

# SAKURA *conduit*

2009 Edition

## Team Sakura has a successful 2009 campaign!

Team Sakura is Sakura-Con's street team. Team Sakura helps distribute flyers, man tables and generally spread the word about Sakura-Con-all over the country. Team Sakura membership is open to anyone that wishes to keep "Sakura Spirit" in the hearts and minds of everyone year round.

This year has been very successful for Team Sakura. We've attended over 10 events officially and countless others via the grass roots efforts of volunteers taking flyers to company picnics, conventions, community festivals, schools, work, and more.

This summer, at the Emerald City Comic Con in Seattle, Anime Expo in Los Angeles and the eleventh-annual Aki Matsuri in Bellevue, we broke our pre-registration records for those events. The most stunning example of our increased pre-registration success was at ENMA's (<http://enma.org>) annual Aki Matsuri Festival-held annually at Bellevue community college. Last year we sold 70 pre-registrations during the entire festival. We were amazed to find ourselves easily breaking this record before the end of the first day! By Sunday afternoon we'd sold over 140 registrations-making an all new Aki Matsuri record for Sakura-Con.

One of the decided highlights of our Team Sakura Summer was the annual International District Seafair Parade. We had over 120 participants show up in full costume. While organizers were a bit overwhelmed by the incredible turn out-and are thus already making plans to improve next year-everyone was thrilled to see so many willing to support Sakura-Con. Thank you to everyone for coming out and making this Team Sakura event boast the most volunteer participation ever-next to Sakura-Con itself.

Thank you to all the Team Sakura volunteers that help spread the word and cheer year-round. If you are interested in proposing new Team Sakura events, joining the street team by handing out flyers or for more information in general, please contact [Team\\_Sakura@sakuracon.org](mailto:Team_Sakura@sakuracon.org) or visit our website at [www.sakuracon.org](http://www.sakuracon.org) and look under "Press" and then "Team Sakura".

Ever wonder what last years Commercial looked like? Miss the Opening Ceremonies Video? Wonder what Sakura-Con is about? Then check out the Sakura-Con Promotional Videos at [www.youtube.com/SakuraConPR](http://www.youtube.com/SakuraConPR)

Sakura Radio is a podcast introduced to keep you informed on Pre-registration dates, local events Team Sakura attend, new guest updates, and anything else Sakura-con related. You can watch it and keep up to date at [sakuracon.blip.tv](http://sakuracon.blip.tv), iTunes, and Miro to name a few. If you have any ideas, requests, or comments please feel free to contact me at [video@sakuracon.org](mailto:video@sakuracon.org)

More Team Sakura Event photos on page 3





**Smile.dk** is a Swedish pop duo with the singers Veronica and Hanna from Sweden. Their mission is to entertain and create happiness through their catchy lyrics, upbeat sound & tender sensitive ballads, and of course the tracks are bound together by their beautiful voices! Recently we got to interview Veronica to find out more about this dynamic duo.

**Q. Can you tell me how and when Smile.dk first formed?**

**A.** Smile.dk first was formed back in 1997. I, Veronica, had just left the group "Look Twice" and was making some demos with the producer Robert Uhlmann. One day he got contacted by a record company that wanted to start a girl group. We started looking for some singers and having lot's of auditions but couldn't find the right girl. Then I remembered a girl called Nina, that I had met some time ago and contacted her....well the rest is history...Nina auditioned and became the second member...and that's how we started working together. We made a few demos together and later

that year we signed a record deal with EMI Denmark.

**Q. What is your musical background?**

**A.** Veronica has been a member of Smile.dk from the beginning. She has been singing and dancing since a very young age, studied one year of Afro-American singing school in Stockholm, been a member of a gospel choir for eight years, participated in a TV show in Sweden called "Sikta mot Stjärnorna" (Aim for the

stars) as Sissel Kyrkjebö, Veronica also used to be a singer in a country band, etc. Her first international release was in Japan 1995 with the Swedish group "Look Twice". She was the lead singer of the band, accompanied by two male rappers – "Vinny" and "Crazy G". She stayed a part of the band "Look Twice" until the year 1997. Now she's singing and writing songs to Smile.dk and other projects.

