

# GOOD MORNING, AOMORI!



Helen Masters

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Amidst the mists and fiercest frosts,  
 the winter wind is here to howl.  
 And through the long and lonesome nights,  
 the moon peeks out and seems to scowl.  
 Although the men are in their mirth,  
 the darkened days will close like tombs.  
 As flesh wanes white and souls grow dim, the  
 specter of the blizzard blooms.  
 And then a shock: with hope restored,  
 the troops will trek the deadly roads.  
 Atop the mount they stand like gods and stride  
 the peak as though 'twere Rhodes.  
 Then fall at once, each free of fear,  
 and soar upon the wings of snow.  
 And joy they'll know like ne'er before;  
 until the mountain lays them low.

**Sam Arnett (Misawa)**

## Last 3 Months at a Glance

Crave Cravak (Aomori)

**Aomorians** ran into October with the **Apple Marathon** in Hirosaki. Then **Culture Day** showered Aomori JETs with a taste, step, brush, and beat of Japanese flavor. And while the snow had yet to fall, Tesia Smith, Aomori's champion curler, invited fellow JETs to hurl and broom their way through a challenging **curling** practice with living legend Takeda-san. Let's not forget, Genevieve Murphy's adventurous **hike** up the Shirakami mountains. October came to a close as Misawa Air Base's Elementary School opened its doors on **Educator's Day** and Hachinohe hosted its annual Halloween Extravaganza, as JETs volunteered to give local kids a frightfully fun festive experience. Then under the disguise of night, they played dress up and drowned themselves in curious liquids at the official EofA **Halloween** Party.

In **November**, ALTs showed up in grand style for the **Mid-Year** Conference in Hirosaki. Spirits were lifted as AJET officials announced the unbelievable news that all Culture Day attendants would receive a gigantic **230yen** refund! This year's **Talent Show** and Auction setup within the stylish confines of Quadra Night Club. While most JET Rookies were more concerned with practicing their dance moves, generous bidders raised a healthy dose of cash for needy children in Nepal and Cambodia. The chance to purge their sins from Mid-Year came with the **JET Christian Fellowship** National Retreat at Torchbearers in Yamanashi-Ken.

Things got classy in December, as Wyomia Mouwers showcased the 2nd Annual **NA-MASTE Art Exhibition** in Hirosaki to raise funds for EofA. The weekend wrapped up academically as many put their pedal to the kanji in Morioka looking to obtain that prized Level 1 **JLPT** status. More recently, Aomori city welcomed it's newest American, **Tony Roma**. Luckily he brought his trademarked BBQ Ribs to the 2nd floor of the newly opened Richmond Hotel across from the 'can't-miss' Hitachi sign. Finally, just before everyone began their winter travels; the Aomori **International Exchange Association** gave us an excuse not to pack with their annual Christmas Potluck Party. In a rare occurrence, JETs weren't the featured foreigners as many from China, India, Indonesia, and Jupiter mingled their way through various home cooked and kombini purchased morsels.



## Upcoming Festivals and Events *in aomori*

January 1	<b>Tokiwa Hachiman Shrine Festival</b> 常盤八幡宮年縄奉納行事	Fujisaki
February 5—28	<b>Lake Towada Winter Story</b> 十和田湖冬物語2010	Towada
Early February	<b>Aomori Winter Festival</b> 青森冬まつり	Aomori
February 11 –14	<b>Hirosaki Snow Lantern Festival</b> 弘前城雪燈籠まつり	Hirosaki
February 17-20	<b>Hachinohe Enburi Festival</b> 八戸えんぶり	Hachinohe



## Akita Events *visit our neighboring ken*

February 10	<b>Kamihinokinai Paper Balloon Festival</b> 上桧木内の紙風船上げ	Semboku, Akita
February 12-14	<b>Namahage Festival</b> なまはげ柴灯まつり	Oga, Akita
February 14-16	<b>Yokote Winter Festival</b> 横手の雪まつり	Yokote, Akita

## Work Event Schedule

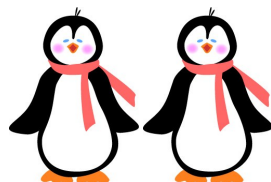
<b>January 1</b>	New Years Day
<b>January 11</b>	Holiday (Coming of Age)
<b>February 5</b>	Re-contracting deadline
<b>February 11</b>	Holiday (National Foundation Day)
<b>March 22</b>	Holiday (Vernal Equinox)

