

# FRIENDSHIP NEWS

## SHINZEN TSUUSHIN

シンゼン  
ツーシン



### To contact us:

Donna Reynolds, Chair  
Drose\_00@hotmail.com  
785-263-4169

Jerry Rankin, Newsletter  
Editor  
785-263-7317  
jdrankin406@yahoo.com

Spring  
2011



What a difference a little time makes. When I first started this edition of *Shinzen Tsuushin* I had made a cover which reflected the 5th anniversary celebration of our Sister City's founding. And then - life happened. And as it sometimes does, it happened in a very violent, brutish kind of way. Earthquake and tsunami, resulting in, along with

everything else, a disaster at a nuclear power plant, further unsettling the lives of not only those nearby, but hundreds of miles away.

In minutes a 5th anniversary celebration of joy and accomplishment gives way to unimaginable loss, sadness, and the disquieting uncertainty that one's place in the world is no longer as sure as it had seemed only minutes earlier. Friends, so far from us, suffer and fear and because of the distance we can do nothing but worry and pray. Emails, phone calls, and Facebook postings bring reassurance, comfort, and one of the most important things during times such as this—connection. Omitama was, for the most part, spared the catastrophic material destruction and loss of life of the earthquake and tsunami, though there is still the fear of uncertainty and the suffering brought about by the loss of friends and family, and some of our friends have suffered harm resulting from the effects of radiation contamination on dairy herds and fields.

I chose the above photograph for this issue because it seems to speak to the present situation. In acknowledgement of the present reality, the monk bows very deeply in prayer for those who have died—a posture which speaks of deep sorrow at the terrible loss of both life and that sense of security which we value so highly. But, the monk will not stay that way. After a time, he will stand up straight, and continue on his way. He will not be the same as he was before, but he will go his way, living into his life—into his future. So it is (or is to be hoped) for all who live through such times as these. “Weeping may spend the night, but joy comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30.6) So may it be for our friends in Omitama, Ibaraki, and all of Japan. Indeed, even now, a mere month and a half on, our friends and their countrymen are rising to new life.

### In this edition of *Shinzen Tsuushin*:

From the Chair of the Sister City Committee  
Observances & Commemoration  
Japan Club & Spring Haiku  
Photos of Tree Planting and Benefit Concert  
News from the Sister City Committee  
News from our ALT  
“Thank you”



From Donna Reynolds,  
Chair of the Abilene-  
Omitama Sister City  
Board:

These have been trying times for our friends in Japan. The earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear situation have caused great concern for the citizens of Japan and also for the citizens here in America. Those of us in Abilene have anxiously awaited news from Omitama that everyone was okay. Modern technology has allowed us to communicate with emails and on face book. Each time we have heard good news it has been a relief. Dave Bergemeir has been great about putting news in the paper. I'd like to thank all the people who have shown support for Omitama at this time. That concern epitomizes the true meaning of a Sister City relationship. We all hope that life will return to normal for Japan as soon as possible.

Tim and Robin Nolan were wonderful to suggest a Benefit Concert. That event provided us with an opportunity to share the Japanese culture, food, decorations and items for sale, while entertaining the audience with music and a magic act. It was a special afternoon of friends, family and fun. The money that was raised will be donated to Omitama. It's not too late to send a donation to the Community Foundation in care of Friends of Sister City. We will be sending the donation in May.

We are in the process of making cranes to send to Omitama. The story says that our wish will come true if we make 1000. Our wish is for the people of Omitama to be able to return to a safe, healthy life, without fear. If you would like to help make cranes, please contact one of the board members for further information.

Sincerely,

Donna Reynolds

## Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board

**commemorates** . . . Prior to the earthquake on March 11, the Sister City Board had begun planning a celebration of the 5th anniversary of the founding of Omitama. We had:

- ✧ Petitioned the City Council to issue an official proclamation declaring March 27 "Omitama Day"

and

- ✧ Committed to the planting of five flowering cherry trees (*sakura*, さくら), one for each year of Omitama's existence, in Eisenhower Park.

