



Sister City News

Palmer, Alaska - Saroma, Japan

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2012

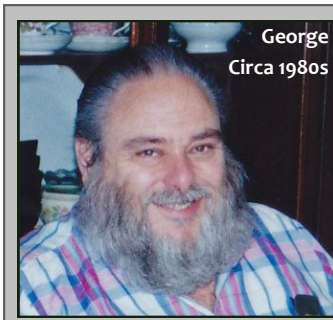
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George Carte Growing Friendships for Over 30 Years

By Carla Swick

The Palmer Saroma Sister City Program is synonymous with "George Carte" who helped support and grow the program since its official start in 1980. For years he has kept us up-to-date with sister city news through his newsletters. After several months of hospitalization last year, he and his wife Kathy moved to Lewiston, Idaho to be near their daughter, Jeanette and her family. Although he is physically no longer in Palmer, his heart continues to be with his lifelong friends in both Palmer and Saroma. He and Kathy recently visited Palmer to attend Saroma's current Assistant Language Teacher, Sean Holland's Alaskan marriage ceremony to Yoshie Taga.



George
Circa 1980s



George
July 2012

George and Kathy will be celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary on September 14th, 2012. Omedetou gozaimasu -- Congratulations!

George, we will do our best to nurture the roots of the sister city program that you helped plant. Anyone interested in submitting future newsletter content, please contact Carla Swick at carlaswick2010@gmail.com.

Friends of George and Kathy Carte are welcome to contact them at:

George and Kathy Carte
3957 Lakeview Drive
Lewiston, ID 83501

email: gcarte@cableone.net
or gcarte@usa.com or
kcarte@ak.net

phone: 208-816-0164

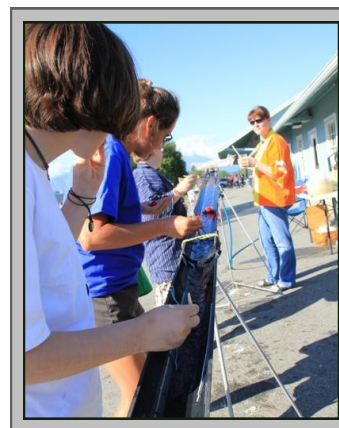
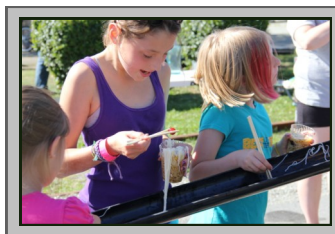
George and Kathy are both on Facebook as well.

Noodle Shoot at Palmer Pride

By Heather Kelley

The Palmer Pride Picnic was held Friday June 27th and once again Palmer Saroma Kai was on hand with the "Noodle Shoot". It's a fun Japanese game that Palmer delegates to Saroma played in 2010. Upon his return, delegate Monte Goodrich

used his skills to build one for the citizens of Palmer.





Quarterly Calendar of Events

Japanese Language Classes

Mat-Su College is offering First & Second Year Japanese Classes this fall from 8/27/12 through 12/15/12.

First Year Classes

Mon & Wed - 7p to 8:50p

Second Year Classes

Tues & Thurs - 7p to 8:50p

For more info visit:

<http://matsu.alaska.edu/>

Palmer Saroma Kai Annual Meeting

The first annual meeting for Palmer Saroma Kai will occur on August 18, 2012 at the Palmer Museum of History & Art. See the article on page 2 of this newsletter for more information.

School Visit this Fall

Palmer will have visitors from Saroma this fall. Students Renya Fukuoka, Naname Kaibe, Sayuki Tsuchimoto, and Chiharu Abe as well as chaperones Yoshie Holland Yuko Hirouchi will be staying with Palmer families from Sept 9th-Sept 21st.

News From Saroma

By Sean Holland

Fiberoptic internet will be coming to Saroma in September. Signing up now can get one up to 50,000 yen (\$630) off of a new electronics purchase.

Saroma Junior High has a new English teacher. I happen to know her quite well - she is my wife, Yoshie Holland and she is very excited to have the sister city and school relationships to enrich students' English acquisition and understanding. Both I and Saroma Town are lucky to have her.

Saroma was the location for a national TV show - "Motemote 99" which filmed a special. They produce a monthly "arranged marriage" special and Saroma was their choice for July. They brought in around 40 women to meet 20 of Saroma's eligible bachelors. The 2 hour special aired in primetime on July 24th.

There will be another mayoral election in August. The current mayor, Akio Kawane, who was first elected mayor in 2008, is

currently the only candidate.

There are now zero Japanese style toilets in Saroma Town Hall or the Townspeople's Center. They have all been recently replaced with western style spray toilets in order to make it easier on elderly visitors.

