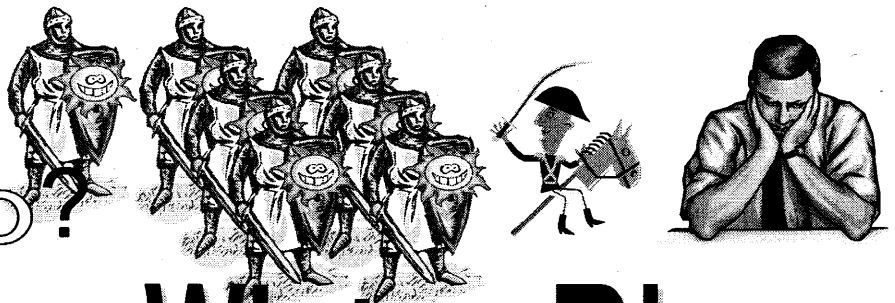


# What's Happening in Obihiro:

International Relations Section Newsletter

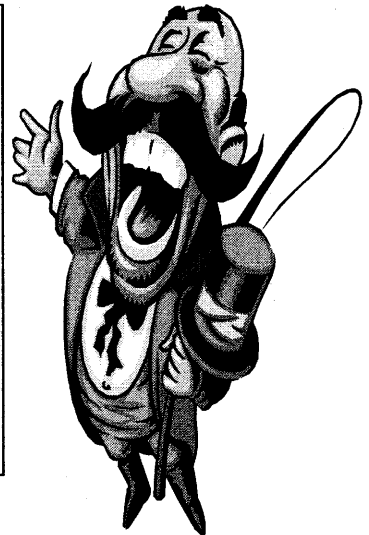


# Fighting the Winter Blues

The winter here in Obihiro seems to drag on forever, and just when it seems things are starting to warm up, you wake up and your car's tires are frozen to the pavement! (this can happen if you park in a puddle) People tend to feel the winter blues because there is less sunlight and the weather prevents most spontaneous outdoor activities. So here are some headlines and random articles to jump-start your brain and help you out of any deep snow banks your brain may be in. We hope it also piques your interest in Japan and the world, and hopefully we will see you at our next international event!



**The new prime minister of Japan, Mr. Abe** (pronounced Ah-Bay, picture at left) is Japan's youngest prime minister since WWII. history. He gained popularity through his successes and strong stance on the North Korean abductions issue, and one of his main goals as PM is to change Japan's pacifist constitution. He also is pushing very hard to change many things regarding education in Japan such as the content of what is taught, increasing the government's influence over local boards of education, etc. So, if you are a teacher, student, or parent in Japan, you should be watching his actions very closely.



**The 6-Party Talks** (between Japan, China, Russia, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States) finally seem to have produced some results. There have been many "joint statements" written stating that North Korea (the DPRK) is willing to talk about giving up its nuclear ambitions. However, recently the DPRK has finally agreed to begin dismantling its nuclear program (again) in return for thousands of tons of oil and other aid. The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula has been a point of tension here in East Asia, but if this agreement is successful, then maybe it will make this side of the world a safer, more friendly place to live.



**Obihiro is also making strides** for international cooperation and understanding. It turns out that there are nearly 500 foreigners living in Obihiro, and probably almost double that number living in Tokachi, in total. We aim to make Obihiro and Tokachi a better place for foreigners to live, and to increase understanding both ways so that people of many different cultures can live together harmoniously. The city, along with international organizations such as the Obihiro Committee for International Friendship, is constantly putting on international events, and we would love it if you would participate! Some examples of the events we do are written below:

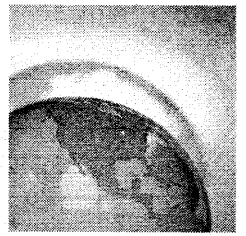
## Obihiro's International Events



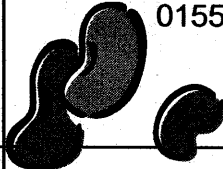


- \* Children's Book Readings: You read a book to Japanese children in your own language, and we translate
- \* International Workshops: We invite people from all over the world (like you!) to come and talk and teach Japanese people about their own country and culture. Many people hold cooking workshops, make traditional crafts, or play traditional games.
- \* International Events: These can include huge Halloween parties, or Wine parties where foreign residents can mix and mingle with locals while learning about each other's cultures. We also have high school student exchange programs with China and the United States, so if you have something that you think they should see while in Obihiro, please let me know about it! This month we will have an "International Understanding Workshop" where people will discuss stereotypes and prejudices between Japanese and foreigners.
- \* If you would like to join us in any of these events or would like more info, please contact us at the address on the back page!



