



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

春 Spring

2016

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I AM TOHOKU TOMO

By Heather Kelley

On February 29th a group of students from Wasilla High School and friends of the Palmer and Saroma Sister City program attended a showing of "Tohoku Tomo".

Tohoku is the area of Japan that was devastated by a massive tsunami on March 11, 2011.

Tomo is short for Tomodachi, which means friend.

The tsunami tragedy was devastating to Tohoku, Japan and the entire world. People lost loved ones, their homes, and even their way of life. Even now, many years later, the people of Japan and volunteers from around the world are still working to put these communities back together.

Many organizations and groups have helped with recovery efforts and "Tohoku Tomo" focuses on twelve smaller grassroots level efforts.

As stated on the "Tohoku Tomo" website, "Many of these people dropped what they were doing and dedicated themselves to Japan's recovery. Many of them even took it upon themselves to establish non-profit organizations aimed at connecting with and rebuilding Tohoku and its communities. At the core of all of these organizations are individuals. Many of these groups were founded by members of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET Program). What started as a love of Japan through teaching blossomed

into a true friendship and commitment to the Tohoku region. These founders and many other volunteers have truly become friends of Tohoku."

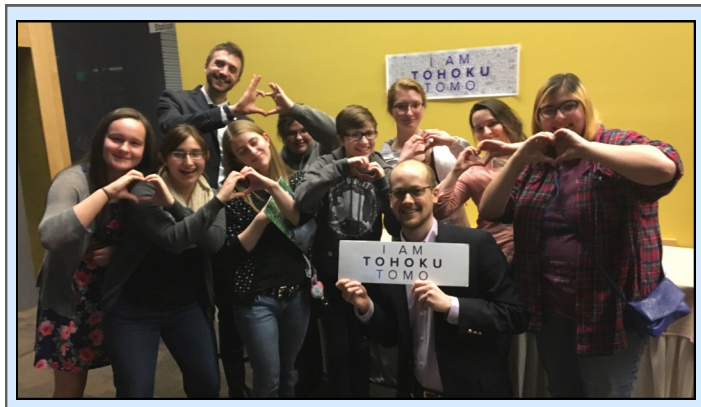
After seeing the movie, Wasilla High School Japanese language teacher, Carla Swick said, "I remember seeing the devastating images of Japan's earthquake & tsunami on TV March 11, 2011 and thinking they were clips from a Hollywood movie. While my friends in Saroma were safe, that wasn't the case for the people living in Tohoku-- the northern part of Honshu. Tonight's viewing of the film 'Tohoku Tomo' reminded me that volunteering at our own level or capacity does make a difference and 'the best way to not feel helpless is to get up and do something.' It was an honor to learn more about Monty Dickson, a UAA alumni & JET teacher who perished in the tsunami but lived life to the fullest every day. As he would say: 楽しそう!"



JETAA Alaska hosted the showing of "Tohoku Tomo" in Anchorage at the BP Energy Center.

If you would like to learn more about the movie visit: <http://tohokutomo.com/about/>

To learn more about Monty Dickson, visit: https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/mdc/about_monty.cfm.





Calendar of Events

Machetanz Arts Festival

The Machetanz Arts Festival is held each year at Mat-Su College in Palmer, Alaska each year in honor of Fred and Sara Machetanz.

This year's event runs from Tuesday May 31 thru Sunday June 5 and includes a film festival and many art workshops including Raku Firing and Zentangle®.

For more information and to register, check out [facebook.com/Machetanz](https://www.facebook.com/Machetanz).

Palmer Student & Teacher Delegation to Visit Saroma

Eight students and two chaperons, from Palmer Schools, will be visiting Saroma in June 2016. While there, they will live with host families, attend school, and participate in many cultural events. See page 3 for more information.

Senshi Con

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 2016 Senshi Con will be held Oct. 1st - 2nd at the Egan Center and Hilton Hotel. <http://senshicon.org/>

Tea Ceremony & Palmer Saroma Kai Meeting

On January 16th, 2016 Palmer Saroma Kai (PSK) hosted a Japanese Tea Ceremony Demonstration as part of its annual meeting.

Yuki Moore & Dr. Hiroko Harada, from the Montgomery Dickson Center for Japanese Language and Culture, educated valley residents on the traditions of the Japanese tea ceremony, provided a demonstration of tea preparation, and served samples of matcha (抹茶), powdered green tea.

