

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

SynthesAizu

May 2021
Volume 1 Issue 5

Association News

“Little Trip” Seminar Series: Bolivia!



Come join us for the next destination in our “Little Trip” Seminar series! Our guest speaker, Mr. Kazunori Sasao, will take us on a journey to Bolivia! Mr. Sasao lived in Bolivia for 2 years as a JICA ambassador, and will share some of the interesting and surprising things he experienced during his time in Bolivia.



Date: Saturday, May 29th 10:00~12:00

Place: Aizu City Learning Center, 3F

Price: Free!

Sign-Up: Please contact the AWIA by phone or email by Friday, May 28th.

*Limited to 18 participants. (This seminar will be held in Japanese.)

Annual AWIA General Assembly

Date: June 5th (Sat) 14:00 - 16:30

Place: Aizu City Learning Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2&3

On June 5th, the AWIA will hold its annual General Assembly meeting. Last year, the former AWIA president, Mr. Kensuke Suzuki, retired from his 25 years of service at the association. In addition to Mr. Suzuki's farewell speech, we will also be presenting video messages from many of the AWIA's former CIRs at the meeting. Members will soon receive a postcard in the mail to RSVP for the event. Non-members are also welcome to RSVP by contacting the AWIA by phone or email.

AWIA Library Grand Re-Opening Event!

We are thrilled to announce that we will soon be unveiling our new and improved AWIA library! Here at the AWIA office, we have been hard at work organizing our book collection, streamlining our shelves, and adding some fresh new titles for members to enjoy! We've also modernized our lending system so that all book loans can be recorded through a simple library app. Please join us on May 15th for an online tour of the new library, followed by an opening campaign week in early June!

Online Livestream Tour

Time: Saturday, May 15th, 10:00~10:30

Place: AWIA Facebook Page

Join us on Facebook for an online tour of the library where we'll be introducing some of the new books in our collection and answering questions live!



Library Opening Campaign Period

Time: June 8th (Tues) - June 13th (Sun)

Place: AWIA Office

Come drop by the AWIA to check out the fresh library and take home a new book! Visitors who come during the campaign period will get an original AWIA bookmark!



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: mail@awia.jp

New Member at the AWIA Office: Yumeno Sato!

This month, we welcome a new office member here at the Aizu Wakamatsu International Association! Ms. Yumeno Sato is a recent graduate from Takushoku University, and joined the AWIA team as a temporary worker on April 16th. Ms. Sato attended elementary school in the United States (CA) and her English skills are excellent. She'll be at the office most Wednesday and Friday afternoons, so feel free to drop by and say hello!

1-Minute Interview

Yumeno-san, what's your favorite season and why?

"I really like spring. My birthday is in spring, and I love eating fresh strawberry cake. The cherry blossoms are beautiful too."

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

"Morocco! There's a place in Morocco where everything is blue, and I'd really like to see that someday. I've also heard there are a lot of cats in Morocco."



Local Artist Exhibit: Gen Yamanaka

"Memory of the Stars"

4/24 (Sat) ~ 6/20 (Sun)

Kitakata City Museum of Art
(Closed Wednesdays)

Adults 600JPY/ Children 250JPY/
Seniors 300JPY/ ages 75+ FREE



Gen Yamanaka was born in Kitakata City in 1954, and attended Tokyo University of the Arts where he studied printmaking and oil painting. This exhibit features a collection of Yamanaka's woodblock prints spanning from his early works to his latest ones, as well as glass paintings and monotypes. The exhibit celebrates the artist's roots with a selection of pieces related to Yamanaka's hometown in Kitakata.

Museum website
kcmofa.com

Novel Coronavirus Updates

Prefectural Government Urging Caution During Golden Week

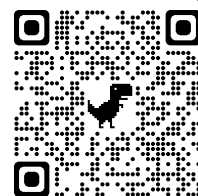
In light of the recent rise in Covid-19 cases across Fukushima, the prefectural government is urging all residents to take extra precautions during the Golden Week Holidays. The city is also reminding residents to avoid unnecessary outings and travel during the long vacation.

Vaccine Distribution for 65+ to Begin in Aizu Wakamatsu May 17th

In mid-April, Aizu Wakamatsu City mailed vaccination vouchers to residents over the age of 65. After receiving the voucher, residents will be able to make a reservation by phone to receive their vaccine. Phone lines may be congested during the reservation period, but the city has assured enough vaccines will be available for those eligible.

Ukiyoe Exhibit at Koriyama City Museum of Art

"Ukiyoe that Challenges - Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi...and More!"



4/24 (Sat) ~ 6/6 (Sun)

Koriyama City Museum of Art
(Closed Mondays)

Adults 800JPY/ Students and Seniors 500JPY/
JHS students and younger FREE

This exhibition showcases nearly 150 woodblock prints from the late Edo to early Meiji period. The exhibit features works from printmakers Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861) and his apprentice Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (1839-1892) who was known as one of the last great ukiyo-e masters.



Member Spotlight: Vadim and Liaisan

This month we would like to introduce Vadim and Liaisan, from Russia! This well-traveled duo shared some of their thoughts and experiences from their two years living in Aizu. Recently, they left Aizu and set off on a brand new adventure in Barcelona! Although we are sad to see them go, we wish them the best of luck going forward.

First, could you tell us a little bit about your hometowns?

