



Mishawaka Communicator



Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life, and inspiring pride in our community.

Dave Wood, Mayor

www.mishawaka.in.gov

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A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



On Sunday, June 24, 2012, a delegation from the City of Mishawaka made the long journey to Shiojiri, Japan to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our sister-city relationship. Brock Hundt, City of Mishawaka Building Commissioner, Charles and Yoko Lavelle, Don and Nancy Crawford along with their sons Matt and Steve were the official representatives for the City of Mishawaka. These dedicated citizens traveled at their own expense to further our important friendship.

As you know, I am a student of history and the history of our sister-city friendship with Shiojiri is fascinating. This extraordinary relationship began in 1937 during a chance encounter on a train ride between Helen Amos, a teacher at Battell Elementary and Kenichi Midzuno, a young Japanese business man. While engaging in conversation on board the train the two learned that they had a great deal in common despite the fact that they lived worlds apart. This chance encounter resulted in a vow between the two that they would be sure to maintain their friendship through the exchange of correspondence.

Then in 1954 Midzuno and Amos were reunited again when his job brought him to the United States to work in Chicago. While there, Midzuno was introduced to Hiroo Takasuna. Takasuna was the Vice President of Shiojiri Nishi Primary School PTA and he had come to America to tour American print shops and to share some children's school work, but all of the American schools were closed. Mr. Takasuna expressed his disappointment to Mr. Midzuno who then told him about Helen Amos. The two met and shortly and after meeting Amos, Takasuna proposed that Battell Elementary School and Shiojiri Nishi Primary School become sister-schools. This relationship has been strengthened over the years with the exchange of information, gifts, letters, and artwork. Eventually the friendship expanded to include the entire



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Toxic or Not? A Home Safety Quiz

Health Information from Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

You might feel safe within your own home. But some everyday objects in your dwelling could harm you and your family. Take this quiz to see how much you know about the risks—and how to reduce them.

Toxic or Not?

1. Air Freshener
2. Nonstick Pans
3. Carpeting
4. Plastic Baby Bottles
5. Antibacterial Soap
6. Granite Countertops



(answers on next page)

Work Zone Safety

Nationally, more than 1,000 people die in work zones each year. That's nearly three per day! One in three work zone crashes is a rear-end collision.

Since there are a number of projects throughout the City that periodically require the restriction or closure of roads, take a moment and review some simple safety tips to observe when driving through work zones.

- ◇ **Stay alert!** Look for reduced speed limits, narrow driving lanes and highway workers.
- ◇ **Pay attention.** Work zone signs will tell you exactly what to expect ahead.
- ◇ **Merge early.** If drivers merge as soon as they see the signs, traffic will flow more smoothly.
- ◇ **Slow down.** If you're speeding, you may encounter slowed or stopped traffic within seconds.
- ◇ **Don't tailgate.** Maintain a safe distance on all sides of your vehicle.
- ◇ **Minimize distractions.** The three C's – cell phones, CDs and coffee – are the primary causes of driver inattention.
- ◇ **Plan ahead.** Expect delays and allow extra travel time. Select an alternate route if you are running late.

Remember, work zone safety is everyone's responsibility!

More info at www.in.gov/indot.

Find the latest information on traffic alerts for the City of Mishawaka at

<http://mishawaka.in.gov/traffic>

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood (continued)

Mishawaka and Shiojiri communities, and so in 1972 both Mishawaka and Shiojiri formalized their Sister-City relationship with an official decree.

