); JAPIA, (Japan Auto Parts Industries Association); and the OESA (Original Equipment Suppliers Association). Attendees participated in a half-day of intensive meetings which were focused on the concept of Monozukuri (or in English, “the art of making things better”) and how to maintain Monozukuri in the manufacturing process, amidst the trend of localization and expansion.

I delivered introductory remarks, joined the first half of the meetings, and later hosted the JETRO officials and several key participants for dinner at the official residence. What struck me throughout the day was the similarity with which U.S. and Japanese manufacturers enthusiastically embraced Monozukuri, despite their different approaches and cultures. I also learned a lot about the working relationships between local Japanese companies and U.S. engineers and workforces.

Considering the fact that U.S. manufacturing continues to rebound, and we are in the epicenter of a resurgent domestic automotive industry, I think JETRO’s timing and choice of location for this seminar was excellent.



Vol. 235: Visit and Lecture from Dr. Kimura of Keio University

On March 6th, a lecture by Keio University professor, Dr. Fukunari Kimura, was held at Michigan State University located in East Lansing. Dr. Kimura’s lecture was about the Japanese economy and had a strong emphasis on Abenomics and TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership). Following the formal lecture, there was a very active exchange of views points between Dr. Kimura, researchers from MSU’s Asian Studies Center and students.

Professor Kimura obtained



his PhD in economics at the University of Wisconsin and has worked as a professor at American universities. In recent years, he became the Chief Economist at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), based in Jakarta.

Dr. Kimura's lecture took a positive and supportive stance on TPP. He delivered the talk in persuasive and fluent English, with quite a bit of humor inserted throughout. It seemed that the audience was quite impressed by his delivery and I believe he left a strong and memorable impression.

I truly hope that, in the future, we will be able to welcome more scholars from Japan like Dr. Kimura to come speak about pertinent issues which are interesting and relevant to an international audience.

Vol. 236: Ohio Japanese Speech Contest

On March 7th, the 16th Annual Ohio Japanese Speech Contest was held in Dublin, Ohio which, as last year, I attended as a co-organizer and judge. There were ten finalists in both the high school and university categories and their presentations were so remarkably high it made it quite challenging for the judges. The various speeches covered many topics, but I was impressed by their sincere passion for Japan and Japanese.

Last year, the Ohio State University was selected as one of only 15 sites in the United States to hold the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, which is very good news for the Japanese language students in Ohio. We hope this will inspire even more students to become interested in studying Japanese.

For their continuous support and organization, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to JASCO (Japan America Society of Central Ohio), OSU Japan Student Association, COJAC (Central Ohio Japan Chamber of Commerce), OSU Institute of Japanese Studies, OATJ (Ohio Association of Teachers of Japanese) and City of Dublin, as well as the many local organizations which have kindly donated to the success of this event.



Vol. 237: Survey Results for Improving Consular Service

A consulate service improvement survey was conducted at 150 Japanese embassies and consulate generals worldwide with 300 or more Japanese nationals in their jurisdictions as of October 1st, 2014. With everyone's support and cooperation, a total of 19,224 responses were received. There are more than 25,700 Japanese nationals residing within the Detroit consulate's jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio and from that number we received 811 responses (in the previous year that number was 627) placing us in 5th among the diplomatic overseas establishments compared to 6th place last year for number of survey respondents (2nd in the United States). I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who took the time and effort to complete the survey. For your reference, the 1st through 5th ranked embassy/consulate generals for survey respondents were the United Kingdom, New York, Malaysia, Shanghai, and Detroit.

The cumulative results were favorable and for your reference here are the results of the survey: "Ease of finding" 78%; "Entry treatment" 68%; "Satisfaction with clerk service" 78%; "Satisfaction with telephone service" 74%; "Website content" 63%; and "Email newsletter

content” 75%.

Results for our Detroit consulate were similar to the aforementioned. While the evaluation of our one-day consular services was positive, the difficulty of finding our location is an inconvenience for our visitors. This is a structural problem with the commercial building we reside in, but we will continue to try our best to make it easier to find the consulate by installing signs and other clear directions. We have received requests that the consulate be moved to an area with a higher Japanese population (such as Novi) due to the inconvenience of traveling to downtown Detroit. The jurisdiction of our Detroit consulate includes both Michigan and Ohio, and Detroit is still the largest city in Michigan and houses the headquarters for the Big Three automotive companies, as well as the UAW. Also taking into consideration the presence of political, economic, media, educational and other public bodies, I hope others will understand why we decided to have the Japanese consulate in the Renaissance Center (the headquarters for General Motors) in downtown Detroit.

Based on the results of this survey, we would like to continue to improve on our consular services including our face-to-face and telephone correspondence with visitors. We will also make a conscious effort to handle and support individual cases in a serious manner.

(For more information about the overall results of the survey (in Japanese) please visit the link below at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/tokei/questionnaire/index.html>).

Vol. 238: U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant's Detroit Home

Ulysses S. Grant was the famous Union Army general during the American Civil War, who later served as U.S. president from 1869-77. According to an interesting Detroit Free Press article (March 12th) Grant was the only would-be president to have ever resided in Detroit and one of only two would-be presidents to have lived in Michigan (the other, of course, was Gerald Ford of Grand Rapids).

Upon graduating as an officer from West Point, Grant was assigned army duty here from 1849-50. Grant's old Detroit-based home, pictured hereunder, is in the news because there are plans to relocate it from its present soon-to-be redeveloped Michigan State Fairgrounds site, closer to its original location in the Eastern Market district. According to the article, this will be the home's second relocation.

Compared to Grant's heroic Civil War days, his presidential era was less remarkable; however, he is remembered in Japan as the president who in 1872 received the Iwakura Mission delegates of the Meiji Government.



Vol. 239: Commencement Ceremony of the Detroit Japanese Saturday School

With the onset of daylight savings time, and most of the snow melted away, I feel spring right around the corner. It is a season which reminds us of new beginnings; thus, it is a very fitting time to celebrate commencement ceremonies at local Japanese schools.

Within my jurisdiction states of Michigan and Ohio, there are 8 Japanese weekend schools. On this particular occasion (March 14th) I attended the commencement of the Detroit Saturday School in Novi which, with more than 900 K-12 students, is the largest of its kind in the jurisdiction. At this particular ceremony, 68 elementary, 24 junior high and 2 high school students were honored and I had the privilege of offering some remarks and my personal congratulations. Each time I am able to participate in commencements I feel so happy and encouraged by the hope and optimism these young graduates show as they move towards their next challenge.

These students have been educated in two distinct cultures, languages and societies and I am confident that they will play very significant future roles in the U.S., Japan and the international community.

I will try my best to attend as many Japanese weekend school commencements as possible while serving in Michigan and Ohio, so that I may directly convey my congratulations and encouragement to such hardworking and accomplished students.



Vol. 240: Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl

On March 15th, I had the pleasure of attending the 22nd annual Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl which was held at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. Each year, our Consulate is very glad to co-sponsor this wonderful event.

That day, 46 teams from 14 middle and high schools participated in the event and I had a chance to attend the final competition which was held in the afternoon. There were five categories in the finals with two teams competing in each category. Watching the competition was exciting, especially as the level of competition became higher and higher.

I heard that the annual Quiz Bowl is hosted by different universities, with each university hosting the event for a few years at a time. I realized that this event truly gives junior high and high school students specific goals and incentives for learning Japanese. The event also gives the Japanese language professors, who help prepare questions and serve as judges, the opportunity to publicize and showcase to high school students their Japanese Language Department's strengths and what types of courses are offered through their university. It became

very clear to me that this event plays an extremely important role in promoting Japanese language education here in Michigan.

There are currently 6,100 students learning Japanese at the K-12 and university levels here in Michigan. I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the professors, especially those from Eastern Michigan University, who were involved in preparing students for this great event. I would also like to congratulate all the students on their successful participation at the 22nd annual Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl.



Vol. 241: Japanese School of Detroit Length-of-Service Award Ceremony

On March 16th, the Japanese School of Detroit (Ringo Kai) Length-of-Service Award Ceremony took place at my official residence to commend those distinguished teachers and staff who have served at the school for many years. The school took care of the arrangements associated with the ceremony and I offered my official residence as a location for the event. After the president of Detroit Ringo Kai, Mr. Kenichi Egawa, recognized and handed out the certificates to the distinguished individuals, I had the opportunity to directly deliver gifts to the recipients. I also shared my own words of thanks to the local teachers and staff in attendance. The individuals recognized at the reception included those who had been working in increments of 5 years, 10 years, 15 years and over 20 years. In total roughly 100 people attended this reception, including 50 current school employees, the parents' association, executive committee members, preschool staff and Consulate representatives.

In a consulate or embassy, having excellent local staff members is a key factor in the office's overall performance. I believe this is the same for companies and schools. Detroit Ringo Kai, which began more than 40 years ago with only a dozen or so students, has expanded into a distinguished school and now has about 900 students. I was reminded that such development in a supplementary school is largely due to the support and guidance of the local teachers and staff whose passionate teaching methods and administrative work help inspire the entire student body. The Consulate provides support to Japanese supplementary schools by providing financial assistance towards the rental of the school buildings as well as for the payment of local salaries and we plan to continue offering support to the schools in the future.

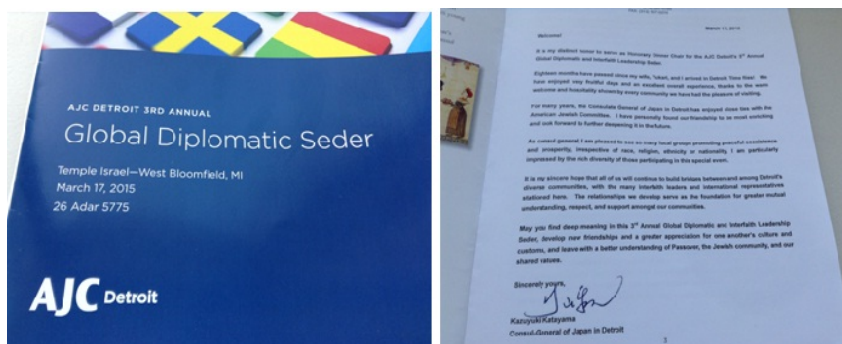


Vol. 242: Passover Seder Dinner

On March 17, at the invitation of the AJC, a local Jewish organization, I attended a Seder dinner, in accordance with the Jewish Passover tradition, held for the diplomatic community at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield. I attended last year and as a reflection of the closer relationship enjoyed between our office, the Japanese community and the Jewish community over the past year, I was honored to be invited as the honorary chairman of the event.

I had the opportunity to provide a message of greeting for the printed program and address the guests at the beginning of the dinner. I touched upon the fact that among the many different cultures and religions here, both the Japanese and Jewish people emerged from the ruins of war, and now, as close allies of the United States, share similar values. I also mentioned the recent close relations between Japan and Israel, including the visits to one another's countries by the Prime Ministers in the past year and a private Holocaust museum located in my hometown of Fukuyama (incidentally, the founder of the museum was a Japanese pastor of a local Protestant Church in Hiroshima who had met Otto Frank, the father of Anne Frank, by chance during a trip to Europe more than 40 years ago).

While enjoying this special Seder meal along with 80, or so, others (representatives of the local Jewish community and members of the consular corps) I reflected on the unique history of the Jewish people.



Vol. 243: University Lectures

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit and give lectures at two different universities in Michigan. On March 16th, I spoke about the relationship between Michigan and Japan at Oakland University. Then, on March 19th, I lectured on Japan-China relations at Michigan State University. Both lectures were held before an audience of approximately 50 enthusiastic audience members. I'll admit that I was a bit nervous before each talk, but I did my best to remain energetic and keep the audience captivated.

I hope that through these types of lectures American students and researchers will be able to understand more accurately Japan's foreign policy and learn more about the strong relationship Japan enjoys with Michigan and Ohio. I also sincerely hope that such lectures and visits to universities will promote Japanese language learning and also give audience members the chance to truly appreciate the strong bilateral relationship which has been established based on the very strong alliance between our two nations for the past 70 years.

Since I was appointed here 18 months ago, I have visited more than 40 universities throughout both Michigan and Ohio. As long as time allows, I would be more than happy to visit as many universities and organizations as possible. If your school or organization would like to request a visit, please feel free to contact our office anytime. I will do my best to

accommodate your request.



Vol. 244: Visiting Chillicothe

On March 20, I visited the city of Chillicothe, in southern Ohio, over a 4-hour drive from the Consulate. Chillicothe is a small city with a little over 20,000 residents, but it was the first state capital of Ohio. Chris Manegold, CEO of the Economic Development Alliance of Southern Ohio, made the arrangements for my visit. First, I visited the Japanese company YSK Corporation. YSK Corporation is an auto parts manufacturer, focusing on aluminum die-casting, and creates about 180 jobs at its plant. Last year, the plant celebrated its 25th anniversary in Chillicothe and they are currently developing plans for further expansion.



Later, I toured the Adena Mansion, which was built to be the home of Thomas Worthington, the sixth governor of Ohio. In the evening, I had the opportunity to meet and speak over dinner with 15 local officials, including a local state representative, a local state senator, the mayor of Chillicothe, several economic development agency officials and Congressional staffers. They all appreciated the contributions of Japanese business to the local community. I hope that this meeting will further strengthen the ties between Japan and the city of Chillicothe.