Vadim is originally from Penza, and Liaisan is from the small urban village Karabash, in the Tatarstan republic (subject of Russia). However, in the last few years before coming to Japan we lived in Kazan. Kazan is the main city of the Tatarstan republic, and it's an old and beautiful city with rich history and culture. Because there are at least two main ethnic groups (Russian and Tatar) and correspondingly two religions (Orthodox Christianity and Islam) there are many diffusions between them. During last decade, Kazan has changed significantly into a very modern and developed city. There are many interesting places there, including restaurants of different cuisines, cozy bars, informative museums, and associations of passionate people. There is also a very new part of Kazan, a small IT-city called Innopolis, which was built around the University to create a unique atmosphere for those who want to study and apply their technical skills towards building modern services and solutions.



Why did you decide to come to Aizu Wakamatsu? Had you ever been to Japan before moving here?

We decided to move to Aizu because Vadim got an offer to work at a Japanese-Russian startup company called Soramitsu. Before coming to Aizu we visited Japan only once, during summer vacation in 2018. Actually, Vadim heard about the opening at Soramitsu and had his first interview with the CEO of the company while we were there during our vacation. Aizu was selected by Soramitsu because of the high potential for collaboration with Aizu University and because of the inspiration that the Aizu area gives our CEO, Makoto Takemiya.

What are some things about Aizu that surprised you, and what did you enjoy most about living here?

We were surprised that there is no cinema in such a big city :-)
Being serious, we were very surprised by the kindness of the local people, beauty of the surrounding nature, the large number of rice fields, and the natural forests around the city. We were surprised that there are so many foreigners, both English-speaking people and Russian-speaking people (most of them became our good friends). With the support of our Russian community we discovered different interesting temples and museums (the museum of Kyoshi Saito and the Salvador Dali museums are our favorite ones), hiking trails and mountains, raw horse meat and Awamanjyu. Also, the existence of the International Association in a relatively small town surprised us too. We have solved so many bureaucracy-related quests with the support of the association. We have also learned a lot from the Japanese lessons organized by AWIA.

What was something you discovered here that you would want other people to know about?

Other people should definitely take the chance to discover not only Aizu-Wakamatsu, but all the small towns and villages around, looking for unique temples and food. Particularly, Sakudarikannon and Shingu Kumano Shrine amazed us a lot. The relatively unknown Kagetsutei Garden Museum also inspired us a lot.

You mentioned that you've traveled and lived in a number of different countries. Of all the places you've been to so far, which one stands out the most in your mind?

The list of countries we have lived in is not so long. However, we definitely like Japan and it will always have a place in our hearts. We hope that we will return there as a tourists many times, and who knows, maybe one day we will stay there again as residents. Talking about other countries, we were extremely overwhelmed by Cambodian culture and the temples in Angkor Wat, as well as the paradise islands of Koh Rong. The preserved ancient architectural treasures and untouched tropical surroundings made wonderful and deep impressions to our travelers' souls.

Finally, do you have a message that you'd like to send to the people of Aizu?

There are many people who we have met during our time in Aizu-Wakamatsu over these two years. All of them were very kind, patient, helpful, supportive and cheerful. We want to say great "Thank you" to all of you, no matter how our relationships exists now: Fujii-sensei, Kengo-san, Nobuko-san, Hiroko-san, Tsuya-sensei, Chifumi-san, Tsukuba-sensei, Obara-sensei, Kobayashi-san (and all the AWIA supporting members). The list is not complete, for sure, and there are many more people who deserve the warmest gratitude from us. And of course, we cannot forget our heartfelt friends: Gera, Evgenii, Victor, Veronica, Dasha, Dima — we miss you very much and hope we can meet again in the not-so-distant future.

Events in May

1	SA	
2	SU	Closed
3	MO	Closed
4	TU	Closed
5	WE	Closed
6	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
7	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
8	SA	14:00 Muscle Volunteer Day
9	SU	10:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba
10	MO	Closed
11	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
12	WE	
13	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
14	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
15	SA	10:00 AWIA Library Livestream
16	SU	Closed
17	MO	Closed
18	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
19	WE	
20	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
21	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
22	SA	
23	SU	
24	MO	Closed
25	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
26	WE	
27	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
28	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
29	SA	10:00 "Little Trip" to Bolivia 13:30 Newsletter Release Preparation
30	SU	10:00 Storybook Room Volunteers Meeting
31	MO	Closed

Other Information

Call for Volunteers!

Do you have muscles? Even tiny ones will do! In preparation for our library grand re-opening, we will be moving some of our furniture and books around at the AWIA office! If you are able to help us move and re-arrange furniture, come join us on:

Saturday, May 8th at 14:00

No need to sign up, just drop by if you're free to lend a hand!

Call for Volunteers!

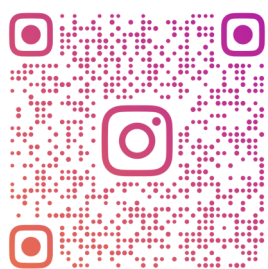
Volunteers needed to assist with folding, stamping, and preparing our monthly publications for mailing. Come enjoy chatting with other members during this casual volunteer event! No need to sign up, just come by if you can!

Date: May 29th, Saturday **Time:** 13:30~

Place: Aizu Wakamatsu International Association

Message from the Editor

Hello everyone! Thank you as always for reading this month's edition of SynthesAizu. Here at the AWIA we are hard at work preparing for some exciting events coming up later this summer. Although we won't be able to host the Aizu International Festival in the same way as in previous years, we still have plenty of summer fun planned for you all on the horizon. As with most of our events, they are only possible thanks to the continuous support from our members and volunteers. Thank you all very much for all of your help and support, especially during this past year. For anyone who would like to get involved but isn't sure where to start, feel free to reach out to us anytime over email, Facebook, or by phone to talk about opportunities!



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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