

Please join us at the...

PTSA Annual General Meeting on
April 16, 2011 at 10:30 in the
morning (Elementary School Gym)



Table of Contents

2-3	Understanding Easter
4	Talking to Teachers
5	University Corner
6	Easter Recipe
6	Rakugo

Happy Easter! Happy Spring!

Spring has sprung! Happy Easter, everyone!

Growth and change is in the air. As life begins to renew after a winter of resting, we dedicate this issue of the CIS PTSA News to growth and positive change.

On that note, the PTSA would like to congratulate the grade 12 grads and wish them all of the very best! We'd also like to give a warm welcome to the new CIS students!

In this spring edition of the newsletter, we are happy to share a little of the traditions surrounding the most important springtime holiday in Canada – Easter.

In “Talking to Teachers”, we chat with Mr.

Howell. He shares some important truths in this fascinating interview! Please ask about any of the colloquialisms (everyday language)!

Moving away from Canadian universities for this edition, Mr. MacDonald shares some insights from his time at his New Zealand alma mater in “University Corner”.

We'll also take the opportunity to give you a bit of background about the Rakugo performance which the PTSA was thrilled to be able to bring to the CIS students earlier this year.

Finally, we'll leave you with a fun family recipe! Enjoy! Hope to see you on April 16th!





To make Easter eggs:

Dip hard-boiled eggs into dye (1/2 cup boiling water, 1 tsp white vinegar and 10-20 drops of food colouring) for 3-5 minutes. Let dry. Store in fridge.

A few creative options:

- a) create designs on egg with wax crayon, stickers or rubber bands and then dip into colour(s).
- b) coat coloured egg in a thin layer of glue then dip in glitter
- c) mix a little oil in the dye and swirl the egg in it to create a "tie-dyed" effect.

Easter – The Oldest and Most Important Christian Festival

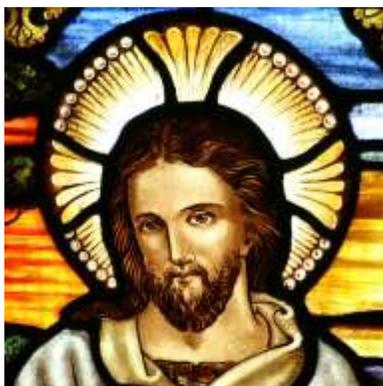
Easter is the oldest Christian festival. According to the Bible, Easter Sunday is the day that Jesus was resurrected, or rose from the dead. This took place 3 days after being crucified (dying on the cross) which is said to have been in AD33.

The resurrection is central to Christian beliefs. This is because it is the most important symbol of hope for eternal life – in other words, of God being willing to forgive people's sins and allow them to go to heaven after dying.

Easter is a moveable feast and takes place anytime between March 22 and April 25. The date is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. This year, 2011, Easter falls on April 24.

There are a number of other important dates associated with Easter. For example, the Friday before Easter is called "Good Friday" and commemorates the day Jesus was crucified and died. The Sunday before Easter is called "Palm Sunday" and crosses from palm fronds

are made to honour Jesus. The next year, these crosses are burned and their ashes are used to make crosses on people's foreheads on "Ash Wednesday". The ash cross is a sign of repentance (being sorry for sins). Ash Wednesday is 46 days (40 days when Sundays are not counted) before Easter and marks the beginning of "Lent". Lent is a period of prayer and self-denial lasting 40 days. People typically give up a vice (bad habit) during this time. Lent ends on "Holy Saturday" – the day before Easter.



Easter is celebrated in many different ways. A common way begins with a church service on the evening of "Holy Saturday" (the day before Easter) called the "Easter Vigil". The service begins in darkness and a large candle is lit, symbolizing Jesus rising from the dead. Bible stories are told,

songs are sung and church bells are rung. The lights then come on and the Eucharist is celebrated. The Eucharist is the sharing of the bread, which is said to be the body of Christ, and the wine or juice, which is said to be the blood of Christ. There are also sunrise services early on Easter Sunday morning which some people attend.



More about Easter Celebrations

In Canada, almost everything, including government offices and stores, is closed on both Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Both days are considered National Holidays.

In addition to being one of the two most popular days for attending church, many Christians and non-Christians also enjoy the secular (non-religious) aspects of Easter.

The non-religious traditions of Easter include: colouring Easter eggs, waking up to chocolate Easter bunnies, having Easter egg hunts (indoor and outdoor), eating hot cross buns and getting together for a big family meal.

Common symbols of Easter include the colours yellow, white and purple, Easter lilies and lambs as well as eggs, rabbits and chicks.

The colour white is believed to symbolize purity, yellow is light and the colour purple is a symbol of royalty, faith and patience. These colours all remind people of Jesus and the sacrifice he made for humankind.

Easter lilies, found in many people's homes at Easter, likewise remind us of Jesus' resurrection and the pure new life that it promised people.

