



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

春 Spring
2017

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Skype Lessons Across the Pacific

By Tanya Lang and Sean Williams

For nearly 40 years, the communities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan have enjoyed a close relationship as sister cities.

As part of that relationship, for the past five years, Saroma Elementary and Sherrod Elementary have developed a connection that centers on online communication.

From November to March, the fifth grade classes communicate via Skype. The students introduce themselves, play games, share presentations on cultural events, and (for the Saroma students) work on language skills.

In response to a fun presentation by the Saroma students, Room 203 at Sherrod celebrated Setsubun on February 3rd.

Setsubun (節分) is the day before the beginning of spring in Japan. It includes a special ritual called mamemaki (豆撒き), which is meant to drive away the bad and welcome the good.

Sherrod students colored their own Oni masks, snacked on roasted soybeans, and did a little chanting of the traditional good luck phrase given to us by Swick Sensei.

During the February 8th Skype session, the Sherrod students presented information about Groundhog Day to the Saroma class. Students showed posters and performed two brief skits showing what would happen if

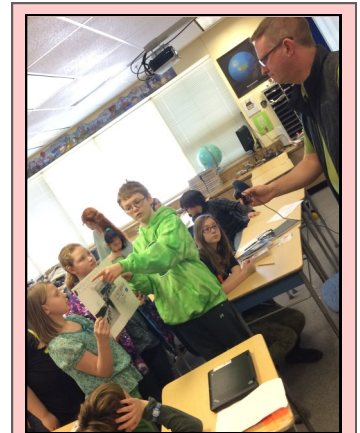
a ground hog was popping out of its hole.

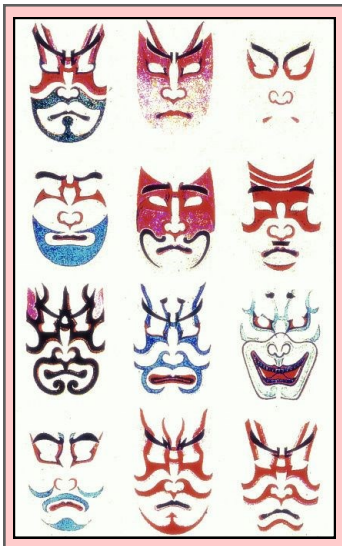
Everyone acknowledged the limited meteorological abilities of North American rodents, and the impossibility of spring coming to either Palmer or Saroma in February.

Also during this session, a few Sherrod students presented their progress of jump-roping skills. Most students are excited and motivated to continue practicing the skills listed on the skill list from the Japanese physical education program. Double jumps and triple jumps are still a challenge, as are the crossed-hands challenge.

[During this time, Mr. Williams evidently pronounced a word he thought was the name of a jumping style, but was actually a bad word in Japanese. Sigh.]

Thanks again to Swick Sensei and Hayazaki Sensei of Palmer High for helping with translations.





Calendar of Events

Ikebana 101 (Flower Arrangement)

Lecture and flower arrangement demonstration. Saturday, April 22, 2017 from 2 - 4pm at UAA's Montgomery Dickson Japan Center (MDJC) Tea Room in the Social Sciences Building. \$20 Public, \$10 Students/Japan Alaska Association (JAA) Members. Sponsored by UAA's MDJC.

Kotatsu Series

Join the *Kotatsu Series* – discussions that highlight personal legacies and stories of the people who make Alaska's Japanese community unique. Sunday, April 23, 2017 from 1 - 2pm at UAA's MDJC Tea Room in the Social Sciences Building. FREE. Sponsored by JAA and UAA's MDJC.

Senshi Con - Save the Date
Senshi Con is an annual convention that caters to enthusiasts of Asian culture, animation, graphic novels, and gaming held in Anchorage, AK. It is Alaska's largest event where you can share your fandoms, make new friends, and enjoy costumes, live events, panels, contests, and shop your favorite artists and vendors.

The 2017 Senshi Con will be held Sept 30th - Oct 1st at the Denai'na Civic and Convention Center. <http://senshicon.org/>

Cinema Kabuki

On January 21st, more than 150 locals attended Cinema Kabuki at the Valley Cinema in Wasilla.

Kabuki is a classical Japanese dance-drama and Cinema Kabuki offers the experience of a full-scale performance on the big screen with English subtitles.

Thank you to all the sponsors: Japan Foundation, LA; Consular Office of Japan, Anchorage; The Valley Cinema; Shochiku Co. Ltd.; AK Association of Teachers of Japanese; and Palmer Saroma Kai.



By Heather Kelley

Palmer Sister School Delegation

Eight Palmer students and two chaperones will visit and study in Saroma this June.

PJMS Delegation (from left to right): Cal Tipton, Derrick Hallman, Ms. Cori Verna, Cheyanne Frantzich (back), and Zoe Patton-Meyer (front).