**Hanna** is the newest member of SMILE.dk. She is a singer and songwriter from southern Sweden. She started her career in a church choir at age six and has continued singing and performing ever since. She has done everything from solo performances to different kinds of shows and has been with some of the best vocal coaches in Sweden. She has also done backing vocals for the worldwide artist Pandora.

**Q. Your music has found it's way to almost every DDR game-have you played the game? If so, what do you think of it?**

**A.** I, Veronica, have played the game on tours in Asia. I also got the first and second game with Butterfly and Boys at home so I get to play it once in a while. I love it!! But it's so hard and I'm so bad at it!!!

**Q. Smile.dk is said to have been on hiatus for a time-why the break?**

**A.** Well, after our third full length album "Golden Sky", both me and Malin (the former member) became moms and needed the break for a while to reload our batteries, so to say ?. I had almost given up the music when I, Veronica got contacted on MySpace by a record label in Canada and USA, saying they wanted to bring Smile.dk back again...and of course we were tempted ?...

**Q. What is your newest project and where can we hear it?**

**A.** Our new album is called "Party around the world" and has just been released in America. You can purchase it on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or iTunes and so on. It's a wonderful new produced album with happy catchy Smile.dk tracks and also some beautiful ballads!! You can also have a glimps of the new tracks on our homepage:

[www.smiledk-music.com](http://www.smiledk-music.com)

and on [www.myspace.com/smiledkmusic](http://www.myspace.com/smiledkmusic)

**Q. You had your first US appearance last summer at a Texas anime convention-how did that go? What was your impression of the anime fan community?**

**A.** Yes that's true and we really had a wonderful time there. It was so exciting to finally meet some fans in America!! Everything turned out so much better than we ever could have imagined?. Everyone knew our songs



# TEAM SAKURA 2009

- ▶ Kumori-Con
- ▶ International District Parade
- ▶ Aki Matsuri
- ▶ Emerald City ComicCon

Interview with Smile.dk continued

and sang along...that was an overwhelming feeling!! This wasn't only our first time in America...it was also our first time at a anime convention, so we had no idea what to expect. But we loved seeing all the different costumes and it was VERY HOT in Texas!! Wow, we're not use to that kind of heat ?!!

**Q. Is there anything you want to share about your plans for appearing at Sakura-con 2009?**

**A.** Well, this will be our second time in America and we are VERY excited!!!! We really hope that a lot of fans will come to see our show at Sakura Con and hopefully we'll get the chance to meet them face to face and talk to them too. The show will be an hour and consist of both old and new hits...so we really hope that you will enjoy it!!! So till then...take care and keep smiling!! See you all soon!!!

LOVE, Veronica & Hanna



## When Japan the Idea Meets Japan the Reality

By Bruce Rutledge

Japan is both an idea and a place. In the West, the idea of Japan reigns supreme. Many politicians, business leaders, writers and artists have a vested interest in protecting that idea, whether it be Japan as an exotic paradise of submissive women, an unthinking military dictatorship or a society of blue-suited salarymen marching in lockstep. The reality is too murky and far too difficult to turn a profit on.

Today Japan's government has embraced its image in the West as cool and creative, the home to anime and Akihabara. Of course, any good skeptic will know that when government ministries start touting something as cool and hip, it is definitely not. I'm not saying anime is uncool. Far from it. It's just that the government has chosen to be a cheerleader for anime and manga — even going to the extreme of making a cartoon character (Doraemon) a goodwill ambassador — at a time when the industry is suffering a downslide and when it seems painfully clear that the next generation of anime films will come from somewhere besides Japan.

The Japan I see is a complex mix of dark, depressing trends and exciting, creative sparks. It's a country that has seen the emergence of the working poor, a directionless place whose once firm safety net is shredded by years of aggressive American-style deregulation. But it's also a place with moments of intense creative expression and increasing dissent.

