

President's Message

Werner Willoughby



On behalf of the Torrance Sister City Association, I would like to thank **Ms. Mikko Haggott Henson** for her generous donation of \$10,000 toward the Anniversary Fund, specifically for the 50th Anniversary celebration, an event to be held in the year 2023. Mikko was

part of the original group to establish the sister city relations with Kashiwa in 1973 and was a past TSCA president in 1976, '77, '83, '84 and '90.

The 50th Anniversary celebration will occur in both Kashiwa and Torrance, and preparations have begun. We are currently in the process of assembling a committee who will work with Torrance City officials, the Torrance Committee of the Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA), and our membership. An initial thought is to include as many stakeholders and participants who have been involved in past and present programs—TSCA members, exchange students, Adult Leaders, English teachers, and Torrance City officials—thereby showcasing and revitalizing what so many have experienced over the past fifty years.

The 50th anniversary celebration will coincide with the visit of an adult delegation from Kashiwa who travel to Torrance every five years, highlighting the very unique symbiotic relationship between TSCA, the City of Kashiwa and the City of Torrance.

As a result of board vacancies, we extend a warm welcome to our newest Board member, **Stephanie Ewing-**

Warner, who received Board approval at the March 8, 2021 meeting. Stephanie has been involved with TSCA since 1982 when she was an exchange student, later becoming an Adult Leader in 2000. The Warners have been host families for Torrance and Kashiwa students, and Stephanie was instrumental in the success of August activities and has participated on many committees including the Teacher Selection Committee. We are grateful for Stephanie's willingness to be a member of the Board and offering her time and experience to the organization.

In a mutual decision reached by the TSCA board and the Torrance Committee of the Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA), the 2021 student exchange program has been cancelled due to COVID and will return, hopefully, in 2022. The students who were scheduled to visit Kashiwa in 2020 and their parents met and all agreed to participate in the 2022 student exchange.

Under the leadership of **Alyssa Yamauchi**, we have had a successful membership drive. We truly appreciate your vote of confidence in TSCA through your membership renewals, and in some cases, donations.

As soon as regulations permit, here and in Japan, we will be up and running to restore the students' interactions and foster their friendships.

May I extend the best of health to you and your family. ☘

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Membership News

Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chairperson

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

APRIL 12

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

MAY 10

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

JUNE 14

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

JULY 12

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

SEPTEMBER 13

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

OCTOBER 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

NOVEMBER 8

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

DECEMBER 13

Budget Meeting for Executive Board (7-9 pm)

Schedule subject to change due to pandemic

Benefactor (\$125/year)

Furey, Pat and Terry
Taniguchi, Hazel

Supporting (\$75/year)

Miles, Frank and Marilyn
Shiosaki, Ed (South Bay Judo)
Uchima, Ray (Uchima Corporation)

Family (\$40/year)

Arnheim, Bruce and Sumi
Bothwell Automotive
Cababa, Kerry and Ed
The Diederich Family
Eustaquio, Joseph
Flynn, Janet and John
Gallagher, Ann and Marty
Gelbaum, David and Randi
Gray, Bob, Summer and Jeremy
Han, Dai Sup and Jill
Higa, Reiko, PK and Ken Shrivastava
Ito, John, Wendy and Alex
Johns, Patricia

Kimmel, Ronald and Gudrun
Kranz, Dave and Linda
Kuwahara, Gary and Teri
Lobo, Kevin, Pindi, Ann and Rachel
Maroney, Mark and Jill
Martel, Lou and Lori
Matsumoto, Mickey and Frances
Mayemura, Paul, Amy and Miwa
McGee, John and Carmen
Mealins, Kathy
Nakano, Helen and George
Namimoto, Jim and Mariko
Nishi, Kikuko and Katsuhisa
Peck, James and Charles
The Penland Family
Radomski Family, James
Reeve, Ron and Susan
Roulette, Mark and Peggy
Scotto, Frank and Cindy
Seraydarian, Mark
Shetti, Mayoore, Navin, Jeena and Ruchi
Shintani, Ron and Patsy
Sprague, Brian and Tracy
Tanaka, Keith and Shirley
Trattner, Melanie
Tsudama, Geoff, Mickie, Meisa and Reymi
Ueki, Masaki and Sumi
Ujimori, Harvey and Kay
Warner, Steve and Stephanie Ewing-Warner
Wheeler, Karen and Robert
Yorizane, Eddie and Eileen