Vol. 245: Breakfast Meeting with Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives Cliff Rosenberger

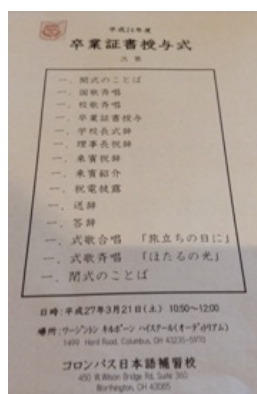
On March 21, I was invited to a breakfast meeting with, the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, Cliff Rosenberger in Columbus. Born in 1981, he is the youngest person ever to hold the Speaker of the House position in Ohio. He served in the Air Force for 12 years and also worked in the Bush administration and the Romney presidential campaign. I explained that Japan is the largest foreign investor in Ohio including six facilities that employ over 2,000 people



in the Speaker's district (91) alone. The Speaker displayed a strong will to strengthen Ohio's bilateral relationship with Japan and while he has never visited Japan, he expressed his hopes to visit in the future.

Vol. 246: Columbus Japanese Saturday School Graduation Ceremony

On March 21st, the graduation ceremony for the Columbus Japanese Saturday School was held in the auditorium of Worthington High School. This year, we celebrated the graduation of 40 elementary students, 30 middle school students and 4 high school students. While watching the dignified graduates come one by one to receive their diplomas, my hope was that they would use their knowledge gained from both Japan and America to become great leaders in an increasingly competitive and globalized society. One attendee at the ceremony was Mayor Scott Holmes, who had formed a very good impression of Japan after visiting there for the first time last year. The Japanese school is greatly supported by the warmth of the local community lead by the mayor.



Vol. 247: Survey Results of Japanese Direct Investment and Japanese Residents

The consulate recently announced its annual survey results on the number of Japanese residents, companies and affiliated organizations. In Michigan, as of October 1, 2014, there are now 487 Japanese facilities (a 6-facility gain over the prior year) which directly employ 38,339, (+552). In Ohio, there are now 422 facilities (-8), directly employing 70,985 (+1,464). Most of the Japanese investment in these states is within the automotive industry, where employment continues to steadily increase.

As for the Japanese resident survey, there is almost the same number of Japanese nationals in both states: Michigan is home to 12,828 and Ohio to 12,843.

Further, amongst local (non-Japanese), students, there continues to be strong interest in the study of Japanese as a foreign language. As of last fall, in Michigan, there are 56 K-12 schools where 4,091 students learn Japanese and 17 colleges and universities where 2,038 students are studying the language. In Ohio, there are another 16 K-12 schools (860 students), and 25 colleges and universities (2,251 students). In all, there are nearly 10,000 Japanese language learners in the consulate's two jurisdiction states which I feel is a very encouraging number, though there is still potential to boost the K-12 numbers in Ohio. I believe the strong level of interest in studying Japanese bodes well for future U.S.-Japan relations.

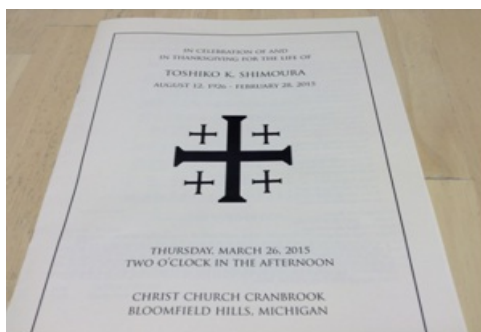
(For a detailed breakdown of the above-referenced survey results, please access http://www.detroit.us.emb-japan.go.jp/index_j.htm)

Vol. 248: Memorial Service for Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura

On March 26 many family and friends gathered for a Memorial Service in remembrance of Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura, held at Christ Church Cranbrook, very near the official residence. Mrs. Shimoura, a Japanese-American, was born in 1926 in California and endured the hardship of the Japanese-American internment camps during WW2. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and later settled in Michigan. Through her many activities and positions, such as Detroit Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) president and founding member and professor of Ikebana International Detroit, she became a bridge between Japan-US cultural exchange and fully committed to civil rights for Japanese Americans.

Last year Mrs. Shimoura celebrated her 88th birthday and also received a Foreign Minister's Commendation by Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs, for her many years of contributions. She seemed as active and healthy as always and I was truly shocked and saddened by her sudden death.

By getting to know Mrs. Shimoura and those like her, I came to realize that since the war, the deep relationships which we have cherished for the past 70 years between Japan and Michigan and Japan and the U.S. were cultivated through their many achievements. In the spirit of their conviction, I would like to follow in Mrs. Shimoura's footsteps and strive even harder to further develop these relations.



Vol. 249: Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest

I had the pleasure of attending and judging the 20th annual Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest which was held on March 28th at the Novi Civic Center. This year, five high school and ten university finalists took part in the heated competition.

I enjoyed listening to the high school students who enthusiastically spoke on themes including their travels to Japan and their daily experiences. I was astonished by the high level of the content of the university speeches which touched on a variety of topics including a unique analysis on the relation between anime and shut-ins, capsule hotels in Japan, the challenge of being questioned by police while living in Japan and the classic Japanese literary masterpiece *The Tale of Heike* which truly touched one of the finalists. Some of the students chose to speak on deep, more difficult topics while others kept their topics lighthearted and fun. Regardless of the specific subject, I was truly impressed by the high caliber and persuasiveness of all of the speeches. I would like to express my gratitude to those students who are interested in Japan and who have chosen to study Japanese language and culture. I am happy to support your studies in any way possible.

Finally, I would like to thank the Japan Business Society of Detroit, the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwest Ontario, the Japanese Teachers Association of Michigan, the Japan Foundation and Delta Air Lines for their strong support and contributions to this

speech contest. I look forward to watching another exciting round of competition at next year's speech contest and truly hope to see even more high school finalists take on the challenge.



Vol. 250: Novi Educational Foundation Gala Dinner

On March 28th, I attended the Novi Educational Foundation Gala Dinner for the second time. We made a contribution to the foundation and, as a representative of the Japanese community, I had the opportunity to give a greeting at the event to thank the local educational representatives as well as local citizens for their support to the Japanese community. In Novi there are 3,300 Japanese residences and about 400 Japanese children in the public schools. In addition, about 900 students from kindergarten to high school are enrolled in the Japanese Saturday School, which operates through loans from the Novi Public Schools. In this way, Novi, with the largest population of Japanese nationals within the jurisdiction of our consulate, offers a wonderful educational environment for Japanese people. As members of the same community, we Japanese, including both the public and private sectors, hope to continue our efforts through cooperation with local Americans in order to further maximize the educational environment in Novi.



Vol. 251: Stevenson High School's 20th Anniversary Celebration

On March 31st, I attended a ceremony commemorating the 20th anniversary of Japanese language education at Stevenson High School located in Livonia (a suburb just outside of Detroit) in order to congratulate the staff, teachers and students on many years of successful language education. I had an opportunity to enjoy speaking with Livonia School District Superintendent, Dr. Liepa; Stevenson Principal, Mr. Gibbons; teacher of Japanese, Ms. Melisia Taylor; school board members; students' families; and students studying Japanese at both Stevenson High School and Niji-Iro Elementary Immersion School.



It was a great pleasure for our Consulate to take part in such a wonderful celebration! There are currently just over 20 students studying Japanese at Stevenson High School and it was great for me to see the passion displayed by not only the students, but the enthusiasm for Japanese language shared by their teacher as well. The Consulate General of Japan in Detroit is committed to supporting the Japanese language programs in Livonia in any way possible.

Stevenson High School students are regular participants in the annual Michigan Japanese Language Speech Contest and also in the Michigan Japan Quiz Bowl. An elementary immersion school called Niji-iro opened in Livonia last academic year and offers English-Japanese immersion education to its students. As a matter of fact, it is one of less than thirty such Japanese immersion schools in the entire nation! In addition, a Japanese immersion charter school called Hinoki International School used to offer English-Japanese immersion education in the location currently used by Niji-iro until last fall. I have heard that Hinoki International School plans to relocate and reopen its doors this coming academic year in Farmington Hills, MI. It is wonderful that Metro Detroit will have two Japanese language immersion schools.

Michigan is home to 56 K-12 schools and 17 universities offering Japanese language education to more than 6,100 students! I truly feel that these young people will be playing a very special role in U.S.-Japan exchanges and will be great contributors to U.S.-Japan relations in the future.

Vol. 252: Consulates Soccer Tournament Reception

On April 1st, I hosted a dinner reception at the official residence in honor of the Japanese participants in the 2014 Consulates Soccer Tournament. The annual tournament (as described in Vol. 157) is co-sponsored and administered by the Consulate of Mexico, Wayne State University, and Ultimate Soccer Arenas. Last year was the seventh time the tournament has been held, and 16 teams joined the competition. I was delighted that the Japanese team—comprised mainly of young ex-pats employed at local Japanese companies—finished a very respectable third place, after being eliminated in a semifinals shootout by the eventual tournament winners, Team USA.

My motivation in holding the reception was to honor the great effort of the Japanese team members and also to recognize the tournament organizers for their efforts in arranging such a terrific event.

Here's hoping that the Japanese team will bring home the championship next time; I'll

be supporting you all the way!



Vol. 253: Cleveland Saturday School Entrance Ceremony

On April 4th, I visited the Cleveland Saturday Japanese Language School's entrance ceremony. There were six students entering kindergarten, seven entering elementary school, five entering junior high, and three entering high school. It was a challenge to keep a speech interesting for students ranging in age from kindergarten through high school, even more so than delivering a lecture to university students. Nevertheless, I am always impressed by the fresh, honest attitudes of students at entrance ceremonies. Because the school has less than 100 students from elementary to junior high (the compulsory education period in Japan) there are no teachers dispatched from the Ministry of Education. However, the school is managed admirably by Principal Saito and the locally-hired teaching staff, with the support of President Otani and President-Elect Sasaka of the School Committee, parents, and local officials. Recently, one of the school's students as well as school itself each won an award at the National Japanese Book Report Competition. At the general meeting after the entrance ceremony, I reported to the parents about the recent activities of the Consulate. I woke up at 4:30 AM for the trip to Cleveland, which turned out to be a valuable experience as I got to see the lunar eclipse from the car.



Vol. 254: Michigan State University, Regrettably Eliminated in the Semi-finals

On April 4th, in Indianapolis, the Michigan State University Spartans sadly lost to Duke University, 61-81, in the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) men's college basketball semi-final tournament.

In this seven-round tournament, 68 high-performing teams from the regular season compete for the national basketball championship. Eight lower-ranked teams initially compete for a chance to play in the tournament. The resulting 64 teams are then divided into four districts and battle for the regional championship. These four district champions, known as the Final Four, then contend in a semi-final round. From there, the two winning teams advance to battle for the national championship.

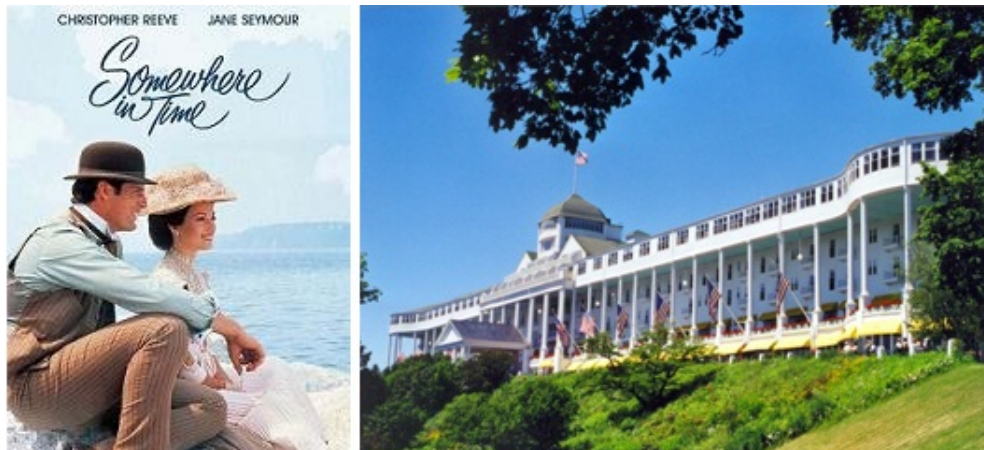
Although during the regular season the Spartans were in third place in the Big Ten Conference, they were able to beat top ranked teams four times before the semi-finals. Incidentally, twice in the past (1979 and 2000) the Spartans' powerhouse team shone with victory as national champions. Magic Johnson was a key player in the '79 win. This year MSU was but one step from victory; let's remain hopeful for next season.

In basketball and football, it seems the Spartans have been enjoying more success lately than the Wolverines (University of Michigan).



Vol. 255: The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island

I recently rented on iTunes the movie *Somewhere in Time* (1980) and noticed that the setting for the movie was the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. In this film starring Christopher Reeve, who is famous for his role as Superman, and Jane Seymour, Mr. Reeve plays the role of a playwright who travels back in time from "present-day" 1980 to the year 1912 in order to meet the woman played by Ms. Seymour. In the movie, the playwright is driving his car from Chicago and ends up at the Grand Hotel. In actuality, cars are prohibited on the island and drivers must park their car in a parking lot on a mainland peninsula and ride a ferry boat to the island, where horse-drawn carriages and bicycles are the only means of transportation. The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island first opened in 1887 and in 1989 it was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The hotel is especially famous for having the longest front porch in the world, which is around 660 foot long (about 200 meters). During the winter months, Lake Huron freezes over and the hotel is closed. The hotel is open for business from May until roughly the end of October. During last year's season I visited the island twice, once for a business trip and the other time for my own personal travel. I also stayed in the Grand Hotel once during that time. I read that in the past, when traveling abroad was only a dream for many Japanese, there was a TV show called Kaoru Kanetaka's *The World Around Us* wherein a person named Kaoru strongly recommended this place as one that she wanted to revisit. Although it is a little expensive, if you haven't had a chance to visit the island, why not try staying there once for the experience?