I founded Chin Music Press, a publishing company in Seattle, to tell the stories of modern Japan. On the one hand, we want to pay tribute to the country's artistic achievements. On the other, we want our writers to resist the urge to sum up Japan in pat assumptions or easily marketed slogans. The result is beautifully designed books complete with illustrations and artwork that bear titles like *Curing Japan's America Addiction* and *Goodbye Madame Butterfly*.

My hope is that we're your second step on your path to understanding Japan. The first step is the thing that you love, be it animated films or a martial art or collectible toys. The second step comes when you want to learn a little more about this place that produced the thing you're passionate about. The first step is the idea. The second is the reality. And as anyone who has ever truly been in love knows, taking the second step is crucial if a relationship is going to last.

You can find out more about Chin Music Press at [chinmusicpress.com](http://chinmusicpress.com).

## 2010 Mascot Contest

Thank you for all the beautiful entries for this year's mascot contest. Voting will be done by Sakura-Con staff prior to the 2009 Convention. First, second and third place winners will be announced at Closing Ceremonies.

## Sakura-Con Pass Booth

**Event Pass Booth One** will be on the 6th floor in room 6B—it is where you can secure passes for the AMV contest. The AMV contest is the **ONLY** event which required passes to attend. AMV passes will be distributed on the 6th floor in room 6b at Event Pass Booth one. You will need to choose between two Friday showings or a Saturday showing—only one showing per member as supplies last. You will receive a stamp and a pass to gain entry to the AMV showing you choose.

*Continued on page 11*



# Sakura-Con ROCKS



Formed in 2004, **girugamesh** made their USA debut at 2007's JRock Revolution event in Los Angeles, CA, which also featured artists such as Miyavi, D'espairsRay, alice nine, and MUCC. In 2008, the band has been performing non-stop, bringing their "Stupid" tour to fans in Japan and Europe.

See program guide for concert information.

Want to get in to the concert... early? When you get a hotel at the convention rate you qualify for a wrist band that guarantees your admittance to the concert! Please see page 4 of this newsletter for Pass Booth details!

The characters "Hangry" and "Angry" are said to come from the H44 Star Nebula in order to save the world from global warming. They arrived in the present in their time machine dubbed "LOVE MACHINE."

See program guide for concert information.



**Myuji** debuted at 16 as a musician, releasing many songs, such as "Over the view", "Normal" and "Bone". He is known as the singer of "eX dream", the theme song of "X", the animated TV series originated by CLAMP. This is Myuji's first Sakura-Con.

See program guide for concert information.



**Soul Candy**

See program guide for concert information.



**The Slants**

See program guide for concert information.

## Pokemon Video Game Championships

On August 16, 2008, 64 of the best Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl players from Japan and the United States competed for the ultimate claim to fame at the Pokémon Video Game Showdown Finals.

Two Pokémon Video Game Showdown Qualifier Tournaments, held in Los Angeles and New York during the summer, identified the best players in the U.S., and these Pokémon Trainers earned an invitation to compete against Japan's top players. The Pokémon Video Game Showdown is now complete, and the battles were legendary.



We have our first Pokémon Champions!

**Junior Champion**  
Knight Silvayne

**Senior Champion**  
Izuru Yoshimura

Senior Trainers pictured in the back row of the photo, from left to right: Yasuhito Kajiwara, Izuru Yoshimura, Hideaki Shimizu, Christopher Halordain-Tsai

Junior Trainers pictured in the front row of the photo, from left to right: Genki Taketomi, Knight Silvayne, Takerou Toyonaga, and Kento Mikata



## Pokemon TCG World Championships

### Friday - The Last Chance Qualifier (a.k.a. The Grinder)

Players from the United States, Japan, and all over Europe descended on Orlando, Florida, to play in the Last Chance Qualifier and perhaps earn a coveted spot in the Main Event. With 117 players in the Junior Division, 157 in the Senior Division, and an astonishing 374 in the Masters Division—so big that those players are competing in two flights—it was the biggest Last Chance Qualifier in the history of the Pokémon TCG World Championships!

