

AJET

CONNECT

News & Events, Arts & Culture, Lifestyle, Community

**MAY
2018**

SPECIAL

END OF THE YEAR ISSUE



**The Japanese Lifestyle & Culture
Magazine Written by the International
Community in Japan**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

It's kind of a bittersweet moment knowing that May is my last issue as the Head Editor of *CONNECT*. I've learned so many things just from the two years of being an editor: problem solving, time management, new ways of writing — it was a lot to take in sometimes. However, with the help of our awesome and spirited team members, we've pushed out a new issue every single month for readers like you. All the trials and tribulations have made me more ready to face life after JET.

This year will also be my last year in Japan; I owe so much to this Programme and am grateful everyday for the opportunities and experiences I've been able to have after coming here. If it wasn't for JET, I wouldn't've found *CONNECT*, nor discovered my passion for editing. (Here's hoping I get to make a career out of it instead of just as a hobby!)

So, as a thank you to our hard editors and team members, our May issue will be a year in review. Flip through to take a look at which articles we liked the most, which features we looked forward to, and possibly get a chance to find something new if this is your first time picking up *CONNECT*.

Thank you so much to you lovely readers for giving *CONNECT* a purpose, to find new voices all over Japan and share their stories with others, to help make new friendships that transcends distance. I always look forward to seeing something new or be surprised by something different in Japan every month. And I hope to many more to come!

Peace, love, バイ

Lilian Diep
Head Editor
3rd Year Toyama ALT



Photo: Colette English



LETTER FROM THE ASSITANT HEAD EDITOR

CONNECT has been a part of my JET experience since before I landed in Japan summer 2016, sweaty and jet-lagged (pun? anyone?) and with no idea of what my next week looked like. It was nice to have at least one thing in place, something to organise, and in a way, something to organise me a little while I got to grips with my new home, workplace, friends and colleagues.

Almost two years on, I can say that signing up to be Events Editor was one of my better decisions. When we work in another country, we often find that life happens to us, rather than the other way round. I really enjoyed having creative control over my own little section, and along the way I learned things I'd never have stumbled across otherwise. I've lost count of the number of times people have looked at me incredulously, asked why in the world I know that there's an annual baby crying festival at Sensoji Temple, or a husband throwing ceremony in Niigata. Many accumulated weeks hunched over a monthly events calendar is why, and trust me, it gets weirder.

But that's a huge part of the draw, to JET and to *CONNECT*. I feel so privileged to have this opportunity to experience Japanese culture firsthand, and my role with *CONNECT* means I'm never short of new things to learn about it and add to my bucket list (up next, Aomori Nebuta!).

The past year, I've been Assistant Head Editor, something at times awesome and others terrifying (often both). I've always loved responsibility and something to get stuck into, but often that involves shoving myself waaay out of my comfort zone. Editing and emailing and lot of other small jobs were things I was used to, but the idea of actually being partly responsible for pulling this whole thing together? It liked it in theory, but it was tough to begin with. I want to give a huge thanks to this year's Head Editor, Lilian, for always reminding me to breathe. Thanks also to the whole *CONNECT* team - your ideas, unique visions for your sections and roles, and your openness to everything new make this job so much fun, and *CONNECT* a magazine I'm incredibly proud to be a part of.

But the biggest thanks really have to be saved for you, our readers and contributors. It's your stories, photos and artwork that fill our pages and keep people hooked month after month. Every submission paints a distinct picture of your own little corner of Japan, and that personal perspective is so fascinating and valuable. So, thank you, for sharing your experiences with your fellow expats, and for showing up each issue to be an audience for others. It's you who makes *CONNECT* so great.

Lauren Hill
Assistant Head Editor
2nd Year Tokyo ALT



Photo: Evashree Pillay



Head Editor

Lilian Diep

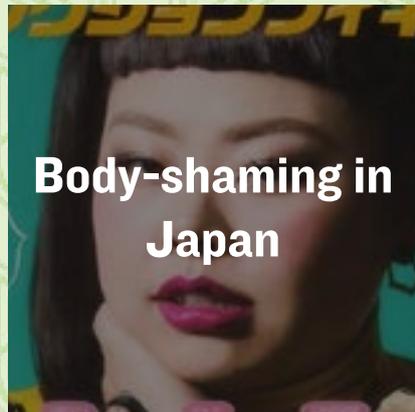


Thank you so much for all your support this past year! I came onto **CONNECT** in June 2016 and I have loved every minute of it. I hope to continue staying in touch with my Japanese home through this publication, so please keep on sharing your stories and experiences!

