

26 Annual Newport Black Ships Festival

July 16-19, 2009

Presented by the Japan-America Society of RI



www.BlackShipsFestival.com



The Japan-America Society and Black Ships Festival of Rhode Island, Inc.

28 PELHAM STREET, NEWPORT, RI 02840 • (401)846-2720 • FAX (401)846-5600 • JASRI@NEWPORTEVENTS.COM

Dear Media Representative,

Welcome to the **26th Annual Black Ships Festival!** Over 150 years ago, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed and initiated the trading relationship between Japan and the United States. Newport's own Commodore Matthew C. Perry, USN, negotiated this treaty during a time when Japan was isolated from the rest of the world. This celebration commemorates his accomplishments and features over 50 exciting events that provide the unique opportunity to experience Japanese art, culture, and music here in Newport, RI from **Thursday to Sunday, July 16-19, 2009.**

The following is a list of some of the outstanding events you will find highlighted:

- * *Sailing, Sake & Sushi on the Tall Ship Aurora*
- * *Sumo Wrestling Meet and Greets at Brick Market*
- * *Arts & Crafts Fair at Touro Park*
- * *Governors' Black Ships Gala at Rosecliff on Bellevue Ave.*
- * *Taiko Drum Festival at the Newport Yachting Center*
- * *Candy Artist Miyuki from Disney's Epcot Center at Brick Market*

These exciting events provide a multitude of incredible photo opportunities (please refer to enclosed schedule for times and dates). The Black Ships Festival is presented by **The Japan-America Society of Rhode Island, Inc.**, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to developing an understanding and cooperation between the citizens of Rhode Island and Japan. The Black Ships Festival/Japan-America Society of Rhode Island was selected to receive the prestigious "Minister of Foreign Affairs Citation" in 1998. The award recognizes those who have contributed to friendship and understanding between Japan and other countries.

We extend our sincere appreciation for any assistance you may provide in "getting the word out." Please check out our website at www.BlackShipsFestival.com for details and pictures. If you need anything or would like to set up interviews, please call us at (401) 846-2720. We look forward to speaking with you and hope to see you at upcoming events. Thank you in advance for your support.

Domo Arigato,

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Festival Director

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Liz Zalewski
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~Visit us online at www.BlackShipsFestival.com~



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The 26th Annual Black Ships Festival Brings Japanese Culture to Newport, Rhode Island

NEWPORT, RI – May 21, 2009 The Japan-America Society of Rhode Island is pleased to present the 26th Anniversary of the Annual Black Ships Festival, July 16-19, 2009. The festival is a celebration commemorating the establishment of friendly trade relations between the U.S. and Japan that began when Newport's own Commodore Matthew C. Perry, USN, secured the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854. This event also celebrates the 51 years of the sister city relationship with Shimoda, Japan and Newport, Rhode Island. The four-day festival features over 50 exciting events that provide the opportunity to see, sample, and experience authentic Japanese arts, foods, performances, and traditions. The following is a list of just some of the highlighted events:

*** Festival Opening Ceremonies July 17th 10:30am Touro Park, Newport RI**

Colorful ceremonies to commemorate Newport's native son, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, and the signing of the treaty of Kanagawa, which opened trade between Japan and United States. Wreath-laying at Commodore Perry's Statue and speeches by American and Japanese dignitaries. Navy color guard and band. Newport Artillery Co. will fire cannon salutes.

*** Governors' Black Ships Gala July 17th 6:30pm Rosecliff Mansion, Bellevue Avenue.**

The 26th Annual Japan America Society of Rhode Island Black Ships Festival Gala will take place at Rosecliff on Bellevue Avenue on July 17th at 6:30pm. Join us in celebrating the Sister City relationship between Newport and Shimoda. Enjoy a unique evening that fuses both Japanese and American culture. The festivities begin with the breaking of the ceremonial sake drum filled with **Gekkeikan Sake**. Music, dancing, **Opulent Martini Bar**, open bar and delectable food provided by Plantation Catering will make this a night to remember. Disney's Candy Artist Miyuki will demonstrate the art of making candy. The Black Ships Festival Gala an elegant evening with a Japanese flair celebrating 26 years of friendship. \$150 per person, Black Tie/Kimonos. **Presented by Toray Plastics (America), Inc.**



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*** Sailing, Gekkeikan Sake, & Sushi!**

While sailing on the magnificent Tall Ship, the 101' schooner Aurora, enjoy the beautiful Newport harbor as you sip Gekkeikan sake and sample sushi on **Thursday, July 16 from 4pm-6pm** and **Sunday, July 19 from 2pm-4pm**. Tickets must be purchased ahead of time because it always sell out. \$30 per person in advance and \$35 day of the event if available.