In light of the events of March 11, and after due consideration, it was decided that we would continue with the both the Proclamation and the planting of the cherry trees, though now, the initial mood of congratulations and celebration, has been replaced by a more somber tone. Still, what we do we do in a spirit of gratitude and hope for our Sister City.

## Japan Club of Abilene . . . Machiko

Fedorchuk was the special guest at the January and February meetings of the Japan Club. Machiko, who lives in Junction City, shared with us her interest and in the Japanese art of calligraphy.

Elizabeth Shimabuku led lessons in Japanese, both speaking and writing beginning with hiragana and katakana, two of the three principal forms of Japanese writing, the third being kanji. (Romaji, which is the anglicized writing of kana is also sometimes used.)

Donna Reynold led those present in writing haiku for winter and spring, some of which we take great delight in sharing with you elsewhere in this edition.

On April 17, the Japan Club held it's last meeting for this term with an anime viewing party (Ponyo). We will resume in October 2011. Thanks to Donna Reynolds and Elizabeth Shimabuku for your help.

## Spring . . . Haiku and reflections from members of the Japan Club -

Lots of flowers bloom.  
Spring is the beginning of  
Beauty blooming full.

I think spring is one of the most wonderful seasons out of all the seasons. When the flowers bloom to their fullest, I'm surrounded by beauty when I'm relaxing in the rose garden!

**Brianna Baldwin**

Brand new life blossoms.  
Flowers bloom upon the ground.  
Spring has come at last

Spring brings new life. The snow melts and flowers bloom. Birds sing as they return from their winter homes. Spring brings the promise of light and happiness.

**Sam Brown**

Spring is beautiful.  
Birds sing and flowers blossom.  
Sun smiles on us.

Spring is beautiful, but Kansas weather is unpredictable. Softball season is around the corner and I can't wait to play outside.

**Jazmean Elledge**

Bunnies run around  
hopping away from people.  
a new day, new life

Spring always smells like it's going to rain so I stay inside.

**Amanda Fick**



The spring is peaceful.  
A new dawn will be coming.  
Spring is coming now.

Spring is warm and sunny. It's really nice weather. It's windy with lots of sports.

**Alan Garrett**

Butterflies so bright  
fluttering in the wind. They  
mingle with the trees.

I like the new signs of life in spring, like green grass and new born animals.

**Sydney Hall**

Spring is on its way.  
Sun rises above the Earth.  
See pretty flowers.

I love the spring flowers. I love the warm air. Seeing the leaves green once again. I like walking in the nice cool air.

**Jr. Garrett**

Earth awakens soon.  
Spring scents will fill the fresh air.  
The warmth brings new life.

Spring is my favorite season. After a long, cold, snowy winter it feels wonderful to have the sun warm on my face. The birds serenade us with their cheerful songs. soon the plants will begin to grow. I look forward to working in my garden.

**Donna Reynolds**





**Tree Planting** ... It was originally scheduled for Sunday, March 27 which turned out to be 32 degrees and snowing. Just one week later, April 3—92 degrees, bright and breezy, Friends of Sister City gathered for the ceremonial planting of the first of five flowering cherry trees. We plant these trees, not only in celebration of the 5th anniversary of the founding of Omitama, but also in commemoration of those who have lost so much, including their lives, and in gratitude for those who have given, and are giving, to help Japan blossom again.



All our best to our friends in Omitama!



Members of Japan Club and 2010 delegates of Omitama plant the first tree.



**Benefit Concert for Japan** . . . Sunday, April 10 was a fine day . . . no better than a fine day. At the Great Plains theater 12 talented and generous artists—musicians and a magician—shared their talents to an appreciative audience for one purpose: to contribute towards the welfare of our friends in Omitama and the people of Japan. Under the gifted production and direction of **Tim and Robin Nolan**, who originated the idea, recruited the talented acts, managed the schedule, and secured the venue; by the generosity of the Great Plains Theater’s managing director, **Marc Liby**, who opened the facility completely to the concert; to the organizing (and cooking) skills of the energetic **Donna Reynolds**, who enlisted and organized the members of the Sister City Board and Friends of Omitama in support of the concert; and to those **dedicated Board Members, Friends of Omitama, and members of the 2010 Delegation to Omitama**, who offered their talents and love for our Sister City to cook and serve (what was by all accounts very good Japanese food), work admissions, tend the silent action, and fold who knows how many origami cranes—it was much better than a fine day. It was a day of artistry, generosity, care, concern, and love.