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Yeah But Have You Heard Of...?

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



It speaks quite frankly what everybody feels like. As an Asian who also struggles with weight issues, it's reassuring to hear that I'm not alone and that all body types have their ups and downs. It also highlights Naomi Watanabe, a talented and wonderful entertainer that is loved in Japan because of her abilities and not her appearance. Also, the layout is quite bangin.

Assistant Head Editor

Lauren Hill



Thank you for reading, sharing your stories, and being a part of **CONNECT** this year! For me, **CONNECT** is all about celebrating the community that we create as expats in Japan, and the once in a lifetime experiences we have here. None of it would be possible without you!

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Family Spotlight



Which article in another section
did you enjoy the most?



**HAFU: Our
Children in Their
Own Words**

As foreigners in Japan, we may experience discrimination, but it's usually a temporary thing. We can move home at the end of our contract and feel like we fit right in again. For half-Japanese children, it's not always so simple. I really enjoyed the unique perspectives of each interviewee in this feature, and I admire their defiant stance on what it means to belong.

Head of Design and

Layout

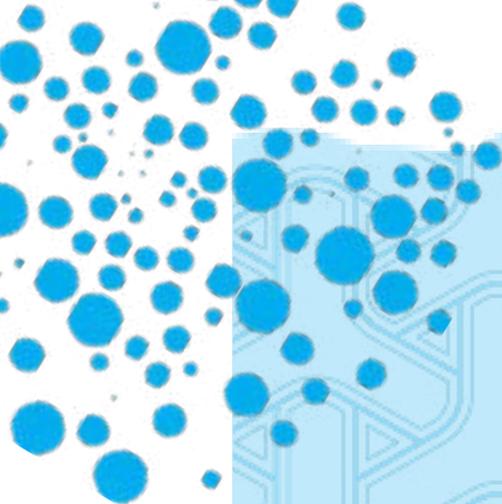
Ashley Hirasuna



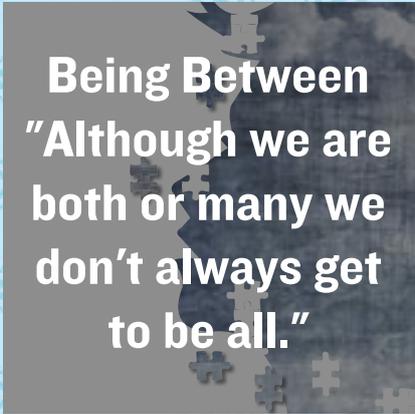
I hope you folks have enjoyed reading and following our stories as much as the editors, and design team has enjoyed working on them every month. For a lot of us, this is our passion and something that we might want to go into in the future after our terms on JET have finished. Please continue to follow our work and read the magazine! We appreciate your viewership!

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Yeah But Have You Heard Of...?



Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



**Being Between
"Although we are
both or many we
don't always get
to be all."**

I spent a lot of time designing this one. I think there is a powerful message that speaks very personally to my own experience as a Japanese American living and working in Japan as an English teacher. It also offers a different perspective about having Japanese heritage but not being "full" Japanese like myself. The article was also written by a dear friend and I wanted to do my best to keep the serious tone in the design while making it relatable and symbolic.

Assistant Designer

Malia Imayama



This has been a really fun project to be a part of. Thanks everyone for your hard work!

