

# SISTER CITY NEWS



Torrance, California



Torrance Sister City Association



Kashiwa, Japan

Newsletter Editor: Mona Wong

January 2011

Newsletter Mailing: Kerry Cababa

President's Message by Teri Kuwahara

あけましておめでとうございます

**Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu** – Happy New Year!

This time of the year I am reminded of the sights and smells of Oshogatsu – New Year's celebration at my grandparent's house when I was a child. Their small home in Torrance was crowded with family and their wooden table was covered with all sorts of Japanese food my grandmother, mother and aunts had worked for days to prepare. The centerpiece on the table was always the shell of a large, red lobster carefully intact and meticulously arranged on a platter. My grandmother said it was for good luck in the New Year. Simmering on the stove was a pot of ozoni, a Japanese soup with fresh mochi my family had gathered to make a few days earlier. As each family arrived, they were cheerfully greeted by my grandfather and the adults were offered a cup of hot sake to toast the New Year.

A top a cabinet in the living room were two important arrangements:

A **kasane** also known as **kagami mochi** consisting of two rice cakes, one placed on top of another, with a small **mikan** (tangerine) picked from my grandmother's tree, leaf still attached placed on top. I really never understood why my grandmother did this, but my parents followed the tradition. I was told it was for good luck and we should always start the New Year with a **kasane** in my home. I would purchase the **kagami mochi** at Mikawayaya Confectionary in Mitsuwa Market and display in my own living room until the mochi got moldy. I will admit to having bought a plastic replica one year at Marukai Market. Periodically, I will gather my family to re-create the tradition of **mochitsuki**, making the mochi sweet rice cakes. But rather than pounding the rice with wooden mallets until the rice was smooth as we did at my grandparent's house, I bought a machine that steams, grinds and churns the rice until smooth. We do, however, keep the tradition of forming the rice into balls by hand. Hot sticky rice in bare hands is an art all should experience at least once in their life!

The second arrangement was a **sho chiku bai**: pine, bamboo and white flowers. I later learned the traditional arrangement called for plum blossom instead of white flowers but I think the plum blossoms were hard to find unless you had a tree in your backyard. As I recall, my grandfather told me the **sho chiku bai** arrangement was a symbol of happiness and the individual elements of the arrangements had separate meaning. The pine was evergreen for a long life, the bamboo was for strength and the white blossom was for a pure and fresh start of the New Year.

My recollections are from the perspective of an American of Japanese ancestry. My traditions may not be culturally correct from a Japanese point of view but as a member of the Torrance



## CALENDAR

January 10	Association Meeting 7:00 pm West Annex Commission Room
14	City Hall Closed
15	<b>ALUMNI REUNION</b> 11:00 am - 2:00 pm (see page 3 for details)
22 and 29	Student Selection Interviews by appointment
28	City Hall Closed

## SAVE THE DATES



# BUNKA-SAI

## IS COMING SOON

### APRIL 30 AND MAY 01 2011

Sister City Association I come to this organization with an interest in learning more about Japan, Kashiwa and myself.

Like the **sho chiku bai**, my TSCA wish for the coming year is happiness as we continue our everlasting relationship with our friends in Kashiwa, strength as we make our decisions for our program and a beautiful beginning in 2011 that will last the year through.

### Missing Ann Smisek

The sudden loss of Ann Smisek to TSCA and our community came as such a shock to everyone. It was just a week earlier the TSCA Board of Directors elected her as Vice President for 2011. Perhaps one of the last photographs taken of her was by Shirley Tanaka on her camera phone as Ann posed with Cheryl Yamauchi and me for a newsletter picture of the new executive committee. She was wearing earrings a friend had bought for her in Russia and a cute pin in the image of a girl playing soccer that we all admired.



Ann had said "yes" to the Nominating Committee. We were looking forward to the year ahead and joked about 2011 being the "Year of the Woman" as all members of the executive

committee were women. I was looking forward to working with Ann. Her easy-going personality and smile were ever present when asked to pitch in wherever needed, especially the Bunka Sai Gift Booth.