Vol. 256: Lecture at Ohio State University

On April 7th, I was invited to Columbus by Ohio State University's Institute for Japanese Studies in order to give a lecture on their campus. I addressed an audience of about 40 students and faculty members and spoke on recent U.S.-Japan relations, focusing on topics in connection with Ohio-Japan relations that would help encourage students to continue their Japanese studies.

Since being appointed to Detroit as Consul General of Japan a year and a half ago, I have already visited about 30 universities. During my visits, I always have stimulating discussions with the students and enjoy having the opportunity to learn about their perspectives. Giving lectures on a variety of topics allows me the chance to clearly gather my thoughts and ideas regarding different subjects.

During the Q&A session following my lecture, I was asked very complex questions by the audience members delving into topics ranging from the Japanese government's recent approach on promoting Japanese studies throughout the world, to a new immigration policy Japan should implement in the face of a declining population in Japan.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series:

US-Japan Relations and the importance of learning Japanese in Ohio

Kazuyuki Katayama
Consul General of Japan in Detroit
Consulate General of Japan in Detroit

Tuesday, April 7, 2015
5:30 pm
Mendenhall Laboratory, Room 115
(120 South Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210)
The Ohio State University Campus

Abstract:
Jan Consul General of Japan in Detroit, Kazuyuki Katayama, as he discusses US-Japan relations, he will also discuss the relationship between Ohio and Japan and potential job opportunities for the students learning Japanese.

Background:
Consul General Katayama began his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1985. Within the Ministry, he has served as Director of the Energy Resources Division of the Economic Affairs Bureau, and as Director of the Cultural Affairs Division of the Public Consular Department, Consulate, Dr. Katayama has held posts at the Japanese Embassy in China, the Consul General in Helsinki, and Belgium. Dr. Katayama joined the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit in September 2009.

Consul General Katayama would like to create an early "Japan Day" for people and visitors to have direct contact with local people, organizations, teachers, business and/or economic activities, cultural exchanges, and people to people exchanges. He would very much like to know more about Michigan and Ohio as well as the history and characteristics of the US people.

Co-Sponsors: Institute for Japanese Studies, East Asian Studies Center, Consulate General of Japan in Detroit, and a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Grant

Free and open to the public.

Contact: Janet Shady Smith | Institute for Japanese Studies | jshady@osu.edu | (614) 292-5345 | <http://osui.osu.edu>

Vol. 257: Mitsuko Uchida & the Cleveland Orchestra (Reprise/a Sequel)

On the 9th of April, at Cleveland's Severance Hall, as last year, I once again enjoyed a concert by the world-renown pianist Mitsuko Uchida and The Cleveland Orchestra. I attended on the gracious invitation of Dr. Hiroyuki Fujita, QED president and CEO, who also serves on

The Cleveland Foundation Board of Directors and is the concert's sponsor. The Cleveland Orchestra is considered to be one of the Big Five orchestras in the United States together with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra.

Cleveland, faced with similar challenges as Detroit, flourished industrially in the past, then declined and both cities are now working to revitalize their urban areas. But, strong cultural assets like this orchestra and the museum are very advantageous to Cleveland. I clearly remember at the beginning of the year a Sunday edition of the New York Times named Cleveland among the top 50 or 100 cities to visit in 2015.

This evening I enjoyed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 6, Symphony No. 34 and Piano Concerto No. 26. Prior to the concert, I enjoyed talking with Dr. Fujita, Gary Hanson (Executive Director of the orchestra) and others over dinner in the Severance Restaurant. Following the performance I had opportunity, once again, to directly express my compliments to Ms. Uchida just outside of her dressing room. I also enjoyed speaking with other Japanese orchestra members during the intermission. Altogether there are five Japanese members who have been active in the Cleveland Orchestra.



Vol. 258: Detroit Public Library

On April 10th, I visited the Detroit Public Library and was given a tour by the executive director and the foundation chairman. The library was founded in 1865 and celebrated its 150th anniversary this year. Speaking of 1865, it was also the year that the Civil War ended. In addition to this main office, there are 22 chapters scattered throughout the city. The Detroit Public Library's collection of books is one of the largest in the state, second only to the library at the University of Michigan. The current building, which was built in the 1920s, was an impressive reflection of the prosperity of Detroit at that time, which can be seen in the skilled craftsmanship in the walls, ceiling, and stained glass installments. In addition to books, many valuable cultural relics can also be found in the library. One such item is the autograph of Laura Ingalls Wilder, who was famous for writing *Little House on the Prairie*. There are also other collections, including a vase donated by Ambassador Charles Beecher Warren (ambassador to Japan from 1921-1922, who was originally from Bay City, Michigan) which he received from the Japanese people and baseball-related goods that were owned by Ernie Harwell, a famous Detroit Tigers commentator whom everybody here knew, during his lifetime. (By the way, there is also a signed book and glove from Ichiro Suzuki.) I found all of these valuable items on display to be quite interesting. The library also seems to be putting great effort into dealing with the low literacy rate of children living within the city. Since the library is right across the road from the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) on Woodward Avenue, by all means feel free to stop by

there as well. Although you need to be a local or have a membership to borrow books from the library, anyone can enter the building.



Vol. 259: Entrance Ceremony for the Japanese School of Toledo



The entrance ceremony of the Japanese School of Toledo (Ohio) took place on April 11th, the last of several such ceremonies I've attended this season held by the Japanese schools within my jurisdiction. At the Toledo school, 5 new elementary students and 11 junior high school students were honored. I hope these children will not soon forget the excitement of this event, which marked the beginning of their next academic stepping stone. Following the ceremony, I enjoyed the opportunity to chat with some of the older elementary and junior high kids.

As the number of enrolled students from elementary to junior high school (or, the period of compulsory education in Japan) is less than 100 at the Toledo school, by the standards of the Ministry of Education, no teacher is dispatched from Japan. This school is nonetheless very well administered, benefitting from the dedicated, enthusiastic instruction of locally

employed teachers, and the strong support of local Japanese companies. For its part, the consulate provides funding for instructors' compensation and the rental of the school building.

With so many Japanese students studying overseas, for the sake of Japan's future, I feel it is important that these children have an opportunity to receive excellent Japanese educations, as they do in Toledo.

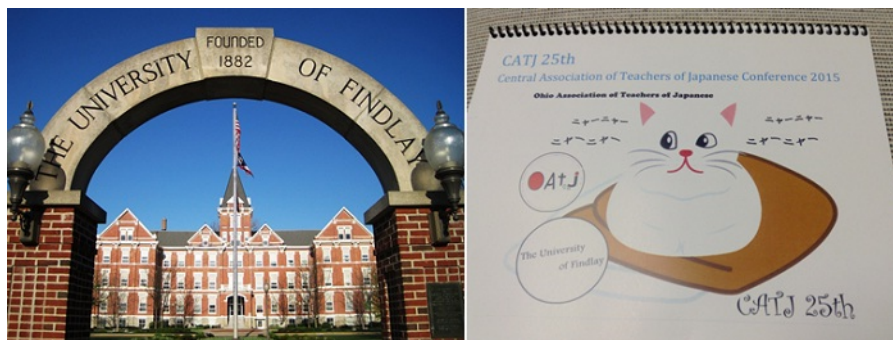
By the way, the official school song of the Japanese School of Toledo is entitled "Yuki" (Courage). It was composed five years ago by a famous Japanese musician, Ms. Takako Okamura. Ms. Okamura, an original member of the early 1980s folk duo Aming, is well-known to Japanese music fans of my generation!

Vol. 260: Central Association of Teachers of Japanese Annual Conference

On April 11th, I had the opportunity to attend the 25th annual Central Association of Teachers of Japanese Conference which was held at the University of Findlay in Ohio. According to surveys conducted by both the Japan Foundation and by my office, the number of students learning Japanese both overseas and here in the U.S. (including my office's jurisdiction of Ohio and Michigan) is steadily increasing. However, if we look closely at the details, there are some challenges that need to be overcome. First of all, we welcome an increasing number of American students choosing to study the Chinese language; however, we must make efforts to ensure that this does not negatively impact the number of Japanese language learners.

At the conference, Eastern Michigan University professor and president of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese, Dr. Motoko Tabuse, gave a keynote presentation in which she pointed out that Japanese language education in the United States currently faces several problems including the aging of teachers of Japanese, a decline in posts for both teachers and professors of Japanese, the soaring cost of university tuition and changes to traditional learning including online classes. These days, students have access to courses and lectures by the best and brightest professors and teachers via online studies, so professors and teachers alike must make changes to the status quo in order to respond to this new learning environment created through online resources. In her talk, Dr. Tabuse emphasized the necessity for schools and universities to work closely with their local Japanese Embassy or Consulate. Our Consulate is very pleased to put forth our utmost efforts to strengthen our networking relationship with teachers/professors of Japanese, Japanese companies and local authorities including school districts and administrators.

This was my second visit to the University of Findlay. Before the conference, I met President Fell for the third time and had the opportunity to enjoy a very nice conversation at her residence. I also had the chance to exchange ideas with three Japanese university students dispatched by Saitama Prefecture to study at the University of Findlay. I would like to express my most humble gratitude to Professor Kawamura for arranging my visit and setting up my appointments.



Vol. 261: The Mikado: an Operetta

On April 12, I went with the Harvard Alumni Association to see a performance of the *Mikado*, presented by the University of Michigan Gilbert & Sullivan Society at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater in Ann Arbor. *Mikado*, of course, means “Emperor” in Japanese, but many of the names in the show sound very strange to Japanese people, such as “Titipu” for the capital city, a crown prince named “Nanki-poo,” the young woman he falls in love with named “Yum-yum,” and her guardian “Koko” (though some say that “Titipu” may come from the actual city Chichibu in Japan). The clothing and mannerisms throughout the work are also rather unusual from a Japanese perspective, but I understand that, when the operetta was first staged late in the 19th century, the goal was not to depict the true Japan. In the United Kingdom at the time, *Japonism* was highly popular, leading to works like the *Mikado*, which borrows from Japan while parodying and criticizing the class system and bureaucracy of UK society. Some of the songs were traditional Japanese, such as “Miya-san, Miya-san,” which opened the show. Mr. Gilbert wrote the 2-act play and Mr. Sullivan composed the music, but I was surprised by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society’s tradition of having the audience join them in singing “God Save the Queen” – the national anthem of the UK – before the performance. After the show, I took the opportunity to take a stroll around Ann Arbor, enjoying the walkable streets and spacious campus that give the city its charm.



Vol. 262: JASCO Annual Reception

Recently, I attended the JASCO (Japan-America Society of Central Ohio) annual reception, held in Columbus, Ohio, as I did last year. JASCO celebrated its 18th anniversary this spring. JASCO is a vital link in cultural exchange in the region, regularly organizing such efforts as Japanese speech contests, business seminars and receptions, as well as supporting official government missions dispatched from Japan. Including JASCO, there are three Japan-America Societies in my consular jurisdiction (Michigan and Ohio) and the Consulate often coordinates closely with them. JASCO officials including President Kinzer, President-Elect Shoji and Executive Director Fukuzawa were in attendance, as well as representatives from JobsOhio (Ohio’s economic development corporation), the mayor of Dublin (home to the largest number of



Japanese expatriates in Ohio), and many other members and friends. I would like to thank everyone for their strong efforts to broaden Japan-US cultural exchange.

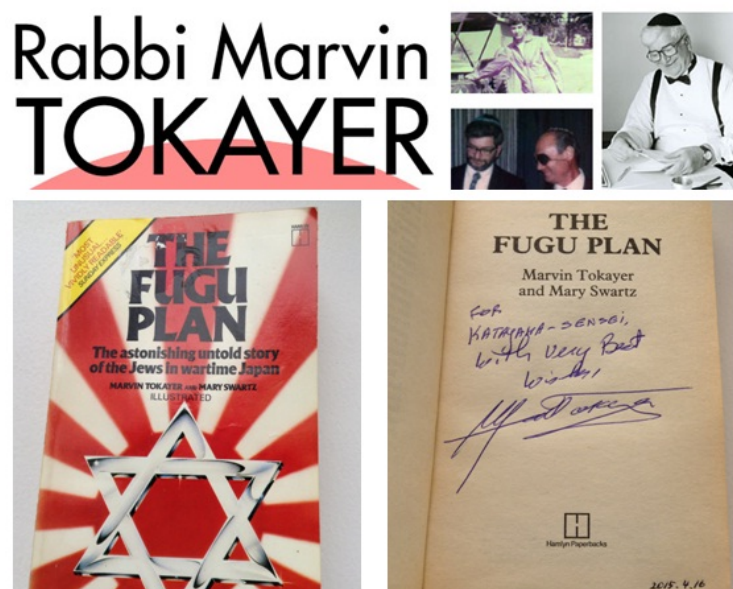
Vol. 263: A Rabbi's Lecture

On April 16, there was a very interesting lecture at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield by Rabbi Marvin Tokayer on the topics of Japanese visas issued to Jewish refugees in Lithuania by Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara and the Japanese plan of Jewish immigration into the former Manchuria (called the Fugu Plan). My wife and I were invited by a Jewish friend and his wife. They kindly prepared seats for us next to the Rabbi and the emcee introduced us to the audience at the beginning of the lecture.