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

Events Calendar

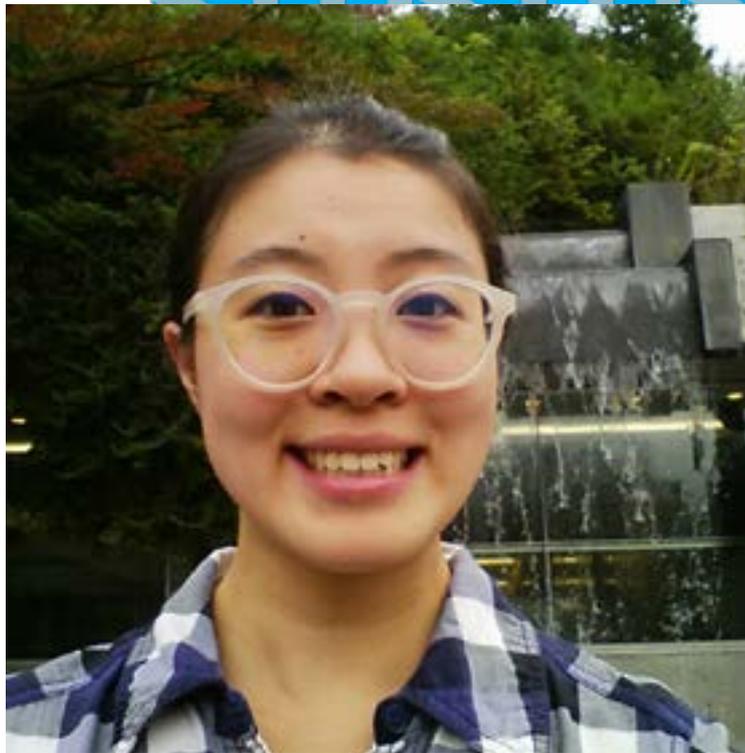
Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



I love cooking and learning about new recipes to make. It would be awesome if we could include more.

Assistant Designer

Connie Huang



My gratitude to all the contributors, readers and the **CONNECT** Team for a successful year run!

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Yeah But Have You Heard Of...?

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



The photo submissions really captured the beauty of Shikoku and the interviews provided lots of great tips and recommendations to enjoying the island.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



This thoughtful article provides objective insight into the legacy of Hibakusa and their experiences. As a JET hailing from Hiroshima, I think their stories and wisdom need to be heard, especially in the current sociopolitical climate.

News Editor

Tresha Barrett



Let's each **CONNECT** and spread love, open-mindedness, hope, and adventure!

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

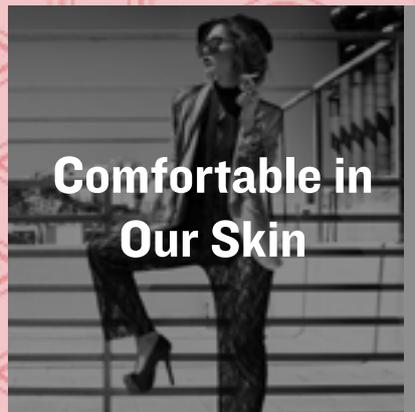
In The News

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



The dangers of the chikan epidemic in Japan is something that many people (even within the country) aren't aware of. There's such a deep level of depravity attached to it, and the physical and psychological abuse that these women are forced to face is not being dealt with enough. So the fact that this woman chose to step outside of the shadow and highlight her experience is applaudable in my book.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



I enjoyed reading about the different experiences and perceptions with regard to race, culture, and identity.

Bailey Jo Josie

Events Editor



Shazboz nanu-nanu

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

Family Spotlight

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



Well written, funny, and interesting.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



It made me cry.

Culture Editor

Amanda Muller

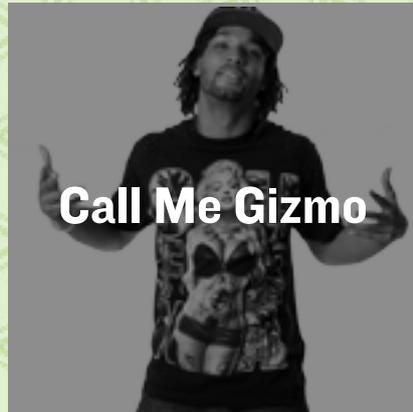


**"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn."
- Hal Borland**

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

Family Spotlight

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



The blending of cultures is what JET is all about, and Gizmo's story of blending several cultures and languages through rap is as heartwarming as it is unique.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



As someone who grew up in a dance studio and used dance classes as a way to escape and cope with issues in my own life as an adolescent, this story resonated with me. It is inspiring to read about how Kat deals with their struggles, especially in a way that is so familiar.

Entertainment Editor

Sabrina Zirakzadeh



I've been with **CONNECT** for 3 years now and contributing for 6 years. I've seen it's ups and downs and I really feel the magazine has been on an upswing this year and hope it continues! If people want to contribute or have articles they way to see, please let us know so we can continue to keep moving forward in this same way!