I had really gotten to know Ann when she joined the TSCA Cookbook Committee. We shared many hours compiling recipes and enjoying each others company at my dining room table. We always scheduled our meeting so they did not conflict with Ann's other community commitments which were many. We could always count on Ann to gather recipes from the Mayor and City Council. She even seized the opportunity to collect the cherished chocolate chip cookie recipe from the Torrance Fire Station #1 by asking a firefighter to write it on a napkin.

The personal tributes to Ann at her memorial service only reinforced what we already knew about her. She was a remarkable woman. The Daily Breeze chronicled her life in a touching article on November 27, 2010 found at: [http://www.dailybreeze.com/latestnews/ci\\_16723316](http://www.dailybreeze.com/latestnews/ci_16723316)

Ann leaves us with a huge void to fill but her legacy with TSCA will live on each year when the Kashiwa students put on the square dance dresses she sewed. Every year the girls from Kashiwa are captured with smiling faces thanks to Ann Smisek.

We will miss you Ann. TSCA will not be the same without you but we will carry on in your honor.

### Thank You Very Much!

Words cannot express our appreciation to the outgoing executive committee and board members who have provided the association with volunteer hours too numerous to calculate and leadership in continuing the mission of the Torrance Sister City Association:

**Jordan Thompson**, President, who stepped up to serve the association for 2010.

**Gail Roulette**, Vice-President for two years and has served as Acting President since September

**Vera Little**, Secretary for two years who has recorded minutes for each meeting.

**Joe Rust**, Treasurer for two years who has kept all of the financial records and managed finances.

**Tracy Burton, Eric Fisher and Jordan Thompson**, Board Members with terms expiring at the end of 2010. We are grateful for your service to TSCA.

It is my honor to serve as your President this year. TSCA is only as strong as our membership. Please remember to renew for 2011.

I look forward to seeing you at the association meetings, the second Monday of each month (except August and December).

Your support and suggestions are always welcome. See you all at the Alumni Reunion Luncheon on January 15th.

**Teri Kuwahara**  
**[terikuwahara@gmail.com](mailto:terikuwahara@gmail.com)**  
**(310) 850-3782 cell**

## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Acting President Gail Roulette was requested to call a special meeting of the Board of Directors as prescribed in the TSCA bylaws on December 13, 2010. At this meeting the Board of Directors unanimously appointed Gail Roulette as President for the remaining 2010 term. Effective January 1, 2011, Gail will assume the duties of Immediate Past-President and serve the Board of Directors as keeper of the bylaws and Parliamentarian.

The Board of Directors also unanimously appointed current Board Member Kerry Cababa as Vice-President and Jill Maroney to the Board vacancy left by her mother, Ann Smisek.

### Congratulations 2011 Officer



**Kerry Cababa**  
**VICE PRESIDENT**

The vice president performs the duties of the president in the absence of the president and is in charge of publicity and newsletter mailings.

She has been involved in the Torrance community for 35 years, having received in the past an Honorary Service Award from both Arlington Elementary and Casimir Middle Schools. She has had past involvement with Girl Scouts, AYSO, Girls' Softball, YMCA, YWCA and Gardena Evening Optimist Club. Current co-chair of the Los Angeles based Manzanar Committee.

She was serve as the adult leader for seven students in the 14th Exchange Group of 1987, remained an active member of the board for about 15 years, then took a short break. Thankful for the many friends made possible by TSCA and for the wealth of positive experiences throughout the years. It's been a fun ride and she hopes to contribute to great journey we all are on.

