Year of the Pig: FCCJ journalists look to the future

The Japan Times: Language, the past tense and the future imperfect

Carlos Ghosn: Deciphering a fallen corporate icon

2019 gets underway . . .

Reporting Thailand
Policing events in the FCCT

Spotting fake news
How to recognize a manipulated video

Building a profile
Stirling Elmendorf, photographer
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR FELLOW MEMBERS,

A very happy New Year from President Peter Langan and myself!

We are all settling into the new facility and getting to know the premises. On the dining front, we’re happy to announce that the Correspondents’ Lunch is once again on the menu and, as of this writing, we are very close to agreeing on a new Food and Beverage contract that promises exciting new developments. We are all looking forward to the Club upstaging the authorities by allowing the fugitive politician Chaturon Chaisang a platform. “Chaturon was one of the last of the former cabinet members to turn himself in, and in a subplot of genuine media interest,” says FCCT President Dominic Faulder. “He made no attempt to resist arrest after he had finished making a statement, and the soldiers sent to collect him had to be used the title only in his London office. The son went on to further his education in the U.K.

From the clubhouse in steel helmets and webbing arrived twenty minutes late. Three weeks later, we had the new junta spokesman sitting in the same spot.”

Things have improved since. Police no longer enter the Club and sit around as they did in the early days of the coup. “It’s pretty stable, and it’s not gotten worse,” says Faulder. “Our relationship with Lumpini police stations, which has the Club in its precinct, is civil enough. We are not an activist organization – we are a press club. Much of our growth is geared to current events and whatever happens to be topical. That can unavoidable cause friction.”

A non-provocative approach has been key to how the FCCT has dealt with Thailand’s military rulers. The military was looking for a way to talk to the foreign media and the Club’s attitude has been that it is there for the generals as much as the politicians. That seems to have some traction with the military. “We want to hear what they have to say – our door has always been open to them,” says Faulder, though appearances by government officials, in some ways the lifeline of any press club, have been more scarce since the coup. In fact, since 2014, no prime minister has appeared at the Club, while prior to that it was an annual event. Only three ministers have visited in that time.

There have been moments, especially in the early years of military rule, when the Club’s position was precarious. Six times since the coup, police have shut down or forced cancellation of Club events. The most recent incident shows that it is clear who still wields the power.

The FCCT had organized a panel discussion for Sept. 10 about a UN report on the Rohingya crisis while there are parallels with Thailand, wasn’t the trigger for what turned out to be a swift and brutal response. That event promoting the event was named General Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar’s military commander. Although he’s been cited by the UN for his involvement in the crackdown on Rohingya, he has some friends in very high places in the Thai military and political establishment and was able to mobilize them to halt the event.

With two hours to go, a dozen Lumpini police officers showed up, shutting down the event on the grounds it was a threat to national security. They were quite clear about the Club’s lack of options. “We are not asking,” said Police Col. Thawatkiat Jindakuansong. “We are ordering you to cancel.” “In hindsight, we should have left (his name) out,” says Jonathan Head, former FCCT president and one of the organizers. “It’s a reminder that they are watching and that they will intervene.”

Such heavy-handed responses have forced the FCCT into some nimble footwork about rescheduling and regrouping their events. Another event in May 2017 that promised to focus on the theft from a public place of a plaque marking the end of Thailand’s absolute monarchy (still unsolved, by the way), was also shut down. So the Club very quickly held an event on the freedom of the press when the issue of the plaque, among others, was raised.

When the panel was scheduled for February, the hope is things will get easier, although given the turbulence of Thai politics that is not a given

The FCCT has kept going through four sometimes difficult years, been one of the few foreign media and where rational debate is free and open and kept the issue of press freedom alive in a country, and a region, that is under some constant threat. That is a significant achievement – one it hopes to build on in the coming years.

By Michael Mackey

Six times since the coup, police have shut down or forced cancellation of Club events... it is clear who still wields the power.

The FCCT’s ongoing struggle with the Thai military government

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Canadian turned British press mogul

Lord Thomson of Fleet Street updated Club members on his latest press moves on Oct. 5, 1967. Seated to his left is FCCT President Al Kuff of United Press International, and to his right is Masuru (Masa) Ogawa of the Japan Times, who both served on the Board multiple times during the 1960s and were longtime Club stalwarts.