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

Events Calendar

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



I've always loved Final Fantasy and this article told me a lot of interesting things that I didn't know while reminding me why I love the series. Also, from an editing standpoint, it was a dream to work with the author! He was funny, well-informed, and it was great to go through.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



I am very into the music scene in Japan but this was a new area for me to learn about and it was written in a fun way to read as well!

Fashion Editor

Abby Ryder-Huth

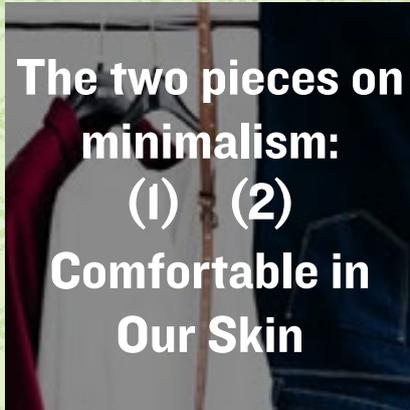


Thank you so much for reading and being part of the dialogues **CONNECT** has engaged with this year. I hope they have inspired new questions for you, new interests, and many conversations. We all appreciate you so much, and hope you'll keep reading for more.

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Yeah, But Have You Heard Of...?

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



Minimalism has become ubiquitous in fashion, and Nika's intelligent, well-researched article offered a strong critique of what may be behind our impulses to pare down our wardrobes and lives. It inspired me to really think about why I own the things I do, and I appreciated Sareen's very engaging piece on thrifting in Japan as a practice to give your style an amp while getting rid of all that extra stuff!

I also loved the wide-ranging responses to how race, physicality, and culture can intersect in *Comfortable in Our Skin*. Fashion for me has always been about more than clothing, and the various writers who contributed to this article helped shine a necessary light on the multitude of factors which influence style identity, particularly when living abroad.

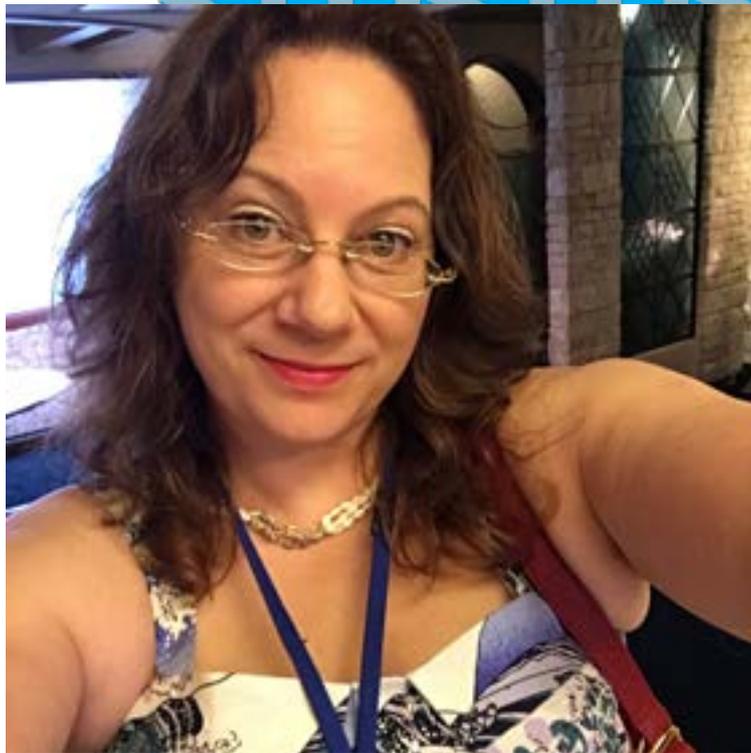
Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



This article used popular Japanese dramas to explore changing cultural attitudes to marriage, divorce and female agency in Japan, which I thought was an insightful way of approaching something that can remain taboo. Media can be an excellent, if slow, mirror for public opinion, and this article's careful reading of the shows it considered offered interesting and important speculations about how women's roles in their families have changed in Japan.

Health and Nutrition
Editor

Rachel Greenwood



I've enjoyed working on bringing you content for this magazine! It's a great mix of beautiful photos and layouts, and interesting and informative content.

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

In The News

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



It's an important issue, my author did an excellent job and I loved the layout as well!

