

# SynthesAizu

December 2024  
Volume 4 Issue 12

## Association News

### New Year Closures Notice:

The AWIA office will be **closed from Dec 29th (Sun) to Jan 3rd (Fri)**

AWIA will open as usual from Jan 4th (Sat), 9:00-17:45

Thank you to all our members for your support this year, we hope you have a wonderful winter break and look forward to seeing you again in the new year.

**2024/25 Unpaid Memberships:** We will be updating our mailing lists, physical and digital and removing unpaid members. Check attached form to confirm if you wish to continue your membership!



## Christmas Movie Night



### Join us for Christmas vibes!

It's the Christmas season, so come join us for a comfy movie night! First we'll introduce Santas from around the world. Then we'll make Christmas cards to enjoy a traditional craft of the season. Finally, let's watch "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," a Christmas movie anyone can enjoy!

There'll be popcorn and hot drinks to relax with too. You can even get in the spirit by wearing your stylish Christmas sweater!

Why not join us for a cozy Christmas here at AWIA?



**Movie:** Santa Claus is Coming to Town (1970)

**Date:** December 11th (Wed)

18:00-20:00

**Place:** AWIA Office

**Cost:** FREE!!

**Participants:** ~15 People

**Sign-Up:** contact AWIA (mail@awia.jp)  
Before Dec 10th (Tue)



※Movie in English with Japanese subtitles

※Bring your own blankets/pillows for a more comfy time!

## FIND English Convo. Club

Why not come and speak English with people from all walks of life? Everyone is welcome, no matter your English level. Enjoy an activity then free talk in this casual event.



<b>When</b>	Saturday, <b>December 14th</b> 10:00~11:30
<b>Place</b>	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm <b>*3*</b>
<b>Sign Up</b>	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by <u>Friday, Dec 13th</u>

## AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.



Speak Japanese in a casual way with many people and have fun with Japanese culture. No Atsuhana this month, but come join us in the new year!

<b>When</b>	Saturday, <b>January 11th</b> 10:00-11:30
<b>Place</b>	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
<b>Sign-up</b>	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by <u>Friday, January 10th</u>



会津若松市国際交流協会

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)

**AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION**

## This Month in Aizu and Fukushima

### Winter Concert—FREE!

**Dec 15th (Sun)**

Enjoy the sounds of your fellow residents at the AizuWakamatsu Citizens Orchestra playing beautiful classical music, *Christmas songs*, and more in their ensemble concert! A few AWIA members, including staff Nakamura-san will be playing! There will even an instrument corner where you can try the orchestra instruments for yourself from 13:15-13:45.



**Place:** Kita Community Center, AizuWakamatsu (Muramae-28 Kōyamachi Ōaza Kamikōya)

**Time:** 14:00 - 16:00 (Doors open @13:00)

**Entry fee:** Free!

**Limit:** 55 tickets (first come, first served.)

You must apply for a ticket.

**Contact:** Kita Community Centre

0242-25-4044



**More info/poster:**

[https://x.com/orchestra\\_aizu/status/1854827318591865013?t=5\\_7pEcrXan9-7wnWJAnn-Q&s=06](https://x.com/orchestra_aizu/status/1854827318591865013?t=5_7pEcrXan9-7wnWJAnn-Q&s=06)

### Tsuruga-jo Castle

#### Exhibition: Yosoi - Adornment

See clothing and accessories from the Tsuruga-jo collection. You can see a variety of items, ranging from functional to beautiful! With some English!



**Dates:** Until Jan 21st 2025

**Time:** 8:30-17:00 (last entry 16:30)

**Entry fee:** General: ¥410 Child: ¥150

<https://www.tsurugajo.com/tsurugajo-event/22799/>

#### Tsuruga-jo Castle Market

Wander around the market stalls at Tsuruga-jo Castle and enjoy the nostalgic Showa-era atmosphere. Take in the lit-up Castle and the lanterns decorating the stalls as you enjoy horse-meat croquette, local sake, and more at the market!

**Date:** Every Saturday and Sunday, December to February 2025, 11:00-19:00

**Place:** Tsuruga-jo Castle Park, Honmaru

**Contact:** Aizuwakamatsu Tourism Bureau (23-8000)

### Prefectural Art Museum

**Until Dec 15th (Sun)**

Like Pop-Art? Go see the exhibition on at the Fukushima Pref. Art Museum in Fukushima City. Enjoy a collection from famous Pop-Artists like Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns.

