

Technology brings sister cities together

By SUSAN WINLOW
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — Thanks to modern-day technology called Skype two sister cities thousands of miles apart were able to visually communicate Sunday.

"How wonderful to meet you in this most wonderful(ly) technical yet personal way," said the mayor of Nirasaki, Kimiaki Yokouchi, to Fairfield's mayor, Harry Price, and Arletta Cortright, chairwoman of the Fairfield-Nirasaki Sister City Committee.

A Nirasaki contingent, including Cortright's daughter who teaches English in Nirasaki and acted as translator, gathered at the their local community center while in

Fairfield the Sister City Committee simultaneously held a fundraising event at Fairfield's community center to raise money for Japanese earthquake relief and the sister city exchange program.

Left with a cancelled exchange program this year because of the earthquake and tsunami that devastated parts of Japan in March, the group wondered what it could do instead to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the union between the two cities, Cortright said.

If Mother Nature hadn't wreaked havoc on the island nation, the Fairfield adult delegation -- a student delegation also visits Nirasaki as well as Japanese students and adults coming



Adam Smith/Daily Republic

Takemichi Nagaoka, holding a mic, speaks with a contingent from sister city Nirasaki, Japan, via Skype at the Fairfield Community Center Sunday afternoon.

here -- would have been in Japan at this time.

"It's a huge disappointment we can't do the exchange," said Cortright. "But we certainly understand."

Cortright said Nirasaki is located about 140 miles from the epicenter of the earthquake.

Annie Hutchinson, 80, came out to support the exchange program. She

hosted a couple of adults from Nirasaki during an exchange many years ago, she said. She also spent a few years living in Japan. She was hoping that some Nirasaki folks would be able to come but was intrigued with the idea of Skype.

"Isn't that neat?" she said when she found out how they would communicate with people in Nirasaki.

Festooned with red table cloths, miniature Japanese and American flags and Japanese snacks, the event included Japanese dancers, Taiko drummers, scrapbook displays of exchange visits between the two cities, silent auctions, dinner, and in honor of Halloween, a costume contest.

Hutchinson, dressed as Lucy of "I Love Lucy" fame, complete with the brilliant red hair, took top honors in the costume contest.

While the sister city program has been active for four decades, the student exchange program will hit its 25th year in 2012. Students from Fairfield visit Japan in the summer while the Nirasaki students come to Fairfield in December. For more information on the exchange program, call Cortright at 428-7384 or email acortright@fairfield.ca.gov.

Reach Susan Winlow at 427-6955 or swinlow@dailyrepublic.net.



Adam Smith/Daily Republic

Zippering down Main Street

Zipp the clown and friends, winners in the novelty motorized parade category, ride down Main Street in Rio Vista during

the final day of the Bass Derby and Festival. The three-day event ended Sunday with a soap box derby and carnival.

Bass Derby winners

RIO VISTA — The winners of the 64th annual Bass Derby were announced on Sunday.

First, second- and third-place winners in the salmon and sturgeon divisions took home \$500, \$250 and \$100, respectively. The big winners, those bringing in the biggest striped bass, brought home \$1,500, \$1,000 or \$500, respectively.

The salmon winners were based on weight while the sturgeon and striped bass were based on a target length predetermined before the derby began. Target length for the sturgeon was 58 inches while the striper's target length was 35.25 inches. Weight is used as a tiebreaker.

Robert Ashcroft of Fairfield not only placed second with his striped bass, but he also paid the extra for the highroller side pot and won an additional \$1,461.

Richard Caswell, a Rio Vista resident, won the 14-foot Klamath fishing boat and trailer.

Salmon

- Martin Morfey, Lodi, first place, 25.66 pounds
- Moe Adams, Sacramento, second place, 18.80 pounds
- Chris Javelos, Brentwood,

third place, 18.29 pounds

Sturgeon

- Paul Koval, Stockton, first place, 57.36 inches
- J. Berenble, Stockton, second place, 57.18 inches
- Terry Schwinn, Stockton, third place, 56.80 inches

Striped bass

- Danny Nguyen, Elk Grove, first place, 35.12 inches
 - Robert Ashcroft, Fairfield, second place, 35.07 inches
 - Carlton King, Rio Vista, third place, 35.07 inches
- (In the event of a tie in length, the weight is used as a tie breaker. Ashcroft's striper weighed 15.33 pounds while King's weighed 14.76 pounds.)

Kid's catfish

- Alison Phon, Victor, first place

Kid's striped bass

- Auston Todd, Fairfield, first place

— Daily Republic staff

In brief

Man dies while surfing at Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON — Authorities in San Diego County say a man has died while surfing at a Camp Pendleton beach.

The Medical Examiner says in a statement Sunday that other surfers saw 63-year-old Charles Solon Todd Jr. ride a wave to the shore on Saturday, sit on his board, then collapse forward.

They pulled Todd from the water and called 911. Paramedics tried to resuscitate him, but he was pronounced dead.

Oakland services closed today due to cut costs

OAKLAND — Oakland officials are reminding residents that most city services will be closed today.

The suspension of services is not in observance of Columbus Day, but is one of several unpaid days off that city employees will be taking as part of a move to reduce the city's \$58 million budget deficit.

City officials say police, fire and emergency services will not be affected during the closures, but that other services, such as public works and library services will be.

Survey: US gas prices dip 13 cents in 2 weeks

CAMARILLO — A survey says the average U.S. price of a gallon of gasoline has dropped 13 cents over the past two weeks.

The Lundberg Survey of fuel prices released Sunday puts the price of a gallon of regular at \$3.42, down 13 cents from two weeks earlier and down 25 cents

in the past month.

Costs have seen similar drops in midgrade, now at an average of \$3.58 a gallon, and premium at \$3.70.

Diesel fell seven cents to \$3.85 a gallon.

Of the cities surveyed,

Albuquerque, N.M., had the nation's lowest average price for gas at \$3.07, and perennial price leader San Francisco had the highest at \$3.81.

In California, the lowest average price was \$3.71 in Fresno. The average statewide was \$3.77, down 11 cents in the two-week span.

— Daily Republic wire services

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