

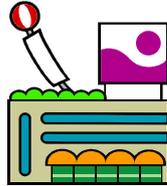
MURORAN TIMES



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Muroran City Office 1-2 Saiwai-cho, Muroran,
Hokkaido 051-8511 JAPAN <0143-22-1111>

News and Topics



Muroran-Marui in Crisis

Marui-Imai Department Store (the headquarters in Sapporo), which had been under management rehabilitation, finally filed an application for the Civil Rehabilitation Act to the Sapporo District Court on January 29th.

Marui-Imai started in 1872 as a general store. Then the store bloomed and developed several branches (seven at one time) in all Hokkaido. After the economic bubble burst, the debt expanded rapidly. In 1997, when Hokkaido Takushoku Bank failed, the economic crisis of the department store came to the surface. After the management was segmented in 2005, Otaru-Marui and Tomakomai-Marui were closed. After Kushiro-Marui closed in 2006, only four shops are left in Sapporo, Asahikawa, Hakodate and Muroran.

In the cities where the stores are operating, the citizens are keen to seek for its continuance. In Muroran the citizens are making posters and signboards calling for support, putting them up in Nakajima, where Muroran-Marui is located, and making petitions for its continuance. Since Marui-Imai filed an application for the Civil Rehabilitation Act to the court, more citizens turned out to Muroran-Marui for shopping than before. The total amount of sales increased by 10% to 20%, compared with the amount at the same period last year.

なかじまちょう
中島町にあるデパート「丸井今井」が閉店の危機
にあることから、市民の署名運動が行われています。

Tie-up between SHIGA GENERAL FOODS CO., LTD. and CO-OP SAPPORO

SHIGA GENERAL FOODS in Muroran formed an alliance with CO-OP SAPPORO with a wide range of stock, physical distribution, staff exchange and other conditions. When the alliance was made, SHIGA increased its own stocks (1,100 shares). Then CO-OP SAPPORO undertook the remaining additional shares. At last, CO-OP SAPPORO dominated 35% of SHIGA's share and became the majority shareholder. SHIGA (nine shops in all) will yield two shops in Tomakomai and one shop in Noboribetsu to CO-OP SAPPORO. The other six SHIGA shops in Muroran and Noboribetsu will remain as they are. Employment, including part time jobs, will be secured.

SHIGA had been planning to strengthen the management against the staggering economy and competition with other companies. Meanwhile, CO-OP SAPPORO had been aiming to enter the market in Muroran. The speculations of the two companies were in accord at this time. CO-OP SAPPORO also expects that fish and shellfish in Volcano Bay and vegetables in West Iburi will be available in their stores through strong distribution routes which Shiga has established..

むろらん じもと しょくひん せいぎょう
室蘭を地元とする食品スーパー「しが」と生協の
「コープさっぽろ」がぶつりゅう じんざいこうりゅう きょうりよく
物流や人材交流などで協力
しあうことを決めました。

Steinway Piano

The repair of the Steinway piano which is furnished at the hall of Muroran Bunka Center will be executed by the fiscal year 2009 budget of Muroran City.

Steinway pianos are commonly known as the representative of the most famous piano in the world called "The Instrument of the Immortals".

The piano at Muroran Bunka Center was manufactured in around 1963, and Nippon Steel Corporation Muroran Works presented it to the

City in 1964.

Though the City Office does a routine check of the piano every year, the repair mentioned above is a special one that takes place every four years.

The City Office plans to invite a workman who belongs exclusively to Steinway & Sons Company. He will exchange the bowstring, which can be the lifeline of sound, and the tuning pin.

The repair will take about one week.



むろらんしぶんか だい
室蘭市文化センターの大ホールにあるスタインウ

エイのピアノが4年ぶりに修理されることになりました。

Information and Invitations



Walking Class

[Date] April 19 (Sun) 9:00a.m. ~ 12:00noon

[Contents] Let's acquire a healthy natural walking style, and spend a healthy life.

[Place] Irie track and field

[Admission Fee] 300 yen

[Limit] about 100 people.

