



STAFF PHOTO BY HEATHER BOWMAN

Souvenirs: Yukari Ina and Noriko Mashimo look over a book Norma Sass brought from her trip.



Picture It: Yukari Ina and Noriko Mashimo of Japan met recently with Norma Sass, principal of Beechview Elementary school to see photos and other souvenirs that Norma brought back with her after her two week trip, sponsored by an exchange program that helps American teachers better serve Japanese students.

STAFF PHOTO BY HEATHER BOWMAN

## East to west

### Exchange helps principal understand Japanese culture

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@homecomm.net

Traveling to a foreign country on vacation is a short-lived experience. Moving to a foreign country can be a life-altering adventure.

A group of local women have learned both can be educational experiences.

Norma Jean Sass, principal of Beechview Elementary in Farmington Hills for eight years, recently met with parents Yukari Ina and Noriko Mashimo when she returned from a trip to Japan.

Sass found the trip particularly worthwhile because Beechview has a newcomer center for elementary age children who are newly arrived from foreign countries, like those from the Ina and Mashimo families. About 28 languages are spoken at Beechview.

After a year there, the children are placed in their home-area school.

Sass traveled courtesy of the Japanese Business Society of Detroit, which sent nine educators from the Oakland County area. Her husband, David, was among the three spouses who

paid their own way at a cost of \$5,000.

The Sassses don't speak Japanese but learned "survival Japanese" and found a wide variety of cultural experiences.

"Everything was arranged for us so we got to really see Japan," Sass said. "I have a much greater sense of the history of the country and their cultural roots. They felt and lived their passion for that. They are the most gracious, kind and accommodating people."

#### Lessons for Beechview

Sass wants everyone who walks into Beechview to feel the same kind of thing. "We have zero-English families," she said. "Their first experience in the United States is oftentimes with us."

Sass now knows at least a few words of Japanese and has an understanding of what it feels like when "you can't read any signs and don't know any language."

She realized how tired a person becomes just trying to understand a different language. "Just to pay attention is a huge task," she said. "You are watching other people to take your cues."

Sass placed her restaurant orders by pointing to plastic food. Members of her group placed an order for chicken, for example, by wild flapping of their arms — like wings.

"We got some things, we didn't always know what they were," Sass laughed. "The waiters helped us out by just bringing things. We don't know what one girl said, but she got three heaping trays of tomatoes."

The two-week trip included a trip to Tokyo and to Tsuruoka, which was more rural. They stayed with a host family.

Sass learned traditional Japanese calligraphy, flower arranging, about the kimono, a long robe with wide sleeves and the tea ceremony.

Both the Ina and Mashimo families, here on company transfers, have been in the United States two and four years respectively. Yukari Ina and Noriko Mashimo are stay-at-home moms.

Their husbands, both engineers, are Katsuhiko Ina, employed by Denso in Southfield, and Eyo Mashimo, who works for Calsonic in Farmington Hills. Typically, they said, company transfers last three to five years.

#### Cultural surprises

With Yoshihiro Gingrich translating throughout the visit, Yukari Ina and Noriko Mashimo both said they were most surprised by the size of the United States and that there is still nature left here.

"Japan is about the size of California," explained Gingrich, who works in the district's bilingual department. "The population is half of American population."

Sass saw more evidence of technology in private Japanese schools than public schools. "Classroom sizes are much larger," Sass said. "That surprised me." She estimated about 35 children in a classroom.

Beechview students will benefit this year from Sass' trip.

"Yoshihiro and I have tried to think about what the best way is

to give other people the experience," Sass said. "We'd like the school to be a Japanese school for a day. We would do the things they do in a Japanese school. They take their shoes off and they would bring their little slippers. They would have lunch in their classroom. The kids would serve their own. They have recesses more periodically."

Everyone takes off their shoes inside the school — students, teachers, and visitors, Gingrich said. Beechview students may be asked to do that, or to wear uniforms for a day.

But the differences between east and west, Sass found, aren't that great.

"We are much more alike than we are different on all fronts," she said.

Farmington Public School

Superintendent Bob Maxfield and his wife, Sara, took a similarly arranged trip two years ago. After their return, he spoke to the Japanese School of Detroit.

"I know I am more sensitive because of it," Maxfield said of the trip.

He found they had a lot in common with their host family besides language and was struck by how open the Japanese students were. When the school day is finished, students spent about a half hour helping to clean the school.

While students have more freedom than he expected, Maxfield said, "Parents are less welcome in school than they are here."

