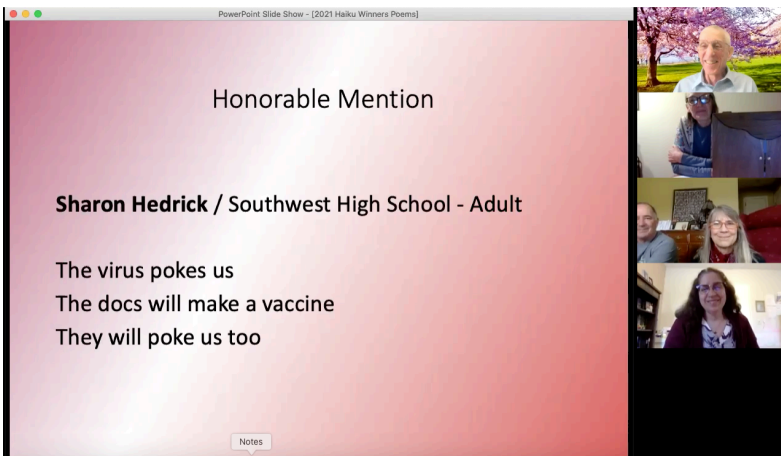


MINNIBARAKI

Our Forty-first Year

Minneapolis Ibaraki Sister City Association



Screen Shot of the Virtual 2021 Haiku Awards Ceremony

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2021 Haiku Awards Ceremony

The 2021 Haiku Awards Ceremony was done virtually again this year due to the Covid pandemic. The winners gathered in a Zoom meeting on Sunday, April 26 to read their winning Haikus.

The event was also streamed live on MISCA’s Facebook page so that family members and friends could also see the winning students and adults.

MISCA received over 500 entries this year and the ceremony honored the thirty-two winners in each of four categories: K-5, 6-8, 9-12 and Adult. These thirty-two were selected as the best of some really amazing Haikus!

Besides hearing the winners recite their Haiku, the ceremony started off with a Kamishibai

performance called “The Dragon’s Tears” by Karen Kersting.

This was followed up with greetings from Consul General Kenichi Okada from the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago.

If you would like to view the ceremony, it can be found on MISCA’s Facebook page at the following link (copy and paste into your browser):

https://www.facebook.com/pg/Minneapolis-Ibaraki-Sister-City-Association-MISCA-129381810480923/videos/?ref=page_internal

We hope to be back to an in-person Haiku Ceremony in 2022!

Friends of the Bell of Two Friends

Diamond Friends

*Bill Deef
Michael Rainville
Karl Reinhard*

Platinum Friends

*Jack Sattel and Karen Sontag Sattel
Mary Witkus & Werner Kohler*

Gold Friends

Jessica Manivasager

Silver Friends

*Richard & Marie-Rose Lundgren
Dan Rolf*

Bronze Friends

*Carol Austermann
Sharon Balke
Carter Clapsadle & Julia Baugnet
Richard Kathrine Fournier
Mirja Hanson
Cynthia & Brian Haskell
Jim & Reiko Hoffman
Brenda Langton & Tim Kane
Helane Monsour
Doug & Addona Rivord
James & Norma Solstad
Claire & Paul Spilseth
Richard & Carol Stahl
Vernon Wetternach*

“My Amazing Days with Kasugaoka Students”

- By Mary Witkus

“They are on the plane!” A year ago, Kyoko French texted that the students from Kasugaoka High School were coming for their annual visit with Southwest High School. Kyoko is the Japanese teacher at Southwest. Last year she was honored by being named the “National Japanese Teacher of the Year”! In February, 2020, the Coronavirus was spreading rapidly and we anticipated that travel from Japan to the United States would soon be cancelled. Indeed, this was the last day the students would have been allowed to leave.