Participants learned how to properly hold and drink their tea and enjoyed a Japanese rice cake called mochi.

Many thanks to Yuki and Hiroko for the demonstration and to the Palmer United Protestant Church for, once again, allowing us to use their space for a Sister City event.

The brief annual meeting portion of the event included reports from the board president

and treasurer, as well as board member elections.

Three existing board members were reelected: Carla Swick, Lee Hendrikson, and Tanya Lang.

The PSK board currently has an open seat. If you're interested in applying to be a board member, please contact PSK president, Carla Swick at 775-0807.

PSK provides encouragement and support for the relationship between the Sister Cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan.

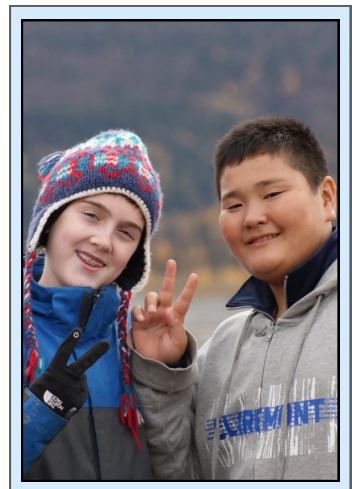


Language Corner

By Carla Swick

The Word Friend: Let's Break It Down

Tomodachi	ともだち	Friend, Companion
Yuujin	ゆうじん	Friend (more formal)
Shiriai	しりあい	Acquaintance
Shinyuu	しんゆう	Close Friend
Doukyuusei	どうきゅうせい	Classmates
Osananajimi	おさななじみ	Friend Since Childhood
Nakama	なかま	Mates, Group of Friends



Palmer Student Delegation Selected

By Palmer Students and Chaperones

Palmer students and chaperones have been selected to represent the City of Palmer, Palmer Junior Middle School, and Palmer High School this June in Saroma. They will each receive a scholarship from the City of Palmer to put towards their trip and Palmer Saroma Kai is going to donate money to help pay for a couple of group meals.

Connor Monroe - 10th Grade
Well, I love to cook. It has been one of my passions ever since I was a child. I have always loved Asian food, and I would love to learn how to make traditional Japanese food in Saroma. I am so interested in the culture, and I just can't wait to go on this trip! Going over to Japan while representing Alaska will be amazing, because I can share traditions that we have here and they can show me traditions to bring home to share with my family and friends. It's an honor to be part of this program.

Tabitha Villanueva - 12th Grade
My name is Tabitha Villanueva and I love fashion! I would like to learn more about the history of Japan and see the old buildings and architecture. Also, I am very excited to meet my host family and experience the culture firsthand.

Hannah Villanueva - 10th Grade
My name is Hannah Villanueva. I look forward to experiencing such a different culture. I love trying new things and food. I'm definitely excited to meet my host family.

Haley Hershman - 11th Grade
I am shy at first, but outgoing and willing to try new things. I am looking forward to seeing all the great people I've met over the past two years. I can't wait to try new foods, sports, and learn more about the culture and language.

Tucker Christiansen - 7th Grade
I am looking forward to going to Saroma because I like traveling and meeting new people. I feel like I could learn a lot about the Japanese culture. I am a kind and adventurous person who likes to try new things.

I think it would be really fun to see Lake Saroma, and I would love to try the sushi because I love sushi!

Lillian Bryan - 7th Grade
My name is Lily Brian and I am a 7th grader at PJMS. I live with my Mom, Dad, Grandma, and older brother. I enjoy dancing, reading, and spending time with family and friends. I am really excited to see a new country and learn about the culture.

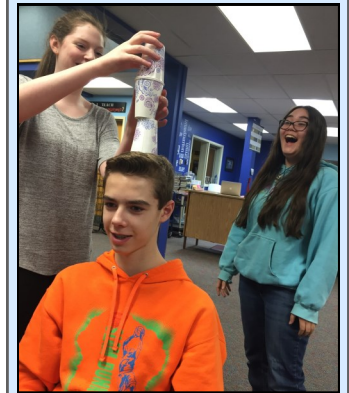
Anesia Pavilla - 7th Grade
My name is Anesia Pavilla, and I was born and raised in Alaska. I am 13 years old and live in Palmer. I look forward to meeting new people and hope to get over my fear of speaking in front of large groups. I am excited to see Japan.