Jesus is often called the lamb of God, so lambs are a common symbol at Easter. Lambs are also a symbol of spring and new life as are chicks (baby chickens from eggs).

It is common to wear new clothes, including an Easter

bonnet (hat), on Easter Sunday. This is to acknowledge the importance of the day and symbolizes the offer of a new life that Jesus gave to people.

Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies (rabbits) are not religious symbols. They are symbols of spring and fertility (being able to have babies). Children are told that it is the Easter bunny that brings them Easter eggs and chocolate on Easter morning. Sometimes the chocolate is placed at the foot of a child's bed. Other times, the "Easter Bunny" hides chocolates and candies (such as jelly beans and marshmallow type sweets) around the house and children search for these. Sometimes a basket with candies and solid or hollow chocolate eggs, bunnies or other characters is hidden for each child.

Outdoor Easter egg hunts are also popular. Some families make it an annual tradition whether there is snow outside or not. They hide hundreds of colourful, plastic eggs filled with various edible (such as candies) and non-edible (such as egg shaped erasers) treats outside and invite neighbourhood children to come and find them (see the photos above).

Easter eggs are usually coloured the day before Easter. They are usually hard-boiled chicken eggs which have been dipped into a dye and, possibly, written on or otherwise decorated (see the previous page for instructions). The Ukrainian people have a very elaborate Easter egg art called "pysanky". Pysanky are eggs painted with wax and dipped in layers of colour. The painting starts with the lightest colour (a white egg shell) and goes to the darkest (often black). The completed egg is then heated over a candle and the wax gently removed to reveal an Easter treasure.

Talking to Teachers – Mr. Howell

- **Can you tell me about the area of Canada that you call home?**

I was born and raised in suburban Toronto (a place called Mississauga). The area has “cookie cutter houses” and shopping malls for the most part. Life was good in the ‘burbs during my childhood. We played all types of sports in the cul-de-sac where my house was - safe from cars and strangers. I had a bunch of friends on my street and on neighboring streets. Life got a little boring in the ‘burbs when I was teenager but, all in all, it was a good place to grow up. For raising my own family, I would prefer to be more urban.

- **How many people are in your family?**

I am the baby and I have two older sisters and two loving, caring parents. My family is weird with a bunch of different personalities - just the way I like it. My mom is laid back, has a really sharp sense of dry humor, is a bit strange and likes to be alone. My father is super social, loves to meet people, is a pretty standard guy and has cheesy jokes. In his younger days, he could be a bit bossy and a tad on the grumpy side. Retirement has turned him into a big softy, though. My oldest sister is a chip off the ol’ father block, my middle sister is a chip off the ol’ mother block and I am a little from column A and a little from column B.

- **Did you have any pets growing up?**

Not really unless you count the fish I fried when I turned up the heat in the aquarium too much. I think there was a gerbil somewhere, too. I learned from a young age that I am not willing to put the time and effort into owning and properly caring for pets so I don’t have any. Don’t take on responsibilities you are not willing to fulfill is my advice!

- **What sport do you enjoy playing the most and/or what is your hobby?**

I enjoy baseball the most but I am a better hockey player. I still play hockey and baseball but not as much as I would like to. My non-athletic hobbies are reading, of course!, and listening to/participating in debates about geopolitics and science.

- **When did you first come to Japan?**

Whoa, awhile ago. Actually, it was November 7th, 2001.

- **What surprised you the most when you first came here?**

Bikes on the sidewalk! Out of my way! Advertising galore on the trains. The friendly people who would be patient with me even though I couldn’t speak a lick of Japanese. Mayonnaise on hamburgers and on a lot of things in the convenience store (I hate mayonnaise). Lots of people but most were fairly polite or at least not aggressive. Things were different but good - obviously, since I am still here. I like Japan and it is quite a comfortable place for me live. Thank you Japan for having me, I feel lucky to have lived large parts of life in two very lovely and accommodating places. I am truly one of the lucky people in the world.

- **Did you have many international experiences before coming to Japan?**

I traveled for a month in South America by myself and I also backpacked around Australia for a month. Those two trips gave me the travel bug. Then I decided not to just travel but to live somewhere else. Japan was the first stop and it

ended up as the last stop. Go figure.

- **What is the one place in the world you have always wanted to visit?**

Africa, hands down. Need to see the motherland and all those animals and natural sites from the savannah to the mountains.