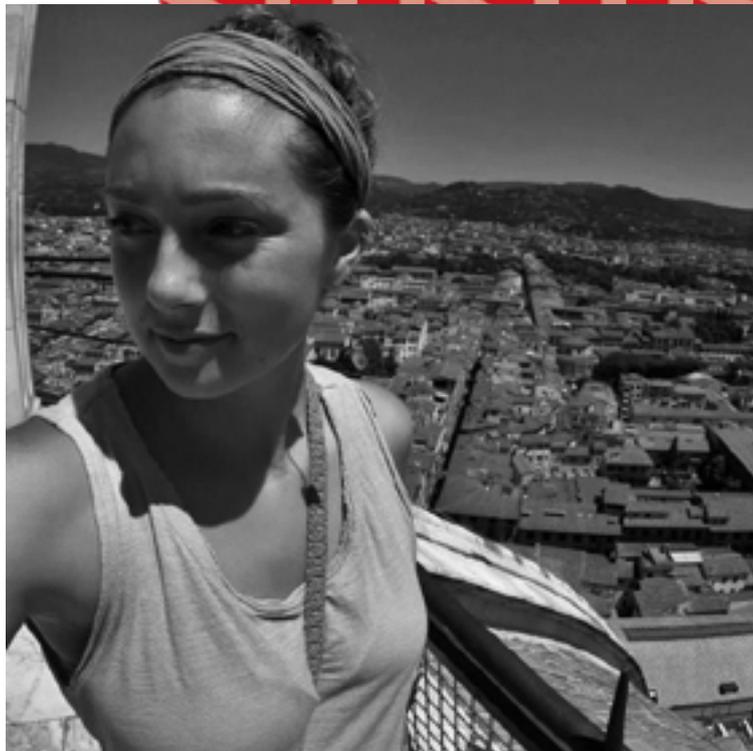
Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



Another subject that I feel is very important!

Community Editor

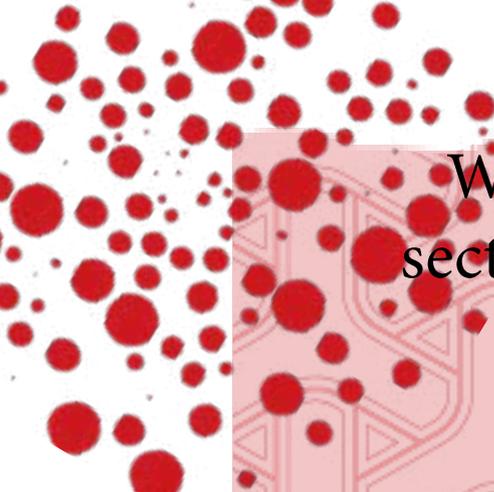
Shantel Dickerson



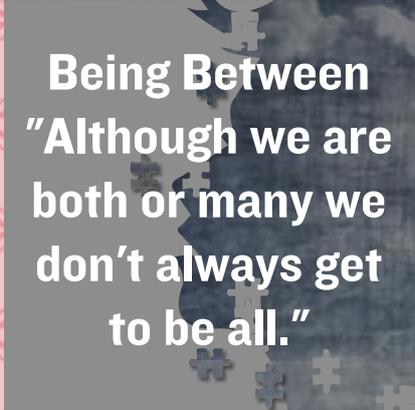
It has been a pleasure serving as the **Community Editor** this year. I have met so many wonderful people with outlooks and visions of living in Japan both much the same and different than my own. It is inspiring to see how everyone is involved in their communities, and it makes me proud and honored to play a role in sharing everyone's unique story.

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Family Spotlight



Which article in your own section did you like the most?



Being Between
"Although we are both or many we don't always get to be all."

By introducing the term 'hafu' and explaining how Tetsuro Miyazaki's workshop at Sophia University went to our readers, Elena Nielsen opened a dialogue that created a ripple effect in our readers, our *CONNECT* team, and even in my life. Following her article, I received many comments from our readers who wanted to explore racial identity in Japan on a deeper level. Later, a fellow editor decided to interview 'hafu' children in Oita Prefecture for their own take on the word and what it means to them. In addition, I organized a community event in Beppu that revolved around the same theme, which Tetsuro Miyazaki supported by donating photos for our event flyer.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?