[Application] Please apply directly at the Muroran Gymnasium, Irie Swimming Pool, Irie track and field sports office. Please fill out the application form at that time. You can also apply by telephone.

[More Information] Irie track and field (Tel: 0143-24-3443)

Muroran Aquarium Open

[Opening Date] April 24(Fri)

[Opening hours] 9:30a.m. ~4:30p.m.

[Admission Fee] 300 yen (adult) free (under junior high school age and over 70 years)

[More Information] Muroran Aquarium (Tel: 0143-27-1638)



Citizens' Marathon

[Date] April 29 (Wed) 9:30a.m. ~12:00noon.



*Marathon will be held even if there's light rainfall.

[Place] The circumference of Nakajima Park

[Course] 1km, 3km, 5km

[Admission Fee] 300 yen (junior high and under) 500 yen (high school and over)

[Application] Come to Muroran Gymnasium on that day

[More Information] Muroran Gymnasium (Tel: 0143-44-7521)

Spring Gardening Class

[Date] April 25 (Sat) 10:00a.m. ~ 12:00noon.

[Place] Small Enterprise Center

[Description] The flower master, Mr. Yonemori will teach how to make a personal spring garden

[Fee] free

[Limit] first 100 people.

[Application] By telephone or FAX from April 1

[More Information] City planning division, Park section at Muroran City Office

(Tel: 0143-25-2603, Fax: 0143-24-2091)

Cherry Blossoms Festival



[Date] May 8(Fri)–10(Sun) 10:00a.m.~3:00p.m.

[Place] *Kameda* commemoration park multipurpose plaza (*Tonkeshi-cho, Noboribetsu*)

[Contents] *Yakitori* and *Yakisoba* Shop, Game Shop, Free Market: May 9,10 Gardening

market: May 1(Fri)–10(Sun)

[More Information] *Kameda* Commemoration Park (Tel: 0143-86-2511)

Muroran Walking Society Wants Members

Would you like to walk together while enjoying the scenery of the four seasons in the scenic areas around Muroran? We accept new members at any time by telephone.

[Participation fee] 1,000 yen per one year

[More Information] Muroran Walking Society: Mr.Konno (Tel0143-44-1493)

Volunteer Training Association of Braille Translation, Reading, and Sign Language

[Date] From May to March 2010(2 times one month) 20 all times

[Place] Welfare for the disabled synthesis center (Pia 216)

[Time] Braille translation and reading —

10:30a.m. ~12:00noon Sign language —

1:00p.m.~3:00p.m.

[Admission Fee] free

[Application] by telephone from April 13 or come directly to Welfare for the disabled synthesis center and fill out the application form at that time.

[More Information] Handicapped Person's Welfare Section at Muroran City Office (Tel: 0143-45-6611 Fax: 0143-45-1003)

The Muroran citizens orchestra looking for new members

The Muroran citizens' orchestra is an amateur orchestra. They hold a performance twice a year. They are looking for people who play stringed instruments and wind instruments excluding the flute

[Practice day] every Monday 7:00p.m. ~

[Place] NHK Muroran broadcasting station

[More Information] Mr.Goto: Wind instrument (Tel:090-3392-1650) Mr.Tachiki :Stringed instrument(Tel:0143-47-2313)

Japanese Cooking 207

Beaten Egg Soup かきたま汁



- Ingredients (serve four) -

Egg 2
Torefoil 1/2 bunch

《Soup》

• broth 600 cc
• salt 3/4 teaspoon
• soy sauce 2 teaspoons

starch-water mixture※ 2 tablespoon
water 2 tablespoons

※ Starch-water mixture: Dissolve starch with an equal portion of water.

Directions

- (1) Beat eggs lightly. Cut trefoil into 2cm length.
- (2) Place broth, salt, and soy sauce in a soup pot, and bring to a boil.
- (3) Add starch-water mixture gradually to thicken.
- (4) Swirl in beaten egg, rotating the pot. Stir lightly.
- (5) Add trefoil and ginger juice, and turn off heat.

