

It's Raining Apples! And Also Lots of Rain

A rain-soaked morning did not prevent eight intrepid souls from venturing to Hobart, Indiana and County Line Orchards on October 15. They were greeted by the enticing aroma of fresh-made donuts, which (with some coffee) was enough to get them into tractor-pulled wagons and a trip out to the apple orchard.

It took some looking and effort, but Shizuka, Fuji, Pink Lady, Honeycrisp and Gala apples were wetly bagged amidst talk of current events. The upcoming Annual Conference was the talk during lunch, and everyone had a chance to load up on donuts and cider before heading back to Chicago. Thank You to **Layla McDermott** for organizing!



photo by Layla McDermott

And Midwest ELPs, Too!

Midwest USJC is proud to have two members chosen for this year's Emerging Leader Program: **Joe Gallagher** and **Aila Gomi**. Aila and Joe will attend the Annual Conference with the rest of their cohort and program alumni to help build community and strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Aila said, "I am incredibly excited to have been selected. I have been part of USJC for four years now and have gotten to meet so many amazing ELP members. I am so honored to have been selected and join the ELP USJC family."

Joe reiterated that he was honored, and said, "I'm excited for the opportunity to get to know other young JA professionals, and to learn from my fellow cohort members' lived experiences. This will also be my first USJC Annual Conference, so I am really looking forward to meeting more members from other regions, and becoming further involved with USJC."



From Anna Ninoyu: Sound Bytes



Over the years I've taken architecture students to Japan to guide them through the deep history sublimated in the traditional and contemporary architecture, gardens and city planning. I write this letter on the heels of my trip to Osaka, Nara and Asuka, embarking on a rare opportunity to collaborate with educational and cultural institutions through the language of traditional Japanese architecture with an innovative and intentional purpose; along the way discovering the unexpected, and building on the people-to-people relationships we encourage within the U.S.-Japan Council to bring communities together both in the US and Japan, and strengthen our ties now and for the future generations.

Since we spent some time in Osaka, my husband and I played our version of "I Spy" in which we looked for Tadao Ando buildings solely on what we know as architects. As a native and having his practice in Osaka, his buildings from the early '90s are found in the little-known dense nooks and crannies in the city as well as the wide-open suburbs of Osaka. While walking along one of many rivers in Osaka, we spotted the Nakanoshima Children's Book Forest that led us to a poem titled "Youth" by Samuel Ullman written in 1918.

He was a German immigrant, son of a rabbi and butcher store owner, who

resided in Birmingham, Alabama. Three decades later, this poem caught the attention of General MacArthur in a Reader's Digest publication from 1945 when he was detailed to oversee the rebuilding of Japan. This was then translated by Yoshio Okasa, and its popularity soared to the point where people of Japan carried folded up copies of the poem in their pockets. In 1992, prominent businessman Jiro M. Miyazawa said "Japan has been completely rebuilt since the devastation of World War II. I believe Samuel Ullman's poem 'Youth' played a part in this process by sustaining the Japanese mind with its inspiring message."

In 1985, the Youth Association was formed in Tokyo to celebrate this and other philosophers and writers. In 1989, this connection helped to establish the Japan-America Society of Alabama, to encourage international relationships between Japan and the United States. The poem is also located on the wall of the Dai-Ichi Life Insurance Company building in Tokyo where MacArthur was headquartered.

Every time I visit Japan, there's a new layer of the culture that is revealed to me. In our time in Nara and Asuka visiting the oldest temple in Japan with the Vice President of Nara University of Education, he wore a t-shirt that read "Be Playful". We were invited to observe an English language class at the oldest elementary school in Asuka, celebrating its 150th anniversary. To our surprise the children were gregarious, curious, and uninhibited, and the principal and teachers were as enthusiastic and playful. The juxtaposition of the place referred to as the origin of Japan and the youthfulness we saw was refreshing. It was a reminder that we all need a bit of playfulness to open new doors and experiences.

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a vigor of the emotions; a predominance of courage over timidity of the appetite, for adventure over love of ease.

Nobody grows old merely by a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether sixty or sixteen, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing, child-like appetite of what's next, and the joy of the game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt;

As young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear;

As young as your hope, as old as your despair.

So long as your heart received messages of beauty, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from man and from the infinite, so long are you young.

When the wires are all down and all the central place of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed and may God have mercy on your soul.

