

January 2007



Nippon club of the Triangle
NEWSLETTER



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2007 Activity Plan

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CLUB NEWS

Notice of Membership Registration/Renewal

Thank you for your continual support for the Nippon Club of the Triangle. We have recently started online membership registration, and we would like to refresh our membership records. Please follow the link below and renew your membership at your convenience. Your membership (free) is vital for our growth. Thank you in advance. <http://nct.clubexpress.com>

*For those of you, who can not access online, please call Rocky Iwashima at (919)787-6233. The membership registration/renewal form will be mailed to you.

Nippon Club's Goal

The Club's goals are to promote Japanese-American Cultural Exchange, to conduct local service activities, and to provide practical information to those Japanese who live in this area. The Club also seeks to foster deeper mutual understanding between

Japan and North Carolina. The Nippon Club is no way limits membership to Japanese but warmly welcomes all who endorse its goals.

*Monthly Director's meeting is the first Wednesday of each month at the NC Japan Center

Financial Report 2006

Description	In	Out	Balance
Carryover from 2005			\$7,669.29
Income			
Donation	\$313.00		
Food Sales	\$8,043.00		
Expenditure		\$7,720.71	
Carryover to 2007			\$8,304.58

Club online services

- Club Contact: triangle_nippon_club@yahoo.com
- Club Homepage: trianglejapanclub.org
- Club Discussion Board (Mailing List):
trianglejapan@yahogroups.jp
- Joining Mailing List: trianglejapan-subscribe@yahogroups.jp
- Membership: <http://nct.clubexpress.com>
- Triangle Taiko Contact: triangleretaiko@yahoo.com
- Triangle Taiko Homepage: <http://www.triangleretaiko.org/>
- Triangle Cha-no-yu Contact: trianglechanoyuclub@yahoo.co.jp
- Triangle Cha-no-yu Homepage:
<http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/trianglechanoyuclub/>

2006 Activity Report

The 16th Picnic/ Club Annual Meeting

The 16th Picnic and Nippon Club Annual Meeting was held on April 29th at NC Japan Center



The first Bon-odori Festival

There were 375 participants, including 101 children at our first Tanabata-Obon Festival on Saturday, July 15, 2006, and it was a great success.

Everybody seemed to enjoy making Tanabata crafts, eating the various foods, and sweating with bon dance. Lisa's musical performance was very charming, and we definitely can't forget the Bon-daiko played by the students of Japanese Saturday's School. This Kodomo taiko was specially formed for the Festival. Also, Cha-no-yu Club members wearing Yukata made tasty 'macha' and served with sweets, and people were fascinated by 'tea'.

Tanabata bamboos were display at the front porch of the North Carolina Japan Center for several days after the Festival, and many Tanzaku were waving in the wind.

Here are some samples of Tanzaku.

I want to be a power ranger
Peace of mind
Healthy kids and strong adults
Lose 5lb
Let Daddy be Safe
Montreal Canadian to win to next Stanley Cup

*Please see Nippon Club's website <http://trianglejapanclub.org/> for some pictures.

We regret that there was a long waiting line for purchasing coupons. Please write and tell us your thoughts and ideas and ways in which we can improve the event. Your replies will help make our plans for future Nippon Club's activities better.

USA-Japan collage baseball game

USA Baseball National Team vs. Japan Collegiate All-Star game was held on July 25th at Durham Bulls Athletic Ball Park.

Nippon Club and the North Carolina Japan Center co-hosted the Welcome Reception for a Japan Team on July 24th. All players and Japan Team Stuff enjoyed southern style pork BBQ and got packed Onigiri and Miso soup when they leave. Nippon Club also organized Japanese community to support this event: 21 children handed with players and joined the opening parade at Bulls Ball Park on July 25. Ms. Yuri Yamamoto song Japanese National Anthem when both players and children lined up. Game started as Ayaka, 10-year old of Chapel Hill, announced player's name and four children's announcer followed. They were Takuya, Sho, Yuki,

and Hiroki from the Triangle Area. Nearly 200 people cheered Japanese players from 'Team Japan Section' and made 'Hinomaru' with red and white poster boards, and that was projected over the Stadium's large screen. (See photos at trianglejapanclub.org)

2006 International Festival of Raleigh

For the International Festival of Raleigh held on 11/4 and 11/5, 2006, the Japan group participated in the Café, Demo/Culture, and Center Stage events. We had a staggering 126 volunteers that helped out over the two days. Thank you very much!

