

Happy New Year (あけましておめでとう)

Time flies, and it is now 2015! Happy new year to all our readers. We look forward to providing you with more of the goings on in Obihiro this year.

あけましておめでとうございます。今年もよろしくお祈りします。

International Festa (国際フェスタinとかち2015)

On Saturday 2/14 and Sunday 2/15 we will be holding the “International Festa in Tokachi 2014” at the Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA Hokkaido International Center (Obihiro).

We are planning to have teachers from an area English school to help us with “Let’s play in English” lessons aimed a children, two free movie viewings about fair trade and schools, booths run by JICA, cultural introductions by Obihiro University International Students, programs to interact with JICA participants, and various international exchange and cooperation organizations will also be in attendance.

We will also have a special rally for children younger than elementary school age, as well as free English story books for toddlers.

The event will be from 10:00 to 15:00 and entry is free.

We are also looking for volunteers to help at the event so if you are interested please contact us.

For more information and inquiries please contact the Tokachi International Association office at the Tokachi International Relations Center at 0155-34-0122.

Event Details

Date: 14 February—15 February 2015
Place: Tokachi International Relations Center
& JICA Hokkaido International Center
(Obihiro)
Fee: Free
Organized by: Tokachi International Association

2月14日～2月15日、森の交流館・十勝及びJICA北海道国際センター(帯広)で行う国際フェスタinとかち2015に皆様のご来場をお待ちしております。

Sapporo Snow Festival (さっぽろ雪祭り)

The Sapporo Snow Festival is one of Japan's largest winter events. This years Snow Festival is from 2/5—2/11.

2月5日～2月11日、さっぽろ雪祭りが行われます。

Obihiro Ice Festival (おびひろ氷まつり)

Every year the city of Obihiro holds the Obihiro Ice Festival where master sculptures from all over come together and build beautiful ice and snow sculptures. There are also stage shows and plenty of hot food to keep you warm during the coldest time of the year. This year’s Ice Festival will be held from 2/6—2/8 at Obihiro Midorigaoka Park, Obihiro Hirokoji, and Eki Kita Grounds (across from Cinema Taiyo).

2月6日～2月8日、帯広緑ヶ丘公園、広小路、駅北広場で氷まつりがありますので、ぜひご来場をお願いします。

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Culture & Cuisine
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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
1/14 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volley Night (国際ミニバレーナイト): Meet friends from all over the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport!	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
1/17 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	27th Kids Playground (第27回キッズプレイグラウンド): Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, you can learn more about Sri Lanka.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
1/24 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	47th International Talk (第47回インターナショナル・トーク): Learn more about the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month's talk will be about Malawi.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
11/1-3/31 (Sat-Tue)	Winter Fest in Ecopark (ウインタフェスinエコパ): Enjoy snowshoe walking, snow raft tours, a foot spa, and other fun winter activities.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
Early December to Late February	Shintoku Welcome Illumination (いらっしやいしんとくイルミネーション): JR Shintoku Station, the gateway to Tokachi and Eastern Hokkaido, will be lighted up in various colors.	JR Shintoku Station JR新得駅前 0156-64-0522
Early December to Mid-February	Tokimeki Illumination (ときめきイルミネーション): Around 20,000 bulbs will light up the highway 236 leading up to the town hall.	Sarabetsu Village Exercise Square 更別村運動広場・農村公園 0155-52-2115
1/11 (Sun) 14:00-15:00	Obihiro Coming of Age Ceremony (帯広市成人の集い): If you turned 20 in the past year and reside in Obihiro, you can join this ceremony celebrating adulthood.	Obihiro Citizens' Culture Hall 帯広市民文化ホール 0155-65-4162
1/17-1/18 (Sat-Sun)	1st Fat Bike Snow Match Race in Churui (第1回全日本ファットバイク雪上マッチレース2015 in ちゅうらい): Watch regular bicycles with big tires race against the clock on a snow course.	Churui Naumann Onsen Alco 236 忠類ナウマン温泉アルコ236 01558-8-3111
1/24-1/25 (Sat-Sun)	37th Nukabira Lake Time Trial on Ice (第37回糠平湖水氷上タイムトライアル): Watch as rally cars of various classes speed along the frozen surface of Nukabira Lake.	Nukabira Lake, Kamishihoro Town 上士幌町 糠平湖 01564-4-2224
1/24-3/1 (Sat-Sun) 19:00-21:00	Tokachigawa Swan Festival "Sairinka" (十勝川白鳥まつり「彩凜華」): Come to a romantic world with a fantasy show of lights and sounds. There will be a free foot spa and other attractions.	Otofuke Town Tokachigaoka Park 音更町十勝が丘公園 0155-32-6633
1/24-3/22 (Sat-Sun)	2015 Shikaribetsu Lake Ice Village (2015然別湖コタン): Come to this ice village built on top of the frozen lake, with an onsen, ice bar, ice theater, cross country skiing, and more.	Shikaribetsu Lake, Shikaoi Town 鹿追町 然別湖 0156-69-8181
1/31 (Sat) 16:00-20:00	11th Honbetsu Yuki Akari Night (第11回ほんべつ雪あかりナイト): Over 8,000 ice candles will light up the town. There will also be a candle contest, games, and more.	Michi no Eki Stellar Honbetsu etc. 道の駅ステラほんべつ他 0156-22-2529
1/31 (Sat)	4th Wood Candle Night (第4回ウッドキャンドルナイト): Ice candles and wood candles made from local pinewood will light up the town.	Michi no Eki Ashoro Ginga Hall 21 道の駅あしよろ銀河ホール21 0156-25-6131

Culture & Cuisine Corner (カルチャー&キューズコーナー)

Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu! Happy New Year to everyone! It's the Gregorian Year 2015 or Heisei Year 27. Make sure to write the year correctly on those countless forms you fill out this year. For those of you who received New Year postcards or *nengajō*, don't forget to check their numbers when the post office announces the winning *otoshidama* or lottery numbers on January 18. If you're lucky, you might just win free postage stamps, a package of local goods, or even 10,000 yen in cash.