### Saturday and Sunday - The Main Event

More than 270 Pokémon Trainers put their best decks forward and competed for a chance to call themselves the best in the world. After two grueling days of battling, these elite Pokémon Trainers can call themselves the best players in the world, and they definitely earned it! Congratulations to all!

**Junior Division Champion:** Tristan Robinson (United States)

#### Junior Division Runners-Up

2nd Place: Takuto Itagaki (Japan)  
3rd Place: Simone Zucchelli (Italy)  
4th Place: Noah Lawson (United States)

**Senior Division Champion:** Dylan Lefavour (United States)

#### Senior Division Runners-Up

2nd Place: Paul Atanassov (Canada)  
3rd Place: Nicholas Kolibas (United States)  
4th Place: Curran Hill (United States)

**Masters Division Champion:** Jason Klaczynski (United States)

#### Masters Division Runners-Up

2nd Place: Khanh Le (Norway)  
3rd Place: Gino Lombardi (United States)  
4th Place: Jimmy O'Brien (United States)

# Anime Super-Fun Word Jumble

By Jeff Anderson

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**Full Metal Panic:** Sousuke becomes the head coach of this Jindai High Sports team

G-Y-U-R-B

\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_ ( )

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**Beck:** This American band is an inspiration for Koyuki

N-Y-D-G-I E-R-D-E-B

\_\_\_\_ ( ) ( ) \_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_

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**Ceres, Celestial Legend:** The item that was stolen from Ceres

O-O-M-H-O-A-R-G

( ) ( ) \_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_

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**Kiddy Grade:** The intergalactic Government is known as this.

L-B-G-A-L-O O-U-N-I-N

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ ( ) ( ) \_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_

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**GTO:** Onizuka, briefly abandons his dream of becoming a teacher to take this job.

U-R-K-T-C V-D-E-S-I-R-R

( ) \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ ( ) ( ) \_\_\_\_

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Take the letters in the parenthesis above to make up this answer:

**Read or Die:** Yomiko Readman has worked both for and against this organization

\_\_\_\_\_



# A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:



DID YOU KNOW...  
Greg Nickels has proclaimed  
April 10, 2009  
as "Sakura-Con Day"  
in the City of Seattle.

# ONE OTAKU'S OPINION

by Jeff Anderson

## Shoujo anime from the male Otaku's Perspective.

When you hear most guys talk about anime, (when they admit to talking about anime) it is usually Shonen type action shows like Dragonball Z or giant robot anime like Gundam Wing.

But if a guy is truly an Otaku then they have seen the softer side of anime shows like Chobits and Negima. And truth be told they for the most part have enjoyed them. Shows like that are described in Japan as Shoujo or "Girl's anime".

This article is a quick guide for guys who have not or have been afraid to cross over to the Shoujo side of the anime universe.



Sailor Moon and Honey-Sempai

What is Shoujo exactly? It is anime that is more character driven and less action inspired. Characters tend to spend more time monologuing to explain their emotions than bashing or blowing up things or people to get their way or accomplish their goals. It's not that Shoujo anime does not have its share of action and battle scenes. It's just that the action is not the main focus of the story but is secondary to the relationships that develop between the characters. In the typical Shonen story there is little or no character growth among the main protagonists. The way they think and behave at the end of the story is basically the same way they acted and behaved when you first met the character. Instead of growing emotionally, they gained new skills and abilities to become better warriors so they can be more effective at destroying whatever enemy they were facing. While the protagonists in Shoujo grow and change as people during the story arch, and the typical main character in a Shoujo might end up 180 degrees different at the end of the story as the character was when we first introduced to them at the beginning of the storyline. Shonen we watch the characters as they battle against the enemy while Shoujo invites us to feel what the character are going through inside as we watch them fight against their enemies.

The Grandmother of all Shoujo is of course, Sailor Moon. Unlike the typical male lead in a Shonen story with a battle of Good vs. Evil, Usagi is neither smart, brave or skilled as a warrior. If anything she is less so than the average person. She gets bad grades, is selfish and a glutton when we first meet her. There is nothing about her that in any way suggests she has any chance to become a hero. In fact when she is first presented with the idea of becoming Sailor Moon to fight against the evil invading the world, she refuses out of fear. But as the show progresses her inner strength and character grows stronger and stronger, until at the end she has the strength to fight one on one vs. her ultimate enemy Queen Beryl... even when she knows that doing so will most likely mean her own destruction as well. The Usagi we see at the end of season one is not the same person at all as the person we first saw in episode one.