Mr. Tokayer once served in the US Air Force at the Itazuke Air base in Fukuoka and later he returned to Japan as the rabbi for the Jewish Community of Japan for nearly ten years in the 60's and 70's. I remember that in high school I read his book, published in Japan, titled *Japanese are Dead* and it felt a bit strange that I would actually meet him nearly 40 years later in the suburbs of Detroit.

Although he is almost 80 years old he was very energetic and discussed the situation of the Jewish refugees, the decision by Chiune Sugihara to issue visas, the plan of the Japanese government for Jewish immigration, the reaction of American Jewish organizations, the role of Jacob Schiff, a Jewish capitalist, during the Russo-Japanese war and the general understanding of Japanese toward the Jewish people. The lecture left a deep impression on the audience who were mostly Jewish Americans. Even for me, seeing Japan's actions from a third party's point of view had a great impact.

After the lecture, I was truly touched when a woman in the audience, the daughter of a Sugihara Survivor, tearfully expressed to me her sincere gratitude to Japan for saving the life of her father.



Vol. 264: Consul General's Commendation for Mr. Hidaka

On April 17, the annual cherry blossom festival was held at HIDAKA USA in Dublin, Ohio (home of over 2200 Japanese nationals, the most of any Ohio city). Last year, due to the long, harsh winter, there were few cherry blossoms to appreciate, but this year the event was

held on a clear, calm spring day, perfectly timed so that many of the more than 100 cherry blossom trees on the grounds of the factory were in full bloom. President Yoshihiro Hidaka has spent 26 years contributing to the community not just through his business activities, but also through social and philanthropic activities such as opening his grounds and inviting local people to the cherry blossom festival every year. Last year, he was chosen as the Dublin Chamber of Commerce's "2014 Business Person of the Year." He has been of great help to me in building relationships with the mayor of Dublin and other area leaders during my business trips to Dublin. Mayor Keenan, who recently visited Japan at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was in attendance as I presented the Consul General's Commendation to President Hidaka. I hope that Mr. Hidaka will continue playing a major role in building stronger relationships between Japan and central Ohio.



Vol. 265: BGSU Ohanami Cherry Blossom Festival

On April 18th, the 14th annual Ohanami Cherry Blossom Festival was held at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. The previous day, when I visited Dublin, I had the opportunity to enjoy the cherry blossoms which were in full bloom at that time. As Bowling Green is located in northern Ohio however, it was still a bit too early for the blossoms to be fully bloomed. Despite this, the Ohanami Cherry Blossom Festival venue hall was packed with more than 700 people! Guests had the opportunity to enjoy a variety of Japanese cultural performances and activities including calligraphy, origami, traditional plays, rice pounding, taiko drums, martial arts, traditional Japanese dances, tea ceremony as well as a variety of Japanese foods including sushi.



I would like to express my humble gratitude to the university faculty and staff, students of Japanese, city government officials and all the people who came together in order to make this wonderful festival possible. In particular, I would like to recognize Dr. Akiko Kawano-Jones for her longtime dedication to this important event. This festival would not be what it is today if it weren't for all her great efforts and devotion. I sincerely hope that the guests at the Ohanami Cherry Blossom Festival had the opportunity to truly enjoy Japanese culture that beautiful spring weekend



On April 25th, an annual dinner held by ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) was held at the Marriott Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. Like last year, I had the pleasure of attending this event as an honorary member of the executive committee. This year marked the 44th annual dinner and, as in past years, the grand event was

attended by about 1,700 people. Several famous politicians including former Congressman John Dingell, Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, and many local dignitaries including Mayor Mike Duggan of Detroit were in attendance.

The Metro Detroit area has a very large Arab population and I have heard that this region boasts the largest concentration of Arab Americans living in the United States. ACCESS assists the local Arab American community through the support of low-income families, helping newly arrived immigrants and promoting an understanding of Arab culture to the local community. A variety of services are also provided by ACCESS in the areas of social services, healthcare services, education, the arts, employment aid, legal services and medical treatment. As I see it, the Metro Detroit area is a true microcosm of American society as a whole, exemplifying a dynamically developing society which is home to a multitude of diverse ethnic groups.

Vol. 267: Centennial Anniversary of the Detroit Athletic Club Clubhouse

The Detroit Athletic Club (DAC), a private social club located in downtown Detroit, is one of the most prestigious of its kind in the United States. The DAC was originally established in 1887 on Woodward Avenue by some local young athletes. The club was reborn in 1913 by a group of prominent Detroit business leaders who commissioned famed architect Albert Kahn to design a new six-story clubhouse on Madison Avenue, where it sits today. The stately Neo-Renaissance structure was completed in 1915.

With almost \$50 million invested in restoration and construction over the past 15 years, the DAC celebrated the completion of these clubhouse renovations at the Centennial Anniversary which I attended on April 25th. The clubhouse features several dining and bar areas; workout and swimming facilities; various event spaces; a library; a gymnasium; and overnight rooms. Conveniently located in downtown's entertainment district, the DAC sits adjacent to Comerica Park and Ford Field. It's a great place from which to take in a Tigers' game or tailgate in the clubhouse's backyard.

After assuming duties as consul general here, I had the chance to visit the DAC and decided to join as an individual member; this process required a sponsor, multiple referrals, and an interview. I've found the DAC to be a good place to host lunches, dinners and other events, while providing key networking opportunities and access to many local leaders. There are now over 4,000 DAC members, many of whom I joined at the big 100th anniversary party last Saturday night. Together with the Detroit Economic Club and Detroit Regional Chamber, the DAC is one of the main local organizations playing an important role throughout the metro Detroit community.



The Freer House invited Mrs. Yuriko Kuchiki, a journalist living in New York, to present a lecture at the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) on the 26th of April titled “The Business of Asian Art: Yamanaka & Company and Charles Lang Freer.” Mrs. Kuchiki has written many books on art topics, including the works of Vermeer and Van Gogh, as well as the *House of Yamanaka: The Company That Sold East Asia’s Treasures to America & Europe* (Shinchosha 2011), which was directly related to theme of the day’s lecture.

From the Meiji Era to just before World War 2, Yamanaka & Company (founded by Sadajiro Yamanaka) sold Japanese and other Asian arts to such affluent collectors as John D. Rockefeller, Jr. At one time the company had branches and representatives all over the world, including New York, Boston, London, Paris, Beijing, Chicago, etc. Charles Freer was also an important client. Unfortunately, at the beginning of the war, all assets of the company were seized and sold off.

Mrs. Kuchiki completed her book after seven years of research, and it was truly a valuable opportunity for me to hear the story directly from the author. I heard this was her first ever presentation in English, but her lecture, together with many slides, was very interesting and enlightening. Among the many guests attending the event were the chairman of Japan America Society, Mr. Bruce Brownlee and the president of JBSD (Japan Business Society of Detroit), Mr. Kunio Nakaguro.

Prior to the lecture, on the 24th, I had the opportunity to invite Mrs. Kuchiki, her husband, and representatives of the Freer House and DIA to the residence where we enjoyed a very pleasant and entertaining dinner together.



In the Kita District of Kyoto, there is a temple called “Koetsu-Ji” that has ties to the famous Edo Period artist, Motoami Koetsu. At this temple stands a monument of famous Detroit businessman, Charles Freer, who is known not only for his success, but also for his art collection which is displayed at the Freer Gallery in Washington D.C. Koetsu, along with Tawaraya Sotatsu and Ogata Korin are the original founders of the “Rinpa” School, which was a school of art famous during the Edo Period in Japan. Charles Freer was a true lover of artwork from the Rinpa School and he especially loved Koetsu’s works including his beautiful teacups. When he would visit Japan, Mr. Freer often visited Koetsu’s tomb at the Koetsu-ji Temple. Because of his great admiration and appreciation of Koetsu’s artwork, a monument to Charles Freer was erected at the Koetsu-ji Temple in 1930, eleven years after he passed away. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan at that time, Mr. William Castle Jr., attended the unveiling ceremony of the great monument to Charles Freer.

It has been 85 years since Charles Freer’s monument was erected at Koetsu-ji, and I’ve heard that his monument is now covered with moss and hidden behind trees and other foliage. As a matter of fact, very few people at the Temple even know the history behind the Freer monument. Now, the Freer House in Detroit is embarking on a plan to support restoration efforts of the Freer monument at Koetsu-ji and they plan to invite Ambassador Caroline

Kennedy to the reopening ceremony once the restoration is complete. I sincerely hope that this monument will be fully restored to its original grandeur and that the relationship between Freer and Koetsu will be recognized, once again, by the people of our two countries.



Vol. 270: Integrated Patterns: Structured Abstraction at the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science & Art

April 25th marked the opening of an interesting art exhibit entitled *Integrated Patterns: Structured Abstraction*, at the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science & Art, located in Midland, which is the hometown of the world-famous chemical manufacturer, Dow Chemical. Although the title sounds complex, this exhibit showcases abstract works which feature repeating motifs, recurring geometric patterns and structural organization. I am told that viewers will be struck by the discovery of unexpected mixes of motifs and materials, presented in approachable, unique ways.

The exhibition includes the works of Japanese artist, Ms. Hiroko Lancour Yamashita, a Michigan resident who retired from a local U.S. company so to pursue her dream of an art career. Ms. Lancour Yamashita obtained a master's degree in fine arts from Wayne State University in 2014. I understand that in this particular exhibition, her works—which feature elements of traditional Japanese handcrafts, such as Sashiko (embroidery) and Somemono (dyeing) reborn in sophisticated, contemporary forms—are fit for a tatami room.

Integrated Patterns: Structured Abstraction continues until June 26, and I'm very much looking forward to my visit. Should you choose to go, while in Midland, I would also recommend a visit to the Alden B. Dow House and Studio, the former home of Alden Dow, who was the architect son of the founder of Dow Chemical. This site has been selected as one of the top 25 historic residences in the United States.

Why not go and check out both of these wonderful Midland attractions?



Vol. 271: Imperial Decoration Awarded to Dr. Kinji Tanaka



きよくじつそうこうしょう
旭日双光章

It was officially announced that Greater Cincinnati's Dr. Kinji Tanaka, President of Japan Research Center of Greater Cincinnati, will be awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, for his significant contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the United States. I extend to him my sincere congratulations! It is a great joy and honor for me to have a recipient of such an award in my jurisdiction.

The decoration ceremony will be held at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida on May 15th and will be followed by an audience with Emperor at the Imperial Palace.

Dr. Tanaka established the Center in 1981 and continues to serve as its president; he served as Special Consultant to the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce; and, was also the first principal of the local Japanese Language School. Through these activities he has made great contributions to the Japanese community and the local society. In addition, Dr. Tanaka has conducted extensive research on Japan-related writer Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) and Rookwood ceramic artist Kitaro Shirayamadani, both of whom lived and worked in Cincinnati, and has published and lectured on their achievements. Also, last year, when I visited Cincinnati, Dr. and Mrs. Tanaka kindly showed me around the City of Cincinnati, introducing me to several very interesting places and providing much valuable information on the region.

I look forward to his continued assistance.

Vol. 272: Governor General of Canada

His Excellency David Lloyd Johnston, Governor General of Canada, visited Detroit and a reception was held in his honor on April 29th at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), which I also attended. The Governor General of Canada is the representative of Queen Elizabeth, who is the head of state of Canada. The Canadian Parliament holds legislative power and the Prime Minister and the Cabinet hold executive power. So in practice, the Governor General's authority is limited. He or she is appointed by the Queen, but in fact, the selection is based on a nomination from the Prime Minister of Canada. In the past, the post was generally filled by a white male of English descent, but more recently, French-Canadians, women and people of Asian or African descent have been selected, recognizing the diversity of the Canadian people. Governor General Johnston became the 28th Canadian Governor General in 2010. Before that, he has taught at several law schools and has held high posts, including president, at a few universities. Traditionally, the term of the Governor General is 5 years, though this is not legally fixed. When I had a chance to talk to His Excellency at the reception, we talked pleasantly about how he once visited Japan during his time as a university president.



Vol. 273: Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month here in the United States. Throughout the entire month, a series of cultural and traditional events are planned and held by various Asian-Pacific American groups living here in Michigan. On May 1st, I

invited representatives from several local Asian-Pacific American organizations to attend a reception at my Official Residence. I was so pleased that more than 60 people joined the reception including members from MAPAAC, APACC, CAPA, JBSD and JETRO as well as from the state government.

The number of Japanese Americans living in Michigan is not so large, but there are nearly 13,000 Japanese nationals living here in this state. I hope that this reception helped convey to attendees that the Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals living in the local communities here in Michigan are very willing to unite and cooperate with other Asian-Pacific American groups here as members of the same overall Asian-Pacific community. I heard that the month of May was chosen as Asian-Pacific American Heritage month in order to commemorate the first Japanese immigrant, John Manjiro, who came to the United States in May 1843, and also to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railway constructed mainly by Chinese immigrants in May 1869.



Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce



Vol. 274: Ohio's Amish Villages

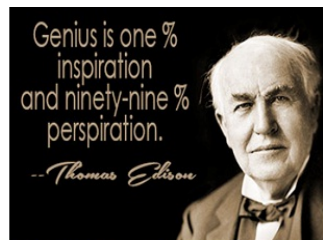
From May 2nd to 3rd, I visited several Amish villages during two days and one night. Holmes County is located in central Ohio and has a population of about 42,000, but around the circumference of this area live nearly 40,000 Amish, which has caused this place to be nicknamed "Amish Country". Together with Pennsylvania, this area has one of the highest concentrations of Amish settlements. Including the center of this Amish community in the town of Berlin, you can catch a glimpse here and there within the small towns and villages of Millersburg, Walnut Creek, Charm and Mount Hope of the idyllic life of the Amish with their modest clothing and black horse-drawn carriages (buggies). Because tourists gather in this area, you will also see craft exhibitions, antique shops, flea markets and traditional restaurants. With blue skies and a high of about 27°C (80°F), it felt wonderful to experience the countryside.