### New Board Member



**Jill Maroney** born in Los Angeles, She has lived in Torrance since she was three years old. She has been married to Mark Maroney for 26 years. She enjoy working as the office manager for Dr. Linda Schack. She love to travel, read, golf, and just spending time with family and friends. Coming from a long line of volunteers, She served on the Board of Directors at her children's preschool, then served for many

years on various PTA Boards, earning an Honorary Service Award in 1996. After her elder daughter, Rachel, was part of the 2001 student delegation to Kashiwa, she joined the TSCA Board of Directors, serving two terms. Seeing how special the exchange trip was, she applied to be the adult leader, and accompanied the 2005 delegates to Kashiwa. What a fantastic time! Her younger daughter, Adrian, was a delegate in 2007, and in 2008, She traveled to Kashiwa with her mother, Ann Smisek, to attend the wedding of Daisuke Kaneko, a friend made through TSCA. She served as the Student Club Advisor for three years, and she has served on many TSCA committees. She is looking forward to rejoining the TSCA Board, and helping to continue the wonderful Sister City relationship.

# TSCA ALUMNI REUNION

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**When:** Saturday, January 15, 2010, 11am to 2pm

**Where:** Ken Miller Recreation Center

**Who:** *Everyone* who has been to Kashiwa, is planning to go, or has otherwise been involved in the exchange program--including host families, exchange students, adult leaders, anniversary delegates, English teachers, future applicants, City or business leaders. 2011 applicants and their families will be introduced.

**Why:** To remember the good times, renew friendships; enjoy amazing food from our membership, and to strengthen relationships within our association and community; to install new officers and to meet our new applicants. Our Partnership Award recipient will be honored as well.

**What to bring:** If you like, bring a dish featured in our cookbook, "Reunion", as these dishes are guaranteed to be "winners". Include the page number or a short description of the recipe on an index card. Families or groups of 3 or more, please bring an entrée to serve 10. Couples or 1-2 people bring an appetizer, salad, or side dish. Include serving utensils labeled with your name. All other dishes are equally welcome...don't forget your appetites. Beverages and a cake will be provided.

**What to wear:** Happi coats, yukata, kimono, your year's t-shirt, geta, zori, Kashiwa Reisol shirts, etc. It'll be fun, fun, fun to see the different designs. Bring your extra Kashiwa t-shirts and we will display them

**To Volunteer to help or to get 411:**

Kerry Cababa, 310 532-7562 or 310 871-1546, [Kcababa@TorranceCA.gov](mailto:Kcababa@TorranceCA.gov) or

Teri Kuwahara, 310 540-4933, [terikuwahara@gmail.com](mailto:terikuwahara@gmail.com) .

## Adult Leader Selection Committee

*Chairman Mark Richardson*

The Adult Leader Selection Committee have screened the applications and conducted interviews in December. The Adult Leader for 2012 will be formally announced at the Alumni Reunion Luncheon on January 15.

### Steven Ihde to Be 2012 Adult Leader



*By Mark Richardson*

The Adult Leader Selection Committee has presented their selection of Steven Ihde as Adult Leader for our 2012 student delegation to Kashiwa to the TSCA Board of Directors..

Steven became a familiar face during this past summer as he accompanied the Kashiwa delegation on many activities and excursions. He serves as a newly elected member of TSCA's Board of Directors, and also on the Student Selection Committee. Steven is well positioned to provide informed leadership to our Torrance students.

Steven also marks the first second-generation of leaders from the illustrious Ihde family. Father Butch (of Bunka-Sai dango fame) led the Torrance delegation in 1990, and mother Donna was the leader in 1984. (Sister Cara represented Torrance as a delegate in 2006.)

I want to acknowledge at this time the other fine applicants for the position of Adult Leader. It's a demanding role, and we express our gratitude to those willing to step up and offer their time and labor to make the exchange a success, not only during the summer but throughout the year of their tenure as leaders. Our Association is fortunate to have the "problem" of selecting a leader from among such talented candidates. All have our thanks.

Thanks also to committee members Gail Roulette and Jill Maroney for making the selection process both efficient and enjoyable.

## Membership News

*Membership Chairman: Ron Kimmel*

It is now time to renew your membership for 2011. Please use the membership form found on the back of the newsletter and mail in your dues for 2011. Members are encouraged to invite friends and family to join.

Membership must be renewed before February 28 to be included in the membership directory.