Anika McDonough - 7th Grade
My name is Anika McDonough. I'm an artist in training and I love all types of anime. I look forward to seeing a new country for the first time and travel-

ling out of the US; plus, Japan is the heart of anime. I believe that going to Japan will be an excellent learning experience for me and my peers.

Liz Crowley - PJMS Chaperone
My name is Elizabeth Crowley and I was born and raised in Alaska. I'm 44 years old and I live in Palmer with my husband Dane. My 17 year old daughter Katie is currently in Bolivia on a foreign exchange. I'm looking forward to seeing Saroma, meeting new people, and learning about the culture.

Kim Akers - PHS Chaperone
My name is Kim Akers and I am the Administrative Secretary at Palmer High School. I am so lucky to return and see all of the wonderful people of Saroma. I cherish the friendships that I have developed over the last few years.



Alaska Nihongo Competition

By Carla Swick

The 13th Annual Alaska Nihongo Contest was held on March 26 at the University of Alaska Anchorage. This event sponsored by the Alaska Association of Teachers of Japanese (AKATJ) and the Consular Office of Japan, Anchorage is much more than a contest. It is a day-long celebration of cultural events and language. This unique competition encourages all students studying Japanese in Alaska -- from kindergarten level through university level -- to have fun expressing themselves in Japanese. It also brings the Alaskan Japanese community together as a whole.

Participants and viewers alike are able to watch various demonstrations and performances and try traditional Japanese arts. This year's cultural corner included: Tomodachi Daiko -- taiko drumming, shodou - Japanese calligraphy, ikebana - Japanese flower arrangement, origami - the art of paper folding, and kendo - a Japanese martial art that uses bamboo swords.

Throughout the day, students competed in six Japanese language categories: Speech - Poetry - Original Poetry - Original Haiku - Group Skit - and Song. Every year the City of Saroma graciously donates the 1st place trophy for the popular Song Division. The 2016 Saroma Award went to UAF student Eileen Ward, who beautifully sang the song, *The World Has Fallen in Love*.

Wasilla High School and Colony High School students represented the Valley well. WHS's Japanese 3 & 4 class was thrilled with its 1st place win in the Mixed Skit category. Their play, *Bedtime Stories with Grandma*, wove together various scenes from the popular story of Peter Pan. "From script writing, translating, learning lines, building props, and figuring out stage movement -- it was so rewarding to see our hard work successfully come together," said senior Kristina Cloud. Warrior Amanda Vue won 2nd place in Original Haiku and her brother Eric Vue won 2nd place Elementary Speech and 3rd place Auro-

ra Speech with his speech, *Opportunities*. Finally, Justin Hanson was awarded 3rd place Elementary Speech for his speech called, *My Japanese Studies*. In total, the Wasilla Warriors brought home 5 state trophies! Colony High School's Emily Maxwell took 1st place in the Aurora Speech and 2nd place in Beginning Speech with her speech, *My Teacher is a Martian*. Yes, this was about her Japanese teacher -- Mr. Shunji Ninoyu. She will have a chance to represent Alaska at the National Aurora Speech Contest in Los Angeles at the end of May. CHS students Allyson Chavez, Jessee Myree, and Kate Kelsch also won the Best Group Award with their rendition of the song, *Sakura*. And finally Mat-Su College student, Sharon Hunter, won 2nd place in the Poster Competition.

We are so proud of our Valley students who gave their all in the Alaska Nihongo Contest at UAA! みんな、一生懸命がんばりました。皆さん、ごころさまでした。



Allyson Chavez, Jessee Myree, and Kate Kelsch of CHS won the Best Group Song Award

WHS Japanese 3&4 class
1st Place Mixed Skit - Middle/High School/College
おばあちゃんと一緒にやすみなさい
Bedtime Stories with Grandma

Amanda Vue - WHS
2nd Place Original Haiku
Eric Vue - WHS
2nd Place Elem. Speech & 3rd Place Aurora Speech

Update from Saroma

By Brenna Kennicker

Hello everyone! It has been over a year since I arrived in Saroma to succeed Sean as the ALT in residence here, and a lot has happened!

It was still winter when I arrived in early 2015, and we had several blizzards dumping more than a foot of snow each time in town. It seemed like every weekend was spent shoveling snow!

I joined the local broomball league (for those who don't know, broomball is like floor hockey on ice) and climbed Mt. Horoiwa on snowshoes with Yoshie Holland.