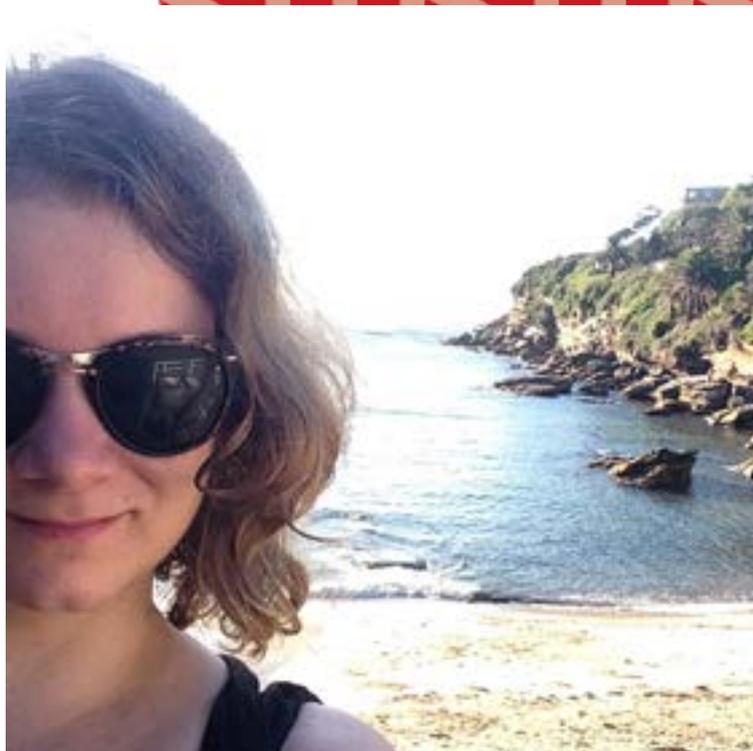


**Single Mothers and Divorce:
Modern Japan's New Family Portrait**

I enjoyed this article because it shines a light on an increasing phenomenon in Japan. Divorce is rarely spoken about, and many of those who do speak about it are often consumed by shame. Dramas are a great way to introduce just how 'normal' single parenting has become, and is thereby decreasing the stigma of divorce, which might ultimately lead to people pursuing more fulfilling and rewarding partnerships and lives.

Sports Editor

Kirsty Broderick



Counting down the months towards leaving Japan, or welcoming in new JET's (I'm very excited to stay!), it is an ideal time to reflect on what Japan has given us. For me, friends, great food and most importantly a chance to leave my safe shell and learn more about who I am. Whether you're staying or going, enjoy all Japan has to offer!

What is your favorite monthly feature?

Yeah, But Have You Heard Of...?

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



Because the article featured two JET voices speaking about a little known traditional Japanese martial art, unusually practiced primarily by women.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



Because it featured three unique voices, each describing their different experiences with that most traditional of Japanese holidays, New Years.

Verushka Aucamp

Copy Editor



Getting connected and involved with your local community will truly enhance your experience and understanding of living in Japan, so make it a priority!

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

In The News

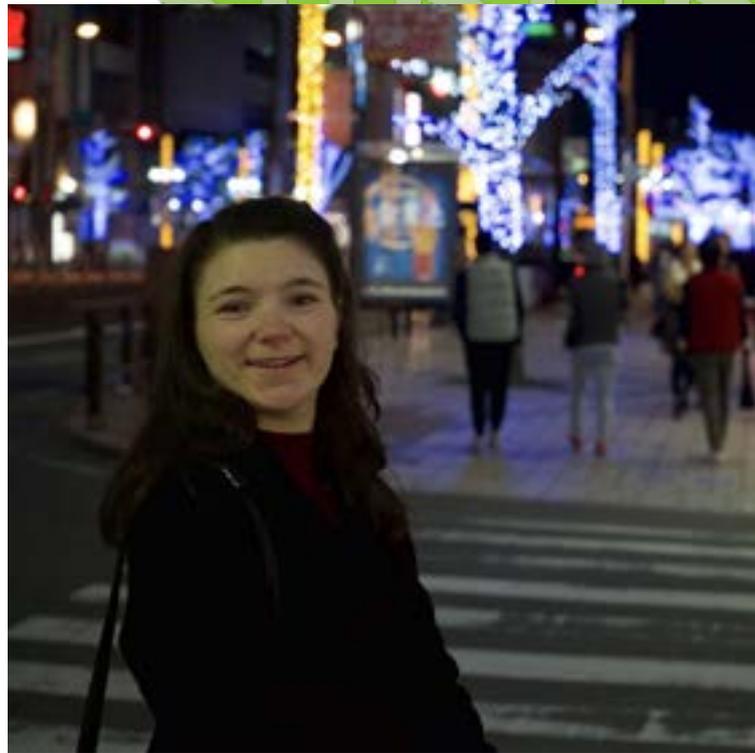
Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



From the moment you arrive in Japan, you might feel a certain amount of pressure to say 'yes' to new cultural experiences. Once the novelty wears off, it becomes easier to forget about 'yes'. Don't wait for years; sign yourself up and show up!

