



## Greetings fellow SA Jet Alumni!

Wow! The year of the rabbit is certainly living up to its name and hopping away with us - I can't believe that it's already April and this is only the first newsletter of the year. My apologies for the late start to the newsletter year, but as one very wise person once said: "better late than never!" (Although I am sure the Japanese would thoroughly disagree!).

Unfortunately, the year of the rabbit will now also forever after be remembered for the catastrophic events that unfolded on 11<sup>th</sup> March in our beloved island of Japan. Now, more than three weeks after that fateful day, details are still emerging of just how devastating the 8.9 magnitude earthquake and the resultant tsunami actually were. For those of us who lived in the most affected areas - Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate - the tragedy has been even more personal and I pray that all of you have had at least some good news about the safety and wellbeing of many of your friends and colleagues living in those parts of Tohoku. For me, every new email or Facebook message confirming the safety of a loved one is another reason to rejoice and I continue to pray that those I have not yet heard from are also safe and sound.

Many friends in these areas are still waiting for relief supplies to arrive, have lost their homes and are living in shelters and queuing every day for food, kerosene and water. All of them without fail, however, are amazingly genki and stoic in their present condition, and I have every faith that it is this kind of attitude and resoluteness that will see the people of Tohoku rebuilding their lives and their cities again in the very near future.

While it is hard to always see the silver lining in events as catastrophic and seemingly senseless as this one, one of our members, Michelle Smith, mentioned at our JETAASA lunch recently that the earthquake has made many of us reconnect with our friends in Japan and breathe new life into our relationships with them. I think this is so true, and I for one, am so grateful to be in touch with so many of my good Japanese friends once again. It has also made me realise how important it is to have a support group of people here, who understand how important our connection with Japan is and that has made me even more grateful for JETAASA and the opportunity it gives us support each other during times like these.

I hope many more of you will join our events this year and also help us in our continuing fundraising efforts for Japan relief - this is the year when we can all give back as much to Japan as it has given to us.

*Nicky (jetaasa@yahoo.com)*

## JETAASA Lunch

JETAASA held its first official event of the year, when it hosted a lunch at Matsuya's Japanese Restaurant in Pretoria on 26<sup>th</sup> March. The lunch was a social event to encourage our members to interact with each other and also to have an opportunity to meet members of the Japanese community living in South Africa. After the devastating events of 11<sup>th</sup> March, however, the lunch also served as a much needed platform for those who attended to talk about Japan and how the earthquake and tsunami had affected them and their close friends and colleagues back in Japan.

The lunch was attended by several people from the Japanese Embassy in Pretoria as well as JETAASA members and their friends, and we were extremely pleased with the turnout of over 20 people, many of whom also helped our Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Relief fundraising effort by selling and buying raffle tickets. After the success of our first official get together for 2011, we look forward to many more over the course of the year.



## The 2010 JETAA International Meeting

The JETAA International Meeting was held in the beautiful city of Edinburgh, Scotland at the beginning of October last year. As well as a Japanese delegation from Clair and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the JETAA International Committee, the meeting was also attended by delegates from JETAA chapters from all over the world, including Jamaica, America, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Singapore and of course South Africa. JETAA Scotland, who hosted the conference, did a stellar job of not only ensuring the smooth running of the three day meeting itself, but also of showing all of the delegates the true meaning of Scottish hospitality.

The Consul General of Japan in Edinburgh, Masataka Tarahara, hosted a welcome dinner for the delegates at his residence (followed by a rousing solo performance of Susan Boyle's "I Dream a Dream"!), before JETAA Scotland introduced the group to some of Edinburgh's exciting nightlife. Clair also hosted a lavish reception, complete with traditional Scottish fair (and I can attest that haggis is indeed quite tasty), before we were encouraged to kick our heels up at a traditional celidh (dance) that had most of us breathless but exuberant by the end! Many of us also took the opportunity to do a little sightseeing on our own before and after the meeting with the general consensus being that Edinburgh is certainly an incredibly beautiful and fascinating city that begs to be revisited.

As well as providing a wonderful way to connect with other JETAA members, the meeting also gave us an invaluable chance to swap ideas and success stories and to come up with new strategies and plans for our chapters going forward.

One of the most discussed topics at the 2010 meeting, however, revolved around persistent rumours coming from Japan that the government was considering cancelling the JET Programme completely within the next couple of years. Representatives from Clair and MOFA, however, quashed the rumours, and assured us that the Japanese government – as yet – has no plans to cancel the programme. Due to the worsening Japanese economy, however, they have decided that budget cuts need to be made, and in terms of alumni activities, there will now be no Clair funding available for purely social events (As JETAASA currently does not receive any funding from Clair, this does not affect our activities).

Also, sadly, as a result of the budget cuts, the 2010 JETAA International meeting will be the last of its kind for the foreseeable future. This has been a major blow to JETAA International, as the meeting is greatly valued as a means of connecting with its various international chapters and re-energising delegates with new enthusiasm and new ideas for their chapters back home. However, JETAA International will continue to function as it always has and all of the delegates at the 2010 meeting committed themselves to continued support and communication between their chapters in the year to come. In other words, we will all continue to Ganbarre!