I was so excited! My special time with the students is spent making books. Amid bits of English, a flurry of papers and ribbons, and much laughter, each student completes a handmade book. Last February, I had all the materials packed into a bag, ready to bring to Southwest. I had learned all their names. I was so happy to hear that they would be here soon. The day with the students is my favorite day of spring.



I have had the privilege of doing this activity with the students for many years. Our first gatherings were at the home of my friend, Sally French, whose son Arthur is married to Kyoko. Sally was hosting the farewell dinner for the visiting students and the host families. Because the students would arrive early, Sally invited me to plan an activity with them. Now the farewell dinner - and our bookmaking activity - is at Southwest.

I am grateful to those who have made the Kasugaoka / Southwest relationship possible. It began in 2008 when Kyoko French asked the Ibaraki City Council to recommend a high school with whom Southwest could have student exchanges. It became a much stronger relationship when the Kasugaoka principal, Mr. Toshiaki Hatanaka, came to Minneapolis in 2013 and formalized an agreement with Dr. William Smith, the principal of Southwest, to become “Sister Schools”.



My Amazing Days, continued on page 4

Greetings from IFAI - Kasugaoka High School

We have always enjoyed a great relationship with our sister school Southwest High School. In previous years, the exchange trip between the schools is one of the highlights of the school calendar.

It is usual that around 15 students visit Minneapolis and a similar number come to Japan. During the trip students are able to exchange ideas and learn about each other's culture, make great friends, and have a wide variety of experiences. Students are able to visit Minnesota's world-famous Mall of America, take a look around the University of Minnesota, and are even lucky enough to be able to get some face time with the Mayor of Minneapolis. Many of the students who take part in the program continue to keep in touch with their host families via SNS and build upon the foundations of the relationships which they form overseas.



It was with great sadness that we had to cancel this year's exchange due to the Coronavirus pandemic, however we were able to keep some activities going. For example, we completed a successful exchange of New Year's greetings cards. Over 200 students designed and sent original cards to each other over the holiday. The students worked hard to draw pictures either on a card or by using design software on the computer and some very creative ideas were realized. Many students mixed both Christmas and Japanese New Year themes together in a spirit of mutual cultural respect and understanding.

It is our sincere hope that further cultural and language-based exchanges can continue in the future and we will keep working towards the multi-faceted goals of deepening understanding, fostering relationships, and exchanging ideas in the hope of strengthening the bonds between Ibaraki and Minneapolis in the future.

Amazing Days, continued from page 2

Students learn about each other’s cultures through ‘home-stay’, school, and tours of the city. The mayor of Minneapolis typically meets with the visiting students and teachers. The photo here was taken during the last visit with Mayor Jacob Frey and City Council member, Linea Palmisano. Kyoko French is pictured at the far right. Mr. Matsuyama and Ms. Matsuura, visiting teachers, are on the far left.



Werner and I are also grateful to all the Kasugaoka teachers who have brought the students. Several times they have invited us for a reunion with the students at Kasugaoka while we are staying at the Ibaraki Central. Our lives are greatly enriched by our relationship with the people in our Sister City of Ibaraki. We look forward to visiting soon, as well as, hosting visitors here. It is with great joy that we explore each other’s cultures, find commonalities, and form friendships.



In Memoriam

MISCA would like to express our sympathies to the families of the following individuals:

Former Vice-President and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale who passed away on April 19, 2021. The former Vice-President helped strengthen the relations between Minnesotans and Japanese people.

Norman Andersen who passed away on April 4, 2021. Norman designed and built the “Sound Bridge” sculpture that sits in Ibaraki City Hall as a gift for the twentieth anniversary of the Sister City relationship between the two cities.

Denise Takeshita who passed away on April 19, 2021. Denise was at one time the treasurer for the Minneapolis Ibaraki Sister City Association.

MINNIBARAKI – Past Issues

Looking for some information from a past issue of MINNIBARAKI?