Individual (\$20/year)

Allen, Sheila
Ashcraft, Heidi
Cauble, Lynn
Chen, George
Chien, Jessica Haugen
Goodrich, Marjorie
Grace, Carla
Griffith, Kay
Griffiths, Mike
Kilburn, Victor
Kircher, Ellen
Komae, Amie
Laidoner, Gail
Makino, Sako
Matarrese, John
McIntyre, John
Miike, Pamela
Perez, Ayako
Wand, Suzie
Weideman, Kurt

Donations

Haggott Henson, Mikko (\$10,000)
Hayata, Nancy (\$125)
Old Torrance Homeowners Association (\$125)
Scotto, Frank and Cindy (\$100)
Kircher, Ellen (\$80)
Mayemura, Paul, Amy and Miwa (\$60)
Griffith, Kay (\$50)
Sprague, Brian and Tracy (\$40)
Kilburn, Victor (\$30)
Miles, Frank and Marilyn (\$25)
Shiosaki, Ed—South Bay Judo (\$25)
Uchima, Ray—Uchima Corporation (\$25)
Cauble, Lynn (\$20)
Diederich Family (\$10)
Gallagher, Ann and Marty (\$10)
McIntyre, Hugh (\$5)

Torrance Sister City Association

PRESIDENT

Werner Willoughby

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Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

FORMER YOSHIDA FAMILY HISTORICAL PARK



2019 TSCA Delegation at the Yoshida Family Historical Park

The home of wealthy farmer from days of old, the home was designated as an Important National Cultural Property in December 2010. The grounds, which extend from a 25-meter *Nagayamon* gate building, are open for tours. On the grounds, there is a wooded area, and an open grass lawn where you can find a relaxing atmosphere completely set apart from the hustle and bustle of the city.

The splendor of the cherry trees rising up in front of the *Nagayamon* gate is definitely a sight worth seeing.



View of the cherry trees at the Yoshida Family Historical Park

HATSUMOUE

Hatsumoude is the event in which people go and worship at a shrine and a temple for the first time after a new year begins. People express appreciation for the past year, and/or to pray for the New Year's happiness and good health.

Originally, it was the custom that the head of a family lives in the shrine or temple from the night of the last day of the year to the morning on New Year's Day to pray. And then, that custom was divided into two customs, the "New Year's Eve *Moude*" and "New Year's Day *Moude*". New Year's Day *Moude* became the prototype of the *Hatsumoude* of today.

People go and worship at temples and shrines, receive an amulet and a sacred arrow, and write a wish on a *Ema* (a votive picture tablet), and hope that this year is a good year. People are able to burn the last year's amulet and sacred arrow in shrines and temples at this time.



Fuse Benten (Koryuzan Tokai-ji)

FUSE BENTEN (KORYUZAN TOKAI-JI)

Fuse Benten is one of three "*Benten*" temples in the Kanto area, and is said to be blessed with fortune, treasure, wisdom, love and respect, conquering the devil, good health and profitability.

On New Year's Eve, the first 108 people to arrive can ring the large bell, and after that, you can enjoy ringing the New Year's bell as you wish.

Best Wishes to John La Rock



TSCA sends a warm welcome to the new Torrance Community Services Director, **John La Rock**.

John La Rock has enjoyed over thirty-five years providing public services in local government, cultural arts and professional entertainment.