*** Arts & Crafts Fair Demonstrations and Workshops Saturday July 18 and Sunday July 19**

Calligraphy, Origami, Ninja, Ikebana, Sushi Making, Aikido (Martial Arts), Tea Ceremony, Acupuncture, Shorin-Ryu (Okinawan Martial Arts), Shiatsu and Reiki (Japanese healing and relaxation) and more!

***Taiko Drum Festival Saturday, July 18th 5pm**

The Taiko Drum Festival will take place Saturday, July 18th at the Newport Yachting Center at 5pm featuring **Odaiko New England Taiko Drummers**. Doors will open at 4:30pm with a special introduction by Sumo Wrestler Manny Yarbrough and The Shishi Mai - the Lion Dance by Stephen Long. Tickets \$10 Adult/\$4 Child. Odaiko New England (ONE) began drumming in 1994 and is fast becoming one of the premier taiko groups on the East Coast. By combining Japanese aesthetic sensibility with the bold American spirit, ONE is forging its own modern distinctive style and voice as it challenges the very definition of the art of taiko.



~They are pictured above when they performed at Fenway Park.



This festival is a demonstration of the sacred Taiko drumming which dates back to ancient times when the “Taiko,” or Japanese drum, was first used to drive away evil spirits. Drumming was also used as a means of practical communication during droughts in ancient Japan, farmers would play drums to imitate the sounds of thunder. A rural village would establish its boundaries by how far villagers could hear the largest drum. Taiko has been used in battlefields, religious ceremonies, and festivals for over two thousand years in Japan. Today, Taiko uses extensive

physical and mental conditioning to forge a group, which works synergistically to create the vibrant sound, and powerful rhythms that characterize the art. **There will also be another performance Sunday July 19 at 11am at Cardine’s Field. Tickets are \$5.00 Adult/\$4.00 Child.**

Other Events include Tea Tastings, Sushi Demonstrations & Memorial Ceremonies. These are just some of the events that will be taking place during this fun-filled, four-day festival of Japanese culture, for a complete schedule visit www.blackshipsfestival.com.

The festival has two missions. First, to bring an exciting and fun Japanese cultural experience to the people of Newport. Secondly, to augment and enhance the existing cultural, educational, and economic programs between Japan and the United States by celebrating the historic achievements of Commodore Perry.

The Japanese term kurofuno means “black ships” and refers to the American ships that were excluded from Japan, with one exception, for two hundred years. However, when Commodore Perry negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, Japan opened trade with the west, which has exposed us to an array of Japanese imports from sushi to Nissan cars to Sony electronics. This festival will be fun for everyone!

For further information on other exciting Black Ships Festival

events and a free brochure, please call

(401) 846-2720 and visit us on

our web site at

www.BlackShipsFestival.com

to purchase tickets and view

the schedule!



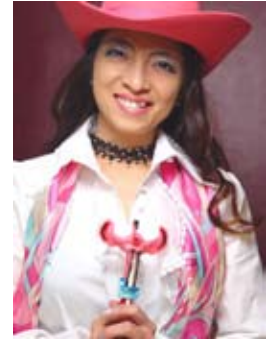


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ADDITIONAL EVENTS FOR THE 26th ANNUAL BLACK SHIPS FESTIVAL

NEWPORT, RI – June 4, 2009 - The Japan America Society is introducing new exciting events to the 26th Annual Black Ships Festival; Candy Artistry by Miyuki, Sumo Meet and Greets, Master Calligrapher Michiko Imai, Sake Tasting and more.

On Saturday, July 18th and Sunday, July 19th at 12:00pm and 2:00pm Miyuki joins us from Disney's Epcot Center in Orlando to demonstrate her amazing ability in **Brick Market Place**. She is the only current woman candy artist from Japan and she will be performing presentations on how she miraculously turns soft rice dough into masterpieces in under a minute! The only aid she uses to create her sculptures is a pair of scissors! Her own hands and a lot of careful precision do the rest of the art. Don't miss this amazing presentation!



More Sumo Meet and Greets have joined the Black Ships Festival this year! Manny Yarborough, Alex Vega and Leonard Thomas look forward to meeting you and sharing their success stories. Manny Yarborough is currently Guinness Book of World Record's worlds largest athlete at a towering height of 6'8 inches and an overpowering **weight of 700 pounds**. He won the 1995 Sumo World Championship and has appeared on David Letterman and Jay Leno. He is an exciting and interesting individual who has experiences worth talking about. Also, joining us will be sumo wrestler, Alex Vega who is a "key figure in the future of amateur sumo wrestling" as stated in the New York Times. Vega hopes to be a future Olympic champion and he is clearly on his way because he is in the prime of his career. Finally, two-time North America middleweight champion and national championship winner Leonard Thomas will be there to share his stories. This two-time national team member is also the former president of USSF and ISF. So come meet Manny, Alex and Leonard at Festival.