Born in Ontario, Canada, on June 5, 1894, to a Canadian father and an English mother, Roy Thomson started his career selling radios. To increase demand for his product, he launched a radio station in 1911, then bought a local newspaper in 1914. Acquisition of more radio stations and newspapers followed, as did diversification into other commercial activities. Between the early 1950s, his organization had grown to 19 newspapers, including one in Florida.

With this as a base, Thomson launched the Canadian Weekly Review, a newspaper for expats living in Britain, purchased the Scotsman newspaper in 1952 and in 1957 bought Scottish Television. Two years later, in 1959, his company acquired a group of UK newspapers that included the Sunday Times, and in 1966 he bought the Times, bringing the two newspapers under common ownership for the first time.

Thomson’s media empire eventually came to include more than 200 newspapers in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. as well as television and other diversified interests. In the 1970s his involvement in an oil venture in the North Sea was also successful.

In 1964, Roy Thomson was honored in the U.K. for his public service by being named Baron Thomson of Fleet, the acceptance of which resulted in the loss of his Canadian citizenship. Even as a baron, however, he was known for avoiding ostentation, and continued to use London’s subway system to commute to his office. Later, in 1970, he was also made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE).

Lord Thomson of Fleet died in 1976, leaving his title and businesses to his son, Kenneth Thomson, who became the 2nd Baron of Fleet but used the title only in his London office. The son went on to expand the Thomson holdings, at one time being named by Forbes as the richest Canadian, but that is another story.

Charles Pannery

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Forgotten foreign correspondents

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Forgotten foreign correspondents
The Dog days are over. Welcome to the Year of the Pig

Happy days are here again, as FCCJ correspondents make their predictions for headlines and stories in 2019.

Dateline, Los Angeles: Shohei Ohtani hits 40 home runs in a year of performing exclusively as a batter, goes on to star in his first Hollywood movie and marry Taylor Swift.

- Bob Whiting

What’s in a Name?

Jan. 23: Inspired by their success in redesignating the aircraft carrier, Izumo, as a “multi-purpose operation destroyer,” Japan’s Self-Defense Forces comes up with improved names for other military equipment. Hand grenades are to be renamed “security fireworks”, assault rifles will be known as “projectile projectors”, and flame throwers will be rebranded as “utility cigar lighters”. Seppuku is to be referred to as “tummy tickling”.

- Richard Lloyd Parry

BOJ keeps rates on hold (Jan. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Mar. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Apr. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Jun. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Jul. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Aug. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Sep. 20, 2019)
BOJ keeps rates on hold (Oct. 20, 2019)

BOJ keeps rates on hold (Nov. 20, 2019)

- Robin Harding

Diet session extended as gov’t admits it needs to lose weight

- Daniel Hurst

‘HonEn’ Trade Deal Hailed as Example for World

A trade agreement signed on June 1 will set a vibrant, exciting example for all newly independent and reformed countries, said representatives of the Federated State of Honshu and the Counties of United England. The agreement comes after the islands of Okinawa, Shikoku and Hokkaido held referendums and voted for independence from the island of Honshu.

As Scotland, Wales and Northern Island had similarly voted to break away as independent nations from England following Brexit, the Honshu-England, or HonEn, deal made a lot of sense, the representatives said, declining to be named or give any details.

- Peter Langan

TOKYO OVERWHELMED BY FLOOD OF 27 FOREIGN WORKERS AFTER CHANGING IMMIGRATION LAW.

- Isabel Reynolds

In a bid to reduce costs, newsrooms employ artificial intelligence to replace editors. The change is quickly reversed once the internet-connected AI software turns every publication into a Trump Twitter feed.

- Albert Siegel

An aging Japan continues to tackle its labor shortage problem, with flexible work hours, counseling and time off for couples trying to conceive. (If it all fails, companies to introduce AI and robots to remove human workers from the equation forever.)

- Hisa Torimoto

Happy days are here again, as FCCJ correspondents make their predictions for headlines and stories in 2019.

Feature: Predictions
Feature: Predictions

Winter Cancelled, Cherry Blossoms Bloom in January; Nation goes straight from sweaty autumn to humid spring

— David McNeill

Invasion of South Korea will ‘save democracy’: Kim Jong-un

— Julian Ryall

Dog Days of August

On Aug. 23, 2019, U.S. President Trump, Russian President Putin and Chinese President Xi Xi met for a summit by including a “non-aggression and friendship treaty.” Afterward, President Trump proudly declares, “This is the deal of the century, which will stabilize world order.