In May, I participated in a clean-up of Lake Saroma, and in June worked one of the aide stations for the Lake Saroma 100k Ultra Marathon.

Fall 2015 brought more unusual weather, with Saroma experi-

encing a typhoon for the first time in several years. Almost 90cm of rain fell in a 48hr period and parts of Saroma experienced some flooding, but everyone was OK.

This winter was warm and there was a lot of concern about whether or not the town would be able to open up the local ski area, which the school uses during Jan - Feb for ski classes. Luckily, a storm dropped over 30cm of snow.

The school year in Saroma ended in March, so all of the graduation ceremonies occurred mid month. Unlike American graduation ceremonies, which can be very loud and high energy, Japanese graduation ceremonies are very solemn, quiet affairs.

Students are called one at a time to receive a certificate from the principal. Then speeches are given by the

school principal, the head of the PTA, and other important guests.

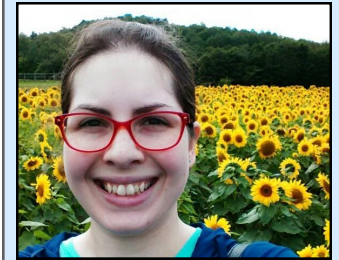
The student body president and a member of the graduating class each give a message and advice to their fellow students.

The ceremony finishes with the student body and graduating class performing songs. By the end of the ceremony most of the students will be crying.

After the ceremony there is time for students to meet outside and socialize or take photos with friends and family.

I've really enjoyed my first year in Saroma and I look forward to seeing everyone who is planning on making a trip to Saroma this coming year.

Saroma students are excited to meet this year's Palmer student group in June.



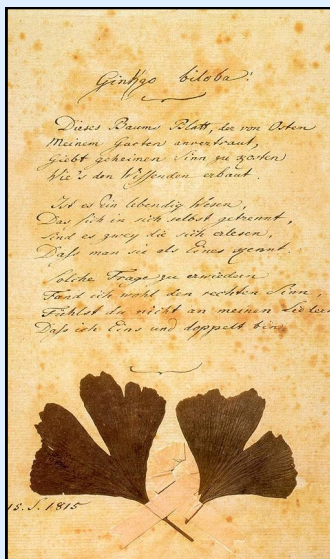
Brenna Kennicker



Saroma Graduation photos by Mr. Kobayashi, City of Saroma Photographer



Lake Saroma 100k Ultra Marathon photos by Mr. Kobayashi, City of Saroma Photographer



This leaf from a tree in the East,
Has been given to my garden.
It reveals a certain secret,
Which pleases me and thoughtful people.

Is it one living being,
Which has separated in itself?
Or are these two, who chose
To be recognized as one?

Answering this kind of question,
Haven't I found the proper meaning,
Don't you feel in my songs,
That I'm one and double?

“Ginkgo biloba”
by
Johann Wolfgang
von Goethe

Montgomery Dickson Center for Japanese Language & Culture

The Montgomery Dickson Center for Japanese Language and Culture was established to commemorate Montgomery "Monty" Dickson, who perished in the March 11, 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. After graduating from UAA in May 2009 with a B.A. in Japanese, Monty participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program and taught English in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, Japan. Monty cherished Japanese culture, and it was his dream to be a bridge over the Pacific Ocean to connect his homeland and Japan. On the morning of March 11, Monty translated words by an internationally known Japanese author, Ryotaro Shiba, into English, "There's nothing as beautiful as dedicating one's life for a cause."

The mission of the Montgomery Dickson Center is to expand the instruction, appreciation, and enjoyment of Japanese language and culture, engage in public outreach, enhance existing and future international exchange activities with Japan, and serve the University of Alaska and the State of Alaska as a resource with respect to Japanese bilateral relations and understanding.

The Center's three main objectives are:

to encourage, complement, and expand Japanese Language instruction within UAA and throughout the State of Alaska,

to provide opportunities for Alaskans to experience, appreciate, understand, and enjoy high-quality, significant, and culturally meaningful Japanese programs and events, and

to serve as a locus within the university for facilitating student and faculty exchanges, programmatic collaborations, and enhanced cooperation between Alaska and Japan.

Check out the website at www.uaa.alaska.edu/mdc/ and please consider making a donation to support this worthy effort.



Monty Dickson - May 2009



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.

Palmer Saroma Kai
1150 S Colony Way, PMB 361
Palmer, AK 99645