Within the wrap-up meetings held by the Ethnic Group Leaders on 12/4, 2006, the leaders pointed out that some of the changes in this year's festival were positive. The location was centralized, making it easier to access, and being able to eat while watching the main stage was also a good change. Despite not holding the event on Friday as in the past, each group's earnings remained roughly the same. The overall festival had positive net cash flow for the first time in 4 years. For the future, the Japan group recommended holding a parade of the groups with their respective ethnic clothing. Next year's festival in 2008 will be held at the newly renovated Raleigh Convention Center.

Cafe

Over the two days, we had a total of 620 customers. Saturday afternoon was especially busy, with 45-55 people an hour. This year, we added to the usual menu of Yakisoba (stir-fried noodles), sushi, and green tea ice cream with a new dish, Gyudon (beef bowl). The beef bowl was a great success, and we sold out both day's portions by early Saturday evening!

We had 6 members that volunteered as sushi chefs. They received a one-day training on how to make California rolls from Tsujimura-san, the owner of the Japanese restaurant "Waraji." Behind the sushi counter, the sushi chefs looked very professional with the traditional clothing. (See the Photo section of the Nippon Club website)

We also had 42 students from the Japanese Language School (also students in local high schools) help out as volunteers. They were very friendly and adaptive to the ever-changing situation at the counter, and were also very helpful in the kitchen. The parents of the students, watching from the shadows and being amazed at their children's liveliness and cooperative attitude, were a very memorable sight.

Culture/Demonstration

This year, we put on Origami folding, Yukata try-on, and writing peoples' names in Japanese.

A day before the event, the Japan booth was suddenly moved next to the stage at the back of the room. The reason for this is because; the Japan booth attracted such a crowd past years. The organizers wanted to not crowd the front of the room, as well as invite people all the way to the back of the room. This year, again, the our volunteers were so busy that they never had time to take a break. Some will remember the large photo in the News&Observer of children with Origami and their names written in brush paint. We would like to thank all the volunteers that helped to plan, prepare, and put on the event. This year, again, we had participants all the way from Wilson, Greenville, Fayetteville, and Greensboro among others. It was good to see an increase of volunteers helping out in couples.

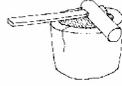
Center Stage

The role for the Center Stage was passed to Triangle Taiko, and for both days, the group was assigned 3 stage performances during the most crowded times of the day. The performance centered around the 13-member assemble of "Miyake-Daiko." As the children hung on to the stage watching intently, the members dressed in Happi ordered especially from Asakusa Tokyo put on an exciting performance. Soon after the event, someone uploaded the movie on Youtube.

*Finally, we would like to present a special thanks to the Chapel Hill-Durham Japanese Association, whose board members all came to help out with the clean-up after the event. As a result, we were able to finish off this event with a smooth and successful exit. Thank you very much.

Mochitsuki Party/ voice of volunteer by Chiyoko Lord

I really enjoyed my first experience with the "Year-End Mochi Tsuki Party". We had such variety of food, from special pork miso soup, rice cake, and all sorts of sauces, all with a traditional Japanese taste that we usually cannot find in any Japanese restaurant. The Mochi rice cakes, hand-made using a traditional wooden hammer "kine" and container "usu," was especially so. Adults and children alike were swinging the heavy wooden hammer in the traditional fashion of making mochi, and were thoroughly enjoying themselves. The atmosphere was very energetic, and people spontaneously volunteering to help out where they can, even saying that they would like to help out again next year. We always need more people to help organize this event. The more the merrier...



* Mrs. Lord is an active member of 'Triangle Cha-no-yu Club. She prepared pork soup with Mrs. Yamagishi of Hillsborough, who is also a Cha-no-yu member, a day before 'Mochitsuki'. Their 9 gallon soup was well accepted and was gone very quickly. She recently moved from Long Island, NY and lives in Raleigh with her husband, Kevin, and two children.