Soon afterwards revelations surface that the part contains a secret protocol by which the three signatories agree to partition the world, particularly natural resources, according to their respective spheres of influence.

Based on the terms of the protocol, China will acquire the disputed Senkaku Islands and Russia will continue its occupation of the Northern Territories. Bewildered and humiliated, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announces his resignation, saying “The international situation is bizarre.” Some observers pointed out that the signing marked 80 years to the day on which the Molotov-Ribbenbop Pact was concluded on April 19, 1939, as a secret protocol defining Soviet and German “spheres of influence.”

— Eriehiro Takemoto

Feature: The language of reporting

War of words

A year after changing owners, the Japan Times finds itself embroiled in a fight over the past.

By Tim Hornyak

Press freedom in Japan has been the focus of growing debate in recent years amid reports of pressure on reporters to toe the line of the Abe administration. The latest episode in this saga was a change in editorial policy on WWII-related terms at the Japan Times, under new management since 2017, that sparked heated debate in the newspaper and threats of cancellations from irate subscribers.

It began with a Friday, Nov. 30 page-two “Editor’s note,” appended to a story on a judgment by South Korea’s Supreme Court against Mitsubishi Heavy Industries for its use of Korean workers. The paper mentioned it was changing nomenclature when referring to comfort women and forced laborers to “women who worked in wartime brothels,” including those who did so against their will, to provide sex to Japanese soldiers” and “wartime laborers.” Many readers, including your humble scribe (disclosure: I am also a contributor to the Japan Times), were outraged.

The reaction from readers of the paper was swift. In a blog entry later that day, Minako Kambara, the paper’s international editor, wrote of her astonishment at the intense response from readers on social media and in phone calls. She said the change in wording was the result of discussion among the editors with diverse opinions, and expressed support for the editorial department. She closed with the vague promise that “The Japan Times will continue to freely communicate the present and future of Japan to the world.”

MEANWHILE, THE MOVE BY the Japan Times was generating international headlines and an internal revolt. Over the weekend, the Guernsey, NPR and the Chosun Ilbo, among others, ran stories on the change in wording, reporting critics’ views that the paper had bowed to rightwing pressure to change historical descriptions. The New York Times, whose international edition is distributed by the Japan Times, appeared to have been blindsided by the paper’s move. Danielle Rhoades Ha, NYT VP Communications, told the Japan Times: “The New York Times uses precise language on this topic and will continue to do so.”

As discontent among staff members continued to simmer, the paper had to act. On Monday, Dec. 3, Executive Editor Hiroyaus Mizuno met with the staff over two hours in an attempt to calm the waters. He and CEO Suematsu followed up with another marathon session the next day, in which many reporters and editors expressed their views. In the end, a compromise was reached: a new committee would be formed and assigned to review the matter of the controversial wording.

On Dec. 6, an extraordinary message signed by Mizuno was splashed over one full page in the paper. Titled “We are listening,” it was a statement in which he took responsibility for the decision to run the Editor’s note and apologized for damaging Japan’s reputation as an independent voice. “It seems to me that our reputation as an independent voice, “ wrote Mizuno, who did not respond to questions from the Number 1 Shinbun.

But not all the reaction to the FT’s move was negative. Some welcomed it. In a Dec. 6 Twitter post reweeted over 8,000 times, American attorney and author Kent Gilbert—who contributes a weekly column to the conservative tabloid Wall Street Journal—called on his followers to send messages of support to the FT. And on Dec. 7, Twitter also saw Mashahisa Sato, Japan’s State Minister for Foreign Affairs, wonder aloud whether the change was “the result of accumulated efforts or a symbolic change,” seeming to hint that there could have been outside pressure on the paper.

In response to questions from the Number 1 Shinbun, the paper’s raison d’etre.
Opinion: On Carlos Ghosn

By John R. Harris

C arlos Ghosn would scoff at my contention that I wrote my first book in French. It is one of the few words he uttered as his speechwriter from 2005 through 2008. Having once said, “I have a horror of approximation,” he would demand the highest standards for something like public speaking. Ten years later, I still live by those words.

Ten years after my first encounter with Carlos Ghosn, he is still radically different. He was nothing like a chipper automaker, unimpressed by the whole works ticking in harmony. In order to anticipate his thinking, I had to imprint in my brain his voice, his Latinate mode of expression and every word ever said by or about him. Ten years later, Ghosn remains one of my favorite figures. If anything, his words have become more declamatory, more colorful, more passionate.