### Moved Recently?

If so, please update your details with Ryan Keet at the Japanese Embassy at ryan.keet@embjapan.co.za.



## JET Streams

The 2011 edition of JET Streams – the annual publication compiled by CLAIR that features interesting stories, essays and pictures from local chapter activities, as well as information from JETAA International – is now available. Check it out at this link <http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/former/jetstreams.html> and please consider contributing to the next edition.

## The next JETAASA Event will be...

... on 14<sup>th</sup> May at Yamato Japanese Restaurant in Illovo, Johannesburg at 12 pm. If you would like to join us (to eat GREAT Japanese food, drink too much sake, make new friends and reminisce about Japan) please RSVP to Nicky Furniss at [jetaasa@yahoo.com](mailto:jetaasa@yahoo.com) by 6<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

**Cape Town members**, please contact Jon Williams (our resident guru of Japan related gatherings in Cape Town) at [jonwilliamssensei@gmail.com](mailto:jonwilliamssensei@gmail.com) for news of the next Cape Town get together.

**Durban/Pietermaritzburg members:** feeling left out? We are still looking for a volunteer to co-ordinate activities in good old KZN, so if you are keen to be the liaison person for the odd lunch or dinner, please let me know and we can finally get some activities happening on the East coast.





## Join our Facebook Page!

To keep up to date with what's happening in JETAASA and to post your own comments and photos, join our Facebook page – just search for JETAASA the next time you are logged on.

## The Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Relief Raffle

As the horrific images of the earthquake and tsunami that hit the Tohoku region of Japan began to be shown around the world, many of us watched in disbelief; devastated by what was happening in a country that showed so many of us such unbelievable hospitality and kindness during our years living there. I know that many of you felt – as I did – that you had to do something to help and so JETAASA immediately sprung into action and started a Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Raffle to raise money to contribute to the relief efforts.

The raffle prize – a Garmin Nuvi 1200 GPS – was kindly donated by the TCB Group, and many of our members offered to take raffle sheets to sell to friends and family members. All of the sheets and the money raised were collected by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, and we were overwhelmed by the response. Special mention must go to Alan Gray, Hein de Vries, Stephanie Nel, Michelle Smith and Nuria Giralt for being our star raffle ticket sellers and bringing in a large portion of the money raised.

The draw was held on 4<sup>th</sup> April, when the lucky winner was announced as Claudio Rossi from Pretoria – congratulations Claudio!

The proceeds of the raffle were handed over to the Japanese Embassy on 5<sup>th</sup> April to be sent to aid the excellent work of the Japanese Red Cross. In the end, over 350 raffle were sold and the final amount of money raised was a wonderful R7,700, which we are truly thrilled about. Many of our members living overseas also generously donated directly to the Japanese Red Cross raising our contribution even higher – omedetou!

JETAASA plans to continue fundraising efforts throughout the year, to donate more money to the relief efforts. If you have any fundraising ideas or would like to get involved yourself, please drop me a mail at [jetaasa@yahoo.com](mailto:jetaasa@yahoo.com).



## Be a South African Senpai

In the next couple of weeks, Tokyo will announce which of the 2011 South African applicants have been accepted as JET participants. As we all know, receiving that congratulatory phone call is an amazing experience, but it is also one that is almost immediately followed by questions and worries, doubts and terrified anticipation. The months leading up to the JET departure can be harrowing – especially for members of the Japanese Embassy in Pretoria who are often inundated with email and telephone queries.

In order to ease the load on the embassy, and also to fully prepare the new JETs for their time in Japan, we would like to create a SA Sempai system where each new JET is paired with a JET Alumni (preferably in their area) who can take them out for coffee, take their phone calls, answer their questions and calm their nerves. This kind of insider advice is obviously invaluable to the new JET participants, plus it gives us a chance to put all that hard earned Japan experience to good use!

If you would be interested in being a SA Sempai this year, please send me your name and the area you live in to [jetaasa@yahoo.com](mailto:jetaasa@yahoo.com) as soon as possible. Arigatou gozaimasu in advance!



# Life after the B.O.E

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR, 2002-04)



To read more of David Namisato's amusing Jet-related cartoons, visit his website at [www.lifeaftertheboe.com](http://www.lifeaftertheboe.com)

## Japanese Events in May

Classical music lovers can catch Japanese Conductor Yasuo Shinozaki in May at the Cape Town City Hall, where he will be conducting the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. On 19<sup>th</sup> May (20h00) he will be accompanied by piano soloist Claire Huangci, and by Jonathan Oshry on 26<sup>th</sup> May (20h00). The concerts will include pieces from Chopin, Sibelius and Holst, among others. For more information, contact Ursula Badminton on 021 410 9809.



## Letters of Love

Four schools in South Africa – Tyger Valley College, Leicester Road School, Laerskool Muldersdrif and Queenstown Academy – sent over 250 letters of support to the Japanese Embassy in Pretoria to be distributed to people in Tohoku affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami. Current South African Jet, Kimashnee Poonsamy, who is working at Oide Junior High School in Sendai city, will take the letters back with her when she returns to Japan on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. She plans to share the letters with other South African Jets working in the city who will display them in their schools to show their students just how much people around the world and here in South Africa are thinking of them and sending their support.