This growth of emotional strength is the common theme in most Shoujo anime, and is what makes them so memorable in the long run. Shows like Fushigi Yugi and Read or Die tend to stick with you a lot longer than the all out action blitzes like One Piece or Naruto. Some of my most favorite animes have been Shoujo shows like Chance Pop Session and Princess Nine. If you're a guy and you have not tried any of these shows, give them a chance. It can just be our little secret.

That's all for now, thanks for reading. This is just One Otaku's Opinion.

## Cultural Happenings at Sakura-Con

Did you know that in addition to Japanese anime, Sakura-Con also features Japanese cultural demonstrations and panels? You can learn how to tie an obi in the Kimono workshop, learn the centuries old history behind the tea ceremony, or enjoy a martial arts demonstration.

### Cultural panels include:

- Kimono Workshop
- Chado Urasenke Tankokai - Tea Ceremony
- Kabuki Academy Sunday
- Dynamic Koto Solos
- Kendama Spot
- JUMP INTO JAPAN – with the JET Program!
- Puget Sound Bonsai
- Tacoma Kendo and Iaido Club
- Metro Tacoma Fencing Club
- Akido
- Tai Chi
- Tsubomi Seishin Kan Dojo
- Yamato Taiko
- Kyudo Demo



## The Sushi Sampler - Nigiri-Style Sushi

Nigiri sushi is a slice of fish (cooked or uncooked) pressed by hand onto a pad of rice. Fish roe is also served as nigiri sushi in a style called gunkan, which means "boat". Nigiri sushi contains a hint of horseradish (usually placed under the fish) and is meant to be lightly dipped in soy sauce and eaten in one bite. They are always served in pairs.



What's the best type of nigiri for beginners? If you are not used to the idea of raw fish, you may want to try the egg omelet nigiri, known as tamago. The egg is generally sweet, but not overly so, and you will find that most sushi restaurants have their own distinct tamago flavor.

If you are more adventurous, try the masago (tuna) or sake (salmon) nigiri. Don't be afraid to use the soy sauce, but remember to use it sparingly. If you dip your nigiri too much it will fall apart on you.

Green tea is the beverage of choice when enjoying sushi, as the flavors of the sushi are delicate, and the flavor of the green tea enhances the sushi instead of overpowering it.

Don't forget, when you are selecting a sushi restaurant (and there are many good ones in the Puget Sound area), one of the most important things to notice is smell. If you walk into a sushi place and it smells like fish... walk out. If you walk into a sushi place and it has a light scent (I can't describe the sushi scent... it's just wonderful!!) then you are in the right place!

Happy Eating!

# SAKURA-CON IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING GUESTS OF HONOR:



Gabe and Tycho of Penny Arcade

Sasaki Nozomu



Koichi Ohata

Hideo Okamoto



Roland Kelts

## Sakura-Con Pass Booth

*Continued from page 4*

Event Pass Booth Two will be on the 4th floor in the Galleria section, across from Merchandising. At this booth you can have your wrist stamped to verify you are over 18 for the sake of attending the handful of panels we have showing that have a mature rating. Note that picture ID will not be accepted in these panels- you must have a valid ID stamp.

Additionally, at Event Pass Booth Two you can present your Sakura-Con affiliated hotel room reservation confirmation and receive a wrist band for early entrance to seating in our concerts (first 15 minutes of seating reserved for those with wristbands). We will check your name against our hotel reservation lists (so try to bring your confirmation-but if you don't have it and you're the person the room is reserved under we can try to look you up directly). ID is required and wrist bands will only be released to the main person reserving the room-limit of four wrist bands per room for roommates.

For more information on all of our guests of honor, go to [www.sakuracon.org](http://www.sakuracon.org).