

Chado Urasenke Tankokai Philadelphia
Board Meeting
March 9, 2020

Present: Morgan Beard, Frank Chance, Brandon Forsht, Drew Hanson, Sachiko Houck, Mary Lynn Howard, Shoko Kato, Terry Sherwin, Keijiroh Yamaguchi

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Discussion on Coronavirus Precautions

Frank shared that the Cherry Blossom Festival would likely be cancelled. [On Wednesday 3/11 it was officially announced that it would be.] Washington DC has already cancelled theirs.

There was discussion of the various ways that people have taken precautions against transmitting the virus in classes or demonstrations, including using disposable drinking vessels, not reusing chakins during lessons, and not making koicha for more than one person at a time.

Looking ahead to the Shofuso demonstration in April, it was suggested that we look into getting compostable cups or bowls and explain to participants that it's not traditional but we're being cautious.

Urasenke Headquarters in Kyoto has cancelled all events for March and are not having classes where koicha is served; however, they are not issuing official guidance for local associations, instead asking them to use their judgment and keep the safety of their members in mind. The page for the latest information is here: <http://www.urasenke.or.jp/texte/img/urasenke-response-2020-03.pdf>

Membership Management

Shoko has set up an automated site to keep track of membership and send renewal reminders. Members can pay directly through this site rather than going through our main site at phillytea.org.

She said that we need to reinforce to members that if they are practicing tea actively, they need to maintain their membership status in order to keep their status with Urasenke.

There was some discussion of increasing membership fees, and also what benefits we might offer to encourage people who aren't tea practitioners to join. Another possibility is to expand membership by recruiting new practitioners. (Currently, all but a couple of our members are either current or past tea students.) Potential benefits include holding more workshops, or asking Shofuso if our members could come to the Thursday member nights.

Terry and Shoko will work on a proposal for raising membership rates and potential benefits we can offer. Morgan will research what other Tankokai associations charge and how they structure their fees.

[At this point, Drew Hanson and Brandon Forsht left the call.]

Auditing and the Budget

Shoko talked about her role on the board, which is a supervisor position. Whereas most non-officers are managers, meaning they assist with the running of the organization, the supervisor is more like an auditor who reviews the financials on a regular basis. She's working on implementing a budget and financial statements in line with nonprofit business standards.

The discussion segued into a draft budget. Morgan displayed it on screen and walked board members through it, answering questions and taking feedback. Changes included breaking out cash versus in-kind donations, and adding money for tatami mat covers (\$600-700) for storage and transport.

Shoko pointed out that we are currently in the red for 2020, so we should think about potential fundraisers.

Morgan will update the budget and send out for board members to look at in more detail. The board will approve at the next meeting and then implement. Once this initial format is established, the goal will be to have the budget ready for approval at each year's annual meeting.

Demonstration Committee

Terry reported that it's been a busy couple of months for demonstrations. Following are the demonstrations that we did:

- At the Nihon Gakko at Friends Central, there were two demonstrations over the course of a weekend in January, serving tea to approximately 60 people.
- On February 1, several members took part in a series of three demonstrations, averaging 15 guests each (due to space limitations), with tea and sweets served. This event, held at the Wallingford Art Center, was the opening day of a tea bowl exhibition that lasted throughout the month of February. Instead of paying a fee, we asked for donations, and received a total of \$380 for the day. Keijiroh will distribute reimbursements for expenses and then donate the rest to the Tankokai.
- On February 8, Keijiroh was contacted again by the Nihon Gakko to do tea for parents of schoolchildren. He served about 35 people; donated money went to the school as a fundraiser.
- Terry did a demonstration at New Eagle Elementary for three groups of first graders; she donated her fee to the Tankokai to help cover supplies.
- Mary Lynn did a tea on behalf of a mother whose son (a Buddhist) passed away recently; she offered tea at the refreshment part of a service at a local temple where the son practiced.
- Keijiroh, Sachiko, and member Taiko Ruf did a demonstration for a meditation group in Lancaster.

We also have some upcoming requests:

- A group of students from the University of Pennsylvania would like to film a tea ceremony at Shofuso for a virtual reality project. Morgan and Terry will participate. (At the time of the meeting this was scheduled for March 17, but was later rescheduled due to coronavirus shutdowns at the college).

- There will be a fundraiser for the Raymond Farm Center on June 7th. Terry will send more information as the details are hammered out.
- Terry has been asked to give a talk on tea to the Acorn Club, but it will probably be just a talk rather than a demonstration.

The sign-up sheet to help with upcoming demonstrations had been experience some technical difficulties but is now functional and ready for signups.

Terry is planning to set up a meeting to talk about demonstration fees coming up; details to follow.

Events Committee

Morgan reported that the only event we've had since the last time the board met was Hatsugama. Registration for this event was lower than usual because a number of people had timing conflicts; income was \$645 (combining payments received in 2019 and 2020), and expenses were \$737.06 plus a venue fee of \$825. There was a discussion of trying to find a cheaper venue; Morgan mentioned that when we'd previously looked at places it was very difficult to find one that was available for the hours we were looking for and also had no problem with the sumi, and also had kitchen facilities.

There was a discussion of the cancellation of the cherry blossom festival. Frank shared that an official announcement would be made later that week (after the meeting, the announcement came that the event was cancelled). However, Shofuso will still open as usual unless the city orders public venues closed, and later festivals like Obon are still on.

Collections Committee

The Collections Committee had nothing new to report.

Other Business

There was a question about English-language newsletters and Japanese-language magazines from Urasenke. Morgan hasn't received any English newsletters recently, but will look and see if there are any older ones she hasn't sent out yet. She will also bring Japanese-language magazines to King of Prussia for the library there.

There's interest in having individual subscriptions to the Japanese-language magazines. Shoko will contact Tankosha about orders.

Sachiko said that she is interested in working on business cards to give away at demonstrations.

Terry asked about creating a Google Drive folder to contain reference documents. Morgan will work on it.

The next board meeting will be held on Monday, June 8, at 7 p.m., also virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.