

The newsletter for foreign residents.

VIVA ! ひめじ

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newsletter editing volunteers.
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<People> Ms.Ferra-Lynn McCaffery

Ferra-Lynn is from Ottawa, Canada, and has lived in several cities in Canada, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal, and Halifax. She came to Japan in July 2008, and has lived in Himeji since August after completing a three-day JET Program orientation in Tokyo.

Q: What do you do now?

A: I am working at a junior high school and four elementary schools in Himeji as an ALT. I mainly work at the junior high school, while teaching English to elementary school students every Thursday.

Q: How do you like teaching at the elementary school and junior high school? What has been your impression of students?

A: Elementary school students are full of energy and speak to me a lot. I enjoy doing some activities with them such as playing games, reading books, and so on. At the same time, many of the junior high school students are very quiet and shy, so I sing or dance with exaggerated gestures for them. I felt a bit embarrassed at first, but I enjoy it now because they have gradually become interested. The other day, I got a Christmas card from a girl student, which made me so happy.

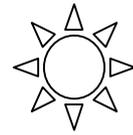
Q: What do you do on your day off?

A: I like to travel and also like to eat local food while traveling. I was surprised that the okonomiyakis I ate in Hiroshima and Osaka were different than the okonomiyaki in Himeji; however, all are delicious. I often listen to Japanese music. Songs by EXILE and Hikaru Utada are my favorite, and I have known these songs since I was in Canada. Recently, I watched the movie "Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea" without subtitles.

Q: What are you planning to do for the future?

A: As I have been in Japan for only six months, what I want to do now is to get used to life, culture, and customs in Japan. In the near future, I hope to work in the Japanese Embassy or Canadian Embassy and contribute to the development of international relations and multiethnic cultural exchange.

2009 Event Information (Spring)



●Himeji Castle Special Exhibition: 4/1 (Wed) – 5/31 (Sun)

Special exhibition of parts of the castle normally closed to the public.

Regular hours of operation are 9:00 - 17:00, but will be extended to 9:00 - 18:00 from 4/25 (Sat) to 8/31 (Mon).

Price: adults, ¥600; students (age 5 to junior high school), ¥200

●‘Hanaakari’ Himeji Castle Night Cherry Blossom Viewing: 4/3 (Fri) - 4/12 (Sun), 18:00 - 21:00

About 70 cherry blossom trees in Nishinomaru Garden are to be lit up.

A ‘Hanaakari concert’ will be held twice at the site everyday at 18:30 and 20:00.

● The 25th Annual Himeji Castle Cherry Blossom Viewing & the 17th Annual Himeji Castle Blossom Viewing Taiko Drums Performance

Planned to be held on 4/4 (Sat) 10:00 - 16:00.

Visitors can enjoy the sound of gorgeous *Koto* harps and epic *Taiko* drums while viewing Himeji castle and cherry blossoms.

* Will be held on 4/5 (Sun) in the case of rain.



●The 9th Annual Himeji Craft and Art Fair for 2009 5/9 (Sat) - 5/10 (Sun)

Place: Higashioyashikiato Park (East of Himeji castle, the lawn next to the Himeji Zoo)

More than 100 groups will participate from all over the country. Exhibitions and vendors of handmade works will be available. Workshops and locations to experience craft-making will be set up. Visit http://www.geocities.jp/wood_topjp/himejicraft.htm for details.

< Events around Himeji >

●Tulip Festival: 3/1 (Sun) - 5/6 (Wed)

About 3 hundred thousand (representing 450 kinds) of tulips are planted.

Visitors can try on Dutch costumes on Saturdays and Sundays between 3/1 (Sun) and 4/26 (Sun).

Place: Hyogo Prefectural Flower Center (Kasai City)

TEL: 0790-47-1182 <http://www.flower-center.pref.hyogo.jp/>

Open: 9:00 - 17:00 (no holidays during the festival term)

Entrance fee: adults, ¥500; junior & senior high school students, ¥300; elementary school students, ¥150; under school age, free.

Access: Direct bus service is available from the Shinki bus terminal (only Sundays & holidays). The trip takes about 1 hour. Price: ¥900.

Busses depart from Himeji at 10:03 and 11:03. Busses depart from the Flower Center at 14:48 and 15:48.



●Tatsuno Samurai Parade: 4/5 (Sun)

About 3,000 cherry trees come out every April around Tatsuno Park, and the Sakura Festival is held.

A procession totaling 300 people, including 160 child warriors and 10 knights, will parade between the rows of cherry blossom trees while performing on traditional instruments.

Place: Tatsuno City, around Tatsuno jokamachi (castle town)

Access: 20 minutes train ride (Kishin line) from the JR Himeji station; 25 minutes walk from Tatsuno station.

Have you heard about Domestic Violence?

