

Chiisai Shinbun 2024-1Q

This is a quarterly newsletter of the **Japan-America Society of Vermont** describing what we have accomplished during **the first quarter of the year of 2024** (January, February and March) and a forecast of our activities in the near future.

1. New Year Potluck Party

Happy New Year!!! We held a New Year Potluck Party at the usual clubhouse in South Burlington on Saturday, Jan. 20th, from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm. We made **Mochi for the first time** as a JASV event. Suzuko Kern and Toshi Saitoh arranged this event and it was very successful.

In Japan there are two kinds of rice. One is everyday use rice which we eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The other is Mochi rice. We usually make Mochi from it and eat it on holidays. Mochi rice is called sticky rice or sweet rice in the US. After cooking Mochi rice, we pound it many times to get Mochi which is very soft and sticky. Nowadays, we have a machine for the pounding process.



(Machine to make Mochi: It will cook Mochi rice and pound the cooked rice using vibration.)

Then we will take out the cooked Mochi and place it on to a big plate to break it into small pieces. We usually use rice flour or corn starch to prevent the Mochi from sticking to your hands.

There are many kinds of ways of eating Mochi. One common way of

eating Mochi on New Year's Day in Japan is to cook it with vegetables and other ingredients. This is called **Ozouni**. Suzuko-san prepared a special soup to cook Mochi in. Everyone who attended had a chance of tasting authentic Ozouni. It was so delicious!!! She also brought individual and special authentic **lacquer bowls** from Japan. Suzuko-san, thank you very much!!!



(Suzuko-san: Third from the left. Sorry for the blurry picture.)

Then we had presentations from two **Middlebury College students** about Japanese sustainability.



(Presenters: Shik Smetana and Matthew Burns)

Shik and **Matthew** presented their studies together focusing on the recycling system in Japan. In Japan, recycling materials are divided into several materials and are collected on different days, which is more complicated than the US. Also, such system is managed by each city's policy. Since they traveled a long way from Middlebury College, they had to leave early unfortunately.

Recently, Toshi's son in Osaka told him about an interesting article. There are many train lines all over Japan. The **Hankyu-line**, which connects Osaka to Kyoto and Takarazuka City, uses sustainable energy to run its trains, such as solar, water, and wind energy. This is a wonderful move since many Japanese commute by train everyday.

On New Year's Day in Japan, people often welcome the year with Ikebana. A total of 11 participants enjoyed the party.



(Ikebana by Toshi Saitoh at the party)

2. Nengajo (New Year Card) Contest by the Consulate General of Japan in Boston

The Japanese consulate of Japan in Boston has been having a Nengajo contest in the New England region for elementary school / middle school / high school students for the New Year's card art. Toshi Saitoh has been one of the judges. Some of them so good that they look professional. All of the coordination has been taken care of by Zoe Nugent who used to be an active board member of JASV before going to work for the Consulate General of Japan in Boston. She is now a remote JASV board

member.

The following won first prize for high school Nengajo!
Congratulations Marisol Tang.



(Marisol Tang - 10th Grade, Phillip Andover Academy)

3. Japanese Language Classes for Adults

The JASV started Japanese Language Classes for Adults by Zoom from Feb 19 to Apr 24. There were a total of 7 students who signed up (Level-1: x4, Level-2: x3). The teacher is Ms. Linda Sukop. Children's Japanese class will start from April 6th.

4. Matsuri-'24

The last Matsuri-'22 was held at Tuttle Middle School sponsored by the South Burlington Recreational Department.

However, after long discussion with the city and school, we decided to have Matsuri-'24 at the **South Burlington High School Gym** on **Sunday, September 22nd** this year. The high school gym has a stage which is more convenient.. The venue rental and insurance will cost a total of \$815.00 (Venue: \$472.50, Insurance: \$342.50). Of course we need other expenses to pay for posters and its distribution, pamphlets, U-Hall

rental, 7 Days Ad, etc.

So, for this Matsuri, we are looking for special sponsors who will donate more than \$500. The sponsors' names will go on the Matsuri posters and listed on our website. Since the poster design must be completed and ready to print by later June, please let Toshi Saitoh (tsaitoh@aol.com) know by June 30 if you are interested in becoming a sponsor.

The following is the start of the previous Matsuri poster,

Japan-America Society of Vermont
and
South Burlington Recreation and Park
present Matsuri-'22

This Matsuri-'24 poster will start with,

Japan-America Society of Vermont
and
Sponsors (Sponsor-A, Sponsor-B, - - -)
present Matsuri-'24

Please don't miss this great opportunity!!!

5. Spring Potluck Party

We are going to have a **JASV Spring Potluck party** from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm on **Saturday, May 4th**. Toshi Saitoh will present a slide show about the beautiful Japanese Cherry Blossom. He will include Yoshino Mountain which is well known for cherry blossoms and is one of the World Heritage Sites of Japan. Many or all of you know that Japan is a cherry blossom country. Wherever you may go in Japan, you will see beautiful cherry blossoms every year from late March to mid April.

We also will start to prepare for Matsuri entertainment. At the previous Matsuri,

(<http://jasv.org/v2/newsletter/Chiisai.Shinbun.2022.3Q.pdf>)

we had the following performances on stage as the **JASV offerings**,

- Shamisen Performance
- Tea Ceremony
- Kamishibai
- Ikebana Lecture

This year we would like to add the following performances,

- Japanese Speech by the JASV Class students
- Singing Performances
- Japanese Sustainability Lectures

For booth events, the JASV had,

- Kimono Try-on
- Uchikake (Kimono) Display
- Origami Corner
- Calligraphy Corner
- Culture Sale
- T-Shirts Sale
- Manga Book Sale

We are happy to hear your ideas and involvement at the party on May 4th.

If the time was permissive, Toshi would like to present some other culture of the world such as about Paris. He has many slides and videos which he wants to share. And/or we know that some members visited interesting place of the world. Hopefully someone will be able to present slide shows.

Detailed agenda will be sent to you when the date gets closer.

6. Participation in the July 3rd Independence Day Parade in Montpelier

For many years the JASV has been participating in the July 3rd

Independence Day Parade (7/03) in Montpelier. Unfortunately, we didn't have enough participants last year so we canceled for the first time. This year we hope to have at least the 10 people minimum. Our goal is to celebrate the American Independence Day and to advertise our organization to the public. Following is the Matsuri-'22 report for your reference,

<http://jasv.org/v2/newsletter/Chiisai.Shinbun.2022.2Q.pdf>

The parade itself will take less than one hour. It will start from 6:00 pm and ends before 7:00 pm. But there are many performances and booths around state house. And firework will take place at night.

When the date gets closer we will let you know where we will park our car and where we will meet for the parade.

Thank you for your participation!!!

JASV