

## Longtime Nishinomiya Friend Writes Us About Their Spokane Week

Hello from Nishinomiya,

The season is changing here, little by little. The plum blossoms are in bloom. I hope you all are keeping well.

Thank you for sending us the sweets box. Akihiro Nakahara brought it to our monthly meeting in February. It was the day our "Spokane Week" just started. He suggested that it should be used for a talk I was about to give.

Let me tell you a little about myself: I am Yasuko Ichihashi. I visited Spokane 56 years ago when I was a high school student. I used to be a member of the Student Exchange Program Committee. For Spokane Week I was given an opportunity to talk about my experiences with homestay activities just after our 50th Anniversary visit in 2011. (Ed. note: there were official Sister City visits by groups from Nishinomiya and Spokane for the 50th Anniversary of our Societies.)

My discussion during our February Spokane Week was about the "Connections Garden" at Riverfront Park and reconstruction support (from Spokane citizens who donated money from a

T-shirt sale and a CD of Japanese songs by pupils at Whitman Elementary school, after the horrendous earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan.)

After the talk, everyone was happy to receive a piece of the Spokandy chocolate and an American scone, which I baked. I hope the citizens of Nishinomiya will get more interest in Spokane. Sincerely,  
Yasuko

(Ed note: Ms. Ichihashi was referring to a shipment of Spokandy-made chocolates given them by our society.)



spokane-nishinomiya.org

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SISTER CITY SOCIETY

Spokane Nishinomiya News



## Spokane Nishinomiya News

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## A Message From the President

*Rol Herriges*

For the 43rd time since our Society's inception, we are supporting another group of high school exchange students for their six-week cultural and educational tour of Nishinomiya and other spots in Japan. They are Jessica Harpel, Joel E Ferris High School, Yulien Shapla-Priddy, Lewis and Clark High School and Oswald Olazabal, North Central High School. They are pictured, along with their parents, on page (2).

But, before we go any farther, a congratulatory message is sent to the Society members who have put in hours of work, and will continue so until the young men and women leave in June, in selecting and training the new exchanges. They are Polly Kaczmarek, Hiroko Hill, Misako Egner, Ron Belisle (team leader) and Mike Manor. Our Vice President for Education is JoAnne Rehberg, and Jdon VanCurler for Teacher Exchange.

They pore over a number of applications from students in many of Spokane's high schools; interview the applicants; select the best three and give them insight into the culture of Japan.

Those various aspects include introduction to Japanese food (a picture of a bento lunch is included in this publication); manners in greetings, gift exchanges, clothes, etc.! The students, well, their parents, provide 25% of the airfare and the Society

pays the rest from funds gathered at the Annual Meeting and a stipend from the Tsutakawa Scholarship Fund that is managed by the Inland Northwest Foundation, plus other incidental contributions. Three students from Nishinomiya High Schools have been selected also and they will spend six-weeks here in Spokane starting in September. It's an important, sometimes life-altering activity for these high school youngsters, who find so many new ideas about how people in other lands live. Testimonials of past exchange students attest to that.

Two other subjects, briefly: The Annual Meeting again attracted some 50 participants to the Japanese Cultural Center at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute. Reports from last year's exchange students, a three-minute collage of pictures from October's 55th Anniversary Celebration was shown and bento games (a form of bingo) with prizes awarded featured the program. The second item, which will be explained in more detail when finished, is an online system of managing almost every aspect of our various Society programs. Ron Belisle is working on it and it should be up and running before too long. It will make everything easier. But, of course, humans will still be a part of it all...stay tuned!



Exchange student Todd Bloom and his Nishinomiya homestay friend Yusuke flank a stone identifier that explains the structure in the background...the Akashi Kaikyo bridge, the longest suspension bridge in the world. Todd is one of last year's three exchange students to Nishinomiya.



Sorry to announce that a dear lady, longtime friend and a charter member of our Society, Nobie Oka, passed away earlier this year. She was the widow of well-known artist, Keith Oka, who passed away several years ago. RIP

## Celebrating Another Trio of Exchange Students

For the last 35 years the Spokane-Nishinomiya Sister City Society has sponsored a large number of Spokane high school students to go to Nishinomiya, Japan to experience a homestay with a Japanese family. The selected students are in Japan for six weeks after school in Spokane is out in June. In exchange, the families of the selected students from Spokane host one Japanese student from the same family in Japan for six weeks the following October and November. The Spokane-Nishinomiya Sister City Society pays 75% of the airfare for each selected Spokane student. The student's family is required to pay the remaining 25%. Host families in Japan are volunteers, thus there is no cost for basic room and board for the selected students. However, students are required to have pocket money and may need to pay for incidentals such as entertainment outside the home or the Nishinomiya bus or train system to get to school, etc.



Oswald Olazabal and parents, North Central High School



Jessica Harpel and parents, Joel E Ferris High School



Yulien Shapla-Priddy and parents, Lewis and Clark High School



◀ The cultural orientation the exchange students receive from the selection committee include a bento lunch (pictured) served to them at the Suki Yaki Inn downtown Spokane. Usually closed on Sundays, hostess Emiko opened it for one afternoon to accommodate the exchange students and their parents.

Other orientation included a visit to the authentic teahouse at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute, presentation of business cards and other cultural activities.

## Spokane Week



Our Japanese Sister City's week-long celebration of Things-Spokane featured, along with other activities, two display cases in city hall showing cultural articles received from Spokane, including a 55th Anniversary quilt depicting various scenes of life in the Spokane region.



## Japanese (Kobe) Newspaper Features Story of Nishinomiya Lighthouse Replica Destined for Spokane's Riverfront Park



To be installed in Nishinomiya's Sister City, Spokane, possibly next year.

Spokane City is the second largest city in the northwest of Washington State, the United States. The Sister City Affiliation between Spokane and Nishinomiya was made in 1961. The branch school of Mukogawa Women's University is in Spokane and there have been active exchanges between the citizens of both cities.

Spokane City is constructing a park called 'Connections Garden' at the site of its '74 Expo. The city has a plan to install something that symbolizes each Sister City in the garden.

Mr. Roland A. Herriges, the president of the Spokane Nishinomiya Sister City Society made a proposal to install a replica of Imazu Lighthouse in the garden. Nishinomiya City and the owner of the lighthouse, sake producing company, Ozeki Corporation agreed with the idea.

### 'A symbol of friendship' representing active exchanges

The height of the replica will be 1.8 meters including the pedestal. The 'original' lighthouse is made of cypress but the replica will be made of steel which doesn't require much care. The color will be 'as close as possible to the original one' and for the light, a solar battery will be used.

The cost of production is approximately 1,700,000 to 2,200,000 yen. The Sister City will donate the replica to the garden and the expenses will be covered by the donations made both in the U.S. and Japan such as the one from Ozeki Corporation.

President Herriges told us 'The replica is a symbol of the friendship between the people of Nishinomiya and us. We hope to spread the word to thousands of tourists from around the world who visit Spokane.'

(by Shigeyuki Maekawa)

The decision to install the replica of Imazu Lighthouse located at Imazu Nishihama-cho, Nishinomiya City to the Sister City, Spokane, America was made. Imazu Lighthouse is designated as Nishinomiya's important tangible cultural property and is the oldest active lighthouse in Japan. At the earliest, the replica will be installed in May, 2018. The symbol of the harbor that watched over Nishinomiya for more than 200 years will now cross the sea.