## Crossword

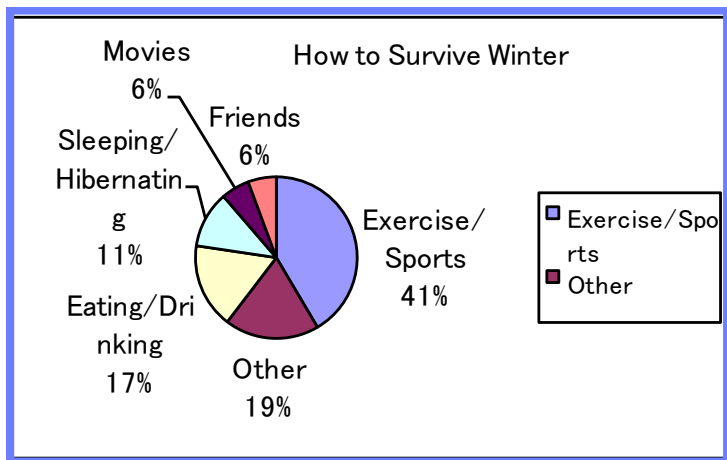
Aomori Winter

W	O	N	S	W	L	D	C	O	L	D	D
H	L	I	E	R	E	T	N	I	W	K	V
T	R	G	Y	K	O	T	A	T	S	U	Z
H	A	K	K	O	D	A	W	O	H	G	K
F	D	E	N	E	S	O	R	E	K	G	I
U	O	O	D	R	A	O	B	W	O	N	S
K	C	S	K	I	I	N	G	E	Y	T	Q
E	R	V	D	R	O	P	C	Z	W	E	B
A	M	U	R	A	D	I	K	U	Y	J	O
T	F	G	N	I	L	R	U	C	V	E	O
Y	E	T	A	N	R	E	B	I	H	L	T
B	R	X	O	H	L	E	V	O	H	S	S

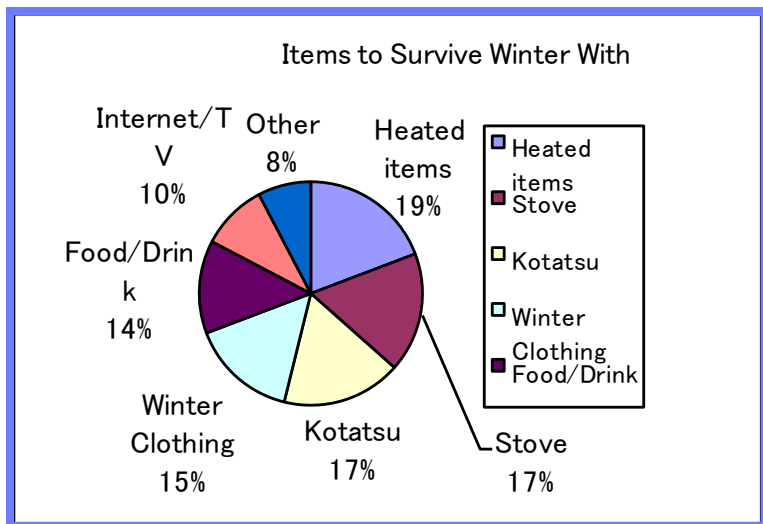
BOOTS  
 COLD  
 CURLING  
 HAKKODA  
 HIBERNATE  
 ICE  
 KEROSENE  
 KOTATSU  
 SHOVEL  
 SKIING  
 SNOW  
 SNOWBOARD  
 WINTER  
 YUKIDARUMA



## A bit about your fellow Aomori JETs



*Wondering how fellow JETs make it through winter in Aomori? Check it out!*



## Towada' Top Temptations

**1. Towada Art Museum:** The younger side of Towada, the art museum has some great modern art exhibits including a **giant statue** of a hundred year old woman and a seal stuck between the first and second floors. **It's groovy!**

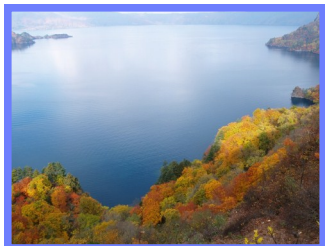


**2. Shorinji Kempo class at the Shiodokan:** If you feel like smashing **cement bricks** with your bare-hands but doing it in a really *zen* way, you can attend a Shorinji Kempo class near the Towada gym on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. Good for the **mind, spirit, and body**.