General Section
Editor

Hayley Closter



I've had the pleasure of working with multiple sections of *CONNECT* to help out where I could this past year. I've been able to tackle a wide range of topics, styles, and voices from all over Japan. As a result, my time on *CONNECT* has been like riding a different roller coaster every month. Thrilling in its unpredictability.

But like all roller coasters, my time on *CONNECT* has come to an end all too quickly. Thank you to our team of talented designers, editors, and social media managers who worked with equally talented contributors to bring amazing articles to *CONNECT* every month. This magazine really is a beautiful example of dedication and team work despite cultural differences.

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

In The News

Which article in your own section did you like the most?



I didn't have a specific section on *CONNECT*, I just kind of floated between sections and helped out where I could. So of the articles that I had a hand in, 'The Lost Martial Art of Naginata' was my favourite. It featured Aurian Eghbalian, a JET I know from my own Miyazaki Prefecture, and her passion for the little known martial art, naginata. I felt like *CONNECT* was helping to spread the word about a hidden Japanese treasure through this article, which was what *CONNECT* was all about for me. I also adored that Aurian got some well-earned recognition for all her hard work.

Which article in another section did you enjoy the most?



'Call Me Gizmo' by *CONNECT*'s prior Culture Editor Jack Richardson, was probably my favourite article from the past year. The interview article's subject was a Shizuoka English teacher who moonlights as a professional wrapper named Gizmo. I found his story and outlook on his time in Japan so fascinating that it had me reading on the edge of my seat. Jack's casual yet witty writing style seemed to match so perfectly with Gizmo's apparent personality. A match made in heaven. It was a really fun read. The article read like a lyrical story that made me feel like I was in the room at the time of the interview.

Social Media
Manager

John Wilson



It sounds cliché, but in JET you only get out what you put in.

What is your favorite
monthly feature?

Family Spotlight



Which article in another section
did you enjoy the most?



**HAFU: Our
Children in Their
Own Words**

**It was a really insightful article on a topic that still needs more
open discussion in Japan.**

*Calling all artists!
Want to get your artwork an audience
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2018



submissions open

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CONTRIBUTING TO CONNECT

CONNECT is a magazine for the community in Japan, by the community in Japan. Everyone is welcome to write, no matter your experience or style! If you have an idea you want to see in these pages, reach out to our Head Editor, or any of our awesome section editors. We'll work with you to make it the best it can be and share it with our audience of thousands. Not every article needs to be an essay! We feature interviews, infographics, top-ten lists, recipes, photo spreads, travelogues, and more.

Contact the Head Editor of *CONNECT*, Lilian Diep, at connect.editor@ajet.net with your submissions, comments, and questions.

ARTICLES

Write about something you're doing. Write about something you love. Tell us a story.

SPOTLIGHT

Tell us about someone in your community who's doing something neat and noteworthy. Cooks, collectors, calligraphers — we want to hear about the inspiring people around you.

COMMENTS

Let us know what you think. Interact with us on Facebook, Twitter, and issuu.com.

PHOTOS

Members of the JET community contributed to the photos you see in this issue. If you're an aspiring photographer and want your work published, please get in contact with the lead designer, Ashley Hirasuna, at ashley.hirasuna@ajet.net.

HAIKU

Each month *CONNECT* will feature *haiku* from our readers. A *haiku* is simple, clean, and can be about anything you like! If you're an aspiring wordsmith with the soul of Basho, send all of your *haiku* along with your name and prefecture to connect.editor@ajet.net.

COMICS

You asked for it, and now *CONNECT* features comics. Whether you're a desk doodler or a published artist, we want to see your panels and strips about life in Japan.



CONNECT WITH US

Interested in contributing to *CONNECT*? Want to stay up-to-date on interview opportunities, photo requests, and *CONNECT* announcements? Get involved with the *CONNECT* by contacting our current *CONNECT* staff and reading about the possible positions [here](#).

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