About Japan

Life and Customs



<What sports are popular as spectator sports?>

Professional baseball always attracts a large number of spectators. Japan League professional soccer, rugby, and volleyball have a lot of young fans, while rugby is popular also with middle-aged people. Young girls make up the greater part of enthusiastic volleyball fans.

TV viewers love broadcasts of baseball games and sumo wrestling bouts. Broadcasts of Japan League soccer games and professional golf tournaments also have high audience ratings.

When the Natinal Senior High School Baseball Championships held in spring and summer begin, the whole nation cheers the team that represents their prefecture. The fact that people get so excited over high school baseball games might seem odd to some foreigners.

<Has sumo been the national sport from ancient times?>

Sumo in ancient times was a sacred event to foretell an abundant harvest and to predict the will of the gods. The oldest bout of sumo recorded in history was in 642 A.D., and it was



adopted as a court ritual in the early ninth century.

After the 12th century, when warriors began holding real power in politics, sumo acquired the characteristic of a practical martial art to be used in the battlefield. In the *Edo* period (1600 – 1868) *sumo* bouts began to be performed as part of shows in festivities at shrines.

It was not until the end of the *Meiji* period (1868 – 1912), or the early 20th century, that *sumo* was mentioned as the national sport for the first time. As the emperor was defied under nationalism *sumo*, originally a court ritual, was given national sport status.

<What is the world of the *sumo* wrestler like?>

The winner in *sumo* is decided when the opponent is forced out of the ring (*dohyo*) or when any part of his body touches the ground.

In order to become a *sumo* wrestler, one has to belong to one of the approximately 50 *sumo* stables. The stables take care of every aspect of the newcomers' lives including food, clothing, and housing, while training them to be strong wrestlers. It is a man's world except for the family of the stable master.

Wrestlers are ranked according to their ability. The lowest rank is called *jonokuchi*, which is the starting point. There are nine other ranks such as *jonidan*, *sandanme*, *makushita*, *juryo*, *maegashira*, *komusubi*, *sekiwake* and *ozeki*. In the top rank are the *yokozuna*, or grand champions.

Wrestlers above the rank of *juryo* are called *sekitori* and receive monthly salaries from the Japan Sumo Association. What the other wrestlers get is a small incentive depending on their record in tournaments.

The doors to the *sumo* world have also been open to non-Japanese. The first wrestler from abroad made his debut in 1934, and seven others would follow him by the start of World War II. As of the fourth tournament of 2004, there were 61 non-Japanese wrestlers from 11 countries, including the United States, Mongolia, Russia, Brazil, and various European countries.

<When was *judo* established?>

Judo was established in 1882 by *Kano Jigoro* (1860 – 1938). The origin of the techniques of *judo* can be found in *jujutsu*, which developed from warrior fighting techniques on the battlefield.

Kano, who had mastered *jujutsu*, was not satisfied with fighting just for the purpose of winning, and created *judo* which aims for both physical and mental strength.

In 1882, *Kano* opened the *Kodokan* in the *Eishoji* Temple in Tokyo, with only nine students in a 12 *tatami*-mat room as a practice gym. *Judo* is now a world sport and an Olympic event.

As a sign of the way *judo* competitions have become internationalized, it was decided at the general meeting of the International Judo Federation held in Paris in 1997 to introduce colored *judo* uniforms. This was decided in spite of objections from the All-Japan Judo Federation, which is strongly attached to the traditional white *judo* uniforms. Starting with the 1998 Hyundai World Cup for Men and Women in Minsk, Belarus, colored *judo* uniforms were worn for the first time at an international competition.

Cinema Guide

Muroran Gekijo (Higashi-machi)

1. VALKYRIE

2. 映画ドラえもん (Japanese)

3. ジェネラル・ルージュの凱旋 (Japanese)

4. おくりびと (Japanese)



About the Muroran Times

The Muroran Times is designed to bring information about local events to the international community of Muroran. Staff: Mitani Yoichi, Ishizawa Yuko, Yamashita Mayumi, Tagashira Kazui, Nomura Ikuko, Nakamura Mari, English advisor: Jane Takizawa.