We thank the following members who have renewed or joined early:

Kimmel, Ron & Gudy (F)

Kragh, Evalyn (I)

Kuwahara, Teri, Gary & Derek (S)

Shintani, Ron, Patsy & Melissa (F)

Tanaka, Keith, Shirley & Jenny (F)

Ueki, Masaka & Sumi (F)

Wilder, Jean (I)

If you have any questions, call Ron Kimmel at (310) 530-2382.



***Presidential Challenge: President Teri Kuwahara is challenging every TSCA member to bring in one new member for 2011. TSCA depends on membership dues to defer the operating costs of TSCA and the summer programs. The price of membership dues is well worth receiving our wonderful newsletter compiled each month by our editor, Mona Wong. Please invite a friend, family member or local business to join TSCA and support global friendship between Torrance and Kashiwa, Japan.***

## PARTNERSHIP AWARD

*by Hazel Taniguchi*

The Partnership Award was started in 2006, the purpose being to recognize and honor longtime supporters of TSCA. The selected honorees have been and will be presented at TSCA's Annual Alumni Reunion.

So far, the following have received this award:

- 2006: Oriental Motor USA, TSCA's only business lifetime member and supporter of many activities
- 2007: Mrs. Shjiko Fujizawa, Ikebana instructor
- 2008: Former Mayor Ken Miller, who signed the Sister City agreement with Kashiwa, Japan in 1973
- 2009: Mrs. Hiroko Ikuta, tea ceremony and calligraphy instructor
- 2010: no award
- In 2011, the Kawai Sumi-e Club will be honored as the partnership award recipient. The club has been a supporter of TSCA at Bunka-Sai since the inception of our Japanese Cultural Festival. More details of the club will appear in another issue of our newsletter.

# CULTURAL EXCHANGE ENHANCES LIFE EXPERIENCE AND GROWTH

## Open House Event Showcases Japanese Exchange Program – See Japan Through Different Eyes

Erin Moriwaki | December 8, 2010

Torrance Public Library hosted an open house event for Torrance Sister City Association on Wednesday, December 8th at 7:00 pm as an opportunity to spark interest and recruit exceptional high school students for the student exchange program. The event focused on testimonials from previous student delegations and the positive unique personal impact on their lives. The campaign “See Japan through Different Eyes” identifies the unique experiences that reveal the layers and depth of complexity Japanese culture embodies through close interaction one cannot get simply as a tourist. It is with these experiences that provide lasting positive impressions and youth development that cultivate internal understanding as well as external appreciation.

“TSCA provides lifetime experiences and unique exposure to Japanese culture that allows our students the opportunity for self discovery and self revelation.” Said Teri Kuwahara, 2011 TSCA President.

Speakers sharing their experiences included: Teri Kuwahara, 2011 President, Brianne Heredia, Jeffrey Johnson, Kelley Yonezaki and Lisa Cho, 2010 Student Delegation, Emily La Rue, 2007 Student Delegation, and Ellen Blair Kircher, 2010 Adult Leader.

The event was put together by Dana Vinke, Torrance Library Support Services Supervisor and 2011 Adult Leader, and Erin Moriwaki, 2011 TSCA Secretary, who both are on the Student Selection Committee. In addition to the extra exposure from the library, Torrance City Cable covered the event. Special thanks to Brenda Parra for the hard work and creativity that went in to designing the poster and flyers for the recruiting campaign.



## English Teacher Selection Committee

*Chairman Lori Chong Eurich*

Chairman Lori Chong Eurich and her committee of Yoko Kobayashi Druten, Dan Fichtner, Hazel Taniguchi and Stephanie Ewing Warner are starting their campaign to publicize the vacancy for one English Teacher in Kashiwa. Application information is found on page 7.

## ENGLISH TEACHER SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The English Teacher Selection Committee met with Mr. Hidenobu Suda, Principal of Kashiwa Municipal High School in November at Lori's home during the school's exchange trip with North High School. The discussion covered the terms of the contract for the new English Teacher who will be selected in May. The teacher's contract includes a salary and benefits including personal time off. Please see the flyer in this newsletter for more details on the position.