The Saroma Junior High Softball team will again be going to the All-Hokkaido competition. Last year they made it all the way to the national championship.

Palmer Saroma Kai Annual Meeting

By Heather Kelley

Palmer Saroma Kai was formed in 2011 to provide encouragement and support for the relationship between the Sister Cities of Palmer, Alaska and Saroma, Japan.

The first annual meeting will occur on August 18, 2012, from 6p-8p, at the Palmer Museum of History & Art (723 South Valley Way, Palmer, AK 99645).

Everyone is invited to attend

and membership applications will be available for those who wish to join.

The meeting will include a display of Sister City artifacts, a potluck dinner (please bring a dish to pass), a presentation from the most recent student delegation, president and treasurer's reports, nominations from the floor for board members, and board elections.

Palmer Saroma Kai membership dues will help sponsor seminars, lectures, events and classes on Japan; support ongoing public display of Sister City gifts and artifacts; provide resources for continued success of the Sister Schools Programs; and foster the exchange of ideas, culture, and people between the Palmer, Alaska area and Saroma, Japan.



Language Corner

By Carla Swick

The Japanese character KAI can be seen in many Japanese words and has several English meanings; such as, association, join, meet, meeting, interview/talk, and party.



Our next Saroma student delegation will arrive in September. Impress our Saroma friends by introducing yourself in Japanese.

Hajimemashite. はじめまして。 Nice to meet you.

Watashi no namae wa Swick Carla desu. わたしのなまえはスイックカーラです。 My name is Carla Swick.

Douzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu. どうぞよろしくおねがいします。 May our relationship be prosperous.

Student Essays

By Kimberly McDowell, Shannon Foley, & Katie Crowley

In late June and early July of 2012, seven students and two teachers visited Saroma. They spent two weeks going to school, participating in after-school activities, and enjoying home life with Japanese host families. Below and on the following page are their stories.

Kimberly McDowell PJMS 8th Grader

My favorite experiences of the 2012 exchange were spent not with a large group but with my host family.

The two Saturdays I was in Japan were spent sight-seeing. These sights and memories were some of the best. We saw Lake Saroma, went to the beach, rode on a boat and much more. The scenery of Hokkaido was beautiful, as pretty or more than Alaska. The untamed mountains and lakes were awe-striking, something I definitely would not have expected.

The people were extremely kind and friendly. Before going to Saroma, I assumed Japan was filled with big, overpopulated cities like Tokyo. But now I understand that Japan is actually full of small towns like Saroma with picturesque views and friendly, kind people.

Shannon Foley PJMS 8th Grader

I would like to share with you some of the highlights of my trip. In Sapporo we went to a mega mall with thirteen floors. To a teenager my age,

this was shopping heaven! Kimberly and I went to all the floors and did lots of window shopping. My favorite was the top floor because that's where all the food and ice cream were. Kimberly got chocolate ice cream and I got pumpkin-vanilla. It tasted very good.

The second highlight was the scenery in Japan. We climbed a mountain called Mt. Horoiwa and the view from the top was amazing. During our hike to the top, the forest was all green and the flowers were beautiful. We also saw the cutest fox along the way. When we got to the top, we could see Lake Saroma, its port, and the ocean. The water was a very dark shade of blue.

The third highlight was the people. They were all so kind and generous, not one person was mean or spoke unkindly. My host family was a family of five and the middle child was my host sister, Keade. My host mother and I got along great. She took very good care of me and spoiled me rotten. Going to Japan was a life-changing experience for me.

Katie Crowley PJMS 8th Grader

My trip to Japan was amazing and I came back with many great memories! One of my favorite memories is of the time the whole family went to Kitami together. We went to a place in the mall and played games. It was a blast! Once we finished playing games Nana took all

four of us to a booth. Once we got into the booth it had a bench and a screen and then a little camera. I figured it was a photo booth, but it was totally and completely different than any photo booth in America! It let us choose backgrounds and gave ways to enhance the lighting and many different things. We had a great time deciding all the different ways to edit our pictures.

Another favorite memory was when we went to the Buddhist temple. We met the monk and it was explained to us how to meditate, the reasons why people meditate, and the proper ways to meditate. It was beautiful in the temple and amazing to learn a little about Buddhism. Then we got bracelets and filled out papers using Japanese symbols. It was one of my favorite memories of not just of this trip but of my whole life!

I will cherish these memories and look back fondly. I am incredibly grateful to everyone that made this trip possible. I hope that I can help give Nana and the other students from Japan an equally wonderful experience.



Kimberly & host sister Sayuki.



Shannon in class.



Katie & host sister Nanami.

“Going to Japan was a life-changing experience for me.”