—"Youth" by Samuel Ullman, 1918

Midwest ELPs

2023 – Joe Galligan, Aila Gomi (OH)

2022 – Fumi Kikuyama Maher

2020 – Monika Oyama, Meredith Maimoni (CA)

2019 – Ryota Sekine, Naomi Hattori

2018 – Eric Hattori, Amy Rubinger

2016 – Kenji Negi, Andrea Sugano

2015 – David Kenji Chang, Miki Sankary

2014 – Stacy Uchida Brown

2013 – Brandon Mita, Amy Ancona Houlihan

Boys Night Out 2

Not to be outdone by the Midwest USJC women, Consulate members—including Consul General Hiroshi Tajima, who would embark for Japan a few days later – JA community leaders and Midwest guys gathered for dim sum at Furama restaurant then drinks at Kombini & Kanpai. Good food, great drinks, and a relaxed and convivial atmosphere all contributed to a wonderful evening improving U.S.-Japan relations, at least here in the Windy City. Much thanks to **Bob Kumaki** for getting everyone together!



photos by Robert Kumaki



Our September meeting found us engaged in our favorite pursuits of good food, drink and conversation at Gaijin, where we enjoyed Chef Paul Virant's take on okonomiyaki and kakigori.

Midwesterners Selected for Inaugural Advanced Leadership Collective

The inaugural cohort of the USJC Advanced Leadership Collective has been chosen, and Midwesterners **David Kenji Chang** (now in New York), **George Kobayashi**, **Daniela One** and **Andrea Sugano** (now in Philadelphia) have been selected. They will meet with 11 other mid-career professionals and hopefully create an engaging and supportive community.

Midwest Vice Chair Daniele said, "As a council member since 2015, I've witnessed the impactful role of the

ELP and JALD programs in cultivating meaningful personal connections. I'm highly enthusiastic about the Council's new initiative, which aligns with the successful principles of ELP and JALD. I'm appreciative of the chance to be part of the inaugural ALC cohort and I eagerly anticipate my role in supporting the program in Chicago and encouraging prospective candidates to participate."

Andrea said, "I am deeply humbled and overjoyed to have been given the

opportunity to participate in ALC with other distinguished members, especially our own Chicago superstars George and Daniela. What I am most looking forward to is the peer mentorship that I will not only gain but also hopefully be able to offer to this group. I believe having a strong network of other mid-career professionals from the community is critical to our growth and impact as leaders. I hope to be in an even better position to give back to USJC and my wonderful mentors and friends as a result of ALC."

Farewell and Welcome, Midwest Consuls General



Many Midwest USJC members made it out to the Residence for CG Hiroshi Tajima's farewell reception on August 4.

Bob Kumaki took CG Tajima out for his last dinner in Chicago to the CG's favorite place for steak: booth #1 at



CG Tajima made one last trip out to the western fringes of his consulate area and visited with **Vickie Sakurada Schaepler** and other Japanese Americans at the Legacy of the Plains Museum in Gering, North Platte and Scotts Bluff. He learned more about the rich history of Japanese immigrants who settled in western Nebraska.

Ambassador Tajima is working in the Cabinet Secretariat as Deputy Chief Negotiator for the Trans Pacific Partnership (now the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership). He met with incoming CG Jun Yanagi (at left) at the Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum. Tsuruga is the port where Jews fleeing Lithuania with visas from Vice Consul Chiune Sugihara were received.

CG Yanagi (far right) at his welcoming reception on September 28. He said he is committed to carrying on the relationship with the JA community that CG Tajima promoted.