Here is a question for readers of this column: What did Ghosn do for Nissan? Beyond question, he saved the automaker. What else? He made other brilliant contributions, too. Stung by criticism that Nissan was an environmental laggard, at the FCCJ in 2006 he quipped that “if you criticize hybrids people think you are an oil company.” Shortly after I counseled him not to use that term again, he had a road-to-Damascus conversion, leading the industry in deciding that the future was all-electric. Overriding the objections of Nissan engineers, he launched development of the LEAF EV.

What did Ghosn do for Nissan? Beyond question, he saved the company where there was no one else to do it, and he did it. The question is . . .

What did saving Nissan do to Carlos Ghosn?

It made him a rock star, and as many a poor boy has learned, that can be a lethal dose of success. To understand his trajectory, consider who Ghosn was before he burst onto Japan’s stage in 1999.

Forget the boilermaker that duhs “French-Brazilian.” In his socks, Ghosn is Maronite-Christian Lebanese, a cohesive Arab tribe with a vast diaspora found even in remote locales like the Amazon, where his grandfather ran a bush airline. Both wives have been of this tribe, and first wife Rita started a restaurant in Daikanyama because Tokyo had no decent Lebanese food.

His French-ness was painted on by Jesuit schooling in Beirut. Minutes, and Latin from that era suggest a pattern. His long-time personal assistant was objected to his term, he had a road-to-Damascus conversion, leading the industry in deciding that the future was all-electric. Overriding the objections of Nissan engineers, he launched development of the LEAF EV.

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Stirling Elmendorf
By Justin McCurry

“I can’t believe how much I love it here,” he says. “Our goal is really simple – to treat everyone in exactly the same way, to be very casual and extremely friendly, but extremely respectful at all times. And we want people to have fun. Our photo shoots are not quiet, heavy affairs. “The best thing about my job is meeting new people and having the opportunity to make them feel great about the work that they’ve done. We really appreciate that they put their trust in us.”

Elmendorf makes time for an eclectic range of assignments – constant reminders, he says, of why Japan is such a fascinating subject for an architectural photographer. He is comfortable photographing houses in Nara and family-run factories in Osaka as he is shooting brand-name outlets in Ginza and high-rise office blocks in Marunouchi. “We shoot everything from kindergartens to Bulgari, and everything in between,” he says.

The couple lived in Osaka for five and a half years when they decided that the time had come to move to Tokyo, where many of their clients were located. Eighteen months on, he is refreshing free of the cynicism that can creep up on some of the city’s longer-term residents.

“We’ve only been here for a year and a half so we’re really still in candy store mode, where it’s just fun to be here,” he says. “We’re surprised and delighted to find so much greenery here compared to Osaka. And we’re shocked by how well put-together Tokyo is as a city. It’s very inspiring for both of us. One thing I would love to do is shoot more public buildings, like museums, libraries and schools. That would be really fun.”

Now 43, Elmendorf had a peripatetic upbringing, spending nearly half his life overseas, with periods in Honduras, Ecuador, India, Mozambique, and Rwanda due to his father’s job with the US Agency for International Development. For now, he is happy to explore his Tokyo neighbourhood – by bicycle, of course – and go wherever his assignments take him. He would, though, welcome more time to practice his guitar and indulge a love of sento public baths that blossomed in Osaka.

“My brother and I are really fortunate enough to have grown up in countries that were developing and weren’t fiscally in the same place as somewhere like Japan,” he says. “It really helps you appreciate what you’ve got, how hard people work and how little they have. Not a day goes by that I don’t wake up and think how fortunate I am to live in Tokyo and how much I love it here.”

Justin McCurry is the Japan and Korea correspondent for the Guardian and Observer newspapers in London and reports for the English-language service of France 24 TV.
**New technology and the fake news battlefield**

*The Wall Street Journal is preparing its journalists to detect deepfakes, a job that is increasingly difficult thanks to advances in AI technology.*

**By Francesco Marrooni and Till Daldrup**

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS FUELING the next phase of misinformation.** The new type of synthetic media known as deepfakes poses major challenges for newsrooms when it comes to verification. The Wall Street Journal is taking this threat seriously and has launched an internal task force led by the Ethics & Standards and the Research & Development teams. This group, the WSJ Media Forensics Committee, is comprised of video, photo, visuals, research, platform, and news editors who are working on deepfake detection. Beyond this core effort, we’re hosting training seminars with reporters and editors, producing guides, and collaborating with academic institutions such as Cornell Tech to identify ways technology can be used to combat disinformation.