**Time:** 9:30-17:00 (last entry 16:30)

**Place:** Fukushima Pref. Art Museum (Fukushima City, Moriai, Nishiyozan)

**Fee:** Reg: ¥1500 Uni: ¥1000 HS and under: ¥600

**More info:** <https://www.fukushima-tv.co.jp/popart/>



### Nicchu Line Christmas Lights

**Dec 23rd-25th 17:30-19:00**

The Nicchu Train Line Memorial Hall in Kitakata will be getting into the Christmas spirit and putting lights inside the old train car to light it up for the season. Experience the train station that was open from the 1930s-1980s, but with Christmas vibes! Why not go and see the beautiful lights and enjoy the former railway station?

**Place:** Nicchu Line Memorial Hall (Atsushio Stn.) (Maeda-602-2 Atsushiokanomachi Atsushio, Kitakata)

**Entrance Fee:** Free!

**More Info:**

<https://tif.ne.jp/entry/article.html?event=6850>



### Important Information

#### Banking Disruptions

**Dec 30th (Mon) - Jan 3rd (Fri)  
ATMs, banking services may be  
unavailable**

Banking and ATM disruptions are common over the new year holiday, so it's a good idea to check your bank's homepage for announcements on any restrictions, maintenance, and closures, and make sure to get any banking done early.

Banks across Japan will be closed from Dec 30th (Mon)- Jan 3rd (Fri) inclusive, in accordance with the Banking Act. The days immediately before and after are likely to be busy. Don't get caught out!



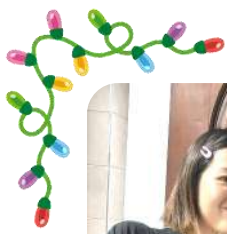
#### MyNumber and Insurance Card

Your MyNumber card can be used at hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies as your Health Insurance card. If you haven't connected them, it's easy! Use a 7-11 ATM, the scanner at a clinic etc., or download the MyNa-Portal App to scan your MyNumber Card. It's as easy as a click of a button; just give permission to connect your information.

From Dec 2nd, new health insurance cards will no longer be handed out, so connect yours now for a smooth transition if you change health insurance in the future!

*If you use the App, you can do it in English!*

[https://myna.go.jp/html/hokenshoriyou\\_top.html](https://myna.go.jp/html/hokenshoriyou_top.html)



## Member Spotlight

### Interview with **MUROTA Ayaka**

MUROTA Ayaka is from Chiba Prefecture and she came to Aizu to study at the University of Aizu. She is affectionately called 'Mumu-chan' by many members. Really reliable and always challenging herself, Mumu-chan was the Festival Committee Head for the 2024 International Festival. She helped start the Japanese conversation circle 'AtsuHana' and thanks to the interesting things she comes up with, AtsuHana is really popular! We asked her some questions about her experiences with 'AtsuHana' and being the Festival Committee Head.



It's simple: You can't accomplish anything by doing nothing!

#### Tell us why you first came to the association.

I originally came to participate in the English Conversation Circle FIND. My friend had also said they wanted to check out the Association. Then, when I heard about the JICA Desk and SASAO-san, the person running it at the time, so I wanted to hear what it was about.

#### You started Japanese Conversation Circle AtsuHana in May 2023 with CIR Erika. How has it been?

It's so fun! I'm so glad to see people have fun at AtsuHana. I get to see a lot of people's perspectives when running AtsuHana, and I feel like I can learn a lot. It's fun using Japanese to interact with many kinds of people as well as people from a variety of countries.



#### Are there any difficult things about it?

Thinking of the plan every time is the most difficult thing. So far, though we've done things like rock-paper-scissors, writing new year's cards, karuta, making kagigori

shaved ice etc.. From a Japanese perspective, I'll think "is this really interesting?" sometimes but then I'll turn around, and the non-Japanese participants tell me how much fun they had! Also, using 'Yasashii Nihongo' to communicate with others is more difficult than I imagined, so I am constantly revising how to express things. Right now, we're accepting any and all ideas for activities related to Japan etc. so let us know if you have any!

#### Why did you want to start a Japanese circle in the first place?

Because I wanted to make friends with Japanese. After seeing the English event, I wondered if we could do the same with a Japanese event. Actually, even before that I had been thinking that I wanted to see if I could organize some event where everyone could just have fun.