Shannon Foley



Sapporo Train Station - (l to r) Heather Pelletier (PJMS teacher), Jake Cunningham (PJMS), Kimberly McDowell (PJMS), Shannon Foley (PJMS), Rachel Buresch (PHS), Sage Stone-King (PHS), Katie Crowley (PJMS), Noelle Graham (PHS), Shanna Omer (PHS teacher).

Student Essays

By Noelle Graham, Sage Stoneking, & Rachel Bruesch

Noelle Graham
PHS Junior

The fondest memory of my trip to Saroma, Japan, took place in a little dance studio/ karaoke house. This isn't a memory filled with exciting details, but filled with more meaning than I could possibly explain. While eating yakisoba and having a great time singing karaoke together; this thought occurred to me, "I can be thousands of miles away from home, away from everything that is comfortable and common, and I can still feel at home." This particular memory, in my opinion, explains the reason why these trips are so successful in raising a generation with a universal understanding and an open-minded nature.

We have two different cultures, which hardly speak the same language, eat the same foods, have the same customs, the same traditions, rules, and religions. Yet these people from two different cultures can come together and live in harmony. We can come together and even though the language barrier is large, we laugh at the same things; we interact as though we have known them for our entire lives; and this alone is what made this trip so special to me.

"I can be thousands of miles away from home, away from everything that is comfortable and common, and I can still feel at home."

Noelle Graham

Sage Stoneking
PHS Senior

Japan. The word brings on an entire new meaning as I now say it to myself after two weeks of unbelievable experiences and unforgettable memories. Each moment was an adventure in itself, for it was a new moment within new place, a new culture. But throughout the trip, and even more afterwards, I found the major reason this trip was such positive and, for lack of better words, fun, experience, was because of my host family.

I stayed with a family of five: my grandmother, father, mother, brother, and sister, Chiharu and after the first hour with them I knew I had a new family.

Though there was a language barrier, my host sister's English was very good, and slowly, I was beginning to understand the general context of what was being said.

Dinner time and afterwards was always fun. Every time I used my chopsticks correctly my family would tell me and I tried a lot of new things, most of which I liked. After dinner, we usually played different games such as Jenga or cards. They taught me different Japanese card games and I taught them games such as Spoons and Slap Jack.

Then I had to leave. I tried my hardest not to cry, not in front of my friends and their families, and definitely not in front of my family. But it could not be helped; I had grown much at-

tached. When I think of the bonds we created as international family in such a short time, I find that bond to be one of the greatest relationships I could have. We as a family had to overcome language, age, personality at times, and culture to find how we could interact in the most positive and happiest way possible. That to me not only shows how strong people can be, but even more importantly the strength of family.

Rachel Bruesch
PHS Sophomore

One of my favorite parts about our stay in Saroma, Japan was being able to experience their classes. My favorite class was cooking. On Friday, my class translated the different recipes from Japanese to English, and then Wednesday we used those recipes to make our own full course lunch. My group made carrot soup and omelet stuffed with fried rice. It was fun because when they wanted me to do something they would say my name to get my attention, and then demonstrate what I was to do. The hardest part was making the omelet because the egg kept tearing when I tried to fold it. After all of our pots and pans were clean and out of the way, we had a guy from a different group join us for lunch. So in turn for the soup and omelets we gave him, we each got a slice of the chiffon cake that his group made. The hard work of making all of it from scratch was worth it. The food tasted amazing.

A Teacher's Perspective

By Heather Pelletier

Saroma was an eye-opening trip. In all the classes that we attended, there were zero discipline problems, and all of the students were focused and on task. Students were ready to learn, and students would take charge of their own learning environment. It gave our Palmer kids a lot of things to think about, and I believe that the home stays reinforced the importance that Japanese families put on education.

The biggest lesson that we all learned was that in spite of distance, culture, religion, politics, and language, people have more in common than they have differences, and when you reach out in friendship, it is returned ten-fold. The Palmer Saroma Sister School Program is a fabulous opportunity for students, and something that is worth supporting!



Sage & her host family.



Rachel in cooking class.

Congratulations to Sean & Yoshie Holland

By Heather Kelley w/ bios from Sean Holland & Yoshie Holland

Since 1994, the City of Saroma has hired an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) from the Palmer Area. Sean Holland has held the ALT position since 2008. While living and working in Saroma, he met and fell in love with Yoshie Taga and they married in Japan in 2011.

“Kimi no hitomi ni kanpai”

This means literally, “cheers to your pupils.” In Japanese it sounds much more romantic and is a hackneyed pickup line used by many a fop. It’s the translation of Humphrey Bogart’s famous line in Casablanca, “Here’s looking at you, kid.”

