



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

春 Spring
2015

Inside this issue:

Saroma's New Assistant English Teacher (cont...)	2
Language Corner	2
Palmer Saroma Kai Updates	2
Calendar of Events	2
35th Anniversary Celebration Delegation	3
World Peace - One Heart At A Time	4
Palmer Student & Teacher Delegation Selected	5
Cultural Corner	5

Saroma's New Assistant English Teacher

By Brenna Kennicker

My name is Brenna Kennicker and I am the new Assistant English Teacher (AET) for Saroma town.

A little about me, I'm a Wasilla High School graduate. I went to UAF and majored in Japanese studies. In 2007, I spent a semester living and studying in Nagoya, Japan. After graduating college in 2010, I have been working as a substitute teacher for the Matanuska Susitna Borough School District.

In June of last year, I was able to join the Wasilla High delegation lead by Carla Swick on a three-week trip around Japan, culminating in a ten day home stay in Fukui Prefecture. This is my first time ever in Hokkaido, and I am excited to experience all the wonderful things this island has to offer.

By the time you read this, I will have been in Saroma two months, and even though that is a very short amount of time, I

feel very comfortable living here. The citizens are very welcoming and friendly. Everyone in town is excited about the 35th anniversary of the Sister City relationship in July.

Though I have lived in Japan before, there were things about Saroma which really surprised me.

First and foremost, the amount of snow! This has been an unusual year for Saroma, and Hokkaido in regards to weather. Nearly every week since my arrival on January 17th, there has been a blizzard during which at least 8 inches of snow has fallen. While I was unable to find definitive numbers, I would guess that 6-8 feet of snow has fallen this winter. My yard is one of the many dumping areas for the local plows, and the mountain is so high I can't see my neighbor's house! I'm looking forward to when all the snow melts, so I can see what the town really looks like! We



had a warm spell a few weekends ago, and I was surprised to discover that the side roads have sidewalks! What else will I discover once the snow is gone?

The other thing which has surprised me more that I thought is driving on the other side of the road, which is easier (and in some ways) harder than I expected. The cars themselves are the complete opposite of the

Continued on Page 2...



Brenna Kennicker on Mt. Horoiwa with a view of Lake Saroma.



Saroma's New Assistant English Teacher (Cont. from Page 1)

cars in the U.S. Even after driving here for the last couple of months, I still occasionally turn on my windshield wipers when I mean to turn on the turn signal. Driving itself has been much easier than I thought; it's amazing how your brain can adjust so quickly to something so different from the norm.

I've also been getting used to the wildlife here in Saroma. While I no longer have to worry about my summer vegetable garden being razed by hungry

moose or having curious black bears investigating my barbecue grill, Saroma has its own unique wildlife encounters. Crows are very common in Saroma. In the evenings, they gather in large flocks and fly around town. The sight of so many birds in the sky at once is a unique sight, and also a little ominous. I've been awoken a few times in the middle of the night by strange noises, only to find out I was hearing the yips and howls of foxes, another animal common in the area.



I look forward to being able to share my experiences in Saroma with all of you through this newsletter and look forward to the many wonderful adventures I am sure to have while living here.

よろしくおねがいします！

Calendar of Events

Palmer Student & Teacher Delegation to Visit Saroma

Seven students and two teachers, from Palmer Schools, will be visiting Saroma in June 2014. While there, they will live with host families, attend school, and participate in many cultural events. See page 5 for more information.

Sister City 35th Anniversary Celebration

This year marks the 35th year of the Sister City relationship between Palmer and Saroma. In July, more than 20 guests from Saroma will be visiting Palmer for one week.

Please join the celebration by attending one or more of the following community events:

Friday, July 10th

Taiko Drummers - Friday Fling

Downtown Palmer
11:30 am & 12:30pm

Two performances are scheduled; check the Friday Fling schedule for time changes.

Sunday, July 12th

Bilingual Worship Service

Palmer United Protestant Church (Church of 1000 Trees)
713 S Denali St, Palmer
Starts at 11 am

Wednesday, July 15th

Community Potluck Picnic

Please bring a dish to share and come meet our special guests.
Matanuska River Park, Palmer
6-8 pm

Palmer Saroma Kai Updates

By Heather Kelley

Palmer Saroma Kai (PSK) hosted its annual meeting on January 10th. Guests were able to try out origami and kakizome (first calligraphy of the New Year) and three existing board members were reelected: Shunji Ninoyu, Heather Kelley, and Mike Chmielewski.

At the February PSK board meeting, the following officers were unanimously reelected:

President	Carla Swick
Vice-President	Shunji Ninoyu
Secretary	Lee Henrikson
Treasurer	Tanya Lang

In February, PSK became a 501(c)(3) which means that donors can now deduct contributions.