# Benefit Concert for Japan . . . .



Ann Manning was responsible for many of the decorations of the day.



The food, prepared by members of the Board and Friends was おいしい (*oishii*, delicious) and in addition to sushi, and gyoza, included curry rice, miso soup, a treat for those with a sweet tooth . . .



as well as, something to drink, of course.

Attendees taking time to visit, fold cranes, view scrapbook about our Sister City, and eat.



Some of the Performers:



Robert Watson



Brian  
Krenzin



Chuck Kolacny,  
Tim Johnson,  
and Kenny Graves



Brianna Walton



The Innermission Quartet





Donna Reynolds and Corina Ryland, Sister City Board Members, working the Silent Auction and Admissions booth for the Benefit Concern.

Laurel Kolacny and Sarah Zey, 2010 youth delegates to Omitama, fold paper cranes during the benefit concert held on April 10. Sarah also originated the “Hope for Japan” bracelet fundraiser to aid in the relief of the Japanese people. Sarah launched her effort the day the earthquake was reported here.



John Barbur (Abilene Tree Board and Friend of Omitama), Mary Zey and Corina Ryland (Sister City Board members, and Elizabeth Rankin (friend of Omitama), help plant the last of five flowering cherry trees.)

## News from the Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board . . .

Two important upcoming events will be front and center in the work of the Board moving forward.

First, our current ALT, Jason Gibson, completes his tenure at the end of the current school year. After considerable discussion, it was decided that, given the challenging circumstances facing the teachers in the Omitama schools this year, the Board decided that we would not send an ALT for the 2011-2012 school term.

The current project for the Board is the 2011 Omitama delegation visit to Abilene in late July/early August. At our November meeting the Board members began volunteering to head the various committees necessary to ensure an enjoyable and successful visit. Though the recent events in Japan called into question whether or not this year's visit would occur, we have subsequently received word from Mayor Shimada, that it is indeed their intention to send a delegation, though there is some degree of uncertainty about the size of the delegation. So, we are moving ahead with our preparations and it is anticipated that Board members will be recruiting Friends of Sister City to aid in the planning and arrangements.

Among the tasks to be done is:

- ◆ Recruiting of host families
- ◆ Special event planning (welcoming and departing events with meals)
- ◆ Itinerary (places to see, things to do)
- ◆ Transportation (pick up and return to airport as well as for the various itinerary events.)

If you are interested and would be willing to help in one of these areas, please contact Jerry Rankin (jdrankin406@yahoo.com or 280-9177) or Donna Reynolds (drose\_00@hotmail.com or 263-4169).

### **Abilene-Omitama Sister City Committee**

Jerry Rankin, Chair  
Donna Reynolds, Vice-chair  
Jackie Bisnette, Treasurer  
Corina Ryland, Secretary  
Ron Rein  
Mary Zey  
Mary Montgomery  
Lisa Wright  
Elizabeth Shimabuku

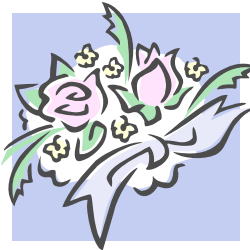
Meetings of the Sister City Committee are held the fourth Tuesday of each month starting at 7:00 p.m. and are open to the public. Meetings are held in the conference room of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (use west entrance).

