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## Portland And Oregon Welcome First-Ever Class Trip From Japan

### THE WEEK IN REVIEW

#### Moscow Building Explosion

At least 23 people had died and dozens more feared dead in a bomb explosion that pulverized an eight-story apartment building in Moscow. Local officials said that the blast was a terrorist act and was caused by a gas leak or explosives possibly stored in the building. More than 200 people have died in explosions in Russia during the past two weeks.

#### East Timor Evacuation

The United Nations postponed the withdrawal of local and international U.N. staff from Dili despite an escalation of violence in the area. About 2,000 East Timorese had taken refuge on the compound. The United States has no plans to contribute to any peacekeeping force for Indonesia.

#### Earthquake in Greece

127 people were killed in the deadliest earthquake to hit Greece in more than 40 years. The death toll from the damage is expected to climb to 140 with 13 people missing and presumed dead.

#### Rwandan Bishop Goes on Trial

Augustin Misago will be the first Catholic bishop to go on trial for genocide. He was accused of participating in the murder of half a million Tutsis in Rwanda that was led by an extremist Hutu government between April and July 1994.

#### Gun Buyback Offer

A \$15 million federal gun buyback plan by President Clinton will get guns off the streets by giving local police departments up to \$500,000 to buy guns in and around public housing projects for a "suggested price" of \$50. The guns will be destroyed, the White House said.

#### Global Y2K Readiness

The International Civil Aviation Organization, a U.N.-based group that sets international flight standards, determined that 53 countries had still not responded to a survey of their airport and airline readiness for the Year 2000 computer problem. The organization had asked its 185 members to respond by July 1.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 540 students traveled with their teachers from the Tokyo-area Shukutoku Yono High School to pursue a week-long educational adventure in Oregon. In Japan, junior and senior high schools plan an annual school trip for all members of a grade level. Traditional destinations for these class trips were historical and cultural sites within Japan. In recent years, however, schools have sought to reflect the growing importance of international education by planning trips to nearby countries such as Korea, China, or Australia. For the first time ever, a school has decided to send students all the way to Oregon.

Reverend Monjo Wajima, a priestess of the Jodo-Shu sect of Buddhism, founded Shukutoku High School, in 1892. Recognizing the need to educate young women in the modern era, Reverend Wajima worked tirelessly to achieve her goal. The school began with only five students and five teachers, and in the last hundred years it has expanded to include co-ed elementary schools, junior high schools, a junior college, and a university, becoming a bastion of Buddhist education in the Tokyo area.

Shukutoku Yono Women's High School was established in 1946 in Saitama, Japan. Continuing Reverend Wajima's legacy, the school advocates an expanding curriculum that adapts to modern challenges. Fostering international education through exchange programs to Oregon has been a strong part of this commitment.

12 classes traveled from Saitama, Japan, to Oregon. 6 classes arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup>; 6 classes arrived on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. (The group was too big for one plane.) All classes flew into Seattle airport and took charter buses to Portland.

Each class spent their first day visiting Pittock Mansion and then shopping downtown. After shopping they went to one of three restaurants: The Chart house, Stanford's and Atwaters. Each class is staying at the DoubleTree Hotel.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 6 classes that arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> went on a morning cruise on the "Portland Spirit." Then they traveled the Mt. Hood loop. 3 classes ate at Timberline; 3 classes ate at The Hood River Inn. (On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the day before returning, the second 6 classes will follow the same schedule.)

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, they broke up into five groups, 2 or 3 classes per group. Each group visited a different location in the morning: OMSI, The Oregon Trail Museum, a police and a fire department, the state Capitol in Salem, and Bonneville Dam. In the afternoon, each group toured a different high school: Central Catholic, Valley Catholic, Portland Christian, David Douglas, and Blanchet Academy (Salem). At each school they held an assembly where a Shukutoku Yono High School



photo by Portland Observer Staff



representative presented the principal with a flowering cherry tree, a symbol of the growing relationship between the two schools.

Then the students met their host families (families who have students at the school visited). 270 host families were found in the area. Each family will host 2 or 3 students. The students will spend Friday night, Saturday day and night and Sunday day with their host families.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> the students and families get together for a farewell banquet. Then they return to the Double Tree Hotel. The students return to Japan on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Speakers: Message from Mr. John Kitzhaber, Oregon Governor read by Mr. Phil Kiesling, Secretary of State, Mr. Todd Davidson, Oregon Medalist at Tokyo Olympics in 1964. Ms. Jean Lampi, Host Family Representative. Mr. Chuck Lee, Principal of Blanchet High School. Mr. Sho Dozono, Azumano President & CEO. Mr. Kunio Karaki, Vice Principal of Shukutoku Yono High School. Shukutoku Yono Student Performance and Speech

Not only does this trip mark the beginning of a new type of international exchange between Japan and the State of Oregon; it is also a groundbreaking effort for tourism. Because schools schedule travel during off peak times, a group of this size can be considered quite a boon to Oregon's ever-growing travel industry. All aspects considered, the group is expected to contribute a notable half-million dollars to the local economy.

## Canda takes helm at N.E. Neighborhood Office

John Canda wants to reconnect the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, and its neighborhood office, with the community it was intended to serve.

Canda was hired as executive director of the office last month. He had served as interim director since the resignation of Ben Priestley in February. Prior to this he had worked in the coalition's Youth Gang Outreach program since 1989, and had served as its program manager since 1997.

"I'm very excited," he told the Observer. "This is something I've been pointing toward for some time." The coalition is a non-profit corpora-

tion that contracts with the city to provide assistance to volunteer community groups in inner north and northeast Portland.

It also runs programs such as Youth Gang Outreach and Tri-Met Rider Advocates programs. Policy is set by a board composed of representatives of 13 neighborhood associations, plus other community representatives.

David Lane, director of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, the city bureau that oversees and dispenses funds to neighborhood offices, says, "We're honored to have John on board. His commitment, experience and expertise makes

him a great asset."

Youth-related issues will continue to be a prime interest, Canda says, but he also wants to reflect the priorities of the larger community. He says he wants to "reconnect" with community-based groups in inner north and northeast Portland. "If people don't feel comfortable coming into this office, and can't get the help they need here, we have no reason to be here," he says.

Canda grew up in the Humboldt neighborhood and attended Humboldt and Boise schools and Benson High School. "I've seen a lot of changes in this community, both good and bad," he says.