TSCA has sent English teachers to Kashiwa since 1979 to give students an opportunity to learn English conversation and acquaint them with Torrance and American culture. Our two English Teachers, Ken Radomski and Geoff Tsudama share their observations about life in Japan every month in their newsletter articles.

*Lori Chong Eurich*

*Chairman, English Teacher Selection Committee*

## Student Selection Committee

TSCA's Student Selection Committee has been busy during October, November and December recruiting student applicants for our Summer 2011 exchange program in July. Presentations have been made in classes at all our local high schools by committee members, daily bulletin announcements have continued for several weeks, and an excellent evening program for the general public was presented at the Katy Geisert main library. Thanks to Dana Vinke and Erin Moriwaki for that fine program.

As of this writing (December 15) we have received no applications, but that is normal. By the deadline of Dec. 20 there will be quite a few. On Saturday, Jan. 15, at our Alumni Reunion luncheon, all applicants and their families are expected to attend, giving us our first opportunity to meet them. That afternoon the Selection Committee will meet to read all the applications and recommendations.

During the next several Saturdays the committee will interview each of the applicants, hold a picnic for the students, have a work party, and a pizza party. We will also visit each of the homes, and on two Friday evenings join the applicants and their families for a Japanese meal at Mitsuwa Market. This is all for the purpose of getting to know each of the students better.

By mid-March the committee will then meet to select the eight students who will be our 2011 Youth Ambassadors to travel to Japan in July.

*Ray Roulette*  
*Student Selection Committee*  
*310-370-9427*



# Trip to Ashikaga

Assistant Language Teacher in Kashiwa: Ken Radomski



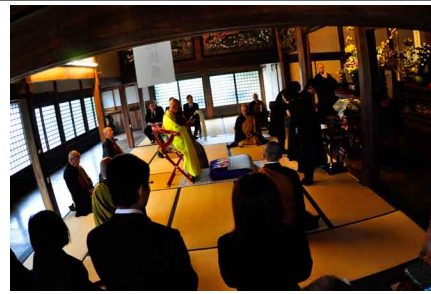
My Ojiichan asked me if I wanted to come with him to his brother's 命日, the 1 year anniversary of his death, and I wasn't quite sure if I was excited. I'm not too familiar with the process, but I knew these anniversaries were primarily celebrated in Asian countries, which paralleled the Eastern religions they practiced. One thing for sure though,

there's nothing more impressive than a death day. An amazing birthday is easy to throw, since you're alive and all, but to have a lively death day, you definitely need to be well loved.

Though we traveled pretty far to my Ojiichan's hometown in Ashikaga, in Tochigi prefecture, I wanted to reacquaint myself with all the stories my grandfather told me when I was there last time — Him telling me



stories of sprinting from corner to corner, coming back from school, trying to avoid the B-12's flying by. Him showing me his gravestone, and then proceeding to tell me about the spirits that he used to see hovering over the graveyard at night. Him telling me about how the temple he lived in housed many individuals and families that were faced with hard times during the war. There was so much history in this place, and yet, I barely scratched the surface.



I got to meet my Ojiichan's older brother and younger sister who I haven't seen in many, many years. The Hasegawa family was full of priests, teachers, and lawyers, which is encouraging. Talking to each one helped me gain an understanding

of how my grandfather grew up, and how our outlook on life isn't all that different.

The ritual of hymns given by the priests had a loud echoing bass to it. "It's unusual," my mother said, "to have 6-7 priests to come to these kinds of events." I guess only 1 or 2 priests usually come to conduct a ceremony, but since my granduncle was the head priest of the temple for years, many priests came to pay their respects.