**3. The Dumpling restaurant:** Two words: **kimchi dumplings**. Right across from the Hakuden, the brightest pachinko parlor in Japan, is the best gyoza spot in town.

**4. Fair Trade Shop & Cafe:** Only open for lunch on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the Fair Trade cafe has one of the best lunches in town. Everything is **organic and vegetarian** and you can score some **great snacks** you can't find anywhere else. The first Sunday evening of every month the shop features free Afri-can drumming classes as well.

**5. Running:** Towada is a great place for **long distance running** and if you head East from the city you'll find yourself in a sea of rice fields. During those breezy



summer nights, the blue-white light cast down by the moon makes the swaying rice fields look like a vast ocean.

**6. Lake Towada:** Nice any time of the year. The fall has **beautiful** leaves, the winter has the snow and frozen waterfalls, the spring has new green.



By Aaron Chambers, Bryan Haut, and Erik Kumetz

**7. Taisozoka:** A nice little park with a cool museum that covers the **history of Towada**, nice statues, **koi pond** and a really humongous gate.

**8. Marrs bar:** When you really need to hear some **loud**, I mean paralyzingly loud, live punk **music**, this is the place to go!

**9. The Central Park:** This park is huge, you can **play soccer** in the field, run laps at the track, watch sumo at the sumo arena or catch a **ball game** at the ball stadium .Plus you can't beat playing **Frisbee** with six year olds.

**10. Asakusa Monjayaki:** Okonomiyaki and monjayaki equals a relaxing dinner plus the super **funny obaasan** who always ensures a good time.

**10. Towada Fall Festival:** A colletion of taiko, cute kids dancing, **street vendors**, mikoshi carrying all adds up to one heck of a festival.

**11. Kanchogaidori:** Beautiful in the spring. During winter when all of the trees are lit up with Christmas lights it looks a snow globe, a perfect **winter wonderland**.



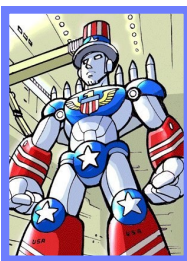
**12. Hakkoen:** Yup, it's grungy, but when's the last time you hoisted **beers** with all of your city's firemen and then proceeded to have **arm wrestling competitions?**

**13. The greatest used store in all the land:** This place has every toy, **game**, card, musical instrument, manga, CD, and **t-shirt** you can possibly imagine.



## 3rd Year JETs

1. ***Job Description***
2. ***Favorite combini purchase***
3. ***Funniest question you've been asked in Japan***
4. ***If you were a Japanese beverage, what would you be ?***



**Samuel M. Arnett**

Misawa

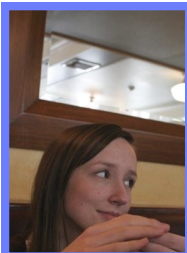
1. Rock Star
2. Final Fantasy Potion (it gave me 200 HP!)
3. A girl asked if I knew what a シーサー (lion-dog of Okinawa) was. She proceeded to endlessly demonstrate the type of motion and sound such a creature would make.
4. Pepsi Shiso



**Bec Behrendt**

Aomori

1. Book and internet critic....occasional red pen user
2. Ichigo milk
3. "Can you please pay 22 man for shaken?"
4. Anything alcoholic with lemon because I can be a bit bitter



**Dana Berte**

Tsugaru

1. Preschool teacher, platitude writer, cushioner of feelings, travel agent
2. Single-portion cartons of drinkable yogurt
3. "You remind me of a painting I saw in Italy, 'The Madonna and Baby Jesus'."
4. I can't stand to drink the stuff, but I might be nigori-zake.