Vol. 275: Thomas Alva Edison

On my way to visit Ohio's Amish Country, I noticed a placard along the road that read *Birthplace of Thomas Edison*. I had some extra time, and it was on the way, so I left the highway and stopped in the charming little village of Milan, Ohio (population less than 1,500). Edison was born in 1847 as the youngest of seven children in Milan and lived there until age 7 (when he moved to Port Huron, Michigan). Henry Ford, later known as the king of automobiles, worked for the Edison Electric Light Company in the

late 19th century and the two men became lifelong friends. Edison's birthplace is a cozy, one-story brick house and now has a museum next door. Unfortunately, we arrived before the museum opened for the day, so I did not have the chance to go inside. By the way, Milan is sister cities with Yawata City in Kyoto Prefecture. The two are connected because Edison first made a practical incandescent light bulb using a bamboo filament from Yawata.



Vol. 276: The Opera "Faust"

On May 3rd, at the invitation of the French Honorary Consul, my wife and I attended a preview of the opera *Faust*. The event took place in the home of a French CEO, who had invited four of the show's singers to perform an act from the opera. It would be an unthinkable concept in Japan for someone to invite about fifty guests into their living room for such an occasion. Of course, the house sizes and income levels here are quite different from Japan.

The five acts of the opera *Faust* were composed by Charles Gounod and premiered in 1859. As you know, the opera was derived from Part One of the play *Faust* written by the famous writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The opera is performed in French.

I learned that this opera was the first opera staged in Japan, in 1894, and that day, November 24th, is still known as Opera Day in Japan.

This was my first experience to enjoy an opera outside of a theater. We were kindly offered front row seats and we were so close to the singers we could almost touch them!



Vol. 277: Prime Minister Abe's Official Visit to the U.S.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made an official visit to the U.S. from April 26th - May 3rd, with stops in Boston, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, and Los Angeles. A summit meeting was held on the 28th, followed by the issuance of a U.S.-Japan Joint Vision Statement and a joint press conference in the White House Rose Garden. Previous to these events, a so-called 2+2 meeting (comprised of Japan's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense and, their U.S. counterparts, the Secretaries of State and Defense) was held in New York on the 27th, resulting in a revision of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. These new guidelines, which went unrevised for the past 18 years, take into consideration present-day security circumstances and strengthen the seamless and unbroken defense cooperation which exists between our two nations.

The highlight of the official visit was the first ever address by a Japanese PM to a joint session of U.S. Congress on the 29th. PM Abe's speech was entitled Toward an Alliance of Hope. He spoke of his warm sentiment towards American society, which he developed as a university student and young businessman in the States. PM Abe also expressed deep remorse for past wars, reflected on our countries' strong alliance that has been built over the past 70 post-WWII years and emphasized the necessity for both countries to take the lead in TPP negotiations, so that our common values—which have created today's prosperity—can prevail throughout the world. Further, he highlighted various reform efforts he's undertaken in Japan, including agricultural reforms, as well as state and human security initiatives based upon Japan's pro-active pacifism stance. PM Abe shared his frank views with more than 500 members of the U.S. House and Senate, many guests and the U.S. public (via the mass media). I believe his message was very well received and left a deep impression upon those who heard it. One of the closing lines of his address was particularly memorable: "the finest asset the U.S. has to give to the world was hope, is hope, will be and must always be hope... let us call the U.S.-Japan alliance, an alliance of hope."



Vol. 278: Cherry Trees on Belle Isle

Belle Isle is a small island located in the Detroit River, which is situated between the cities of Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Canada. In 1994, Toyota City and the Japan Business Society of Detroit presented 100 cherry trees as a gift to the City of Detroit in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Detroit-Toyota sister city relationship. Through the years, some of the trees became damaged or died due to pests. However, last November, 120



trees were planted in order to replace damaged trees and help beautify the area once again. At the time, I expressed my sincere gratitude to the city government and volunteers for their great efforts to preserve and restore the cherry trees.

It was, however, with regret, clear that the history of these trees and the friendship and goodwill between Detroit and Japan were not fully recognized by those city officials and volunteers who embarked on the efforts to plant the new trees last November. The City of Toyota, the Japan Business Society of Detroit and the Consulate only learned about the plantings after the fact through the local newspaper rather than being informed ahead of time. Being unaware of these efforts beforehand was a little disappointing for us. Also, since 2012, the Grand Prix has been held on Belle Isle each spring. While this is a great event, the preparation for the race happens to fall during prime cherry blossom viewing season. As such, our office has had difficulty organizing a cherry blossom festival on Belle Isle.

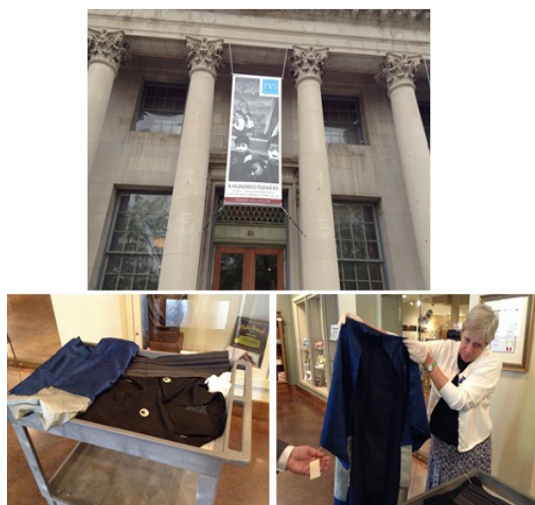
When I visited Belle Isle on May 4th, the cherry trees were in full bloom. It is my great hope that the cherry trees on Belle Isle will once again be recognized as a true symbol of the friendship between our two nations.

Vol. 279: Holland Tulip Festival

On May 6th, I accepted an invitation to attend this year's Tulip Festival in Holland, Michigan. During last year's festival, the very long and harsh winter prevented us from truly enjoying the tulips at their peak. However, this year's weather was a blessing and downtown was overflowing with every color of tulip in bloom. Among the several hundred people attending the formal luncheon held in the Hope College gymnasium were Mayor Dykstra, Governor Snyder, locally-elected Congressman Huizenga of the Federal House of Representatives, the Consul General of the Netherlands and the Consul of Mexico. In the afternoon, my wife and I rode in the parade through the town and waved at the thousands of spectators along the roadside. This Tulip Festival was particularly special because last week I had the mayor and his wife over for an intimate dinner at my residence. I was informed that Mayor Dykstra will leave the city of Holland where he has lived for so many years to become the president of a university in the suburbs of Chicago. In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Christopher Stevens for giving my wife and me private tours of Holland both last year and this year.



Vol. 280: Holland Museum and the First Japanese Students



On the morning of May 6, when I was in Holland for the tulip festival, I received a tour of the Holland Museum from the director. Many of the exhibits on the first floor were about the history of Holland, including displays about battles in the West Pacific during World War 2 where local soldiers fought with Japanese navy and army. The second floor had an exhibition of Dutch art and furnishings, mostly from the 17th century, including a sketch by Rembrandt. There was also special photo exhibition displaying rare pictures taken by an American cameraman who visited China in the 1950s, during the “Hundred Flowers Campaign.” For the occasion of our visit, the director brought out some special items for us to see. There was a set of kimono given to the president of Hope College by Ryaso Tagawa of Komoro, who was one of the first three Japanese exchange students to study at the school in 1870. It was very well-preserved and I could not believe that it was over 140 years old. Hope College, a Christian school founded in 1851, has an ongoing exchange program with Meiji Gakuin University. I am glad to find a connection to Japan in a small town in Michigan.

Vol. 281: Cherry Blossom Festival of Greater Cincinnati Japan America Society

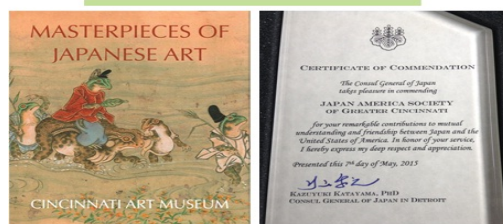
On May 7, the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati hosted their annual Sakura Matsuri event at the Cincinnati Art Museum with about 100 people in attendance. My wife and I also attended, enjoying the 4.5-hour one-way drive down and then back.

Just three weeks ago I invited Chairman Tony Webb and other Society board members to my residence where we had delightful conversation and dinner.

With thanks to the great efforts of Dr. Hou-Mei Sung, CAM’s curator of Asian art, a special, six-month exhibition titled *Masterpieces of Japanese Art*, consisting of Japanese art works held by the museum, is currently on exhibit through the end of August and we were delighted to explore it before dinner. We met a few high school students learning Japanese there who kindly explained the background of a painting to me in fairly difficult Japanese. After dinner there also was a taiko performance.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the companies who generously assisted through their sponsorship.

At the request of the Japan-America Society, in my remarks, I spoke of Japanese culture and court life during the Heian Period and I wished I had studied harder in school. On this occasion I also took the opportunity to present a Consul General Commendation to the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati for their more than 25 years of contributions to Japan-U.S. exchanges and friendship.



Vol. 282: 50th Anniversary of Ikebana International Detroit - Chapter 85

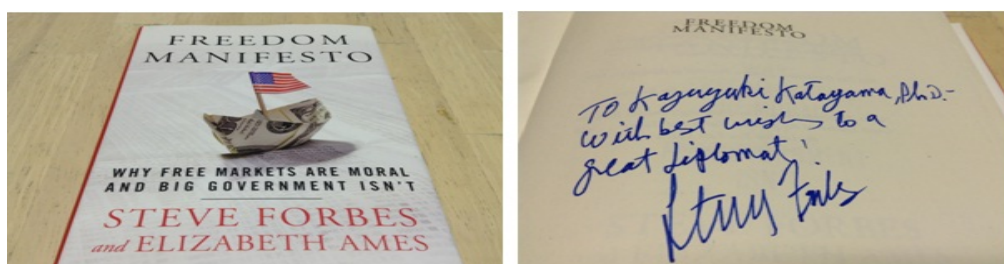
On May 8th, in a suburban Detroit church, Ikebana International Detroit Chapter 85, led by President Lauren Paul, celebrated their 50th Anniversary, which my wife and I were pleased to join. In the beginning of the program I expressed my congratulations to the Detroit Chapter and also presented them with a Consul General Commendation for their long-term contributions to Japanese cultural exchange activities in the community through the art of ikebana. In addition, to commemorate the 50th anniversary, Professor Emiko Suzuki, of the Ikenobo school of Ikebana, was invited from North Carolina to give a special demonstration of Japan's traditional art of flower arrangement.

For such a milestone event it was very sad that a primary member was not present. Mrs. Toshiko Shimoura, a former Detroit Chapter president, who celebrated her 88th birthday last year and was also awarded the Foreign Minister of Japan Commendation, suddenly passed away at the end of February last year while visiting Japan.

Through the devoted activities of people like Mrs. Shimoura, who had experienced life in an internment camp during the war, I believe Chapter 85 has benefited greatly. Once again, I would like to express my heartiest 50th anniversary congratulations, and at the same time, my deepest condolences on the loss of Mrs. Shimoura.



Vol. 283: A Meeting with Mr. Steve Forbes

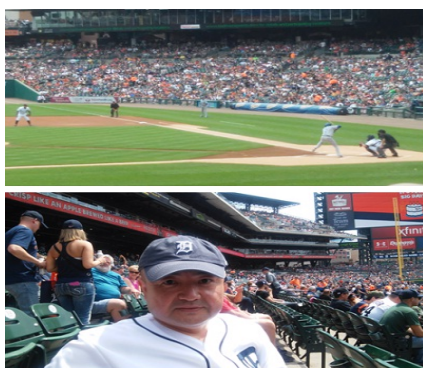


On May 9th, in the Detroit suburb of Birmingham, I attended a small breakfast gathering in honor of Mr. Steve Forbes, Chairman of Forbes Media and Editor-in-Chief of the world-famous Forbes magazine—best known for its lists of wealthy individuals and major corporations.

Mr. Forbes was in town to deliver the commencement address to graduates of Southfield's Lawrence Technological University (LTU). LTU President & CEO, Dr. Virinder K. Moudgil, was kind enough to include me in the breakfast gathering prior to the commencement ceremony.

As you may know, Mr. Forbes ran in the Republican presidential primaries in 1996 and 2000. During the meeting, he mentioned to me that he visits Japan a couple of times each year, especially now that Forbes Japan is published there. Naturally, the main topic at the breakfast table was the 2016 presidential race. Although I won't share details, suffice it to say that the long U.S. political season is already well underway!

Vol. 284: My First Tigers Game of the Season



On May 9th, I watched my first Tigers game of the season at Comerica Park. The opposing team was the Kansas City Royals. In the first inning, the first batter surprised us by hitting a home run, so it was a very ominous start. There were several opportunities for our team throughout the match, but to no avail. We eventually lost the game 2-6. Before the game, the Tigers were in the first place in the central division in the American League, but now their position has been reversed with the Royals. Still, the long pennant race started just a month ago, so let's hope for the future.

