

# BERKELEY-SAKAI SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION



Celebrating over 50 years of Friendship



バークレー・堺 50年超える友好

## Welcome to 2023

### Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, March 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

2240 Summer Street, Berkeley

The 2023 Annual Membership Meeting will be held at the home of Linda & Juri Komendant, 2240 Summer Street, Berkeley. This is an informal gathering for all of you who support us and have participated in our exchange programs. We always like to hear about your experiences and appreciate your interest in Japan and especially Sakai City. After some obligatory non-profit corporation business, we will share appetizers, drinks, and socializing. Weather permitting, we can gather outdoors. We could not do this without your support! **PLEASE RSVP TO LINDA AT EKOM@AOL.COM**

### Proposed 2023 Board of Directors

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Steve Rego  
Barbara Stevens-Strauss  
Roy Nierenberg

This is the proposed Board of Directors for 2023. We have an opening for one more director. We especially need someone with expertise on social media. Please contact us if interested ([ekom@aol.com](mailto:ekom@aol.com)). Donations can be made by check with the enclosed envelope or through PayPal on our website at: <https://berkeley-sakai.org>

## 2022 Update

Japan was still closed to foreign visitors for most of 2022 due to Covid-19. For the Kindergarten Art Exchange, student drawings from 2019 were scanned and sent to Sakai for their annual exhibit, instead of new artwork from the kindergarten class at Thousand Oaks Elementary School. We did not receive an invitation to the KIX Senshu Marathon last year and assume it was canceled. And, although the Pen Pal program with Sakai has not gotten off the ground yet, we have a robust Pen Pal program going with Ibara City thanks to Longfellow Teacher and BSA Board member Forest Borie.

We received an invitation from Junichi Hotta for local artists to participate in the 2022 Art Exchange Exhibition. Mimi Sheiner and Barbara Stevens-Strauss sent artwork, one a beautiful cup in a microwave (which appeared in a recent New York Times article) and the other a lovely sculpture. The small exhibition was held at a 200-year-old Japanese-style building, the “Dotouan,” a registered tangible cultural property, November 22 to December 4, 2022.

In celebration of their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Oakland-Fukuoka Sister City Association installed a beautiful mosaic mural at the Gardens at Lake Merritt. An Unveiling Ceremony was held on August 17, 2022 with a delegation from Fukuoka present. The message “*Compassion, Peace, and Community*” was translated into the artist’s design by Rachel Rodi and Guy Fuerte. The frame was “built by local craftsmen Jay van Arsdale and Jason Forster, using traditional Japanese woodworking techniques of planing and joinery connections.” The Berkeley-Sakai Association donated \$500 to this project and our name appears on a plaque mounted on the mural. The Garden is located at 666 Bellevue Avenue in Oakland.

As Japan slowly opens up to foreign visitors, we are seeing renewed activity for some of our exchange programs. Kindergarten drawings from Thousand Oaks Elementary School were sent to Sakai in January for their exhibit this year. Although we did not receive an invitation, the KIX Senshu International Marathon is scheduled to take place February 12, 2023. And we are hoping to continue with our Student Exchange Program, possibly this year or next.

2022 marked the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sister city relationship between Berkeley and Sakai. In commemoration, Sakai sent us reusable shopping bags with the Sakai-Berkeley Association emblem and we sent them wine bottle corkscrews inscribed with *Berkeley-Sakai*. If anyone would like a commemorative bag from Sakai, please contact us ([ekom@aol.com](mailto:ekom@aol.com)).

As a parting note, a favorite motto of Sakai City Mayor Nagafuji is *ichi-go-ichi-e* (once-in-a-lifetime encounter), a famous idiom which originated from Japanese tea ceremony culture that teaches how one should treasure every encounter with someone as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity because the same moment may never occur again.

## Berkeley-Sakai Art Exchange

### Reflection - Mimi Sheiner

Travel became conceptual during the pandemic. Before then, I had delighted in taking my paints on the road to far-flung places, like France, New York or Maine, to paint *en plein air*.

During Covid, life became more circumscribed. I painted in the garden. As winter approached, I painted in the kitchen, selecting subjects with a personal resonance. Feeling hemmed in, one day, I chose to paint the inside of my microwave. A microwave from Japan, given to us by my mother-in-law, when our daughter, now 35, was a toddler, well before she traveled to Sakai as a Berkeley-Sakai exchange student.



So it was with great pleasure that I sent the finished Quarantine Cup to Japan for the most recent

2022 Berkeley-Sakai Art Exchange and that it was subsequently featured by the New York Times in a story about people affected by the pandemic.



## **Kindergartern Art Exchange**

**Carolyn Rising**  
**Kindergarten Art Exchange Facilitator**

We are delighted to report that our Berkeley-Sakai Kindergarten Art Exchange is up and running again.

The students in Libby Trumbull's kindergarten class drew two sets of pictures for Berkeley's part of the 2023 Exchange. You can view those on our website now at [www.berkeley-sakai.org](http://www.berkeley-sakai.org). The actual pictures are currently hanging in Sakai City Hall.

Pictures drawn by Sakai artists arrived this February and the captions are currently being translated from Japanese to English by our own Noriko Nishikawa. By the time you read this, their chalk drawings should also be on line for your viewing pleasure.

Again we thank the Thousand Oaks students whose colorful art and stories bring so much joy to many Sakai citizens and us.