All past and current issues of MINNIBARAKI can be found at the following link (copy and paste into your browser):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16FIWH9sgFta1MN8wHIQ1eCFand3iAON8?usp=sharing>

The start of a friendship across the Pacific

-by Carol Austermann

I live in South Minneapolis on the north side of Minnehaha creek. My neighbor, Mary Witkus, lives on the south side of the creek. A small foot bridge connects one side to the other. It's a short walk from my house to Mary's. Several years ago, Mary came to me with a request; Could I host a Japanese person? I answered, "Yes!" Mary and her husband Werner, are members of MISCA and had hosted several Japanese and had traveled to Japan often.

My connection to MISCA had begun. Several weeks after that encounter the members of MISCA met the Japanese delegation from Ibaraki at the airport. Excitement and joy filled the area as MISCA members met their Japanese guests. I met Wakako. Her English was excellent. Her energy limitless. We would become friends. The week following was an adventure. Together we toured the Capital in St. Paul, cruised the Mississippi River, explored Minnehaha Falls, visited the Textile Center and laughed through many meals. She presented a gift from her city to my city at City Hall. The delegation had a busy week.

All good things must end so must that time together. On her last evening she prepared a dinner for me in my home. Wakako has a beautiful voice. She sang to me songs of her country and created new songs. I appreciated her talent and was happy she shared it so often with me. We ate and sang together.

But in the world of modern technology there has been no "goodbye". One of my talents is drawing. I often send her my sketches of Minnesota and photos of my garden. She sends pictures of her family, especially the grand children on her cell-phone. The recent photo of a child, dressed as a honey bee, celebrating her 100th day was so cute. The yellow and black costume makes me smile. Wakako also sends me pencils, pastels and sketch books. I will continue to keep her and her family in my heart and mind and send drawings of the nature in Minnesota.

Kamishibai Performances

Karen Kersting will be presenting more Kamishibai stories Sunday, May 2, 2021 at 2 p.m.

These stories will be streamed live on MISCA's Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/Minneapolis-Ibaraki-Sister-City-Association-MISCA-129381810480923/videos/?ref=page_internal

The stories will remain on the Facebook page for you to enjoy at a later time as well.

Once we are able to get back to in-person events, Karen hopes to present other Kamishibai stories so audiences can see them up close like children used to in Japan.



Although the dining room is still closed, Zenbox is still offering takeout delivery or curbside pickup every Tuesday through Saturday from 4 - 8 p.m.

You can find their online menu at:

[Zenbox.com](https://zenbox.com)

A Japanese Event in May

by IIN Working Group on Cultures

Kodomo-no-Hi (Children's Day)

Children's Day is on May 5th in Japan. While Girl's Festival is known as *Momo-no-Sekku* on March 3rd, Boy's Festival is called *Tango-no-Sekku* on May 5th. In 1948, only three years after World War II, *Tango-no-Sekku* was renamed Children's Day and established as a national holiday.



Koinobori (Carp Streamers)

Why have the large sized carp streamers called Koinobori come to be set up outside the house on Children's Day?

It is said that in the Edo period (1603-1867), samurai families used to raise banners to wish for the success of their newborn boys, and ordinary people imitated this practice and began to raise them with carp painted on them. Carp is considered a symbol of success in life, based on the Chinese legend of "Toryumon", which says that carp was the winner of a race among other fishes and became a dragon when it went up the waterfall.

That is why carp streamers are chosen as a symbol of Boy's festival.

Now there are various designs for *fukinagashi* on top of the carp streamers, the original one is the *Goshiki-no-Fukinagashi* dyed in five colors. It was based on the ancient Chinese theory of the five elements and used to ward off evil spirits. The round "spinning ball" or "arrow wheel" on top of the pole is said to be a landmark for the gods to come down.

Indoor Decorations

Kabuto (samurai helmet), swords and samurai dolls are displayed to celebrate Boy's Festival.

Parents hope their sons will be able to overcome the difficulties of life.