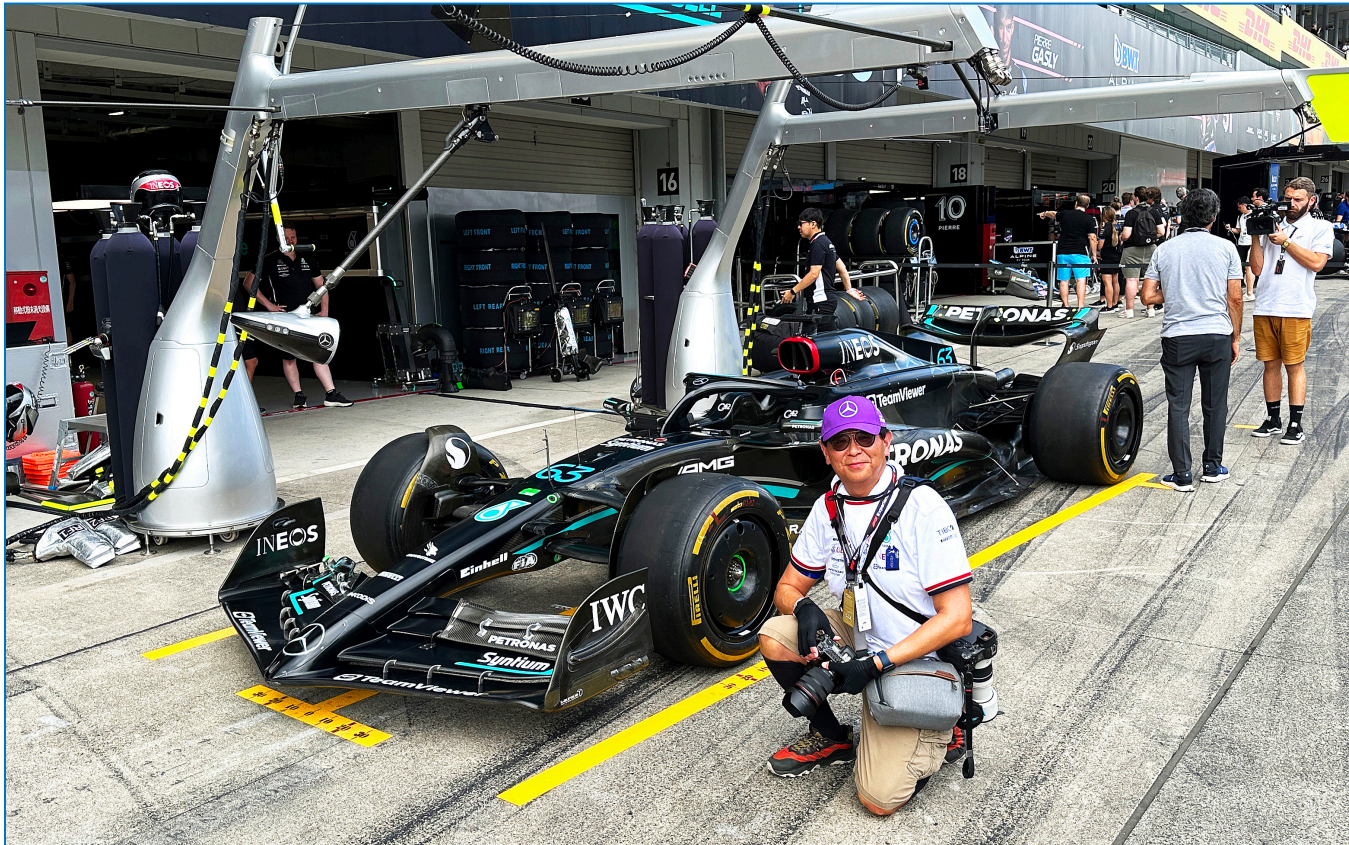
MEMBER NEWS



On August 16, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that **Lisa Sakai** had been awarded the Foreign Minister's Commendation for her efforts in strengthening the bond between the United States and Japan.

"I am honored and humbled to be selected for the Foreign Ministers Commendation this year," Lisa said. "However, I accept this award not just for myself, but also for several organizations that made it possible. Nothing I have done or contributed would have happened if not for the work and efforts of the Consul General of Japan-Chicago, the U.S.-Japan Council, the JACL-Chicago, the JASC and CJAC. These organizations provide the platform and opportunity for Americans and Japanese to come together at a grass roots level. It is through them that I have been able to meet and work with so many amazing Japanese."

Congratulations Lisa!



Toshiki Masaki, a life-long Ford man, at this year's F1 Japanese Grand Prix. Asked how he came to be photographed next to a Mercedes, Masaki replied, "Yeah, my support of Team Mercedes is only because my man Lewis (Hamilton) drives for them. I went to Suzuka last year for the first time and found out that just about everyone wears their respective team gear, so I followed suit. Then as I was doing pit walk this year, one of Mercedes team staff pulled me inside the rope and took pics (totally unprompted; probably because there are so few Mercedes fans!)."

COMMUNITY EVENTS



On November 17 the fund-raiser gala for the Japanese Arts Foundation will be held at Salvage One to directly support its efforts in the Chicagoland community. The theme is going to be Kizuna, the enduring bonds between people—close relationships forged through mutual trust and support. The evening promises a night of fine Japanese cuisine, spirits, and artistic performances and activities while connecting to our diverse community of artists, thinkers, and makers. Click [for more info and to purchase tickets](#).



photos by
Felix Lanier



It rained all day on August 5, but that didn't stop more than 350 folks from coming out to the Annual Chicago Japanese Community Picnic. Many Midwest USJCers enjoyed the food, drink and fun! Reserve August 3, 2024 on your calendar for next year's gathering.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



The 2023 Japan Festival Chicago showcased Japanese culture and food to 3,000 guests throughout the day on August 19 at the Chicago Cultural Center in downtown Chicago. The festival was co-sponsored by the Chicago Japanese American Council, Consulate General of Japan in Chicago and Chicago Sister Cities International. Plans are underway to move back into Millennium Park in June 2024.



The Japanese Culture Center and Japanese Arts Foundation along with the Chicago Park District and its other partners and sponsors held the third annual Tsukimi (Moon Viewing) event on September 29 in the intimate setting of the Garden of the Phoenix in Jackson Park (Chicago, IL). Consul-General of Japan in Chicago, Jun Yanagi, made opening remarks and there were performances by Sumi-e artist Patricia Larkin Green, and by Asian Improv Arts Midwest, including the Toyoaki Ensemble.



photos by
Dayne Kono