

**2025 Conference of New England Japan-based Nonprofits
Wyndham Newport Hotel, Rhode Island Sunday, October 26, 2025**

PANEL 3 Northern New England Societies



Lynda McCann-Olson

President, Friends of Aomori, Director of the Hashi Exchange of Student Created Prints, Member of the Maine Aomori Sister State Advisory Council

Lynda McCann-Olson is the President of Friends of Aomori, Director of the Hashi Exchange of Student Created Prints, and is duly appointed by Governor Mills to serve on the Maine Aomori Sister State Advisory Council (MASSAC). Recently, she was part of a delegation representing the state of Maine for a celebration of their over 30-year relationship with Aomori. She represented the arts, education, and culture sector. Her current projects include providing training for K-6 educators to create prints with their students for the Hashi Exchange and renewing a relationship with the University of Hirosaki.

Lynda has over 35 years of experience as a visual arts educator. She currently creates artwork and teaches on the coast of southern Maine. Her work includes paintings, prints, ceramics, and fine metals. She finds inspiration in the observation of the textures and colors in the ocean and forests of Maine. Her work as an artist and educator reflects her interest in Japan. She is especially interested in the work of Munakata Shiko. In addition, she is a Museum Educator at the Portland Museum of Art. Lynda holds a Bachelor's degree in Art and Environmental Science from Colby College and a Master's Degree in Teaching and Learning from the University of Maine. She is a certified Visual Art Educator and Endorsed to teach English Language Learners.



ETSUKO YASHIRO

Honorary Advisor (and former President), Boston Japan Community Hub

Director of Boston Japan Film Festival

President of the Boston Association of Japan

President CEO of New England Nantucket Basket Association

Owner, Gray Mist Studios

Etsuko Yashiro was born in Japan and currently resides in Concord, Massachusetts. In 1994, She began making Nantucket baskets and studied under Alan Reed. She established a basket-making studio called GrayMist in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and expanded her studio to the Imperial Hotel in Japan. To help preserve the Nantucket basket-making tradition, she created a school in Japan to teach the craft and has trained approximately 80 instructors in Japan.



MATTHEW HALL

President, New England Japan English Teaching Alumni Association

Matthew is a dedicated leader with extensive experience fostering U.S.–Japan relations through his role as President of the New England Japan English Teaching Alumni Association ([NEJETAA](#)) since 2023. He leverages his deep connection to Japan to support alumni engagement, promote cultural exchange and attract high-caliber talent to the JET Program, contributing to sustained educational and diplomatic collaboration.

[Professionally focused](#) on innovation and technology, Matthew advocates for Society 5.0 and human-centered solutions that integrate sustainability and social impact. He drives cross-sector collaboration within global ecosystems to develop scalable, sustainable technological advances aligned with future societal needs.

In addition to his Japan-related leadership, Matthew serves as President of the USA-based board of [Friends of the Family Centre](#), a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the mental, emotional and social well-being of Bermuda's children and families. His multifaceted leadership reflects a commitment to international engagement, community support and forward-looking innovation.



YASUO KUBOTA
PRESIDENT
JAPANESE ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON

RESEARCH SCIENTIST
McGOVERN INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN RESEARCH
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Yasuo Kubota is the Research Scientist in the laboratory of Dr. Ann M. Graybiel at MIT. He joined the lab after he received a Ph.D. in Biological Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and he has been conducting neuroscience research that focuses on the function of the basal ganglia, a circuit in the brain that is implicated in motor control, habit and procedural learning, decision-making, and various disorders including Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression and autism.

Yasuo has also been contributing to local Japanese communities. At the University of Illinois, he was an executive member of the Illini Japanese Association. After moving to Boston, he immediately participated in activities of the Japanese Association of MIT (JAM) and later became the JAM representative for the Japanese Association of Greater Boston (JAGB) and joined the board of this organization. From 2007 to 2010, he served as the President of JAGB, and again from 2022 to present.

Yasuo is originally from Tokyo, Japan, but has been residing in the U.S. since 1980. He was helped by many people when he arrived in the U.S. and tried to adjust to the life and now is eager to provide support to others to make their life in Boston more enjoyable.



KIYOKO MORITA

President, Massachusetts Hokkaido Association

Board Member, Japan Society of Boston

Senior Lecturer Emerita, International Literary and Cultural Studies

Kiyoko Morita was born in Hokkaido. She first came to the United States to study English in 1968. Kiyoko is an accomplished Japanese language instructor. She taught at Doshisha University, Indiana University, Middlebury College's Summer School, Harvard University, and Tufts University. She studied Koh-do (Incense Ceremony) in Kyoto, and has been active in introducing the art of traditional Japanese Incense Appreciation in the United States. She is the author of "The Book of Incense" published by Kodansha International. Finally, she is President of the Massachusetts Hokkaido Association and is an Executive Board Member of the Japan Society of Boston.

PANEL 3 MODERATOR



ROBERT S. WINNEG

Senior Counselor, Japan-America Navy Friendship Association Newport (JANAFA)

Rob Winneg is JASNE's Senior Counselor and has been actively involved in Japan-America activities since 2009. He has spent time in Japan thanks to multiple assignments with the U.S. Navy, beginning with summer training in 1977 after his first year as a Navy ROTC midshipman at the University of Rochester. He currently serves as the Interim Dean of International Programs and Maritime Security Cooperation at the U.S. Naval War College. In that role, leads the oversight of the four programs of education for international officers: the Naval Command College, Naval Staff College, International Maritime Staff Operators Course, and Maritime Security and Governance Staff Course. Additionally, he provides oversight for the College's international engagement programs, including Regional Alumni Symposia and the Chief of Naval Operations' International Seapower Symposium.

He retired from active duty in the U.S. Navy in 2010 after 30 years of service, primarily as a Naval Flight Officer in the P-3C Orion Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aviation community. Among his many assignments, he served in Patrol Squadron NINETEEN, Patrol Squadron NINE and commanded Patrol Squadron ONE. He also was the Chief of Staff for the Commander, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force, U.S. SIXTH FLEET based in Naples, Italy and commanded the Naval Air Station in Brunswick, Maine.