**Joe Colistro**

Sannohe

1. Dude from Blue's Clues
2. Pizza-man
3. "Are there Hollywood stars in America?"
4. Strong Seven



## Seamus Couch

Kuroishi

1. Elementary ALT
2. Underwear
3. "You wanna 大(dai)?" Asked by a friend of mine who was ordering our beers.
4. Depresso canned coffee



## David Crawford

Kuroishi

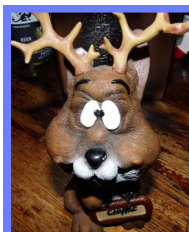
1. Kuroishi BOE ALT
2. Onigiri
3. "You don't have a girlfriend? Are you gay?"
4. Milk tea



## Travis Emery

Tsuruta

1. SHS motivational speaker
2. Yaki-salmon onigiri and happoshu
3. "Do you discriminate against gay?"
4. CC Lemon



## David Foley

Mutsu

1. ALT
2. Oden (no konnyaku)
3. "How many people have you killed?"
4. Soukenbi cha



## Leon Fonseca

Rokunohe

1. Rokunohe CIR
2. Not a combini person
3. Does the sun rise from the west in the southern hemisphere?
4. カレーラムネ (Nobody loves curry more than me!)



## ...3rd Year JETs continued



Lindsay Hurley

Mutsu

1. Tanabu High School ALT
2. Starbucks Doubleshot espresso can/ Starbucks Latte cup
3. "Are you really American?"
4. Matcha; kind of bitter, but great with something sweet.



Steven MacWhinnie

Aomori

1. Teaching children
2. Breakfast
3. "Do you speak English?"
4. Kirin



Wyomia Mouwers

Hirosaki

1. Finally I'm starting to feel like a teacher!
2. Combini sandos
3. "Do they speak English in your country?"
4. A delicious tropical summer edition chu-hi



Genevieve Murphy

Fukaura

1. Teaching some awesome JHS kids. (And a few side projects in the mix!)
2. Starbucks Latte (sometimes it's just a little taste of home :)
3. A questionnaire question by my JTE: "What turns you on?"
4. Hot Lemonade from Lemon Bar in Hirosaki!!! (Because it's the Bomb-shiznittle-bam-shnip-shnap-zapple!!!)



Stephen Pendlebury

Aomori

1. Professional class clown
2. Disposable razors before I get into work.
3. Be careful when you go to Thailand. It's a very dangerous country and everyone will try to kill you there.
4. Ukon no chikara. It's a kick in the pants.

## Everest of Apples News Update



Everest of Apples

- Join Everest of Apples for the **Golden Week** trip to **Nepal**. Volunteer at the **Prajwal School** for 2-3 days and spend the rest of your time vacationing in one of the worlds best adventure sports locations.
- In preparation for Golden Week we're doing a **stationary drive** at schools. If you would like to assist by getting your school involved with collecting stationary supplies please mail us [everestofapples@gmail.com](mailto:everestofapples@gmail.com)
- We would also like to take a **donation** of **used laptop computers** to Nepal, so if you or family members are getting new computers this Christmas, why not donate your old one to Everest of Apples for the needy children in Nepal?
- E of A has decided to support the, **This Life Cambodia** (TLC) project in Cambodia for the JET years 2009/2010, 2010/2011. We are able to help fund much needed teacher training, curriculum development, community involvement initiatives, libraries, kids clubs at secondary grade levels, in a country where only 26% of students graduate from secondary school. **We could not do this without your support!**
- **A BIG THANK YOU** Aomori for supporting Everest of Apples fundraising events in 2009.

## Aomori Alumni Corner

Kevin Byrne

2005 - 2007 Hirosaki ALT

**Hello all!** Kevin Byrne here. After a meandering trip back to my native Ireland I did my **Masters in London**, then worked at an international affairs think-tank, tutored a Middle Eastern royal, got chosen to be an **Irish diplomat**, but that got put on hold because of the economic crisis. Damn. Got tired of London and moved to **Brussels**, which is where I still am. After a short stint working in the EU on Transatlantic Affairs, I've returned to all things Japanese and now work in the **Mission of Japan** to the EU covering EU affairs and the European Parliament for MOFA.