#### Event planning is a lot of work, so why did you want to try it?

I love seeing people smile, so I thought I'd be extra happy knowing that it was me that organized that space. There's also a bit of wanting to challenge myself. Chances don't come to those who only wait, and I also wanted to take this opportunity meet many new people through these events. It's so fun to get together with people who have similar goals.

#### You've always been interested in event organizing?

Nope! In junior high/high school I was just focused on club activities; I was not interested in running events. When I couldn't go to my last tournament because of COVID-19, I realized that 'even if you wait, you can't do anything.' After that, I came to Aizu, learned about AWIA and how I could organize an event myself, and I knew I didn't want to let this chance get away.

#### You were the Head of the Festival Committee for the 2024 International Festival. Why did you want to try that?

My biggest reason is as simple as 'it sounds fun!' I also thought it would be a good opportunity to gain experience for future employment, so it was an ideal chance to learn so much.



#### Were there times you thought it was difficult?

It was hard to manage the big picture. Having so many tasks, it was hard figure out what I should be doing, especially during meetings where the participants with a differing ages and/or nationalities, there were quite a few times that I really worried about how I should be presenting my thoughts and opinions.

#### From AWIA, thank you so much for your help. How do you feel now that the festival is over?

I'm so relieved. We were able to get through it without any big injuries, and I'm so happy that everyone was smiling and seemed to have a good time. I always think about my goals when I do something, and I think I achieved them again this time: 1) to keep my own direction clear, 2) to respect other people's opinions, and 3) to make sure everyone (including me) enjoys ourselves. This year's festival offered great opportunities for interaction, and I felt that the participants



engaged with each other more actively than in previous years.. For those interested in stepping up to help out at the next Festival in two years, please reach out to AWIA! Through the festival, I think I learnt that there is an environment that accepts anyone who tries, and the importance of keeping the spirit of challenge alive.

# Events in December

1	SU	Closed
2	MO	Closed
3	TU	
4	WE	
5	TH	
6	FR	
7	SA	10:00 JICA Desk 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
8	SU	Closed
9	MO	Closed
10	TU	
11	WE	18:00 Christmas Movie Night 
12	TH	
13	FR	
14	SA	10:00 FIND: English Convo. Circle
15	SU	Closed
16	MO	Closed
17	TU	
18	WE	
19	TH	
20	FR	
21	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
22	SU	Closed
23	MO	Closed
24	TU	
25	WE	 (Merry Christmas!) 
26	TH	
27	FR	
28	SA	13:00 AWIA Office Cleaning Day
29	SU	Closed
30	MO	Closed
31	TU	Closed (Reopen on Jan 4th (Sat) 9:00-17:45)



## Other Information



### ON AIR Be a Guest on the Radio!

Want a chance to be on the radio? AWIA collaborates with FM Aizu (76.2) with a segment once a week: Chikyuu Marutto Tele-report (World-wide Tele-report). Guests can share their experience of living in Aizu or abroad. Guests can join live, or come and pre-record their interview. Interested? Contact us!

**When:** Wednesday Evenings ~17:40 (5-10min segment) (interview is in Japanese only) If you have time, why not listen in?

**Want to be a guest?** Contact us: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)

### Digital Newsletter: Help us save money and paper!

Sign up to receive your newsletter by email only!

Contact us at [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)



### What Anime/Manga are you into?

We are hoping to hold an event that breaks down the barriers of language and culture, this time with: Anime and Manga.

We want to create an event where people can get together and talk about what anime/manga they're into, but we need your help! Please fill in our survey and give us an idea of what anime/manga you like, and what you might like to talk about at an event like this!



#### Let us know things like:

- What anime/manga you recommend
- Underrated/mostly unknown ones etc.

Let us know through the QR code survey!



### Notice: Fukushima Museum Closure

#### Dec 2nd (Mon) - March 31st 2025 (Mon)

Fukushima prefectural museum in AizuWakamatsu will be closed to the public for renovation work for 4 months from December 2nd 2024 to March 31st 2025.

[https://general-museum.fcs.ed.jp/page\\_information/opening\\_hours](https://general-museum.fcs.ed.jp/page_information/opening_hours)



### Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come help us fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

**Date:** Dec 21st, Sat **Time:** 13:30~ **Place:** AWIA Office



### We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA\_PHOTO

<https://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for updates in multiple languages!



QR Code to access our email form to sign-up for events