“Raising awareness in the newsroom about the latest technology is critical,” said Christopher Stanley, a deputy editor on the Ethics & Standards team who spearheaded the forensics committee. “We don’t know where future deepfakes might surface so we want all eyes watching out for disinformation.”

The production of most deepfakes is based on a machine learning technique called “generative adversarial networks,” or GANs. This approach can be used by forgers to swap the faces of two people—for example, deepfakes of politicians and an actor. The algorithm looks for instances where both individuals show similar features, such as eyes and facial positioning, then look for the best matches in the background to juxtapose both faces.

Because research about GANs and other approaches to machine learning is still in its infancy, the ability to generate deepfakes is spreading. Open source software already enables anyone with some technical knowledge and a powerful-enough graphics card to create a deepfake.

**DEEPAKE CREATORS CAN USE a variety of techniques. FaceSwap is an algorithm that can seamlessly insert the face of a person into a target video. This technique could be used to place a person’s face on an actor’s body and put them in situations that they were never really in. Forgers can also graft a lip-syncing mouth onto someone else’s face, transfer facial expressions from one person into another video, making them seem disgusted, angry, or surprised—or even transfer the body movements of a person in a source video to a person in a target video.** Journalists have an important role in informing the public about the dangers and challenges of artificial intelligence technology. Reporting on these issues is a way to raise awareness and inform the public.

“There are technical ways to check if the footage has been altered, such as going through it frame by frame in a video editing program to look for any unusual shapes and added elements, or doing a reverse image search,” said Natalia V. Ospina, a senior video journalist at The Journal. “But the best option is often traditional reporting: ‘Reach out to the source and the subject directly, and use your editorial judgment.’

If someone has sent in suspicious footage, a first step is to try to contact the source. How did that person obtain it? Where and when was it filmed? Getting as much information as possible, asking for further proof of the claims, and then verifying is key.

If the video is online and the uploader is unknown, other questions are worth exploring: Who allegedly filmed the footage? Who published it and shared it, and with whom? Checking the metadata of the video or image with tools like InVID or other metadata viewers can provide answers.

**IN ADDITION TO GOING through this process internally, the Journal collaborates with content verification organizations such as Storyful and the Associated Press. This is a fast-moving landscape with emerging solutions appearing regularly in the market. For example, new tools including TruePic and Serelay use blockchain to authenticate photos. Regardless of the technology used, the humans in the newsroom are at the center of the process.**

“Technology alone will not solve the problem,” said Rajiv Pant, chief technology officer at the Journal. “The way to combat deepfakes is to augment humans with artificial intelligence tools.”

Deepfakes are often based on footage that is already available online. Reverse image search engines like TinEye and Google Images are useful to find possible older versions of the video to suss out whether an aspect of it was manipulated. Editing programs like Final Cut enable journalists to slow footage down, zoom the image, and look at it frame by frame or pause multiple times. This helps reveal obvious glitches: glimmering and fuzziness around the mouth or face, unnatural lighting or movements, and differences between skin tones are telltale signs of forgery.

In addition to these factual details, there might also be small edits in the foreground or background of the footage. Does it seem like an object was inserted or deleted into a scene that might change the meaning of the video (e.g. a weapon, a symbol, a person, etc.)? Again, glimmering, fuzziness, and unnatural expressions can be indicators of fake footage.

In the case of audio, listen for unnatural intonations and speech breathing, metallic sounding voices and obvious edits, all hints that the audio might have been generated by artificial intelligence. However, it’s important to note that image artifacts, glitches, and imperfections can also be introduced by video compression. That’s why it is sometimes hard to conclusively determine whether a video has been forged or not.

**A NUMBER OF COMPANIES are creating technologies—often for innocuous reasons—that nonetheless could eventually end up being used to create deepfakes. Adobe is working on Project Clack, an experimental tool for object removal in video, which makes it easy for users to remove or replace details out of the footage. The product could be helpful in motion picture editing. But some experts think that micro-edits like these—the removal of small details in a video—might be even more dangerous than blatant fakes since they are harder to spot.**

There are algorithms for image translation that enable the alteration of weather or time of day in a video. These could be helpful for post-production of movie scenes shot during days with different weather. But it could be problematic for newsrooms and others, because in order to verify footage and narrow down when videos were filmed, it is common practice to compare the time of day, weather, position of the sun, and other indicators for clues to inconsistencies.