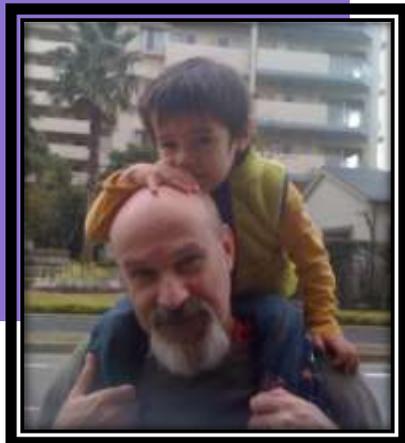


- **What advice can you give to Columbia students to help them realize their goals and achieve their dreams?**

Life is full of ups and downs and many people change their minds about things

- especially as they grow up. Just because something is not interesting now, doesn’t mean in the future you won’t change your mind. So my advice is this: try to experience as many different things as you can or have the opportunity to. Don’t forsake everything else just for one dream - keep little dreams and ideas with you as well. Work hard on your big dream and what is important to you, but don’t forget to have a little fun and keep smaller activities or hobbies around to keep you from burning out on the one big dream or challenge.

University Corner – University of Waikato



Mr. MacDonald and his son,
Ryoma

What is the name of the university (or universities, if more than one) that you attended? What was your major(s)?

Mr. MacDonald received bachelor degrees in chemistry and in education from The University of Waikato in New Zealand. He later graduated from Reading University in England where his specialty was language acquisition.

What was (were) the most famous or well-known facts about your university(ies)? For example what academic programs is the university(ies) famous for? What about sports? The Arts?

The University of Waikato has the usual wide range of academic courses. You can take anything from accounting to zoology but it is most highly regarded for its Maori and Pacific Island department, Biology department, and its Computer Science department.

The university is located in Hamilton which serves a big farming community. There is a national agricultural research centre located next door to the university and the two work closely together. New Zealand has an international reputation as being a leader in environmentally friendly, or “organic”, agriculture and farming.

Why would you recommend students from CIS consider applying to your

alma mater?

I loved going to Waikato because it has a very relaxed atmosphere. The campus is large and looks like a park because it has lots of green fields for sports, trees and gardens and even a lake. The class sizes are not too big and the academic staff are very approachable.

What was the campus and area around the university like? How would you describe the atmosphere of the university? What kind of students attend the school? Does it have a particular reputation for something especially unique?

As I mentioned above, the campus is beautiful and in keeping with New Zealanders love of the outdoors and adventure - there are many exciting activities readily available, e.g. whitewater rafting, caving, rowing etc. The exchange rate is very good, about 63 yen to the NZ\$, and consequently there are students from all over the world studying at Waikato. The university, like many others, has developed a sophisticated support network to ensure that students whose first language isn't English are assisted with all aspects of life.



Hot Cross Buns

3/4 cup warm milk
 3 tbsp butter
 1/4 cup white sugar
 1/4 tsp salt
 1 egg
 1 tsp vanilla
 3 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tbsp active dry yeast
 3/4 cup dried currants, raisins or mixed dried fruit
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
 1 egg yolk
 2 tbsp water
 1/2 cup icing sugar
 1/4 tsp vanilla extract
 2 tsp milk

Put warm milk, butter, sugar, salt, egg, vanilla, flour and yeast together and knead until smooth. Add dried fruit, cinnamon and nutmeg. Put in a warm place and let rise for 2 hours or until doubled. Punch down on floured surface, cover and let rest 10 minutes. Shape into 12 balls and place in a greased 9 x 12 inch pan. Cover and let rise in a warm place till double, about 35-40 minutes. Mix egg yolk and 2 tablespoons water. Brush on buns. Bake at 375 F (180 C) for 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately and cool on wire rack. To make the crosses: mix together icing sugar, vanilla and milk in a Ziploc bag. Cut a corner out of the bag. Brush an X on each cooled bun.



Rakugo

On January 7th, the PTSA was proud to present “English Rakugo” by Mr. Katsura Kaishi in the CIS gym. Mr. Kaishi has performed over 200 times in 11 countries and 28 cities since his first overseas performance in America in 1998. At CIS, he demonstrated some of his most successful performances from overseas.

Rakugo is Japan’s comic form of verbal entertainment and has a 400 year history. In Rakugo, one lone storyteller performs all of the different characters and scenes. The storyteller sits on a “kouza” (a cushion on a raised platform). The Rakugo artist tells a long and complicated comical story that involves the use of different tones to represent different characters. This inevitably makes the audience laugh so hard they cry. The storyteller uses only two props - a fan and a small cloth. These can be used to indicate anything the artist would like. The fan, for example, can be used for chopsticks, scissors or even a horse or walking cane!

At CIS, Mr. Kaishi performed Rakugo twice – once for the elementary students and once for the junior and senior high school students. At the end of each performance, he called up a few students to the *kouza* and hosted a quick Rakugo workshop. The students tried some Rakugo techniques using the fan and small cloth. The gym was filled with laughter and many people said the PTSA should try to have this event again next year.

Mr. Kaishi is sharing the greatness of Rakugo with the world. The PTSA would like to thank him very warmly for his entertaining, informative and interactive performances at CIS.