<Triangle Taiko> by Rocky Iwashima

We have enjoyed our 5th year in sharing the fun of practicing and playing Taiko together. Our group currently consists of 25 members, 7 Japanese and 18 Americans. We finally added our first 32 inches O-Daiko(Large Drum) in our Taiko inventory of 15 medium/small size drums. As part of the community service to promote Japan-US cultural exchange, we have performed as many as 40 stage performances at various events and occasions, such as the International Festival of Raleigh, Arts Festival for special populations, and a variety of school visits. We also held a special training session for 14 vigorous children from Japanese Saturday School for Bon-Odori, which became the highlight of the event. We thank all of the various organizations who donated a total of \$5,580 for purchasing Taiko.



Triangle Taiko Homepage: <http://www.triangletaiko.org/>
Email address: triangletaiko@yahoo.com.

<Triangle Cha-no-yu> by Chika Kitamura

The goal of our group, started in fall of 2003, is to promote greater understanding of Japanese culture in the community through Sado, or practice of Tea. Our members, now numbering 20, perform volunteer Tea demonstrations, and we also enjoy practicing Tea among ourselves. Regardless of the experience or specific style, each of our members dedicate themselves to learn the way of Tea, and by gathering every Thursday at members' houses, we enjoy

practicing and learning together. Once a month, we wear Kimono during practice to learn more traditional style.

We performed a total of 20 demonstrations in the RTP community in 2006, among them demonstrations at local schools, Japanese culture and language classes, museum summer camps, and events at the Japanese Pavilion in the Duke Gardens

Last spring, we started a blog to keep track of our activities. <http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/trianglechanoyuclub>. Sorry but it's Japanese only. For more information, feel free to email us at triang@chanoyuclub@yahoo.co.jp.



Editorial

Serious Culture

By Sawaka Kawashima

Roughly two years ago, when I had gone back to Japan to work after finishing my education overseas, I recall a casual email conversation I had with a friend of mine who had also just come back to Japan in a similar fashion. My email started:

“I was just at a train station, and it just occurred to me that Japanese people listen to music, but you never see them singing or dancing to the rhythm of the music.”

The reply from my friend started a conversation that started casually, and ended with a statement that I still remember to this day.

As you walk around the streets of Tokyo, they do not appear to be enjoying the music; rather, they look as if they are trying to escape the reality of the world around them. The part that made me the most sad, however, is that no one appears to smile.

However, after a closer look, one can discover an interesting fact. The elder population is one group that actually looks like they are enjoying life. If you look at their faces, you can tell that they are used to smiling. Is this a representation of Japan before it was assimilated into modern metropolitan culture, or is this a result of being freed of their former responsibilities as parents and income-earners? I have not had the chance to talk to them and figure this out yet. However, they pay attention to the scenery around them,

and they make an effort to talk and communicate with the people around them.

Seeing the elderly population, I am convinced that it is not too late for everyone else. Most people are, it seems, just enveloped in their daily routines, and they need a catalyst to shake them out of it. Some people have a misconception that not smiling is part of the Japanese way, but if you approach them with a smile, they will be drawn by this and they will eventually start to smile back. This is true at the workplace, and it is true for the tenants of the stores that you pass on a daily basis. Once others start to realize that you greet them with a smile, then every once in a while, they will initiate the greeting with a smile on their own.

These times may only be just a small part of everyone's daily life, but if we can introduce a little smiling within the relationships of the people around us, then we ourselves are also encouraged to not be 'enveloped' in the Tokyo atmosphere.

My friend encouraged me by saying, "You don't have to match the people around you; making other people match you is better for everyone." It has been two years since that conversation, but I still sometimes find myself relearning the power of smiling. As time passes and I observe the people around me now, I also feel that people are also changing, little by little. I will continue to make my small contribution to the world by remembering to smile, and I hope you will join me as well.

** Sawaka was born in Japan, raised in Mexico and in the United States. She is a singer-songwriter trying to serve as a bridge between different cultures with her music



Tangle Japan Club

Up coming Schedule

- Annual Meeting/Picnic: Late spring
- Obon Matsuri
- USA-Japan collage all-star baseball game
- International Festival: November
- Mochitsuki

Newsroom

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