Another incredible new addition to this year's festival activities is a sake tasting. **Exploring the World of Sake** allows you to come and discover the history and culture of this unique drink. Sake is a significant part of the Japanese culture in many ways. It may be used to celebrate special occasions and historical moments. Sample several types of premier specialty sake and plum wine from Gekkeikan. Come relax and enjoy discovering the secrets of sake. **This amazing event will be held on Friday, July 17th from 4:30pm to 6:30pm at Bellevue Wine and Spirits on Bellevue Ave, Newport.**



A demonstration by Japanese Master Calligrapher, Michiko Imai, of Kaji Aso Studio, Institute for the Arts, will be held on Saturday from 12:00pm-1:00pm in Touro Park. Michiko was awarded the highest rank in Japanese Calligraphy of Shihan. She is among the few to have won multiple best of category awards in national Competitions (Japan). Her work has been displayed at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, Nara City Museum of Art and Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art.



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HISTORY OF THE BLACK SHIPS FESTIVAL

NEWPORT, RI – June 4, 2009 - *The Annual Black Ships Festival is a celebration commemorating the establishment of friendly trade relations between the United States and Japan. Commodore Matthew C. Perry, USN, of Newport, Rhode Island, negotiated the 1854 Treaty of Kanagawa between the United States and the Edo Period Shogunate, which signified the beginning of Japanese-American relations.*

From 1637 to 1854, Japan isolated herself from the world, with the exception of limited trade with the Dutch and the Chinese. Attempts by other countries to establish contact with Japanese authorities were rejected, just as the Americans and their “kurofune,” or “black ships,” were turned away. Toward the end of this period, a growing concern developed over this isolation policy. Foreign nations, as well as a number of Japanese officials, were aware of progressive developments outside of Japan where major European powers had made concessions by force of arms.

Meanwhile, the United States was developing a renewed commercial interest in Japan. There was a need for Asian ports to provide shelter for American whaling ships, as well as coal for steamships involved in trade. As a result, both countries were seeking change and establishing diplomatic and commercial relations. Rhode Island’s Commodore Matthew C. Perry, USN, was selected in 1852 to command an expedition to the Far East, and was given full diplomatic power to negotiate a treaty with Japan. He delivered a letter from President Fillmore to the Emperor of Japan that stated, in part, that the United States sought only “friendship, commerce, and protection for our shipwrecked people.”

The Commodore’s squadron of “black ships” dropped anchor in what is now Tokyo Bay near Yokosuka in the Kanagawa Prefecture on July 8, 1853. The fleet included the first two steamships ever seen in Japan. Local officials tried to persuade Perry to leave, but Perry politely insisted that he deliver the letter. Perry returned in 1854 to negotiate with the Japanese. After several weeks of delicate and complex negotiations, the Treaty of Kanagawa was signed on March 31, 1854. Under the terms of the treaty, American ships were permitted to enter the ports of Hakodate and Shimoda to seek assistance and supplies, and shipwrecked American seamen would be protected in either port. However, the treaty did not provide for coaling bunkers or for full diplomatic or commercial relations. In the following years, the first American Consul in Shimoda, Townsend Harris, negotiated to expand Perry’s agreement beyond friendship and navigation to include provisions for full diplomatic relations with the United States. Thus, Commodore Perry’s mission and the Treaty of Kanagawa, were instrumental in opening Japan to the West.

In 1984, Newport held its first annual Black Ships Festival, co-founded by Rhode Island delegates and Mr. and Mrs. Sohiko Yamada of Tokyo. It was inspired by Shimoda, Japan’s celebration of their 45th Black Ships Festival. Now in its 70th year, Japan’s Festival is held annually in May to honor Commodore Perry’s historical accomplishments. The Black Ships Festival in Newport and in its sister city Shimoda, Japan commemorates this historic event with a celebration of friendship. The mission of the Festival in Rhode Island and Japan is to help build significant cultural, educational, and economic relationships. The Black Ships Festival, in simplest terms, is an educational and entertaining cultural exchange.



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To obtain more information on other exciting Black Ships Festival events, please call the Festival Office at (401) 846-2720 or visit us at online at www.BlackShipsFestival.com.