It’s also the first thing that Yoshie ever said to Sean, one evening in January 2009 at a small izakaya in Mombetsu, Japan, as she held up a brimming glass of beer. Sean didn’t understand what she was talking about, and the rest was history.

Sean was born in Omaha, raised in Alaska, and in the days before being an Alaskan on an airplane

inevitably steered the conversation to politics, learned a certain independence through traveling between parents every summer and every winter. This may have developed in him a certain restlessness, in addition to the extreme anal tendencies already present. This is probably what led Sean on a round-the-world sabbatical of attempted self-discovery in early 2004, while still a bushy-headed 19 year old. Luckily, on that trip Sean found two important things: First, that he didn’t have to travel around the globe to find himself – he was who he was, and Second, that he really, really liked Japan. After graduating from the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a BA in Linguistics in 2007, Sean moved to Japan to teach English, where he remains, albeit with more aplomb and less hair. Sean has a younger sister, Bridget, and a much younger sister, Paige.

Yoshie was born Yoshie Taga in Furano, Japan, the “bellybutton” of Hokkaido

(look it up), the baby of the family, after older bro Tomohiro and sis Chifumi. Yoshie’s father worked for the local agricultural cooperative and her mom worked at home wrangling the young’uns. Yoshie graduate from high school in Furano and went on to University in Otaru, near Sapporo. She spent four years there attaining a degree in commerce, but with a heavy focus on English education. She made many good friends there who were also pursuing certificates to become English teachers. After graduation, Yoshie passed the very difficult test to become a teacher employed by the Hokkaido Board of Education, and was assigned to Mombetsu Junior High School, about an hour from Saroma. It was while she was working there that she met Sean. After four years at Mombetsu JHS, Yoshie recently received a transfer and will soon be the newest English teacher at Saroma Junior High School, in the same town as Sean.

www.seanandyoshie.com



Sean & Yoshie Alaska Wedding



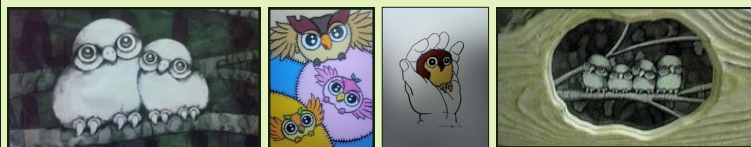
Sean & Yoshie Japan Wedding



Sean & Yoshie



Makoto Ambo is an artist who was born in Saroma and now lives and works in the Osaka area. He visits Saroma once a year for about a week to do classes with students and townspeople. http://blog.goo.ne.jp/makoto_ambo



“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.”

Edgar Degas

Cultural Corner

By Carla Swick

One of Japan’s summer highlights is that of OMATSURI or festivals. Most Japanese festivals are in some way connected with Shintoist or Buddhist deities. OBON is summer festival that usually takes place August 13th-15th. Some towns, like Saroma, follow the lunar calendar and hold OBON in July. It is

a time families gather to remember and honor their ancestors. Family members will often visit the cemetery to clean the family gravesite and leave offerings of foods and other gifts as they pray for the happiness of their ancestors’ souls in the next world. Cities, towns, and villages will also celebrate with

a traditional BON ODORI or “bon dance”. A high stage called a YAGURA is set up and people will dance to the rhythm of the TAIKO drum in a big circle around this stage wearing traditional YUKATA, a cotton summer kimono.



Carla Swick dances at the OBON festival in Saroma in 2010.

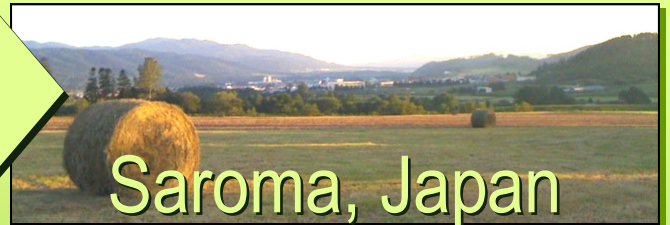


Palmer Alaska

Population: 5,937 (2010 US Census)

Fun things to do: Hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, gardening, golf, mountain biking, baseball, shopping, & restaurants.

Annual Festival: Alaska State Fair



Saroma, Japan

Population: 5,892 (2010 Statistics Bureau Japan)

Fun things to do: Hiking, biking, gardening, boating, fishing, broom-ball, softball, park golf, shopping, & restaurants.

Annual Festival: Pumpkin Festival

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.

Your comments, suggestions, and constructive feedback are welcome!



Left: On June 12th the Sister School Delegation visited the Palmer City Council to say thank for the Council's support of their trip to Saroma. Mayor DeLena Johnson awarded Sister City Scholarships which helped make travel possible for this year's visiting delegation from Palmer.



Above: Palmer Delegation in Saroma T-Shirts