This past June, we again celebrated the anniversary of our Sister-City relationship with the city of Shiojiri. This occasion gives us cause to reflect on how much our community has been impacted by this experience. Perhaps the best example of that is through the establishment of our beautiful Japanese strolling gardens, Shiojiri Niwa where the residents of Mishawaka are exposed to traditional Japanese gardening practices. According to Japanese tradition, these gardens create a tranquil, serene and peaceful environment which takes its visitors away from everyday life to a reflective communion with nature. Not only does this garden provide our residents with a calming atmosphere, but it also provides us all with a lesson in diversity. Originally planted in 1976, this garden has created a "bridge to understanding" which is beautifully represented by the red bridge that is the focal point of the garden. This garden introduces the residents of Mishawaka to welcome a culture that was quite different from our own. If you have yet to experience our Japanese Strolling Garden, I strongly urge you to do so. It is one of Mishawaka's treasures.



Shiojiri Mayor Oguchi and Mishawaka Building Commissioner Brock Hundt

When asked to describe his trip to Japan, Brock Hundt says, "I had a hard time trying to put together a brief summary of my trip. My experience in Japan will be one that I will never forget and to write only a few sentences really doesn't do it justice. Sure the travel to get there was long and tiresome (approximately 36hrs) but to experience Japanese culture and meeting new friends will be with me the rest of my life. I will always cherish the little time I spent there and the people that showed me around. I

do hope someday that I will be able to travel back and see the many friends that I made. Shiojiri, the Sister-City of Mishawaka, should definitely be on everyone's travel bucket list."

While the delegation was in Shiojiri, they attended a celebration that included gift exchanges. At that event, Mr. Hundt presented a sculpture, "The Buffalo" created for the occasion by local artist Bob Kuntz, to Mayor Oguchi, Council Members and the Citizens of Shiojiri. The City of Mishawaka received some beautiful lacquerware wall decorations and Saki glasses which are special products made in the City of Shiojiri. If you are not familiar with the history of this relationship, Mishawaka has a Japanese room in its Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum, several displays in the Mishawaka Public Library and previous gifts from Shiojiri along with a decorative Samurai warrior doll in its City Hall. You can find on display, the gifts given by our friends from Shiojiri in celebration of our 40th Anniversary, as well as pictures and some history of our Sister-City Relationship. I urge you to stop by and visit the display and become involved in this relationship so that it may flourish and grow for many years to come.



Toxic or Not? A Home Safety Quiz (continued)

Answers:

- 1) **Air Freshener—Toxic.** Far from clearing the air, these products often contain formaldehyde and other frightening ingredients. Spray formulas irritate your eyes, skin, and throat. And solid fresheners pose a mortal danger to animals and children who may accidentally eat them. Open a box of baking soda or simmer herbs on the stove for a natural alternative.
- 2) **Nonstick Pans—Not.** Chemicals used in manufacturing non-stick coating may be hazardous. But the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has found no evidence either fumes or chips from the surface of these pans harm human health. Still, don't use metal utensils or abrasive scouring pads on them.
- 3) **Carpeting—Toxic.** Newly installed carpet emits volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These chemicals can cause headaches; ear, nose, and throat irritation; difficulty breathing; and nausea. When damp, rugs become breeding grounds for mold, which can cause allergic reactions. Opt for hardwood or cork floors where you can. Otherwise, look for carpets that are labeled low- or no-VOCs. Dry leaks and spills within 48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- 4) **Plastic Baby Bottles—Not.** There's concern about the health effects, especially on infants and children, of bisphenol A, a chemical used to make hard plastics. Manufacturers are phasing this chemical out of baby bottles. But the bottles you own are safe to use, as long as they're not scratched or broken. Just don't put them in boiling water or the microwave.
- 5) **Antibacterial Soap—Not** ... but that doesn't mean it's a good idea to use it. The FDA is currently reviewing the safety of triclosan, a chemical that fights bacteria and that is used in most of these products. It may increase antibiotic resistance, which makes infections more difficult to treat. Plain old soap and water works just as well.
- 6) **Granite Countertops—Toxic** - possibly. Any piece of granite can emit low levels of a colorless, odorless radioactive gas called radon. High levels cause lung cancer. But most radon in homes comes from the soil beneath homes. To keep your family safe, test for radon with an at-home kit. Contact your state radon office for details.