PHS Delegation (from left to right): Wade Keyes, Brianna Jensen, Eva Venema, Hailee Godfrey, and Assistant Principal Garth Morgan.

Congratulations to each of you; we know you'll do a wonderful job representing Palmer and look forward to your stories.



By Heather Kelley

Language Corner

Let's Talk About Kabuki

Kabuki 歌舞伎 ~ Japanese traditional theatre that combines music, drama, and dance.

Kabukiza 歌舞伎座 ~ The most famous Kabuki theater in Japan. Located in Ginza, Tokyo, it first opened in 1889.

“Kabuki! Yooo! 歌舞伎よおー!” ~ An enthusiastic shout from the audience, actors, or musicians during the play.



By Carla Swick

14th Annual Alaska Nihongo Competition

By Carla Swick

Each year on the last Saturday of March, Japanese language students from all over Alaska gather at UAA to celebrate and demonstrate their new language skills. The Alaska Teachers of Japanese (AKATJ) and the Consular Office of Japan, Anchorage sponsor this competition which is open to ages

kindergarten through university level. Students compete in six different categories: speech, skit, song, poetry, original poetry, and original haiku. It's also a day to get a taste of Japanese culture and experience it firsthand with the Alaska Japanese community. Taiko drumming, karate, kendo, flower

arrangement, calligraphy, origami – there is something for everyone. We are so proud of all our Palmer High School and Colony High School students who represented the Matsu Borough School District so well. Isshoukenmei ganbarimashita – いっしょうけんめいがんばりました。



Jane Lee - UAA
1st Place Song (Saroma Award)
"Red Sweet Pea"



River Parpana, Hailee Godfrey, Zaiyd Puryear, and Tobin Hushower - PHS
Singing "Letter" ながみ



Tanaka Karate Demonstration



Team Palmer High - Alaska Nihongo Contest

Alaska Nihongo Competition Photos



Catrina Cartè, Jessee Myree, Kaitlyn Gilley, & Kate Kelsch - CHS
 1st Place - Group Song
 "Always With Me" いつも何度でも



Aoi Tsuzuki - CHS
 1st Place - Open Speech
 "Make it Shine" ヒカレ



Paris Pargana - PHS
 1st Place - Poster/Artwork
 "Salmon & Koi" 鮭と鯉



Tomodachi Daiko Performance



Sophia Dick - PHS
 3rd Place - Aurora Speech
 "Ocean" うみ



Aoi Tsuzuki, Sarah Clark, Yumeko Ziegler, Kate Kelsch, & Jie Robles - CHS
 (Not pictured: Veronica Podunovich & Amorah Lynn Lopez)
 3rd Place - Mixed Skit
 "Ten Years Later" 10年後

Update from Saroma

By Brenna Kennicker

While the Palmer schools are preparing for the end of the school year next month, in Saroma things are just getting started! In Japan, the fiscal and academic year begins on April 1st.

This year in Saroma, the 2016-2017 school year ended on March 24th, leaving us with just a week for teachers and staff to prepare for the next year! However, school did not officially begin until April 6th.

On the first day of school, there is an event called “入学式” (nyuu gaku shiki). This is the official entrance ceremony for all incoming first-year students. It serves as a formal welcome for those students into the school community and

introduces the new students to the community at large.

For elementary schools, the new first graders are escorted into the school gym by the 6th grade students.

At the junior high school, the students enter the gym one by one behind their homeroom teacher. Then, the national anthem and school songs are sung and the principal gives a welcome speech. The PTA president and other community members, like the deputy mayor and superintendent, give speeches as well. Official roll call for the incoming class is done, with each student standing when his or her name is called. A student representative, usually the student council

president, gives a short welcome speech, and then a representative of the first year students gives a short speech, too.

This year at Saroma Junior High School, the 2nd and 3rd year students performed a welcome song for the new 1st year students. The junior high school entrance ceremony finished with staff introductions. All the staff members lined up and were formally introduced to the incoming students. After the ceremony, commemorative photos were taken and the PTA held an informational meeting for parents.

I'm looking forward to another wonderful school year here in Saroma!



Brenna Kennicker is from Palmer, AK and is currently working in Saroma as an Assistant English Teacher.



Students receive welcome gifts from the PTA. Photo by Mr. Kobayashi.



Wakasa Elementary Entrance Ceremony - Photos by Mr. Kobayashi, City of Saroma Photographer

Cultural Corner



Shibai Ukie
by
Masanobu Okumura

A depiction of the Kabuki theater Ichimura-za in its early days.



Shinto Shrine - Saroma, Japan

The Sister City Program, established in 1980, works together with the Sister Schools Program in the cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan, to promote cultural enlightenment, student and teacher exchanges, international good will and lasting relationships between cities.

This newsletter is published by Palmer Saroma Kai, an organization that provides encouragement and support for the relationship between the Sister Cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan.



To submit articles, photos, or items of public interest, please contact Carla Swick at carlaswick2010@gmail.com or by phone 907-775-0807.

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