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



First Calligraphy of the New Year

Language Corner - Lets Talk About Snow

By Brenna Kennicker

Boufuuetsu	ぼうふうせつ	Blizzard
Fubuki	ふぶき	Snow storm
Yukikaki	ゆきかき	Snow shoveling
Nadare	なだれ	Avalanche
Samui	さむい	Cold
Yuki	ゆき	Snow
Jousetsusha	じょうせつしゃ	Snow plow



35th Anniversary Celebration Delegation

By Heather Kelley and members of the Saroma Delegation

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between the cities of Palmer and Saroma.

In July, more than twenty of our Saroma friends will be visiting Palmer to celebrate this valued friendship.

Here is some information about our distinguished guests:

Co-founder of the Sister City relationship, **Mr. Mutsuhiro Ishiguro**. He and Palmer resident Edward Holmes helped start the Sister City relationship in 1980. He has visited Palmer before and looks forward to learning more about Palmer culture and lifestyle.

The Mayor of Saroma, **Mr. Akio Kawane**, and his wife, **Ms. Michiko Kawane**. This will be her first visit to Palmer and his second. They both look forward to meeting Palmer citizens and developing our friendship for the future.

Saroma Superintendent of Schools, **Mr. Kenichi Kagawa**. He has visited Palmer before and is looking forward to celebrating the sister school exchanges and the assistant language teacher program.

President of Saroma Council, **Mr. Osamu Kagaya**. This will be his first visit to Palmer, he would like to visit Matanuska Glacier.

Principal of Saroma High School, **Mr. Hideki Nakagawa**. This will be his first visit to Palmer. He is excited to learn more about Palmer and its schools.

Principal of Saroma Jr High, **Mr. Katsuhito Nomura**. This will be his first visit to Palmer. He also looks forward to learning more about Palmer and its schools.

President of Saroma Sister City Committee, **Mr. Jiro Hori**, and his wife **Ms. Masako Hori**. Both have visited Palmer in the past and they are looking forward to seeing old friends and celebrating our friendship.

Sister City Committee Members, **Mr. Yukitaka Omote** and his wife **Ms. Emi Omote**. Both have visited Palmer in the past and they are looking forward to seeing old friends. Mr Omote is also looking forward to fishing and Ms. Omote is excited to eat Alaskan cuisine.

Sister City Committee Member, **Mr. Eiji Omote**. He has family members who have visited Palmer before and is excited to see nature in and around Palmer and go fishing.

Sister City Committee Member, **Mr. Tetsuya Tanigawa**. This is his first visit to Palmer and he looks forward to going fishing.

Sister City Committee Member, **Mr. Akifumi Otani**. He has visited Palmer before and is looking forward to visiting with friends.

Sister City Committee Member, **Ms. Ryoko Abe**. She has visited Palmer in the past and is looking forward to seeing a glacier on this trip.

Sister City Committee Member, **Ms. Mariko Ono**. This is her first visit to Palmer and she would like to see local facilities that help those in need.

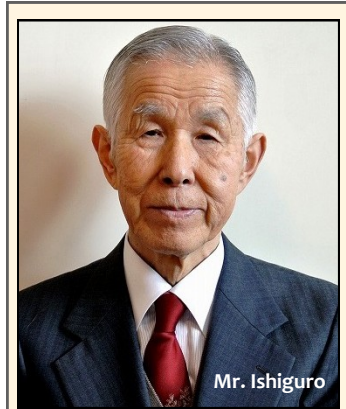
Sister City Committee Member, **Ms. Hitomi Ozaki**. She has visited Palmer before and is looking forward to seeing old friends and learning more about how the community helps low income families.

Saroma Council Member, **Ms. Mami Mita**. This is her first visit to Palmer. She looks forward to making new friends and learning more about industry and education in Palmer.

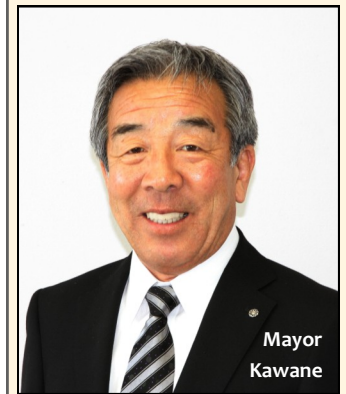
Saroma Council Member, **Ms. Sanae Tadaki**. This will be her first visit to Palmer and she is looking forward to learning more about the Sister City relationship.

Saroma City staff, **Mr. Harutomo Takeda**. He has visited Palmer before and is looking forward to seeing Hatcher Pass.