**Advice:** *Get on your bike, best way to see the ken. Oh and talk to absolutely everyone.*



## South Korea

### 36 Hours - Seoul

A city held in balance between **high-energy** modernism and indefatigable tradition, Seoul is the perfect **long-weekend getaway** for those ALTs nostalgic for a big city or wishing to revel in the **romance** of mainland Asia. As the subway closes before midnight, I would recommend staying at the NAMU Guesthouse located near Hong-Ik University Station, an area with great **night life** and restaurants. Be sure to try Samgyetang (삼계탕), a healthy ginseng and chicken soup, which is surprisingly not in most guidebooks. Baekji Samgyetang near Myeong-dong station is a great place to have it for lunch. After visiting Gyeongbokgung Palace, head over to one of the many tea houses in Insadong-gil for Omija Cha (오미자 차) or Tea of Five Flavors--salty, sweet, sour, **spicy**, and bitter.

In the afternoon, you can experience the significant influence Korea has had on Japanese **culture** during a visit to the National Museum of Korea. In the evening, I recommend the NANTA Cooking Show, a **hilarious** percussion troupe who use knives and carrots instead of drumsticks. Finally, a day tour of the DMZ (and temporarily stepping into North Korea) provides a **surreal experience** that will impress upon you the identity and history of Korea. 잘다녀오십시오!

Erik Kumetz (Towada)



1. **Favorite Food**
2. **Accommodation**
3. **Must See/do**
4. **Duration of trip & time of year**

## 방한 환영

### Taylor Austad

1. Freshest sashimi imaginable in Busan. The fish was killed a few feet away from us right after we ordered it.
2. Hostels
3. Tour of DMZ
4. End of March - 1 week
5. Go to Busan if you have the time.

### Noheji



### Anne Barton

1. Bibimbap
2. Hotel
3. Lotte World and Myeongdong Shopping District
4. In August—6 days
5. If you want to hail a cab you have to be pretty aggressive

### Aomori

## Crave Cravak

## Aomori

1. Korean style fried chicken
2. Friend's houses, Love Hotels, and Ondols
3. Amusement Parks (Everland, Lotte World, Seouland, etc)
4. Fall/ September—10 days
5. Dive deep into its rich culture and traditions and don't limit yourself to Seoul. Take advantage of cheap travel



## Greg Hachenburg

## Hachinohe

1. Bulgogi
2. Hotels, cheap yet comfortable!
3. Jeju Love Land, still can't believe this place actually exists.
4. Winter Vacation 2 weeks
5. Many older people speak Japanese, use your skills!

## Chloe Karamian

## Hachinohe

1. Kim Chi – you can't escape it!
2. Hostels
3. DMZ full day tour
4. September—1 week during Silver Week
5. Go to Hongik University area at night and the Ho Bars!!



## Nancy Velasquez

## Hirosaki

1. Jukgaejjang
2. Love hotels around the Kangnam-gu area are wonderful, Banana Backpackers is a nice option
3. Any castle, Seoul tower
4. December– January 2 weeks
5. It's helpful to learn how to read.

## Katie Mulroy

## Goshogawara

1. Bulgogi. It was delicious. I ate it a lot.
2. Hostel
3. DMZ/Panmunjom.
4. Fall— 5 days
5. I traveled there alone and it was definitely a convenient place



## Ask a PA

advice from Zack and Abidemi

### ***“December is here, and it’s time for...”***

Welcome to the month of December, everyone. By now I’m sure that most of you have either received your re-contracting papers, or you will soon be receiving them. To ensure that the process goes as smoothly as possible, and that there are no ‘nasty’ surprises along the way, we would like to discuss a few points with you.

There seems to be an increasing trend in the disparity between a JET’s opinion of his/her work, and the appraisal of the workplace. A JET thinks that he’s/she’s doing her job well, or that his/her contracting organization is satisfied with his/her performance, but then re-contracting time comes and he/she finds out that this is not the case!

In order to avoid the above situation, we would like to encourage you to seek out your supervisor, and others in your workplace that are willing, for feedback on your work performance and you as a JET in general. This is especially important if you are thinking of staying another year, and imperative if you are seeking a contract for a 4th or 5th year. Japanese workplace culture does not foster evaluations, and although supervisors and COs are being encouraged at every turn to do more assessments and provide JETs with feedback, it is a slow process. Therefore, although we cannot force your CO to initiate communication with you, each individual JET can definitely be more proactive in going to his/her supervisor for feedback.

