

JTF
DECEMBER

Association News

Nola's
Craft Corner

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CRAFTING!

Come join us for the next installment of Nola's Craft Corner! For this month's craft, guests will learn how to make 2 classic Christmas ornaments to take home. Non-members are also welcome!

Make
BOTH
for just
¥800!

- ◆ Date: **Saturday, December 19th, 14:00 - 15:30**
- ◆ Place: Aizu Wakamatsu City Learning Center (Keiko-do)
1F Arts and Crafts Room
- ◆ Sign-Up: Contact the AWIA by phone or email at:
mail@awia.jp or **0242-27-3703**
- ◆ Registration deadline: **Thursday, December 17th**
**Registration is limited to 15 participants*

“Little Trip” : Germany - ONLINE!

Did you miss last month's “Little Trip” to Germany? Not to worry! We'll be hosting an encore performance online this month. Join in for an interactive, RPG-style tour across Germany with German-Japanese native, Yoko Kluten!



Date: **December 13th (Sun)**
Time: 13:30 - 14:30
Place: Online! (Zoom)

Sign-Up: Please contact the AWIA by December 11th (Fri)
mail@awia.jp or **0242-27-3703**

NEW NAME FOR JTF!

After much deliberation, we've decided on a new name for JTF! Starting with the January 2021 issue, the AWIA English newsletter will be called “**SynthesAizu.**”

The idea comes from the original meaning behind the Kanji for Aizu, “会津” which mean “meeting” and “harbor” respectively, and reference the 5 rivers that meet in the Aizu region. We combined this piece of Aizu history with the English word “Synthesize,” which has a similar connotation of several things from different sources meeting in one place: Aizu!

Thank you to everyone who voted and submitted name ideas last month!



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

This Month in Aizu-Wakamatsu

HOLIDAY CLOSURES NOTICE

As we approach the new year's holidays, please remember that most banks, as well as some ATMs, supermarkets, post offices, and other businesses will close for the holidays. Many businesses are closed during the following days:

December 28th (Mon) - January 3rd (Sun)

Holiday hours will vary for different businesses, so be sure to check the holiday hours for your local area. Trash pickup schedules for the New Year's period will also vary by area.

“Nihongo de Hanasou” Student Speech Presentations

Come support your fellow AWIA members at this year's Japanese Speech Presentations!

Students from the AWIA's Fall Japanese Language classes will be showing off their Japanese speaking skills at this free community event. Drop by to support the students and meet members of the international community.

Date: December 12th (Sat)

Time: 10:00 - 12:00

**Place: Aizu Wakamatsu City
Learning Center (Keiko-do)
3F Lecture Rooms 2 & 3**



Winter Japanese Classes Online

Looking to stay on top of your Japanese language study this winter? The AWIA's winter Japanese classes will be starting up this month, with online classes available! No need to venture out of your house into the cold to stay on top of your studies!

❄️ ¥5,000 for 12 Lessons (60min per class) ❄️

Class times are flexible to fit your schedule!
See our Facebook Page for more details.

NEW YEAR'S POSTCARD LOTTERY

For those of you who've lived in Japan for at least a year, you're probably familiar with the Japanese custom of sending New Year's cards, or "Nengajyo." This is similar to the western tradition of sending Christmas cards, and is a good way to keep in touch with friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances, classmates, your local konbini cashier...you get the idea.



If you've sent or received a Nengajyo in the past, you may have noticed the little 6-digit code on the bottom corner. Did you know that number is actually a ticket for a huge, nation-wide lottery? Since 1949, New Year's cards in Japan have been connected to the lottery, with prizes becoming more and more lavish as Japan's economy grew following the second world war. Today, the Japan Post hosts the lottery with a lineup of fantastic prizes every year.

2021 Nengajyo Lottery Prizes Include:

- 3 Million Yen in Cash
- Popular local specialty products
- Special commemorative postage stamps

For more details about this year's prizes and how to send out your own New Year's Postcards, visit the Japan Post Website below:

<https://www.post.japanpost.jp/event/otoshidama2021/>

Good Luck!

New Year's at Tsuruga Castle

For those looking to ring in the new year at the shrine on the Tsuruga Castle grounds, there will be a special giveaway for the first 5,000 guests to arrive for New Year's celebrations. Guests will receive a commemorative bamboo rice paddle engraved with well-wishes for 2021.

Date/Time

December 31st, 23:30 - 2:30,
January 1st, 8:00 - 17:00

Place

Tsuruga Castle Grounds



Last year's paddle



Hanukkah

by Caitlin Quiat

Hanukkah (also spelled Chanukah) is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people around the world. It celebrates the miracle of light, and is a time of singing, lighting candles, and eating fried food. Hanukkah lasts 8 days and follows the Jewish Lunar Calendar, so the dates can fall anywhere between late November to late December.