Saroma City staff and Sister City Coordinator extraordinaire, **Ms. Yuko Hirouchi**. She has visited Palmer many times and wants to help Palmer and Saroma citizens continue this wonderful program.



Mr. Ishiguro



Mayor Kawane



Ms. Kawane



Mr. Kagawa



Mr. Kagaya



Mr. Nakagawa



Mr. Nomura



Mr. Hori



Ms. Hori

World Peace – One Heart At A Time

By Linda Combs

My last night in Saroma, during our visit with the Palmer delegation for the 30th Anniversary Celebration, I was packing while my mind raced through all of the wonderful experiences of the previous week. “How am I ever going to be able to share all of this?”, I wondered.

I kept thinking about the Sister Cities International mission, “To promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.”

The officials of Palmer and Saroma have built a tremendous bridge between our two communities over the past 35 years, forged with close personal relationships. Many of the people I met in Saroma have traveled to Alaska to enjoy the sights and hospitality of the Matanuska Valley. It was amazing to learn of all of these relationships, many of them formed through the efforts of various individuals in both communities.

As I was completing my packing I heard the doorbell ring and my hostess rushing to admit whoever was there. Then I heard her calling to me from the bottom of the stairs. As I descended I wondered if perhaps her daughter and son-in-law had come to say goodbye. So I was very surprised when she presented me to a pleasant looking older woman who stood just inside the outer door. Through a combination of broken English and hand gestures, the visitor introduced herself and stated that she had felt compelled to come after reading about the

visit by Palmer’s delegation to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Sister City relationship. She indicated that she had read Mayor Combs’ speech in the local newspaper and that it had affected her very much. She placed her hand over her heart and repeated several times, “I wish for World Peace too.” Then she presented me with a gift, a book entitled “A Path to World Peace” written in both English and Japanese. I was overwhelmed, but managed to say several thank you’s in Japanese, bowing lower and lower each time. Then I raced up the stairs and hurried back down with my very last City of Palmer lapel pin to present to her.

Unable to communicate easily with my hosts, I waited until the next morning to have a translator help with my questions regarding the identity of this lovely woman. Surprising me, my hostess explained that she did not really know the individual but thought perhaps she was a worker at the local senior home and not a neighbor or family friend as I had expected.

During the next couple of days I was able to piece together a little more information and became aware of the utter uniqueness of the gesture.

This woman, by culture, had to overcome her natural inclinations just to be able to present herself on the door step of the Mayor of Saroma. Furthermore, there isn’t a bookstore in Saroma, so she must have traveled to the largest community nearby, which is equal to traveling

from Palmer to Anchorage.

What struck me most was that this kind and gracious lady was not a member of Saroma’s “official” Sister City group. She had not been one of the attendees at any of the official functions. Instead she was simply a citizen of Saroma.

Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State said, “The origin of modern diplomacy was in the relations between cities. Today, cities are our conduits for world trade, our main communicators of culture, and a proven training ground for future world leadership. The Sister City programs help provide a means by which all of these important assets can be made more meaningful.”

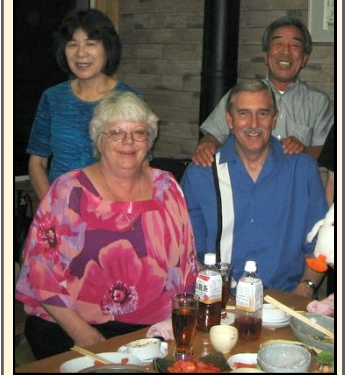
The Palmer and Saroma Sister City relationship shares a rich history of close relationships formed over the last thirty years much to the benefit of the individuals as well as our respective communities.

Our trip was filled with delightful encounters culminating in many new friendships with the folks in Saroma. I often think back to those amazing days and am very happy that I have those memories to cherish.

Everywhere we went while in Japan in the summer of 2010 we saw the universal sign for peace from young and old Japanese people, who would hold up two fingers in the shape of a V.

Mr. Kissinger’s observation aside, I prefer to think of it as World Peace being won, one heart at a time.

Mayor Kawane & Ms. Kawane and Mayor Combs & Ms. Combs in 2010



Palmer Student & Teacher Delegation Selected

By Carla Swick, Palmer Students, and Palmer Teachers

The following students and teachers have been chosen to represent The City of Palmer, Palmer Junior Middle School, and Palmer High School this June in Saroma. As ambassadors of Palmer, they will each receive a scholarship from the City of Palmer to put towards their airfare.

Krista Mahan - 10th grader
I would like to go to Saroma because my karate teacher is Japanese and I want to see all the amazing things he's been talking about. I also want to see another country's way of living! I'm excited to try the food! I love Japanese food at Japanese restaurants so I'm assuming I will love the food in Japan! I'm excited to talk to new people in our sister city, try new things, and have fun! Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Mattie Stuart - 10th grader
I would like to visit Japan because its history and culture has always given me a sense of inspiration ever since I was a small child. Some things I hope to do in Saroma are try new foods, converse with the people, and overall have a good time.