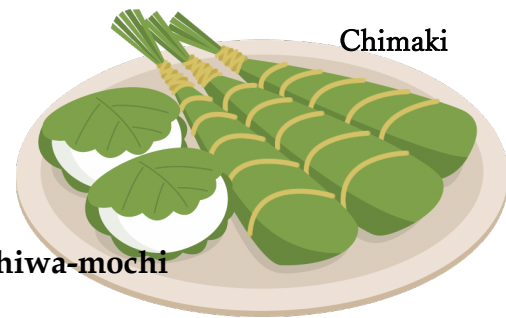


Children's day, continued on page 7

Children's Day, continued from page 6

Sweets

We have special rice cakes for the day. One is called *Chimaki*, sweet rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves. Another one is called *Kashiwa-mochi* wrapped in *Kashiwa* (oak) tree leaves with sweet bean paste in them. *Kashiwa* leaves are said to be a symbol of family prosperity.



Shobu-yu: Iris-leaf baths

Tango-no-Sekku, Children's Day, originated in ancient China as an event to ward off evil spirits at the beginning of the month. In ancient China, iris leaves were used to ward off evil spirits because the number of illnesses and disasters increased during the rainy season of May. When we float bundled iris leaves on a bath, the strong scent of the leaves makes us relaxed. *Shobu-yu* is an event not only to take care of the body but also to ward off bad luck and pray for the growth of children.

5月の日本のイベント【こどもの日】

日本では5月5日が「こどもの日」です。

戦後3年目の1948年に「端午の節句」が「こどもの日」に改称され、国民の祝日となりました。

こいのぼり

「こいのぼり」と呼ばれる大きなサイズの吹き流しが、なぜ子供の日に家の外に立てられるようになったのでしょうか。

それは、江戸時代に武家が生まれた男の子の成功を願ってのぼりを上げていたのを、庶民が真似て、鯉を描いたのぼりを上げるようになったと言われています。鯉は、他の魚との競争に勝ち滝を上って龍になったという中国の登龍門伝説から、立身出世の象徴とされています。そのため、鯉のぼりは男の子のお祭りのシンボルとして選ばれています。

鯉のぼりの上に飾られる「吹き流し」は今では様々なデザインがありますが、古代中国の五行説に由来して五色に染められ魔除けとして使われていた「五色吹き流し」が主流でした。ポールの上にある丸い「回転球」や「矢車」は、神様が降りてくる目印と言われています。

室内飾り

こどもの日には、人生の困難に打ち勝ってほしいという親の願いを込めて、兜や刀、武者人形などを飾ります。

お菓子

この日のための特別なお餅があります。笹の葉に包まれた「ちまき」と呼ばれるお餅。もう一つは、柏の葉に甘い餡を包んだ柏餅です。柏の葉は子孫繁栄を象徴するものと言われています。

菖蒲湯

端午の節句(こどもの日)は、古代中国で月初めの邪気払いの行事として生まれました。古代中国では、5月の梅雨時期に病気や災害が増えることから、菖蒲の葉を使って邪気を祓っていました。菖蒲の葉を束ねてお風呂に浮かべると、その強い香りに癒されます。菖蒲湯は、体調管理だけでなく、厄除けや子供の成長を祈る行事でもあります。

The MINNIBARAKI newsletter is published quarterly (February, May, August and November) by the Minneapolis-Ibaraki Sister City Association.

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MINNEAPOLIS- IBARAKI SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION



Upcoming Board Meetings:

Monday, May 10, 2021

Monday, June 14, 2021

Board meetings are usually held
at ZenBox Izakaya

602 South Washington Ave

Social time 5:30 – 6:15

Business meeting starts at 6:15

However, at this time meetings are
being held virtually. If you would
like to participate, please email Karl
Reinhard at:

misca.info@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

We are hoping to resume
our events later this year.

Cherry Tree Festival-
Canceled

Sister Cities Day -
Canceled

Please check out or
Facebook Page for
Virtual Events