Vol. 285: History of the Republican Party

The Republican Party is said to have originated in 1854, when anti-slavery members of two parties, the "Conscience" Whigs and the Free Soil Party, united in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill proposed by the Democratic Party. The text of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill opened the possibility of slavery being adopted in the newly-formed Kansas and Nebraska Territories. In March of that year, the name "Republican Party" was suggested at an anti-slavery gathering in Ripon, Wisconsin. On July 6th, the first state-level Republican Party meeting began in the suburbs of Jackson, Michigan, which was the first time the party platform and list of candidates were adopted. The State of Michigan has a close connection to the creation of the Republican Party.



Vol. 286: *Winesburg, Ohio*

Winesburg, Ohio is a collection of short stories written by Ohio-born author, Sherwood Anderson, in 1919. The book, which made Anderson famous, is comprised of a series of 22 short stories which are set in the fictional town of Winesburg, Ohio.

The translation of *Winesburg, Ohio* was published in Japan as early as 1933 and the title was translated to *The Story of Winesburg*. According to the commentary written in another

new translation published by Kodansha, this series of stories was very special because it marked a significant period in American literature in which American literature finally distinguished itself from European literature with great works by authors such as Mark Twain. As a matter of fact, Earnest Hemingway and William Faulkner were greatly influenced by Anderson.

Winesburg, Ohio delved into the daily lives and mentalities of people during that time period and unveiled major themes such as solitude and anxiety felt by early 20th century Americans. This novel plays a very important role in the history of American literature. I recommend you read this book, imagining a rural town in Ohio at the turn of the 20th century.



Vol. 287: Cincinnati and *A Daughter of the Samurai*

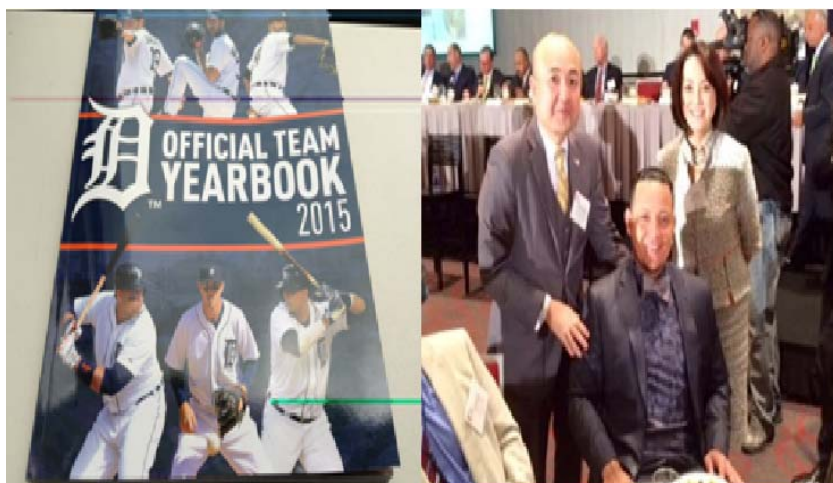
Etsuko Sugimoto (1873-1950) was the daughter of a samurai in Echigo, Nagaoka-han (Domain). In 1898, she was sent across the Pacific Ocean to Cincinnati to marry her betrothed, a merchant named Matsuo Sugimoto. With the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson they lived there for 12 years, during which time they had two daughters. After that, however, she went through many experiences, including her husband's sudden death and her temporary return to Japan. She decided to come back to the United States for the sake of her children's education, supporting the family by teaching Japanese language and culture at Columbia University in New York. Published in the U.S. in 1925, her autobiography *A Daughter of the Samurai* became a bestseller at the same time as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and it was eventually translated into seven languages.

It is regrettable that this book is so little-known in Japan today. Florence Wilson, niece of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson of Cincinnati, became Etsuko's lifelong friend, accompanying her throughout good times and bad in both Japan and the United States. Currently, the Mr. and Mrs. Sugimoto and Florence are interred next to each other at Aoyama Cemetery in Tokyo. I have heard that Japan's national broadcaster, NHK, is currently planning to make a documentary program about the close bond between Etsuko and Florence.



Vol. 288: Miguel Cabrera

On May 13, I joined an annual luncheon hosted by the Detroit Economic Club with the main players of the Detroit Tigers, their coach, the general manager and the owner of the team. Players from the team sat in on each table, but I was lucky enough to have Miguel Cabrera sitting at my table. Born in Venezuela, Miguel has been playing for the Tigers since the 2008 season. In 2012, he achieved the Triple Crown in baseball. It has been 103 years since a Tigers player, the previous one being Ty Cobb, won this prestigious award and the first time in 45 years since anyone in Major League Baseball received this title. His hit record has exceeded 2,200 and he has just had his 400th homerun. With a pierced ear and a bow tie, Miguel was quite fashionably dressed. Perhaps because they had won a game of the previous night, the players were all in very high spirits.



Vol. 289: CAPA and APACC Events

As I wrote earlier, May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage month. In commemoration of this, I recently attended two interesting events: *Splendor of the East 2015*, held by the Council of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA) at Dearborn's Ford Community Center for the Performing Arts on the 15th; and, on the next evening, the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce's (APACC) Annual Gala Dinner, held at the MGM Grand Detroit.

The former is a cultural event which celebrates the people and traditions of this region's Asian and Pacific American minorities; this year, it featured two fantastic performances paying tribute to the Japanese and Japanese American people: taiko drumming and a song from the famous opera, *Madame Butterfly*. The latter event is an annual black tie affair (cultural attire was also encouraged) to which a well-known Asian or Asian Pacific American is invited as the keynote speaker. This year it was Mr. Bill Imada, a Japanese American who serves on President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and who founded the IW Group (a company which advises companies on multicultural marketing and communications). I conveyed my formal congratulations to CAPA in the event program and had the honor of being formally introduced at the beginning of gala, together with some dignitaries, which included several state legislators. Recently, by the way, one Japanese individual was named to APACC's board.

Although on the whole, when compared to other Asian minorities, there are less Japanese and Japanese Americans residing here. So, it was indeed a pleasure to see Japan so well represented at this year's events. Japan's presence in these kinds of activities and organizations is actually on the rise, as organizations, such as the Japan Business Society of

Detroit (JBSD), are attaching greater importance to increasing visibility and involvement in the community.



Vol. 290: Breakfast Meeting with Hideki Matsuyama



On May 19, The City of Dublin hosted a breakfast with professional golfer Hideki Matsuyama at the Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio. Mr. Matsuyama impressively won the championship in last year's Memorial Tournament, held at this golf course which was designed by Jack Nicklaus.

At the time, he was quite surprised that there were so many Japanese fans in the gallery. But, it is easy to imagine, as there are more than two thousand Japanese residents living in Dublin, the largest Japanese population of any city in Ohio. This year's Memorial Tournament will be held two weeks from now, but Matsuyama-san came to Dublin now to join this exchange with the local Japanese and American communities, for which I am very grateful. It seems he has not had much opportunity for such gatherings.

Matsuyama-san is on the PGA Tour based in Florida and continues his success, recently placing 5th in this year's Master's Tournament with 11 under par.

There were many fans at the breakfast to cheer on Mr. Matsuyama, including Dublin's Mayor Keenan and Japan America Society President Allen Kinzer. It was a wonderful exchange and interview with Mr. Matsuyama, which we all enjoyed immensely.

Vol. 291: President Gerald Ford Library

It has been a continual practice that once a president ends their term in office, they set up a memorial library that bears their name, in a location that is important to them. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the first president to follow this practice by preserving relevant official documents kept by his presidency. This presidential library system was enacted by the 1955 congressional legislation: The Presidential Libraries Act. Currently there are 14 of such memorial libraries and museums, although President Obama has recently stated that he will

create one in Chicago.

The 38th president, Gerald R. Ford, has close ties with Michigan as he attended the University of Michigan. Therefore, Mr. Ford's memorial library is located at the University in Ann Arbor. It's quite unusual that Ford also has a presidential museum in Grand Rapids, the city where he was raised. Gerald Ford is the only president to open a separate library and museum. Since I had the chance to visit the museum last year, I opted to visit the library which opened in 1981. The library displays a biographical history of Mr. and Mrs. Ford as well as important documents, interviews and records relating to his presidency and the White House from 1974-1977. All of the documents follow after the resignation of Richard Nixon until the end of Ford's time in office.

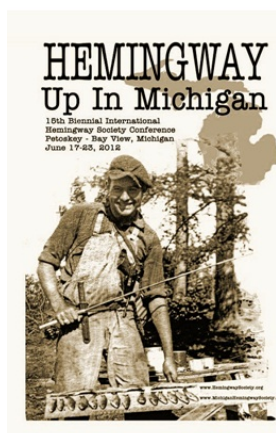


Vol. 292: Hemingway and Michigan

Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899, in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, as the eldest son of a doctor father and vocalist mother. During his childhood, Hemingway's family spent their summers in a cottage in Petoskey, Michigan, across Lake Michigan, on the opposite shore of the Walloon Lakeside Villa.

Speaking of Hemingway reminds me Europe during the First World War and the Spanish Civil War. The 1920's personification of the "Lost Generation" brings to mind the times of being poor whilst still having many big dreams. Hemingway wrote about these concepts in *Movable Feast* while living around Montparnasse in the Left Bank of Paris. He also expressed similar themes feelings of strength and dreaming big in *The Old Man and the Sea* which he wrote while living in Florida and Cuba. But it seems memories from his youth growing up in Northern Michigan profoundly influenced the formation of his personality and character.

During Memorial Day weekend, we visited the area connected to Hemmingway. The destination was about three and a half hours by car to the northwest from Detroit. We went to The Horton Bay General Store (From the novel, *Up in Michigan*), The Little Traverse History Museum of Petoskey (the original Pere Marquette Railway Depot), Stafford's Perry Hotel (a



19th century hotel where Hemingway stayed), the City Park Grill (a restaurant where Hemingway enjoyed playing billiards), Potter's Rooming House (a boarding house Hemingway had once written at) and the remains of the former Harbor Springs station building. I followed in the footsteps of Hemingway by visiting all these places. Although, I'm not an especially big Hemingway fan, I have now visited the first two residences of Ernest Hemingway which are open to public: Oak Park and Cuba's Santiago de Paula. Hemingway also resided in Key West, Florida. I am glad it is possible to have a connection to Hemingway here in Michigan.

Vol. 293: Marysville Friendship Garden Opening Ceremony

On May 29th, a friendship garden symbolizing the relationship between Marysville and Yorii-machi (located in Saitama Prefecture) was officially opened in Partner's Park located just across from City Hall in Marysville, Ohio. At the invitation of Mayor Gore, I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremony along with many government officials including Congressman Jim Jordan, of the U.S. House of Representatives, whose district includes Marysville. In addition, I met with Deputy Mayor Ibe and two other delegation members from Yorii-machi in Japan. We had the opportunity to enjoy musical performances as well as cuisine from a variety of food stands until very late that night.

Honda boasts a large automotive plant in Marysville which was opened more than 30 years ago. Honda also recently invested in Yorii-machi located in Saitama—the sister Prefecture of Ohio. Under the sister-state/prefecture umbrella, Marysville and Yorii-machi started enjoying a friendship relationship.

In Congressman Jordan's constituency, there are 56 Japanese company facilities which have created approximately 27,500 jobs. Mayor Gore and other delegates are scheduled to attend the annual Midwest-U.S. Japan Association Conference which will be held in Tokyo this coming September.



Vol. 294: 20th Anniversary of the Okinawa Tomonokai (Friendship Association) of Ohio

On May 30, there was a 20th Anniversary Celebration in Columbus of the Okinawa Tomonokai of Ohio (Ms. Kazumi Makowski, President). I was happy to send a congratulatory message for the program booklet, as requested by the president, and also chose to personally

attend the event and express my congratulations directly.

Okinawa Tomonokai of Ohio is composed mainly of first, second and third generation Okinawans and was established in 1995 to preserve and pass down the culture and traditions of Okinawa to future generations and also to share their unique culture with the local community. Currently, they have nearly 340 members.

At the celebration, a lively gathering of several hundred people, some coming from as far away as Chicago, Washington, Texas and California, enjoyed many presentations such as taiko drumming, sanshin (a traditional Okinawan string instrument) performances, martial arts demonstrations, singing and dancing. Midway through the program a letter of congratulations from Okinawan Governor Onaga was read and I also had the opportunity to greet everyone and express my best wishes on the milestone occasion.

Okinawa and my home prefecture of Hiroshima are two of the major sources of the Japanese American community. Personally, I travelled to Okinawa only once, twenty years ago, on business, but I have a special feeling of attachment for it. Next year, in October, the 6th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival will held in Naha, Okinawa.



Vol. 295: Reopening of the Japanese Garden in the Newark Suburban Area

Located in a vast, forest park, in the suburbs of Newark, Ohio, a Japanese garden was opened 50 years ago. Found inside the Dawes Arboretum (which was founded in 1929) consisting of 1800 acres of land (7 km²), the garden was founded in 1965 using the design of Mr. Nakamura (Mr. Nakamura was a young lecturer who studied landscape architecture at Kyoto University). The opening ceremony was attended by the then ambassador of Japan, Mr. Ryuji Takeuchi. The ambassador gave a speech that was featured on the front page of the local paper, *The Newark Advocate*. Maybe Japanese gardens were still quite rare at the time.