John was born and raised in New York City and studied art history and cultural institution management at the University of North Carolina. John has held administrative positions with organizations in New York, Houston, Boston, and Maryland. Career opportunities have taken him to all fifty states in the continental U.S. and in 2007 he assumed the position of Cultural Arts Manager at the City of Redondo Beach. In 2015 John received a promotion to Community Services Director, in recognition of his commitment to creating and building upon collaborations

between staff and the highly engaged business, residential, tourism and educational sectors in the community and the greater South Bay. In November 2020, John was hired by the City of Torrance as Community Services Director, succeeding long-time Director John Jones, with whom John La Rock has enjoyed a long-term professional relationship. With Torrance, John supervises the Recreation, Parks, Library, Cultural, and Administration Divisions and a highly skilled and dedicated team who all share a passion to make Torrance the best place to work, live and play. Special projects with Torrance include Animal Control and Coyote Management, Special Events, and Open Space Acquisition. John lives in Long Beach with his wonderful wife Diana and hopes everyone takes time to engage in the rich wellness environment in Torrance, the South Bay and throughout California. ☘

Congratulations to Nobu Kosuge

Helicopter Association International Recognizes Nobu Kosuge

Werner Willoughby

On behalf of TSCA, I would like to congratulate **Nobu Kosuge** on his award as Flight Instructor of the year for 2021.

Nobu is the son of **Akemi Kosuge**, President of the Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA).

TSCA's connection with Nobu goes back to 1991 when he was an exchange student from Kashiwa. Nobu stayed with host families **Steve and Carol Robbins**, as well as **Don and Pat Lechman**, whose daughter **Laura** was a Torrance exchange student the same year.

For several years, the Kashiwa student delegates toured the Robinson Helicopter facilities in Torrance. On one occasion, Nobu graciously agreed to lead this tour. The Kashiwa students were excited to learn that Nobu was a former exchange student and a certified helicopter pilot. We are grateful to Nobu for sharing his time and expertise.

Congratulations, Nobu! TSCA is very proud of your achievement.

Read more about Nobu on the HAI website here: <http://bit.ly/3eC1Wg7> ☘



Nobu Kosuge, Flight Instructor of the Year

English Teacher Report

Sushi, Rootbeer, Guacamole, & Toilet Paper

Deanna Sun



For the past month, Japan has been facing a state of emergency, in which all restaurants and shops close by 8 p.m. This has unfortunately put a damper on all the things I was looking forward to doing while living here. Traveling, meeting new people, going out to restaurants, and late-night karaoke were some of my initial plans, but this current situation has challenged me to look inward rather than set external goals. Luckily, I was given the opportunity to understand Japanese culture more deeply, and introduce some of my American culture to my co-workers and students as well.

During the Christmas season, I wanted to share something unique about American customs. We had our first Secret Santa gift exchange, in which we all pulled names from a hat and bought gifts for the person we received. In America, I never considered Secret Santa to be such a personal experience, but I discovered here how special it is to find the perfect gift for someone, and seeing my coworkers enjoy their first gift exchange brought me so much joy. Brandon and I also decided to do a White Elephant gift exchange with our English Conversation Club students, in which everyone bought joke gifts and chose their present randomly. Some of the students received mugs, totes, ramen, scary dolls, and even strawberry-scented toilet paper. These little events have made me more appreciative of the American culture than before.



Ichikashi White Elephant Gift Exchange



Watoji (Japanese Bookbinding)

There were many other instances in which my colleagues and students learned about American culture. I watched them have their first bite of guacamole and their first taste of rootbeer (which everyone thought tasted like medicine or Salonpas). Brandon and I also created an English board in the school's hallway, which shows off TSCA articles, surveys for students to vote on their favorite artists, music, food, and others, and a new English phrase every month.

While I enjoyed sharing my culture with everyone, the main reason I came to Japan was to immerse myself in everything Japanese. Recently, I learned the art of *Watoji*, or Japanese bookbinding, from two of my students. The entire process made me realize that I don't need to visit every tourist spot or travel to every part of Japan to immerse myself in the culture. I have been learning the culture through everyday moments of my life here. I have learned through experience that Japanese are patient, thoughtful, and very detail-oriented — all characteristics of which I strive.

(Continued on page 6)

Ichikashi Student Report

Speaking Fears

Chloie Erin G. Casbadillo



Hello! I'm Chloie Erin G. Casbadillo. I'm from the Philippines and I am now living here in Kashiwa, Chiba, Japan. I recently received 1st place in ECC's Speech Contest 1st year division. In the past, I didn't like public speaking very much. My voice shook all the time and the things I wanted to say often turned into slurred words. So why did I decide

to join a speech contest all of a sudden? The truth is that I'm very competitive when it comes to games and competitions. Thus, I wanted to try out this challenge. I thought it could serve as a step in overcoming my fears of public speaking. With the right amount of practice and a good mentor, I believed that it would go well.