Peyton Murphy - 11th grader
I want to go to Saroma to experience the difference in culture, practice leadership, learn language skills, and live with a host family! I would love to experience anything and everything in Saroma!

Kim Akers - PHS Administrative Secretary & Chaperone
I am looking forward to returning to Saroma to see all of the friends that I've made from the first trip. I can't wait to make new memories with this new group of delegates. My goal is to learn more Japanese language before our departure. I am honored and thankful to represent Palmer again for this Sister City Exchange.

Ethan Copp - 7th grader
While in Saroma I would like to visit Lake Saroma, experience the local way of life, maybe see the native wildlife, go on a hike, and try new foods.

Zoe Copp - 7th grader
While visiting Saroma, I want to go hiking, visit Lake Saroma, go swimming, and explore the town. I would also like to try Japanese foods.

Zane Carter - 7th grader
In Saroma, I would like to take a day to walk around the town and look in shops, etc. I would like to also go on a nature walk. I would love to join the cooking class and teach Saroma students how to play the card games werewolf and ghosts in the graveyard. I'm SO excited to go.

Tobin Hushower - 7th grader
I'm looking forward to going to Saroma because I am interested in travelling. My friend, Caleb DePriest, had a great time in Saroma last year. I am especially interested in seeing the landscape and meeting new people.

Tanya Lang - Special Education Teacher & PJMS Chaperone
My last visit to Saroma was 31 years ago; I was in 3rd grade and saw everything from a child's perspective. This time I will be a chaperone, taking a wonderful group of students along and sharing it all with them. I can't wait! I am looking forward to returning and seeing old friends and meeting new ones.



Palmer High School Delegation



Palmer Jr/Middle School Delegation



Delegation members cooking up food for a fundraiser for the trip.



The Kamiyubetu Tulip Park situated in Yubetsu town is about 20 miles from Saroma. During springtime, from May to early June, the 17 acre garden is covered in over a million tulips of 120 varieties with flowers stretching as far as the eye can see.

“Every flower is a soul blossoming in nature.”
Gerard DeNerval

Cultural Corner

By Tanya Lang

March 26th was culture day for 3rd graders at Sherrod Elementary. In Mandy Wilson's class students learned about Asia, focusing a lot on Japan. Special Education Teacher Tanya Lang helped out and brought in items

collected over the years from her involvement with the Palmer-Saroma Sister City program as well as from her trip over when she was in 3rd grade. Ms. Lang brought in fans, dolls, children's books, money,

pictures, as well as her kimonos that the children were able to try on. She also talked about the Sister City program that her grandfather Edward Holmes and friend Hiro Ishiguro started 35 years ago.



Kaelin Magee, Ariyann Lawton, and Ms. Lang

The City of Palmer and Palmer Saroma Kai are seeking sponsors for the 35th Anniversary Celebration. If you are interested in helping, please contact Sandra Peterson at speterson@palmerak.org OR (907) 761-1317.

Premiere Sponsor – \$2,500 donation

YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- Premier placement and acknowledgement in all publications, advertising and printed materials, including storefront posters and social media.
- An invitation for two to the private July 12 Official Celebration, with VIP seating and the opportunity to meet and talk with the Japanese delegation, plus an invitation to the July 15 all-community picnic.
- Special recognition will be given during all addresses, acknowledging this highest level of sponsorship.
- Photos of events will be provided and a letter of appreciation will also be sent after the events for your promotional purposes.

Executive Sponsor – \$1,000 donation

YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- Advertising acknowledgement in all publications, advertising and printed materials, including storefront posters and social media.
- An invitation to the private July 12 Official Celebration, with the opportunity to meet and talk with the Japanese delegation, plus an invitation to the July 15 all-community picnic.
- Special recognition will be given during all addresses acknowledging your generous sponsorship.
- Photos of events will be provided and a letter of appreciation will also be sent after the events for your promotional purposes.

Good Neighbor Sponsor – \$500 donation

YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- Advertising acknowledgement in all publications, advertising and printed materials, including storefront posters and social media.
- An invitation to the all-community picnic, with the opportunity to meet and talk with the Japanese delegation.
- Special recognition will be given during all addresses acknowledging your sponsorship.
- A letter of appreciation will be sent after the events for your promotional purposes.



Friendship Sponsor – a donation amount of your choice

YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- Advertising acknowledgement in all publications, advertising and printed materials, including storefront posters and social media.
- Invitation to attend and participate in the all-community picnic.

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