Seek them out, sit down with them and discuss ‘YOU’. Ask how you are doing; what the staff, students, and parents think of you; what you could be doing better and improving; and maybe even whether or not you can expect to re-contract. They might not be able to answer all your questions, but you will get something to go on. Once you know these things, you can work harder on all the areas where you fall short, and try to make modifications by the time the re-contracting decision comes! Becoming a 4th/5th year JET is not automatic, and even if you are in your first or second year, this is beneficial because it lets you know how you can improve on your work and find out your CO’s policy on staying on for a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year. And, it’s never too early to start impressing them with how great an ALT you are, and giving your CO reasons to want to keep you for as long as possible! Also, think of references after the JET Programme - if you can get a good evaluation now, it will come in handy afterwards.

So, the next time you see your supervisor, schedule a time to sit down with them and put their feedback to work for you!!!



## CIR Corner—Tsugaru CIR

Dana Berte



My job as a CIR is extremely varied. As the only foreigner employed by the Tsugaru City Hall, my job is a catchall for anything that a bilingual might be needed for, including translating, interpreting, teaching English, giving lectures and seminars, running international-themed events, maintaining contact with our sister city in Maine, and keeping local foreigners in the loop about what's going on in the city.

In a typical day, I might start out by visiting a preschool or two and playing with 10-40 of Tsugaru's youngest citizens while teaching them about America. In the afternoon, I'm likely to be found at my desk, translating correspondence from our sister city or school documents for American parents about to take the plunge and send their child to a local elementary school. The office is usually pretty quiet, but every so often I'll have a chance to interpret for the mayor if we have foreign visitors, take phone calls from local foreigners who need information, or head out to a local community center to give a talk, seminar, or even a dance class. All in a day's work!

## Teacher Talk

Tateyama Yumiko

Goshogawara Senior High School

### *Is snow cold?*

I was born in Hirosaki. I have always lived in Aomori prefecture, except for 4 years when I went to a university in Hyogo. Normally, people think the winter in Aomori is colder than other areas in Japan except for Hokkaido. However, I think it is colder in Hyogo.

Of course the temperature in Hyogo is higher than that in Aomori, but in Aomori, thanks to the snow we don't feel the coldness as much. We have a lot of snow, and snow causes troubles, for example, heavy traffic and car accidents. Snow, however, is nice too. Before I lived in Hyogo, I thought I could live comfortably without snow, but I felt colder there. When we see snow, we start preparing for winter with heaters, kotatsu, winter clothing, etc. We can prepare mentally. I feel that snow on the ground prevents us from feeling cold. I don't know why I feel so, but to me snow is not cold. Snow makes the view beautiful and I like skiing. Please enjoy your snow life.



**ITS YOUR BIRTHDAY!**

생일 축하합니다

**January****February****March**

- 1 Kristina Alvero
- 10 Tina Wang
- 13 Rachelle Zamora
- 17 Courtney Hearon
- 20 JoAnn Cho
- 21 Sujin Bae
- 22 David Crawford
- 27 Andrew Pozniak
- 28 Travis Emery
- 29 Michael Smith

- 1 Matthew Smith
- 2 Jessica Conklin
- 3 Chloe Karamian
- 4 Alesha Ledeatte-Williams
- 6 Jean-Marc Giffin
- 8 Tesia Smith
- Joe Colistro
- 10 Seamus Couch
- 18 Janice Kim
- 22 Christy Bahr
- 27 Melissa Hooyman

- 6 Brian Stapleton
- 8 Kathryn Hoffman
- 9 Crave Cravak
- 21 Lance Wright
- 24 Eric Malloff
- 26 Melissa Schmiesing
- Sherrie Blackwell
- 28 Julie Austad
- 30 Takefumi Hirai

*Drawings by Sonomi Tanaka*

**Contribute to  
Good Morning Aomori!**

We are always looking to add to the  
Good Morning Aomori! imagination.  
Send your ideas, articles, photographs and  
drawings to:  
[goodmorning.aomori@gmail.com](mailto:goodmorning.aomori@gmail.com)

**Upcoming Issue:****Have you been to Thailand?**

Send us an e-mail and let us know!

**Have something to share about your area?****Pass on information about festivals & events****GOOD MORNING, AOMORI!**

January—March 2010

Editors: *Christy Bahr & Tesia Smith*Contributors: *Aomori JET & Aomori Community*