The garden was renovated in the early '90s and last year they asked Dr. Nakamura—now an honorary professor at Kyoto University—who had designed the original garden, to help create the new renovation. At the invitation of the arboretum, I attended the opening ceremony for the new garden, on the 31st of May. During this visit I had the opportunity to give a greeting and ceremonially cut the ribbon. Nearly 100 people, including financial supporters and 2 mayors, attended the event. This included local people who

remembered the original opening and a young Professor Nakamura, some 50 years ago.

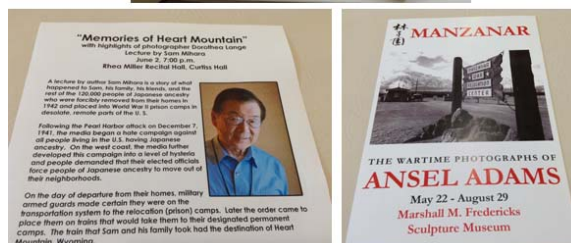
It was a great honor to attend this reopening of the Japanese garden that has such a long history. I will try my best to make this new, reborn garden a symbol of the introduction and exchange of Japanese culture with the local community along with the Japanese residents located in Central Ohio.



Vol. 296: Japanese-American Internment Camp Photo Exhibition

From May 22 to August 29, Saginaw State University is holding a special exhibition at the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum. The exhibition includes 50 Ansel Adams photographs taken in 1943 of the Manzanar War Relocation Center, a wartime internment camp. In connection with this, the museum invited Sam Mihara, an American of Japanese descent who was born in San Francisco as Nisei (second generation) and experienced life in the Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, to give a lecture.

On June 1, the president of the University, Dr. Bachand, held a dinner for Mr. Mihara at his home. My wife and I were both invited, so we took the chance to go see the photography exhibition before dinner. During World War 2, about 120,000 Japanese-descended Americans living on the West Coast were forced to live in 10 internment camps, including Manzanar. By 1943, the situation had stabilized



and there were pictures of job advertisements targeting interned Japanese Americans in the exhibition. Much to my surprise, one of those advertisements was for two housekeepers in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, which is the location of my official residence as Consul General. In 1988, the United States government issued a formal apology for violating the Constitutionally-protected civil rights of Japanese-descended American citizens during the war and paid \$20,000 in compensation per person.

If you have the chance to visit Saginaw this summer, please stop by this exhibition. This year is the 70th anniversary of the end of World War 2 and I think it is significant to look back on this unhappy period of history between our two countries.

Vol. 297: Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario's 25th anniversary
Celebration

On July 9th, the Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario held a commemorative event at the Rivera Court in the Detroit Institute of Arts to celebrate their 25th anniversary. Japanese Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable Kenichiro Sasae, attended the dinner as a special guest. Also in attendance were a number of VIP's including Mr. Brownlee, Chairman of JASMSO; Mr. Archer, former Detroit mayor and recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon Award; Mr. Little, former Chairman of JASMSO; Mr. Gargaro, Board Chair of the DIA; Mr. Baruah, President of the Detroit Regional Chamber; Ms. Dionne, Canadian Consul; and about 150 representatives from the local business community.

The Japan America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario is quite unique in the sense that it promotes cultural exchange not between two, but among three different countries including the United States, Canada and Japan. JASMSO has been an indispensable partner to our Consulate General when it comes to promoting cultural events as well as cross-cultural exchange.

After the dinner, Ambassador Sasae gave a speech about Japan-US relations based on Prime Minister Abe's recent visit to the United States. At the ceremony, I humbly presented a Consul General's Commendation to JASMSO for their many contributions to promoting goodwill and friendship over the past quarter decade.

Just before the event, Ambassador Sasae had the opportunity to take a tour of the city of Detroit, highlighting the many redevelopment projects going on currently. I truly hope that, like myself, Ambassador Sasae had the opportunity to see and feel first-hand how Detroit is now changing and revitalizing in a positive manner.



Vol. 298: Dedication of Japanese Garden at Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park

On the evening of June 10th, for the dedication of the Japanese garden in Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, a large-scale celebratory dinner was held with about 550 officials and special guests invited.

That afternoon, inside the beautiful tea room house that was completed in the garden, the governor of Shiga (Michigan's sister prefecture), Mr. Mikazuki, along with the people of the Urasenke Tea School, hosted a tea ceremony. My wife and I also attended the event. The governor shared with us Shiga Prefecture matcha (a green tea powder), Shigaraki pottery (unique to Shiga), as well as calligraphy of a local tea master in Shiga. The Japanese Ambassador to the US, Mr. Kenichiro Sasae; Governor Snyder; the Meijer families; and other local leaders also enjoyed the ceremony.

After the tea ceremony, we enjoyed a walk in the garden that was designed by Hoichi Kurisu. Inside Meijer Gardens there was a special exhibit called Splendors of Shiga, which shared valuable cultural assets of Shiga Prefecture. These have symbolized the depth and breadth of Michigan-Japan relations. I hope that this, one of the Midwest's largest gardens, will be a center of US-Japan cultural exchange in the region. In cooperation with the Japanese societies and the local communities, we will give forth our best effort to make this so.

Everyone, by all means, please visit the splendid, new Japanese garden in the near future.



Vol. 299: Detroit City FC

In the city of Detroit, there is a Detroit City Football Club that belongs to the 4th tier of soccer leagues. Major League Soccer is the 1st tier. On June 17, in response to the invitation of Sean Mann, one of the co-owners of the Detroit team, we enjoyed a game played on fresh-cut, natural grass in the city at night. He and I had met through a connection to the consular soccer team tournament that takes place in October every year. Detroit City FC's nickname is Le Rouge. It means red in French, but is derived from Detroit's French roots and the Rouge River that flows through Detroit. Currently Le Rouge is first place in the Midwest regional group. The game we saw was a friendly exhibition game against the Columbus Crew College Program.

There are four major professional sports in the United States: baseball, American

football, basketball and ice hockey. Comparatively, soccer is still a minor sensation. However, the U.S. did host the FIFA World Cup in 1994 and the women's national team is ranked in the highest tier in the world. Among children, soccer is very popular. I believe there will be a time in the future where soccer will become a very popular sport in the United States.

Concerning the game, Le Rouge opened the scoring early in the first half, but the Columbus Crew College Program scored 3 goals unanswered, resulting in a 1-3 loss. But, it still was a great game and I thoroughly enjoyed the enthusiastic, supportive fans in the crowd.



Vol. 300: US-Japan Council

The US-Japan Council is a non-profit organization led by Japanese Americans and was founded in 2009 in order to strengthen the Japan-U.S. relations from a global perspective. In 2012, the U.S.-Japan Council was also established on the Japanese side in order to support the implementation of the TOMODACHI Initiative. The TOMODACHI Initiative was created after the Great East Japan Earthquake as a public-private partnership between the U.S.-Japan Council and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. This initiative is now promoting educational and cultural exchange for the next generation of leaders in Japan and the U.S. On June 18, I had the opportunity to host a dinner for the President of the U.S.-Japan Council, Ms. Irene Hirano (wife of the late Senator Daniel Inouye) who was visiting Detroit on a business trip; TOMODACHI Initiative officials; local Japanese Americans; and Japanese business community leaders at my official residence. It is very gratifying to see the relationship between the Japanese Americans in the Detroit area, the Japanese Community and the Consulate General of Japan strengthening through the various situations we have faced together. Our consulate office will try our best to take care of and expand this network.



Vol. 301: Slovenia's National Day Reception

On June 19th, the Slovenia National Day Reception was held at the Cleveland City Hall, hosted by the Consul General of Slovenia, Mr. Jurcek Zmauc. Slovenia is the only foreign country that has established a consulate in the state of Ohio. Slovenia declared independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991, joined NATO and the EU in 2004 and adopted the euro as its currency three years later. In 2006, Japan established its embassy in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana; the Slovenian embassy, in Tokyo, opened in 1993. It is said that Japan is considered one of the ten core countries of Slovenian diplomacy. Slovenia's population is about two million and there are fortunately no major concerns between our countries. In fact, very friendly ties have been established between Japan and Slovenia, highlighted by the 2013 visit of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of our diplomatic relations.

Consul General Zmauc will be soon complete his mission in Cleveland and return home, so this reception also served as his farewell party. I recall that he and his wife kindly drove some three hours—all the way from Cleveland, in wintery conditions—to attend the Emperor's Birthday Reception at my Bloomfield residence last year. I remain grateful for Consul General Zmauc's friendship and offer my very best wishes for his continued success back home.



Vol. 302: Alden Dow Home & Studio

On the 24th of June, I visited the Alden Dow Home and Studio in Midland, home to Dow Chemical (one of the largest chemical producers in the world). Alden Dow (1904-1983) is the architect son of founder Herbert Dow of Dow Chemical. Alden Dow also worked as an apprentice under Frank Lloyd Wright for a short time. The home and studio I visited is where he lived and worked.

On the day I visited Midland, at the kind introduction of Freer house director William Colburn, director Craig McDonald and volunteer guide Randy Kawakita carefully guided us through the home and studio. The building was created in 1936, but was extended later on and therefore has a complex and intricate interior. The garden has an artificial, large pond and a serene natural aura surrounding it. In 1989 the Alden Dow Home and Studio was selected as a national historical landmark.

Alden Dow also had Japanese friends and a strong interest in Japanese culture. Japan-related books and art had been left in rooms around the building. After taking the tour, it

also feels, to some extent, as though his design reflected Japanese influence. Midland is a very nice town, which is surrounded by rich nature. Ladies and gentlemen, please do not miss an opportunity to visit this place.



Vol. 303: Consul General Commendation Awarded to Dr. Hiroyuki Fujita



On June 30th an award ceremony was held in Cleveland for the presentation of the Consul General Commendation to Hiroyuki Fujita. Dr. Fujita came to the United States in the late 1980s, on an exchange program, while he was a student at Waseda University in Tokyo. He decided to remain in the US and obtained a doctorate degree in physics from Cleveland's Case Western Reserve University. Later, in 2006, he established his own company in Cleveland – QED, a medical device development and manufacturing company. His company became very successful, very quickly, and has earned many

awards. Dr. Fujita is recognized as one of the top entrepreneurs in the country and highly lauded in Forbes Magazine, and many others, for his successful start-up and entrepreneurship. In 2012

he was invited by President Obama and Mrs. Obama as an honored guest to the President's State of the Union address. In addition to his work Dr. Fujita contributes greatly through civic activities, serving on the U.S. Manufacturing Council for Secretary of Commerce Pritzker, and on various local boards, such as the Cleveland Orchestra and the Cleveland Foundation. This Consul General Commendation was awarded to Dr. Fujita for his long term contributions to the promotion of friendship and goodwill between Japan and US, especially in Cleveland.

Dr. Fujita met many great friends in Cleveland who immensely influenced his life, many of whom attended the ceremony to honor him. Regarding his life, Dr. Fujita published *A Pathfinder* (Shogakukan 2013), his autobiography, which I highly recommend if you are interested in learning more about him.

Dr. Fujita, I sincerely hope you will continue your valued involvement in community activities and US-Japan exchanges.]

Vol. 304: The Keidanren Mission's Visit to Ohio

Recently, Keidanren (the Japanese Business Federation) sent 3 groups of its members on a mission to visit the United States. One of those groups, consisting of about 25 people led by Kunio Ishihara (Vice Chairman of Keidanren, Chairman of the Japan-U.S. Council and Advisor to Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance) visited Ohio on July 1. At the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus, they met separately with Lt. Governor Mary Taylor and Congresswoman Joyce Beatty. Later, they gave a press briefing to local media outlets and met with representatives of JobsOhio, Ohio's statewide economic development organization. The Lt. Governor and the Congresswoman both expressed profound gratitude for the great investments of Japanese companies in Ohio. Regrettably, circumstances did not permit Keidanren to meet with Governor Kasich, who is preparing to announce his candidacy for President of the United States in late July. I went to Columbus to greet the Keidanren mission before their meetings, and gave them a briefing about the relationship between Japan and Ohio, including how Japan is the largest foreign investor in Ohio, what makes Ohio appealing for Japanese investment, and challenges that can be anticipated in the future. Business trips by such high-profile Japanese politicians and officials are rare, so it is very encouraging to my office at the Consulate and to Japanese businesses in the region that Keidanren stopped in Ohio. I hope that this mission will further promote bilateral relations, including the economic relationship between Japan and Ohio.



Vol. 305: Lecture at Senior Men's Club of Birmingham

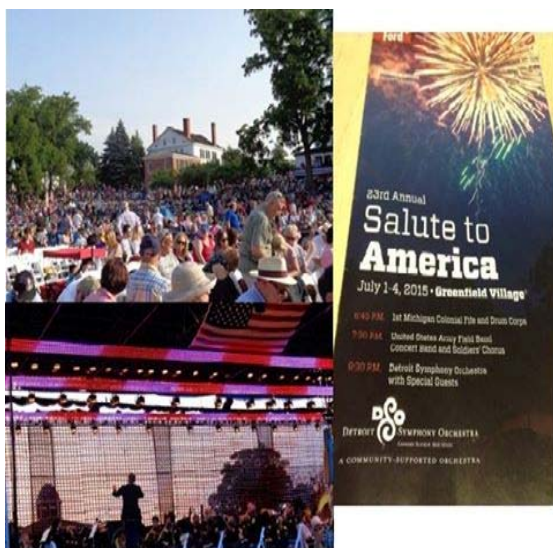
On the 26th of June, I was invited by the Senior Men's Club in Birmingham, not far from my official residence, as a luncheon speaker. I gave a lecture to approximately 150 attendees titled, "Japan-China Relations: the Rise of China and the Implication on Japan-US Relations."