**Election of new Officers . . . At the April 26th meeting the Abilene-Omitama Sister City Board it was reported that Donna Reynolds, Jerry Rankin, and Elizabeth Shimabuku had re-enrolled to serve an additional three term on the Board. It is noted, with much appreciation, that Donna Reynolds, who has served 11 years as a member of the Sister City Board, was completing her 6th year as the Chair. Elections were held for new officers. Elected to serve one year terms were: Jerry Rankin, Chair; Donna Reynolds, Vice-chair; Corina Ryland, Secretary; and Jackie Bisnette, Treasure.**





**News from Jason Gibson . . .** Having completed his third year as Abilene’s representative Assistant Language Teacher to our Sister City, Jason now begins a new chapter in his life—husband and father. On January 27, a beautiful baby boy, Kentaro, was born to Jason and Chika Netsu. Then on March 30, Jason and Chika were married in the Hiye-jinja (Shrine) in Tokyo. (Photos of the wedding are here—<http://www.dropbox.com/gallery/26406994/1/Japan%20Wedding?h=e7231c>) Congratulations to Jason, Chika, and Kentaro. We look forward to greeting you all in August.



The last two months have been very busy for the Sister City Board and the Friends of Omitama. It is especially appropriate to recognize the the aid and assistance provided by:



**The Abilene City Commission** for their whole heated support of the Sister City relationship as expressed by their enthusiasm in support of the Omitama Day Proclamation, and their support and attendance at the Cherry Tree planting, (Then Vice-mayor Lynn Peterson addressed us and and Commissioner Dennis Weishaar was in attendance.) and the Benefit

Concert.

**Sarah Zey** (2010 youth delegate to Omitama) for planning, ordering, and selling “Hope for Japan” bracelets as a way of raising funds in support of our Sister City.

**Tim & Robin Nolan** for the energetic enthusiasm consistently shown in the production and managing of the Benefit Concert.

**Gwyn Johnson** for her help in the Cherry tree project; for collecting and accounting for the donations.

**John Barbur and the Abilene Tree Board** for their guidance and support in the Cherry tree project.

**Jane Foltz and the Park’s Department crew** for their guidance, support, and physical labor in support of the Cherry tree project. Especially for digging the holes for the last four trees. Brilliant!

**All who have expressed support and caring for our friends in Omitama and those impacted by the Tohoku-Kanto earthquake and tsunami** by your emails, phone calls, physical

# Kizuna

## - The Bonds of Friendship -

April 11, 2011  
[Provisional Translation]

One month has passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, which caused over 13,000 people to lose their lives in the enormous earthquake and tsunamis that struck. Even now, over 14,000 people remain unaccounted for, and about 150,000 people remain forced to take shelter as evacuees. I extend my heartfelt sympathy to all the people who have suffered as a result of this disaster, both Japanese nationals and non-Japanese, and to their families.

We are currently mobilizing all resources to bring the situation at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station under stable control and working to stabilize the situation there at the earliest possible time.

This one month since the great earthquake has been an extremely arduous time for Japan. Yet at the same time, it has been a period during which Japan has once again realized, and once again given thanks, that we stand together with the world.

Thus far, over 130 nations and regions, nearly 40 international organizations, a number of nongovernmental organizations and people from all around the globe have extended their best wishes to us, and moreover they have expressed their support and solidarity through donations and other means. Various countries and regions rushed in rescue workers to swiftly conduct rescue operations in the affected areas swiftly and delivered supplies such as food, medical supplies, and blankets. This assistance also brought wholehearted encouragement to the disaster victims. In addition, we have received thousands of origami paper cranes intently folded by children in distant nations wishing for the reconstruction of the disaster-stricken areas.

On behalf of the people of Japan, I extend my heartfelt thanks for such assistance from all around the world.

There is no doubt that Japan will recover, become vibrant again, and become an even more marvelous country. In living up to the cordial encouragement and solidarity extended to us by the international community, I consider walking down the road to such a rebirth to be incumbent upon us, and the best way for Japan to reciprocate your kind concern. It is my firm conviction that through the fundamental strengths inherent to the Japanese people and the cordial cooperation of the international community, we can achieve this without fail.

I am also determined that Japan will certainly repay, through our contributions to the international community, the cordial assistance we have received from around the world.

To that end, I will work to the best of my ability to realize reconstruction of Japan.

Naoto Kan  
Prime Minister of Japan

菅 直人

A friend in need is a friend indeed