### Farmington Hills police offer \$4,000 reward in Standard Federal bank robbery

Farmington Hills Police are looking for a man who on Friday robbed Standard Federal Bank at 11 Mile and Middlebelt Roads.

The robbery happened at 3:56 p.m. The robber entered the bank and stood in line, police said. When he reached the teller, he handed her a note that implied he had a gun and that he wanted money, police said.

A \$4,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest of the bank robber.

He is described as 19 to 23 years of age, black, brown eyed and light skinned with a light mustache and goatee, 5-foot-9

inches to 5-foot-11 inches, and about 170 pounds. He was wearing a short-sleeve shirt over a white T-shirt, denim shorts, white gym shoes and a white baseball cap with an unknown logo.

The teller handed the man some money, and he walked out of the bank, heading north, police said.

The FBI and corporate security are also investigating the case.

Anyone with information on the case can call the Farmington Hills Police Department at (248) 473-9600.



On tape: Security cameras took this picture of the bank robbery suspect.

#### BUSINESS NEWS

##### New office

Kelly Financial Resources, the finance and accounting division of staffing leader Kelly Services, has opened a new office in Farmington Hills.

The office at 33533 W. 12 Mile serves the Detroit metropolitan area.

Kelly Financial Resources provides short-term to full-time placement of finance and accounting professionals to companies worldwide. The assignments range from support level to senior management.

"At Kelly Financial Resources, we realize the importance of finding creative solutions to recruiting and staffing challenges, and we are committed to proactively responding with quality individuals for our clients' requirements," said Desiree Lorenzo, sales manager for the new Kelly Financial Resources office.

Kelly Services Inc. is a Fortune 500 staffing services com-

pany headquartered in Troy, offering temporary services, staff leasing, outsourcing, vendor on-site and full-time placement. With more than 2,200 company owned and operated offices in 26 countries, Kelly provides customers with 800,000 employees annually. Visit [www.kellyservices.com](http://www.kellyservices.com) or call (248) 653-8810.

##### Senator named

July 20 Solomon Smith Barney's Consulting Group has named David W. Senator, CFP of the firm's Farmington Hills office, a Senior Investment Management Consultant.

Senator is one of fewer than 312 of the more than 11,000 Solomon Smith Barney Financial Consultants currently authorized to use this designation. He earned the title after successfully completing a career development program created by the Consulting Group, the firm's professional investment management consulting division.

The title Senior Investment Management Consultant, the highest of three designation levels in the program, identifies a professional who has acquired in-depth knowledge in the field of investment consulting. Each level requires that a Financial Consultant complete an intensive training program and maintain a consistent high level of compliance with the ethical standards of investment business.

Senator entered the investment field in 1993. He develops investment guidelines and asset allocation studies, conducts portfolio manager searches, and monitors fund performance for a core of over 100 clients, with approximately \$160 million in assets.

Senator earned a BA in marketing from Michigan State University and he is affiliated with the Financial Planning Association. He and his wife live in Novi.

## STUFF A BUS!

with school supplies

**New School Supplies Needed for kids in need in Oakland and Washtenaw Counties**

- Pencils and Erasers
- Markers and Crayons
- Backpacks
- Single Subject Spiral Notebooks
- Mechanical Pencils
- Cash Donations are Welcome

**Bring school items and qualify for a drawing to win 4 tickets to the Michigan Renaissance Festival!**

School supplies will be distributed by local school districts with the assistance of United Way. More than 3,500 pounds of school supplies were donated in 2000—this year's goal is to double this amount!

**August 3-4**  
**Oakland 4-H Fair**  
Andersonville Road near Hall Road  
Davisburg

**August 6-18**  
**All T&C Federal Credit Union Locations**  
44400 Woodward Ave., Pontiac

**August 7-18**  
**Lake Orion Eccentric**  
790 South Lapeer Road Lake Orion  
**Clarkston Eccentric**  
**Waterford Eccentric**  
7073 Dixie Highway, Clarkston

**August 1-19**  
**Art Van**  
5053 Dixie Hwy.,  
Waterford

**August 10**  
**Target**  
355 Summit Dr., Waterford

**August 1-19 (24 hours)**  
**Waterford Police Department**  
2303 Crescent Lake Road, Waterford

**August 1-15**  
**Century Bowl**  
7345 Highland Road, Waterford

**August 18-19**  
**Renaissance Festival**  
1260 Dixie Hwy., Holly  
Free child admission with donation

**Stuff a Bus hotline:**  
**248-858-8020 ext. 327**

For additional locations, log on to  
[tcfcu.org](http://tcfcu.org)

**A school bus will be stationed at each location—help fill it up!**

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