My speech was inspired by Michelle Obama's speech "How to Succeed in Life". When I first watched her giving that speech, it never left my mind. Every word and every sentence in the entire speech was so well-spoken that it moved me, and it made me think about my own life. Her speech was exactly what I want to do. I want to leave an impact on everyone who will listen to me. That's why I chose her speech to be an inspiration for mine. I worked with Ms. Deanna Sun, our ALT teacher here. She helped me improve my speech from mediocre to fantastic quickly. Without her, I don't think I would have done it properly at

all. She taught me the connection between tones, emotions, and singing the speech like a song so it wouldn't sound so bland. She was the one who helped me add life and color to my speech. She also taught me how to express my feelings and emotions through my voice, facial expressions, and body language. I was like a talking statue when I first practiced. I improved so much as the days went by. At the same time, I was working hard on preparing the speech while also stressing and reviewing for exams. However, it all worked out in the end.

Lastly, this goes out to everyone who wants to do something but doesn't have the confidence of doing so. Just try and believe in yourself, and get help as much as you need. Build yourself up to your goal. If I can do it, you can do it. To be honest, anyone can. Do everything! We only live once so try all of the things you want to do as much as possible. ☘



English Teacher Report (Continued)

In addition to the art of Watoji, I learned about Japanese folklore, including the legendary Amabie, a yokai (goblin) who is half-fish and half-human. It is said that people will be protected from COVID-19 if they post a drawing of it. I also experienced my first Oshōgatsu, or Japanese New Year's celebration with Yoko Nakano, my Japanese teacher, one of my students, Brandon, and past ALT Kevin Butt. The meal was exquisite! We had an assortment of sushi and osechi, and each dish was said to benefit various parts of our lives. In just one meal, I was given a happy future, many children, unlimited wealth, a healthy body, and a prosperous life.

Every day I am reminded of how fortunate I am to have this experience and share it with my peers. I've read about foreign cultures from textbooks, but there is nothing as surreal as living it firsthand. Every day is such a fulfilling adventure, so as long as this state of emergency continues, I hope we can all use this time to deepen our relationships with the few people around us, and deepen our knowledge and appreciation of different customs and



Osechi for Oshōgatsu

Furusato Park in Kashiwa

Brandon Matsumoto



One of my favorite pastimes recently is going on runs to Furusato Park. It's a very large park with grassy areas, beautiful trees to sit under, fountains for children to play in, ponds to fish in, trails to run on, sidewalks to bike on, and a long beautiful river that splits the park into two. There are also some training machines outside to work out and a pull-up bar.

You might be thinking, “Brandon...are you sure that’s not for children?” Well, that’s what I thought at first, but I read the sign that said otherwise: “To promote wellness and health for adults. Made by the City of Kashiwa.” So no worries! I’m not bumping little kids off of the monkey bars! I’m good to go. As I did my chin-ups, a couple of children would come up to me, trying to copy my exercises—or so I thought. They were probably making fun of me as they snickered and giggled with each other. Sometimes, I just stop and look at the lively park filled with people. I see boys playing catch with their fathers, families on picnics in the shade, kids dancing around and blowing bubbles in the air, and older folks calmly fishing



Kitakashiwa Furusato Park



Except for the Lifetime Membership*
all dues are in effect from
January 1 to
December 31

Member Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email Address _____

Mail your check and this form to:

Torrance Sister City Association
c/o Community Services Department
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

- My membership is: New Renewal
- TSCA Directory Update:
- New Address New Telephone Number New Email Address
- I do not want to be listed in the TSCA Directory
- TSCA Activities:
- I am interested in participating in TSCA activities

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$75+
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$125+
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$200+
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership*	\$2,000+

Enclosed is a donation to
TSCA (in addition to \$ _____
annual dues)

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make your **check** payable to **TSCA**

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday
of each month at 7-9 pm
(No meetings in August or December)

*If you have
any questions
about your membership,
please email Alyssa Yamauchi at
tscamembership@gmail.com*

www.torrancesistercity.org



**Torrance Sister City
Association**

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503