This year, Hanukkah is from December 10th to 18th.

Hanukkah commemorates a time in the second century B.C.E., when the armies of Syria invaded and took over Israel. They tried to force the Jewish people out, and forbid Jewish religious practices, executing those who resisted. The Temple, the holiest place for Jews at the time, was ransacked and renamed for Zeus. In response, a Jewish resistance sprang up, led by Judah Maccabee. Though outnumbered, his army overtook the Syrians and they won two major battles, forcing the Syrians to leave.



Judah Maccabee



Menorah

Once the Jewish people won, they went back to reclaim the Temple. They relit the *ner tamid*, or “eternal light” that was supposed to burn constantly, but they were only able to find a small jar of oil enough for one day. They sent a messenger to look for more oil, but many were resigned to the light burning out. Then, a miracle happened, and the oil that was supposed to only last one day lasted eight whole days, just long enough for the messenger to return with more oil. This is why Hanukkah is called “The Festival of Lights,” and why we celebrate for eight days.

Now, when we celebrate Hanukkah, we light a *menorah*, also known as a *hanukkiyah*. Each of the eight branches symbolizes one night of Hanukkah, and the candle that rests in the middle, the *shamash*, is used to light the other candles. Each night, we add a candle to the *menorah*, and sing prayers. On the last night of Hanukkah, the *menorah* lights up the room, burning brightly with all its candles lit.

We also play games during Hanukkah. *Dreidel* is a traditional gambling game which uses a four-sided top and lots of *gelt*, or chocolate coins. Each side has a Hebrew letter symbolizing a different outcome, and the letters come from the Hebrew phrase, “A great miracle happened there.”

Because of the importance of oil, we eat lots of fried food during Hanukkah. Many families enjoy *latkes*, or shredded potato pancakes, as well as *sufganiyot*, or jelly-filled doughnuts.



Dreidel

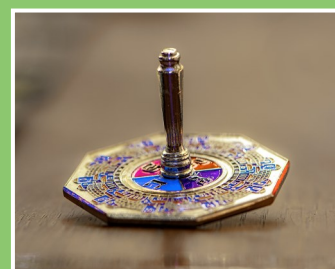
As the candles burn low and we sing our Hanukkah songs, we are reminded of the joy and light that this holiday brings. We give thanks for what we have, and share what we can through charitable donations with those who are in need. It is truly a holiday of warmth and love.



Latkes



Sufganiyot



Dreidel

Events in December

1	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
2	WE	
3	TH	
4	FR	
5	SA	
6	SU	Closed
7	MO	Closed
8	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
9	WE	
10	TH	
11	FR	
12	SA	10:00 Japanese Speech Contest
13	SU	10:00 Nihongo Hiroba 13:30 "Little Trip" to Germany - Online
14	MO	Closed
15	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
16	WE	
17	TH	
18	FR	
19	SA	14:00 Nola's Craft Corner: Xmas Ornaments
20	SU	Closed
21	MO	Closed
22	TU	
23	WE	
24	TH	
25	FR	
26	SA	13:30 Newsletter Release Preparation
27	SU	
28	MO	Closed
29	TU	Closed
30	WE	Closed
31	TH	Closed

Other Information

WINTER CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

For the latest coronavirus updates, please visit the prefectural task force website:

<https://fukushima-covid19.web.app/en>

As of November 24th, there have only been 25 reported cases of coronavirus in Aizu Wakamatsu since the first reported case this August. Although the number of reported cases is low, several new cases are popping up in Fukushima city and other surrounding areas, so it's important to stay vigilant. Especially as the weather gets colder, make sure to keep your immune system in tip-top shape, and avoid situations that pose a high risk of infection.

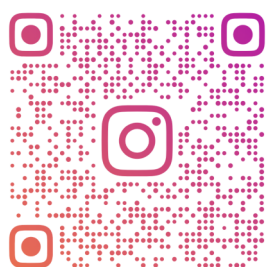
The city hall recommends the following tips for keeping yourself and others safe this winter:

- Be sure to get enough sleep each night
- Always wear a mask when talking with someone
- Take extra care in shared spaces like restrooms
- Avoid eating and drinking in large groups

Message from the Editor

Happy Holidays everyone! I hope you're having a warm season, no matter which holiday you celebrate. Due to the coronavirus, I'll be spending my first Christmas in Japan this year, and I've been thinking of ways to make the day special. Recently, I've spotted ads for Christmas cakes popping up everywhere around town. Most cakes seem quite pricey, and I find myself wondering if I couldn't make something just as good on my own that's a bit cheaper. Have you ever ordered a Christmas cake in Japan? Was it worth the price tag? Is there any benefit to ordering from a bakery instead of the local 7 Eleven? Let me know at mail@awia.jp!

-Nola



We're on Instagram!
Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA_PHOTO

<http://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for the latest updates in multiple languages!

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