- Domestic Violence (DV) is violence received from a spouse or a partner and is a horrible crime.
 - Domestic Violence has many forms:
 - Beating and kicking
 - Being ignored
 - Being shouted at and threatened
 - Interfering with the privacy of the victim by checking the victim's phone calls and e-mails from friends
 - Economic abuse through total financial control
 - Forced sexual activity
 - Victims of Domestic Violence can be supported by the law:
 - “Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims”
 - This law protects all foreign residents of Japan regardless of their nationality and status of residence.
 - Domestic Violence also affects the victim's children.
 - Everyone has the right to live safely.
- ◇ If you feel you are a victim of abuse, ask for help. Please do not blame yourself, but contact the counseling offices listed below.
- ◇ If you witness Domestic Violence, please show this paper to the person affected.
- ◇ If a victim can't ask for help herself/himself, please contact the numbers below on his/her behalf.
- Himeji Gender Equality Promotion Center “I-messae” 「Counseling Room for Women」
 - Telephone Counseling: TEL 079-287-0801
 - Counseling Room (appointment necessary): TEL 079-287-0807
 - Himeji City Welfare Consultation Office: TEL 079-221-2327
 - Himeji City Women's Consultation Office: TEL 079-288-7756
 - Himeji City Child Support Center: TEL 079-221-2132
 - Hyogo Women's Consulting Center: TEL 078-732-7700
 - Hyogo-Prefectural Gender Equality Promotion Center
 - Telephone Counseling: TEL 078-360-8551
 - Counseling Room (appointment necessary): TEL 078-360-8554
 - Hyogo-Prefecture Police Department Stalking and DV line: TEL 078-371-7830
- Lines listed above are in Japanese. Please call the lines below for other languages.
- Consultation in Spanish and Portuguese: TEL 079-221-2107 (the first and third Tuesdays of each month).
 - Consultation Service for foreign residents “From Himeji to the World” (in English / Chinese / Spanish / Portuguese / Vietnamese): TEL 079-287-0821 (the second and fourth Sundays of each month).
 - Hyogo International Association Information and Advisory Service (in Japanese / English / Chinese / Spanish / Portuguese): TEL 078-382-2052



YUMESAKI TOWN

We are pleased to introduce Yumesaki Town which was annexed by the City of Himeji in March 2006, including the neighboring small villages and towns.

[Shiota Hot Springs]

There are two hot spring hotels there among the quiet mountains within the open rural area along the Yumesaki River. For 300 years, the hot springs have been believed to help in treating stomach and intestinal diseases. Therefore, you can enjoy an unroofed hot bath outdoors at the hotels.

Access: The only public transportation is operated by the Shinki bus company from the bus stop in front of the north side of Himeji Station, to the Shiota bus stop (where you get off).

Time: about 40 minutes. Fare: 630 yen each way.

[Mt. Seppikozan]

The mountain has long been known as a religious training site for traveling priests. Many mountain climbers visit for hiking and rock climbing. It was selected as one of the top one-hundred scenic points in Japan, and as one of the top one-hundred forests of Hyogo Prefecture. At the foot of the mountain there are campsites and spots for cars, and bungalows for the night.

Access: Shinki bus to the Seppikozan stop.

Time: about a one hour ride. Fare: 1,070 yen each way.

[Agricultural Park at the Yumesaki Yume-no-sato house]

Here you can have the experience of making noodles yourself from buckwheat grown locally without agricultural chemicals. Furthermore, you can enjoy digging for sweet potatoes, and picking sweet corn and chestnuts. Kindly note that you can take advantage of a cottage village as well as an open space for barbecuing.

※ A reservation is needed to experience making your own noodles.

※ Rental space for barbecuing: 200 yen for adults (free for children), 500 yen for car parking. Please keep in mind that you will need to bring all the provisions for cooking.

Access: About 45 minutes by car from the center of the city.

Telephone: 079-336-1585. Closed for business on Mondays.

[Yumesaki Shichifukujin or The Seven Gods of Japan]

The Shichifukujin are the Gods of Luck and are believed to bring good luck to us all. In the precincts of the seven different Buddhist temples in the town are enshrined Hotei (god of open-mindedness and wealth), Jurojin (god of longevity), Fukurokuju (god of prophets), Bishamonten (god of warriors and religious missionaries), Daikoku (god of farmers), Ebisu (god of fishermen and tradesmen), and Benzaiten (the only goddess in this group of deities, who represents art, literature, music, and eloquence). The image of Hotei in the Miroku Temple is well-known as the largest in Japan.



Hoteison

[Special Product]

Tamago Senbei or Egg Cracker: Wheat flour is mixed with fresh eggs and honey and baked without any water.

Yume Soba: Buckwheat noodles are made of 100 percent buckwheat grown in the Yumesaki region without agricultural chemicals.