I only got a taste of the rich history that I felt between those walls, and I definitely hope to make it up there again. Even just another trip with my grandfather would be fun just so I can pick at his brain. I guess the most rewarding



part of my stay here in Japan is the opportunity to re-understand my grandparents in a way that I couldn't as a child. They're definitely getting older and I want to make sure I seek opportunities like this trip, so I can properly understand what being a Hasegawa is all about

# TSCA Members in Japanese Folk Music Program

On Sunday, November 14, 2010, at the James Armstrong Theatre in Torrance, the Matsutoyo Kai, a popular minyo (Japanese folk song) group in the South Bay presented a show commemorating its 45th anniversary in the United States. Included in the program were four members of the Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA) who are involved in the Japanese cultural arts. The photo depicts all four performing in the opening number called "Shoju Sambaso," a celebratory piece performed at auspicious occasions. The TSCA members who performed are (with their stage names in parentheses): Mikko Haggott Henson on the tsuzumi or Japanese small hand-held drum, far left (stage name Katada Kikusa); Hisae Kihara as a vocalist, top row, second from right (Seigyoku Kihara); Kevin Willoughby, shamisen player in first row, 6th from right (Honjoh Hideeiji); and Aileen Willoughby, dancer on right (Bando Hirosozu). For the past two years, the Matsutoyo Kai Minyo group, under the direction of Madame Matsutoyo Sato, has performed in TSCA's Bunka Sai. Also participating at



Bunka Sai for many years is Kihara sensei (or teacher), an exhibitor of the Japanese crafts created by the students of her school, the Miyabi Oshie Kenkyukai; Kevin, as a performer with the Matsutoyo Kai; and Aileen as narrator and dancer for the Japanese dance group Bando Mitsuhiro Kai.

Watch for future issues of the TSCA newsletter which will feature each artist in more detail.



## Teach English in Kashiwa, Japan

The Torrance Sister City Association seeks qualified applicants for one high school English teacher in Kashiwa, Japan, the Sister City of Torrance. A minimum one-year contract runs from August 1, 2011 to July 31, 2012. The contract is renewable for a maximum three-year assignment.

**Duties:** Conduct and assist in a variety of English conversation classes, assist with coordinating campus visits by parents, administrators and junior high students, and extra curricular activities as specified by the principal which may include: judging and assisting with speech contests, serving as advisor to the English Conversation Club, business trips and coaching students for college interviews. Volunteer work with KIRA (Kashiwa International Relations Association) and other city groups may also be required.

### **Qualifications**

Applicants must:

1. live or work in Torrance
2. be fluent in written and spoken English
3. hold a Bachelor's degree plus a teaching credential or have demonstrated teaching experience
4. possess a keen interest in the Japanese language and culture and
5. represent the Torrance Sister City Association and foster the goals and objectives of the English Teacher Exchange Program

### **Compensation**

1. annual salary of approximately 4,800,000 Japanese yen
2. one-way airfare from Los Angeles to Japan
3. national health insurance (deducted from monthly salary)
4. subsidized housing and transportation allowance
5. paid Japanese holidays and personal days

Please send resume, cover letter, and two letters of recommendation by U.S. mail only postmarked by April 4, 2011 and received by April 14, 2011 to:

Lori Chong Eurich, Chair  
TSCA English Teacher Selection Committee  
Attn: Community Services Dept.  
c/o 3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90503

Qualified applicants will be scheduled for panel interviews held at Torrance City Hall, West Annex in May. For further information call: Lori Eurich at (310) 373-6146 or Dan Fichtner at (310) 316-6092.



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**TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION  
2011 Membership Application**

Except for Life Membership, all annual memberships are in effect from January 1st to December 31st.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

My membership is: NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ I do not want to be listed in the TSCA Directory \_\_\_\_\_

Directory Update: New address \_\_\_\_\_ New telephone number \_\_\_\_\_ New E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in participating in TSCA activities: \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual.....\$10.00 per year
- Family.....\$20.00 per year
- Supporting.....\$50.00+ per year
- Benefactor.....\$100.00+ per year
- Life Member.....\$2000.00+ one time donation

Enclosed is a donation to TSCA (in addition to my annual dues) in the amount \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Make your check payable to **TSCA** and mail with this form to: The Torrance Sister City Association  
c/o The Community Services Department  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, except in August and December, at the Civic Center West Annex Commission Room, 7:00 p.m.