# Tokachi Events

## March 2007



When	What	Where/Contact #
Some Ongoing Events (End in March)	<b>Draft Horse Racing:</b> At the Obihiro Horse racetrack. This is the last year so come and see it! <b>Shikaribetsu Lake Kotan:</b> A Bar made completely of ice, outdoor onsen, etc! Ends 3/31 <b>Tokachi River Hakucho Festival :</b> Ends 3/5	For contact info: Refer to past WHIOs or email us at <a href="mailto:international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp">international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp</a>
3/3 - 5 (Fri - Sat) 8:30- 11:00	<b>Ice Skating Experience:</b> Want to go ice-skating? We are offering FREE skating this weekend, so dress warm, and don't worry if you are a pro or not. We are going to have some middle school students on hand to help everyone learn how to skate like an olympian! (or at least not fall down all the time)	 帯広の森アイスアリーナ Obihiro no Mori Ice Arena 0155-34-0122 Please RSVP by email! <a href="mailto:tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp">tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp</a>
3/10 (Sat) 14:00 - 16:00	<b>The Culture of Myanmar:</b> Come to an introduction to the culture of Myanmar. Khin Maun Tun will be teaching about the culture, society, and history of Myanmar. We will also be making a New Year's snack by hand and eating it because the Myanmar New Year's is actually in April!. (Warning: presentation will be done in Japanese)	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center  0155-34-0122 RSVP Required!
3/11 (Sun) 10:00 - 14:00	<b>Bean Festival:</b> Come and experience the joy of Tokachi beans! There are going to be so many different types of foods to try, and all of them will be made with Tokachi beans. They are going to be giving out lots of free food and information. Also, there will be a taste test to compare Tokachi beans to imported beans, so come decide the #1 bean!	とかちプラザ アトリウム Atrium of Tokachi Plaza  0155-22-7890
3/12 (Mon) 9:00~	<b>All Tokachi Snowball Battle:</b> We aim to use snow to the maximum in order to popularize winter leisure sports, as well as create a meeting place for the people of Tokachi. We will be using Japanese rules. There will be 2 divisions: ①Elementary/Middle School kids and Girls ②Normal Division Unfortunately, I recently found out the application period has already ended so, you won't be able to compete, but you can still go and watch.	旧中札内高校グラウンド Former Nakasatsunai High School Playing Field (30 minutes from Obihiro)  0155-67-2929
3/17 (Sat) 14:00 - 15:00	<b>Story Telling Around the World:</b> This month's children's book is going to be from Canada, read in both English and Japanese. We're going to play games and have fun while listening to a story from another land. Our target audience is children from 3 yrs. old to 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade elementary students.	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center  0155-34-0122
3/17 (Sat) 18:00 - 21:00	<b>Multicultural Living Forum 2007:</b> This is an interesting event for anyone who can understand Japanese. We are going to learn about how foreigners and Japanese can live together better. Mr. Haga, the director for the Niigata International Center, will be the guest speaker.	とかちプラザ(2階) Tokachi Plaza: AV Room (2 <sup>nd</sup> fl.) 0155-34-0122

# Carlos ate a vista!

("Carlos goodbye!" in Portugese)

The warm spring winds melt the winter snows and bring change to the Tokachi Plain. This month, a member of the International Relations team here in Obihiro will be leaving us. Mister Carlos Katatani will be moving to Nagoya in mid-March. I sat down with him to get all the details.

**WHIO:** So, Carlos, why in the world would you want to move to Nagoya?

**Carlos:** I was newly married in May 2006, but I still have not lived together with my wife! My wife looked for but couldn't find a job here in Obihiro. However, we were both able to find a job in Nagoya, and we found a place to live where we can finally live together!

**WHIO:** Was it something we said? Do we have bad breath or something?

**Carlos:** No no no no no. I love it here in Obihiro; even if it is a little colder than my native Brazil.

**WHIO:** Ok, then tell me about some fun things you did here in Obihiro.

**Carlos:** I went to the Kita no Yatai almost ever night. I met so many different and interesting people there, and I also made a lot of friends. It was very interesting to how personalities change depending on whether it is daytime or night! The food here is also very delicious. Hokkaido hotate (scallops) are big and cheap, and the jingis-kan (mutton) is also quite tasty. I also enjoyed the pastries here.

**WHIO:** What was your favorite event that you did while working here?

**Carlos:** I loved the event "Sekai no Tomodachi" (Friends of the World). This event is a big festival at the beginning of July where anyone can come and enjoy food from many different countries, play games and have fun. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the food was cheaper and more delicious than I thought it would be, so I definitely recommend this event!

Carlos left an imprint on Obihiro



**WHIO:** What is going to be your last event here?

**Carlos:** I will be translating at the children's book reading on March 17<sup>th</sup> (Sat.) so please everyone, come and bring your children!

**WHIO:** Do you have a message for the readers of "What's Happening in Obihiro" and all the citizens of Obihiro?

**Carlos:** I would like to thank everybody for helping and joining us at our events. My stay in Obihiro was really short, but it was enough to meet great people. And please, keep coming to the "Friends of the World", "Halloween Party", "Wine Party", etc, because you make these events something really special. And yes, if you want to come south to Nagoya and maybe try "Miso katsu", just let me know!  
~~~~~Até a vista!

If you have any suggestions as to what you would like to see written in the Japanese Corner, or about how it should be written, please email GREG at [international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp](mailto:international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp)

## Japanese Corner (vocab found in/related to this month's issue)

首相 (しゅしょう): "Prime Minister" (of Japan: Shinzo Abe)

六力国協議 (ろっかこくきょうぎ): "6 Party Talks" (regarding North Korea's nuclear program)

教育基本法 (きょういくきほんほう): "Basic Law Regarding Education" This law dictates what is taught in Japanese schools and how. It seems that the current administration in Japan is aiming to improve the Japanese education system by instilling more patriotism into school lessons.

謝礼金 (しゃれいきん): "Thank you Money" given to guest lecturers and other volunteers in thanks for their participation in certain (international) events. The City of Obihiro also sometimes gives thank you money to people who volunteer to do certain events/activities.

世界の友達 (せかいのともだち): Big "Friends of the World" event that Obihiro puts on every July.