Kamaboko: Kamaboko is a steamed fish paste cake. It is semi-cylindrical in shape and placed on a piece of wood. In the town, there are two factories at which you can see the process of making kamaboko. At the Yumesen-kan hall, you can buy tempura (fried seafood and vegetables).

Homepage of the Yumesaki region of the City of Himeji:

<http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/s20/3360001/17097.html>

☆☆Himeji Tourist Information☆☆



①Himeji Tourist Passport

The “Himeji Tourist Passport” is a discount ticket for sightseeing spots around Himeji including Himeji Castle. There are two courses: the Himeji Castle Course and Shoshazan Engyoji Temple Course. The ticket is valid for 7 days. It is convenient to use to show your friends around Himeji, and also good to use for a short trip.

- Himeji Castle Course Adults 800 yen; elementary and junior high school students 300 yen. You can go to Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden, Zoo, Museum of Art, and Museum of Literature. You can see only the permanent collection rooms of museums.
- Shoshazan Engyoji Temple Course
Adults 1,500 yen, junior high school students 1,000 yen, elementary school students 600 yen. You can go to all the places of the Himeji Castle Course, plus the Shosha Art and Craft Museum. It also includes the ticket for the Mt. Shosha Ropeway.
- Special exhibitions at museums are 20% off.
- Also discounted are the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History (group discount applied for both permanent and special collections), Japan Toy Museum (10% off admission), Himeji Central Park (10% off admission), Tourist Gift Shops around Himeji Castle (5% off shopping), “Bansankan” at Jibasan Building (5% off shopping).

You can buy this passport at Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden, Zoo, Museum of Art, Museum of Literature, Shosha Art and Craft Museum, Mt. Shosha Ropeway, and Himeji Kanko Navi Port (Tourist Information Center).

For information call the City of Himeji Tourism Bureau. TEL: 079-287-3652

②Himeji Castle Loop Bus

The retro-styled buses “Otonosama (King)” and “Ohimesama (Princess)” run around the castle.
Route: Himeji Station (Shinki Bus Terminal) – Himeji-jyo Otemonmae (Shiromidai Park) – Keisatsu mae (Police Station) – Hakubutsukan mae (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History) – Shimizubashi Bungakukan mae (Himeji Museum of Literature) – Kokoen mae (Kokoen Garden) – Otemae Dori (Otemae Street) – Himeji Station (in front of the OS building).

Hours of Operation: weekdays 9:00 - 16:30, every 30 minutes (times may change in winter months);
weekends & public holidays 9:00 - 17:00, every 15~30 minutes.

Fare: For 1 ride, 100 yen/adult and 50 yen/child.

For a 1 day ticket, 300 yen/adult and 150 yen/child.

* Discounts are applied for admission to Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden, and Himeji Art Museum.

③Free Rental Bike

You can rent a bike at the Information desk at the JR Himeji Station and Himeji Kanko Navi Port by filling out an application form. No reservation is necessary. Please return the bike to where it was rented.

Registration hours: 9:00 - 16:00 (bikes must be returned by 18:00).



For further information, call the City of Himeji Tourism Bureau (Himeji Kanko Navi Port).

TEL: 079-287-3658 Open: 9:00 - 17:00

Wheelchairs are also available for rent (renters must fill out an application form).

☆☆☆Information About the Himeji International Association☆☆☆

Information regarding the traditional Japanese tea ceremony hosted by the Himeji International Association.

A traditional Japanese tea ceremony will be held once a month by the Himeji International Association in the Japanese-style room "KOYOAN" on the 4th floor of the Egret Building. The ceremony will be held from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm on the first Sunday of each month. Visitors from other countries are welcome to attend the ceremony (free of charge), which represents the art and ritual of serving special powdered tea. Please take this opportunity to attend and experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony.

Upcoming dates for the tea ceremony are as follows:

March 1 st	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
April 5 th	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
May 3 rd	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
June 7 th	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
July 5 th	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
August 2 nd	(Sunday)	10:30 am - 3:30 pm



※※※ Editor's Postscript ※※※



With the cold winter coming to an end, the new season of warm weather will make all living things change. People will take off their winter clothes and put on lighter clothes. In spring, birds begin to change the color of their winter feathers from white into black for summer. For example, the rustic bunting (a kind of sparrow) and the black-headed gull turn their heads from white to black in the summer. Human beings as well as animals both enjoy something fashionable with the change of the season, especially at this time of the year, don't they?

The next, No. 29th issue of 「VIVA ! ひめじ」 is expected to be printed in June 2009.

We are always looking for translators and native speakers to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions of 「VIVA ! ひめじ」. If you are interested, please contact us at the following address:

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These names are used with the contributors' permission.

Their assistance is much appreciated.

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