The club was founded in 1957. It is mainly retired men and currently consists of about 750 people. Although the state of Michigan is very focused on a car-centric society, Birmingham is one of the few towns, like Ann Arbor, that has several chic streets where you can enjoy walking. Birmingham is also a sister city to Ritto in Shiga Prefecture.

Time was limited on the day I spoke, so unfortunately I could not participate in a question and answer session. Nonetheless, after the lecture I was approached by participants with questions about China relations, the East China Sea/South China Sea situation and the East Asian security environment, as well as U.S. commitment to this region.



Vol. 306: Outdoor Concert and Fireworks Display on Independence Day



The United States celebrated its 239th anniversary of independence this past 4th of July. The previous night, I had the pleasure of attending an outdoor concert and fireworks display called "Salute to America" which was held at Greenfield Village in Dearborn. The concert was jointly performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the U.S. Army Field Band. The audience of around 9,000 filled the entire lawn, sitting on both lawn chairs and on blankets in order to enjoy the show. The weather was quite nice that evening and I very much enjoyed music and fireworks.

When I was in Belgium, I often attended outdoor concerts which were held at

various castles throughout the suburbs. During my previous post in the U.S., which was in Washington D.C., I also enjoyed an outdoor music festival at Tanglewood, in a Boston suburb, as well as a folk concert which was held at the Nissan Pavilion (which was the name of the venue at the time) located in a suburb of Washington D.C. My evening at Greenfield Village enjoying the concert and fireworks will certainly be added to the list of exceptional outdoor concerts that I've attended.

Vol. 307: Open-Air Concert at the Ford House

I already reported about my visit to Greenfield Village for a concert last weekend, but this weekend I again was able to enjoy an outdoor summer concert and fireworks show. This time, I went to the grounds of the Ford House, near Lake St. Clair in the Detroit suburbs, to listen to an outdoor performance of classical music used in movie soundtracks by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The Ford House was built in the late 1920s by Henry Ford's son, Edsel Ford, and his wife, Eleanor Ford, and is where they raised their children. Now, the house and expansive grounds are open to the public and have been converted into a museum and park. The weather was good on that day and after a picnic and concert on the lawn, we enjoyed the beautiful fireworks which colored the night sky. It was a very satisfying way to experience the true essence of summer.



Vol. 308: American Football IFAF World Championship

The 5th International Federation of American Football (IFAF) World Championship, which is a once every four years event, is held from July 9th to 18th in Canton, Ohio. In Canton, there is a Football Hall of Fame. This is due to the fact that precursor to the NFL, the American Professional Football Association, was formed there. The 5th Championship was supposed to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, but it was surprisingly canceled and Canton picked up the hosting duties. This year, only seven teams participated: Japan, the U.S., Mexico, France, Australia, South Korea and Brazil. Japan won the championship the first two years it was held. Since then, the U.S. has won two consecutive times. The US team is not composed of big time college students, but it seems that, nonetheless, the ability difference between the other countries and the U.S. is still vast.

On July 12, I went to Canton to support the Japanese team. The match of the day was against the United States. Before the match I greeted the players and coaches of the Japanese team and then I watched the game from the VIP suite at the invitation of the organizers. At halftime I did an interview for an ESPN webcast where I explained the popularity of American football in Japan. After the match was over, I presented trophies to the MVPs from both countries. The United States won the game 43 to 18, but I still feel the Japanese team fought hard.



Vol. 309: Journey to the West

The first time I was appointed to the United States was in 1986, 29 years ago. After finishing necessary procedures at the embassy in Washington D.C., I had two weeks before my Summer School began at Stanford University. I decided to take a Greyhound bus and spend a couple days crossing the continent. In doing so, I had the opportunity to drop by the Grand Canyon and the town of San Francisco. This year, after a long interval, I took a summer vacation and revisited those destinations.

I remember, in my youth (in my mid-20s), the first time I took this trip, still having an adventurous, bright spirit. My English was poor back then and I even had a hard time ordering from a fast food restaurant. I was also very anxious about my life ahead of me, but nonetheless looking forward to the future.

This second trip brought back nostalgia of time gone by. After visiting the west coast, I realize life and natural circumstances in Michigan are wonderful if you put up with the severe winters. It makes me sad to think about leaving this life in about 2 weeks and I will truly miss it.

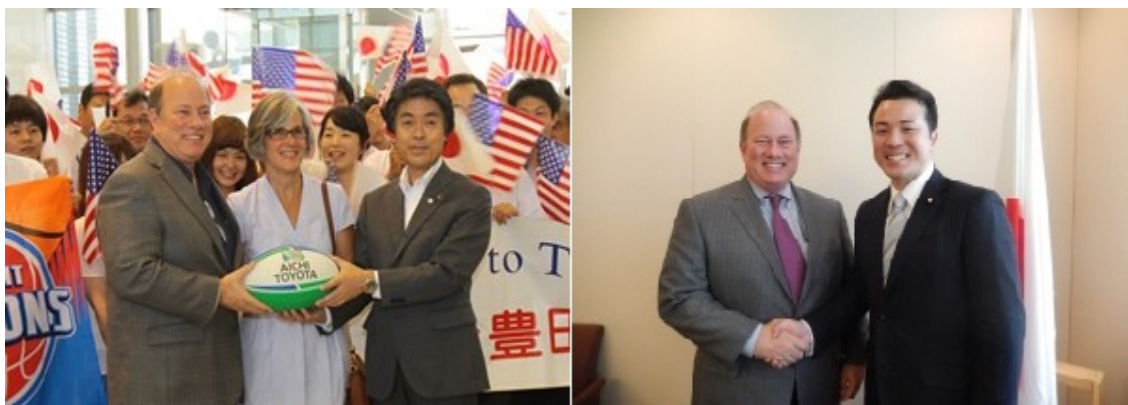


Vol. 310: Detroit Mayor Duggan Visits Japan

The Mayor of Detroit, Mrs. Duggan and their delegation visited Japan in late July. The Consulate General is very pleased with the mayor's visit because we tried our best to make this realization happen. The trip was to commemorate the 55th anniversary of sister city relations between Toyota City and Detroit (July 26). Additionally, the mayor took the time to travel to Tokyo to meet with the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Takashi Uto, on July 28th. During his time in Japan, the mayor attended a luncheon hosted by the US embassy in Tokyo. He also participated in factory visits, held a press conference and partook in several

interviews. This made his trip to Japan a complete success.

This was the first visit to a foreign country from the mayor since he took office and we are honored he chose Japan. I believe this trip was an expression of gratitude held by the mayor for the Japanese contribution to the Detroit area and his high future expectations of our continuing relations. As part of the process of Detroit reconstruction, there is a major challenge as to how the city can encourage more investment from Japanese companies in the future. I would like to express thanks to Deputy Mayor McKinnon, city government officials, the Japan-America Society, and Delta Air Lines for their support of this visit.



Vol. 311: Case Western Reserve University and Tohoku University Signing Ceremony



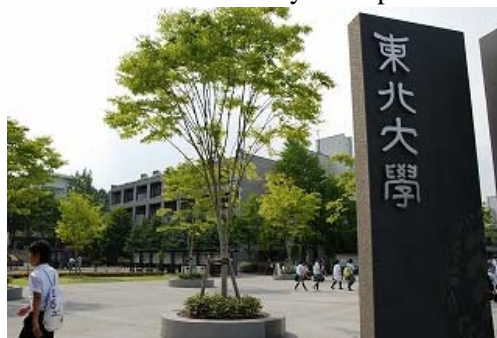
On July 29th, I had the pleasure of giving remarks and witnessing a signing ceremony commemorating the start of a formal education relationship in cutting-edge science research (including data science) between Case Western Reserve University and Tohoku University, which took place on CWRU's campus. Both the President of Case Western Reserve University, Dr. Snyder, and the President of Tohoku University, Dr. Satomi and several other university leaders were in attendance at this ceremony. In addition, Mr. Shimomura, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology

(MEXT) in Japan sent us congratulatory remarks from Tokyo.

MEXT is now actively promoting the cooperation between Japanese universities and prestigious universities around the world as part of the "Top Global University Project" which is aimed at helping 10 Japanese universities become among the top 100 universities in the world by 2020. The research agreement between CWRU and Tohoku University is a part of this project.

Case Western Reserve University is a world famous university that has more than 15 Nobel Laureates affiliated with the school. In addition, Tohoku University boasts 5 Nobel Laureates associated with the University.

Over the past nearly two years, I have had the opportunity to visit colleges and universities within my jurisdiction (Michigan and Ohio) 43 times. During my visits, I've given



lectures, met with presidents and various campus leaders and have enjoyed exchanges with Japanese teachers and students of Japanese. My visit to Case Western Reserve University is likely to be my final university visit during my tenure here as Consul General of Japan in Detroit.

Vol. 312: JET Pre-departure Reception

On July 31st, I hosted a farewell reception for nearly 50 JET Program participants from my jurisdiction of Michigan and Ohio who were set to depart for Japan the following day. Since I came to Detroit nearly two years ago, I have hosted a total of four JET Program farewell and welcome receptions at my official residence. Regrettably, this was the last JET Program reception that I would be hosting as Consul General of Japan in Detroit.

Each time I host this farewell reception, I have the opportunity to see young Americans who naturally appear a bit nervous, but who are also very much looking forward to their new lives in Japan. I am always so impressed by their bright-eyed enthusiasm. I truly believe that their next 1-5 years living in Japan will be a precious experience for them which will no doubt change their lives in some way, shape or form. I, myself, lived in China and the United States during my mid-20's and believe that my experiences abroad at that age shaped my life just as these young Americans' experience with JET will shape theirs.

After departing from Detroit, the JET participants spend three days in Tokyo, from August 3rd-August 5th in order to attend an orientation program. I was so surprised to learn from a feature on NHK News that the younger brother of Taylor Anderson—a former JET Program participant who sadly lost her life during the Great East Japan Earthquake 4.5 years ago—was among the fresh crop of JET Program participants joining the Tokyo Orientation this year. I am so impressed that Taylor's brother will be living his big sister's dream as a JET Program participant.





To commemorate the 55th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Toyota City and Detroit City, chaperones and 16 members of Toyota City Junior Orchestra visited Michigan. (This mission was headed by Akiko Toyota, chairperson of the Toyota City International Exchange Association.) On August 6th, along with the Detroit Symphony Youth Orchestra, they performed at the concert hall of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO). Additionally, on the 8th, there was a joint concert with the Pioneer High School Symphony Orchestra at the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium.

Before that, I hosted a welcome reception at the official residence for the Toyota Youth Orchestra on August 4th. There were around 80 Japanese and American participants at the event, including Deputy Mayor McKinnon. I think it's great to have these young people, who are the leaders of the future to interact and communicate through music. I'm looking forward to seeing how much further the relationship between Toyota and Detroit develops 10, 20 years down the road. I am very optimistic for the next generation after seeing these young people.

On the 7th of August, I visited the office of the Deputy Mayor of Detroit to bid farewell. While there, in honor of her long-term contribution to the Toyota-Detroit student exchange program (a pillar of the sister-city relationship) I presented a commendation to Ms. Rose Love in the presence of the Deputy Mayor. This was my sixth Consul General commendation since coming to Detroit.





Recently, I received a very sudden relocation appointment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and learned that I would be leaving Detroit on August 13th for Tokyo and would start a new appointment as the Consul General of Japan in Shanghai on August 22nd. This news came with great regret as I truly expected to stay in Detroit for another year. I would like to once again express my great appreciation to the people of Michigan and Ohio for your strong support and cooperation over the past two years. I will always look back on my time as Consul General of Japan in Detroit with great fondness.

On August 7th, I hosted a farewell reception at my official residence which was attended by more than 220 people. I also had the opportunity to visit Governor Snyder's Detroit office on Monday, August 10th in order to bid him farewell.

This was my third time living in the United States, but my first experience living in the Midwest. Through my daily activities, I have understood deeply the importance of the strong relationship between Japan and the U.S. Midwest (including Michigan and Ohio) and I have seen with my own eyes the great contributions made by Japanese companies and Japanese residents to the local communities here. I truly enjoyed witnessing firsthand the revitalization of the City of Detroit and have understood more deeply the diversity and the self-reliant spirit of U.S. society. Furthermore, I have been convinced of the critical importance of the allied relations between the U.S. and Japan, which share the same basic values.

This will be my fifth time living in China (including study abroad) but it will be my first time living in Shanghai as during my other four stays I was living in Beijing. In my jurisdiction as Consul General of Japan in Shanghai, there are more than 62,000 Japanese residents and more than 20,000 Japanese companies. In addition, I heard that the Shanghai

Consulate issued 874,000 visas to local Chinese people last year—the highest number of Japanese visas issued at any Japanese foreign mission in the entire world! And the numbers have increased threefold this year when compared with the previous year. I am both excited and anxious about my new life in China. While there are many Japanese nationals living within my new jurisdiction as well as a great deal of Japanese investment, how to wisely manage and overcome political difficulties between Japan and China remains a challenge.

My successor as Consul General, Mr. Mitsuhiro Wada, is my former classmate from the Foreign Service. I truly hope that he will enjoy the same strong encouragement that I received here from the people of my jurisdiction. Michiganders and Ohioans, I would like to once again express my deepest gratitude to you for your continued support throughout my two years as Consul General of Japan in Detroit. I am leaving this great region with unforgettable and truly meaningful memories. Arigatou Gozaimashita!