Audio files can also be manipulated automatically: One company, Lyrebird, creates artificial voices based on audio samples of real people. One minute of audio recordings is enough to generate an entire digital replica that can say any sentence the user types into the system. While these techniques can be used to significantly lower costs of fake news and disinformation production, they represent a risk for news media as well as society more broadly. For example, fake videos could place politicians in meetings with foreign agents or even show soldiers committing crimes.

False audio could make it seem like government officials are privately discussing classified information. “We know deepfakes and other image manipulations are effective and can have immediate repercussions,” said Roy Anzulov, founder and CEO of Serelay, a platform that enables publishers to protect their content. “We need to really watch when they become cheap, because cheap and effective drives diffusion.”

Publishing an unverified fake video in a news story could stain a newsroom’s reputation and ultimately lead to the public losing trust in media institutions. Another danger for journalists: personal deepfake attacks showing news professionals in compromising situations or altering facts—again aimed at discrediting and intimidating their reporting.

As deepfakes make their way into social media, their spread will likely follow the same pattern as other fake news stories. In a MIT study investigating the diffusion of false content on Twitter published between 2006 and 2017, researchers found that “falsehood diffusion significantly spread faster, deeper, and more broadly than truth in all categories of information.” False stories were 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than the truth and reached 1,500 people six times more quickly than accurate articles.

Deepfakes are not going away anytime soon. It’s safe to say that these elaborate forgeries will make verifying media harder, and this challenge could become even more difficult over time.

“We have seen this rapid rise in deep learning technology and the question is: Is that going to keep going, or is it plateauing? What’s going to happen next?” said Haney Farid, a photo-forensics expert. “I think that the issues are coming to a head,” he said, adding that the next 18 months leading up to the 2020 election will be crucial. Despite the current uncertainty, newsrooms can and should follow the evolution of this threat by conducting research, partnering with academic institutions, and training their journalists how to leverage new tools.
JOIN THE FILM COMMITTEE... on Tues., Jan. 15 at 7:00 pm for the acclaimed feature debut of Nanako Hirose, His Lost Name. Like her mentor, Cannes Palm d’Or winner Hirokazu Kore-eda, Hirose takes her time with her storytelling, and revelations do not arrive until long after the film’s opening scenes. A troubled young man (Yuya Yagira, winner of the Best Actor award at Cannes for Kore-eda’s Nobody Knows) is rescued from an apparent suicide attempt by taciturn widower Tetsuro (Kaoru Kobayashi of Midnight Diner), who gives him a place to stay, a job and most importantly, a sympathetic shoulder. But it’s soon clear that the young man isn’t the only one haunted by his past. Hirose will join us for the Q&A session after the screening.

(Japan, 2019; 113 minutes; in Japanese with English subtitles.)

– Karen Severns

The year-end in photos

Christmas slips away: A diver dressed as Santa Claus swims with a moray eel in the Sunshine Aquarium, Tokyo by Yoshikazu Tsuno

New Year greetings: A Shinto priest plays the Sho during the year-end ceremony at Kanda Myoujin Shrine in Tokyo, for the start of 2017 by Katsumi Kasahara/Gamma-Rapho

Season’s leavings: Fallen gingko leaves by Stirling Elmendorf

The Year of the Boar
Illustration Group Exhibition
Curated by Niya Niya Studio

NIYA NIYA STUDIO WAS founded in Kamakura, Japan in 2017 by artists and designers Tada Kono and Yura Osborn. After working in the creative field in Los Angeles and New York, they have relocated to Kamakura where they started their design studio. They hope to make everyone smile with their artwork.
Remembering Jack Spillum

No one could match him for his ready wit and lightning reactions. Always funny and good-natured, he was a pro. "I got to know Jack almost immediately after arriving in Tokyo in 1977," says Bradley K. Martin, a long-time friend. "He was hard to miss: a very funny man, cutting a wide swath as he ambled through the Main Bar, stopping at tables here and there to crack wise. We had a running gag about his state of origin. I would always introduce him as a South Dakotan. Jack would simulate outrage. He was a North Dakotan, damn it!"

At one time, Jack was the country's pioneering foreign stockbroker with Sanyo Securities. "He was a major force in introducing the Japanese market to foreigners," says Martin. "Not only gaijin investors but correspondents, like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. After I went to work for the Asian Wall Street Journal in 1983, it was like me. 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