We'd like to begin the year by providing some useful information for the season. As you probably know, winter in Hokkaido means ski and snowboard season, and there are hundreds of ski resorts all over the island. If you've never tried these winter sports before, why not try them out now? Most resorts have slopes designed for beginners and offer rental equipment. Furthermore, Hokkaido is famous for having fluffy "powder snow" perfect for skiing and snowboarding. Here we list down the ski resorts in Tokachi that you can visit:

Tokachi Sahoro Ski Resort

Address: Shintoku-cho Karikachi Kougen
Open season: Early December to Early April
Hours: 9:00-18:00
17 courses, 9 lifts available
Homepage: www.sahoro.co.jp/winter/w_ski



Nukabira Gensenkyo Ski Resort

Address: Kamishohoro-cho Nukabira Gensenkyo 75
Open season: Late December to Early April
Hours: 9:00-17:00 or sunset
14 courses, 4 lifts available
Homepage: ski.nukabirakan.com



Hoshino Resort Tomamu (Not in Tokachi, but a popular spot)

Address: Shimukappu-mura Azanaka Tomamu
Open season: Early December to Early April
Hours: 9:00-16:00 (Nighter: 16:00-19:00)
25 courses, 6 lifts available
Homepage: www.snowtomamu.jp/winter/



Memuro Ski Resort

Address: Memuro-cho Chubisei 2-sen 42
Open season: Mid-December to Late March
Hours: 9:00-17:00 (Nighter: 17:00-21:00)
5 courses available, 2 lifts available
Homepage: www.shin-arashiyama.jp/ski/



Hakugindai Ski Resort

Address: Makubetsu-cho Azaakeno 496-18
Open season: Late-December to Early March
Hours: 9:00-21:00
2 courses available, 1 lift available
Homepage: www.town.makubetsu.lg.jp/kanko_sangyo/kanko/skiingground/hakuginndai.html



Akenogaoka Ski Resort

Address: Makubetsu-cho Azaakeno 496-18
Open season: Late-December to Early March
Hours: 9:00-21:00
1 course, 1 lift available
Homepage: www.town.makubetsu.lg.jp/kanko_sangyo/kanko/skiingground/akeno.html



Shintokuyama Ski Resort

Address: Shintoku-cho Azashintoku Kisen 9
Open season: Late December to Early March
Hours: 9:30-16:00
3 courses, 1 lift available



For those of you who prefer a slower slide, there are also plenty of ice skating rinks and cross-country ski courses around the region. So what are you waiting for? Go out there and hit the slopes!

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)

To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml



Title	Language	Dates
Interstellar	English	Ends 16th
Fury	English	Ends 16th
The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies	2D Japanese	Ends 30th
The Expendables 3	English	Starts 17th
Annie	Undecided	Starts 24th
Exodus: Gods and Kings	Undecided	Starts 30th
Gone Girl	Undecided	Starts 31st
Big Hero 6	Japanese	All Month

Chinese Corner (中国語コーナー)

1月の北海道自然早已是银装素裹，既然外面天寒地冻，正好有大把的时间可以在家里看看书或者是电视剧。这次我想给大家推荐一部恰好非常适合在冬天看的电视剧——《温柔时刻》。在来北海道之前，留在我印象里比较深的，除了岩井俊二的《情书》里的小樽，其次就是仓本聪笔下的富良野了。富良野三部曲——《北国之恋》、《温柔时刻》和《风之花园》，其中的《温柔时刻》在中国应该算是最广为年轻观众所熟悉的仓本聪编剧的作品之一了。这部剧主要围绕着寺尾聪扮演的涌井勇吉和二宫和也扮演的涌井拓郎父子间的情感纠葛展开——因为事故，大竹忍扮演的母亲去世，父亲辞掉工作，来到妻子的家乡富良野开了一家咖啡厅森时计，将人生剩余的全部时间，用来陪伴心中的思念；而儿子拓郎也因为母亲的事深深自责自己，囚在皆空窑，揉着陶土，塑着泥胎，想把破碎的自己，重新铸烧成器。咖啡馆里故友新知，人来客往，每个人也各自怀揣着各自的故事。剧中的富良野也是这个季节，飘着雪，却因为故事里的人和他们的故事，让人觉得那个冬天似乎并不那么的冷。

It's January and Hokkaido is covered with pure white snow. In this cold season, it's nice to stay inside and read a book or catch up on TV shows. This month I would like to introduce a TV show I think would be great for everyone to see – "Yasashi Jikan". Before coming to Hokkaido the thing that made the biggest impression on me of the area was Iwai Shunji's movie, "Love Letter" where I was introduced to Otaru and from Kuramoto Sou's movies Furano. Of Sou's 3 movies, "Kitano Kuni Kara", "Yasashi Jikan", and "Kaze no Garden", I think that "Yasashi Jikan" is the one most known by young people in China. This drama looks at the problems faced by a family, when a car accident where the son is driving causes the mother to die. Their father quits his job and flees to Furano and opens a Café called "Mori no Tokei". Meanwhile the son who feels great guilt for the death of his mother finds work at a nearby ceramics studio and loses himself in his craft. The two are reunited in Furano and slowly heal their wounds. Also, the people who visit the café have a variety of their own stories they tell. Even though every scene in Furano is full of snow, the connections between the people in the drama make it warm.

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro International and Domestic Relations Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the International and Domestic Relations Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.