

[Events Calendar...](#)[Contact & Access](#)[About Us...](#)[History](#)[How to Join...](#)[Joining the Press
Club That Was Made
for You](#)[Reciprocal Clubs](#)[Visiting Journalists](#)[Direct Debit Service](#)[Facilities...](#)[Board & Committees](#)[Staff & Recruit...](#)[For Students...](#)[No. 1 Shimbun](#)[Publications...](#)[News Aggregator...](#)[Articles of Association](#)***Username:*****Password:**[Request new password](#)**FCCJ Obituary**[Vivienne Kenrick](#)

Joining the Press Club That Was Made for You

by Richard Hanson

So you want to be a member of The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan? No problem. For starters, come by and see what we're all about.

We don't hang out any neon signs. In fact, the closest thing to that was the marquee on our first home, a dowdy three-story building near the Yurakucho train station. It read: "Tokyo Correspondents Club -- No. 1 Shimbun Alley." We've been in the same neighborhood since November 1945. Now and then, the Post Office still delivers the odd piece of mail to that venerable, if a bit contrived, No. 1 Shimbun address.

The neighborhood has changed. The big Japanese newspapers moved out years ago. A five-minute stroll away, Ginza is still the swankest High Street for shopping and classiest after-sunset watering hole in Asia.

The FCCJ itself has gone up in the world -- 20 stories up to the top floor of the Yurakucho Denki Building. The panorama includes Japan's bastion of business and finance, the Emperor's palace, the seat of Japan's robust central government and even a glimpse (on a clear day) of Mount Fuji.

Down below is Yurakucho Station. Above ground, Japan Railways trains run by every two or three minutes, including the Yamanote Line that loops in a big circle and separates the inner and outer city districts--what FCCJ member and literary scholar Ed Seidensticker called Low City and High City in the title of one of his books. Below ground, there are half a dozen subway stops. More paths cross at the FCCJ than at just about any other way station for journalists in the world, all in the very heart of Tokyo's bustle and glitz.

Members Are Us

Back to business. Who are we and how do you join? The "Who we are" part is easy. We are a very diverse lot indeed. With roots as a safe haven for war-weary correspondents who landed in Japan at the end of World War II, we are the one of the oldest, largest and most active press clubs in the world. Our membership cuts a broad swath of over 2,000 foreign and Japanese journalists, writers, artists, business people, professionals, diplomats, and an occasional spy.

At the core of the club are the regular correspondent members from all corners of the globe. These are the "foreign" correspondents assigned by news organizations to report on Japan and the region. Regular members are also Japanese journalists who have had significant careers as foreign correspondents serving in far-flung outposts outside of the country. Associate and professional associate members round out the membership roll, people who hail from just about every walk of life and every country in



[William Miller](#)



[Albert Stamp](#)



[XML feed](#)

the world.

The first step in joining is to pick up an application form and fill it in. As a Club, we require two regular correspondent members to serve as sponsors. If you are a member of one of clubs with reciprocal arrangements with the FCCJ you can use the Club and its services as a guest while visiting or settling in. Spouse (one per member) and family memberships are included when you join.

Our diversity is our strength. That was sure evident when Japan and South Korea co-hosted the 2002 World Cup matches, the first ever in Asia. One pundit, upon viewing the throng of FCCJ members gathered in the Main Bar to cheer and report on the soccer field battles, observed that the FCCJ crowd was "much more diverse in origin than the array of competing teams."

Professionally, the FCCJ is fiercely independent. We are classified as a shadan hojin, a Japanese non-profit organization. We work and live in one of the world's staunchest democracies, where press freedom is taken seriously. Many of our members report on or do businesses in the rest of Asia, parts of which are tougher beats. From the start, the FCCJ has stood for and has upheld certain basic principles and freedoms.

War Stories

The origin of the FCCJ reflects this commitment to press freedom. Soon after the Occupation of Japan commenced under the Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur, the correspondents who landed with the troops rebelled against SCAP's attempt to restrict the arrival of other journalists. SCAP, through its General Headquarters (GHQ), said there weren't enough beds to go around. The General was no fan of a free press.

The response to GHQ was quick. Reporters joined forces to form their own club and provide beds, no small task in war-ravaged Tokyo. They found a semi-derelict banqueting building, fixed up a bar (first things first) and put up beds on an upper floor. The rest is history.

Our Articles of Association say it best: "The objectives of this Association shall be to promote friendship, harmony and mutual welfare in both professional and social relations" among members and "to defend the freedom of the press and free exchange of information and, in so doing, to maintain and increase friendly relations and sympathetic understanding between Japan and other countries."

As a journalist, you will find that the top priorities are to facilitate the collection and distribution of news. All members benefit from the services of our friendly and efficient Front Desk, where books, newspapers and periodicals are available. The FCCJ maintains what are probably the best English-language, private, non-academic library and information services in Japan, with resourceful librarians on duty from Monday through Saturday to help members with their work. There is an array of news and other computer services available for the use of all members.

The FCCJ sponsors and supports the Foreign Press in Japan (FPIJ), an independent organization that serves as a key go-between for foreign journalists and the Japanese government in arranging press coverage for everything from summits to royal

weddings. The FPIJ is in the forefront in dealing with issues of press coverage and freedom of the press in Japan. You do not have to be a FCCJ member to join the FPIJ. See the FPIJ section of this website for details.

What also sets the FCCJ apart from other professional clubs is the role it plays as a venue for newsmakers of all kind to speak at professional luncheons, dinners and other gatherings. We don't set out to make news, but a lot of it just seems to come our way.

Not With Bread Alone

The FCCJ's founders were also no sticks in the mud. They understood members do not survive on beds and bread alone.

The Club's bars, dining facilities, entertainment, and other social activities are unrivaled in Tokyo for variety, good drink and food -- fine dining to our own Masukomi Sushi Bar -- night and day. The FCCJ is open 364 days a year (closed on New Year's day), with self-service drinks and snacks when regular services are closed.

On the social side, The Club has regular Movie Nights, often with special presentations by the filmmakers themselves, fields its own sports teams, sponsors golf tournaments and hosts parties. Other activities range from chess and Go clubs to a chapter of Toastmasters International.

Members can use the Club's excellent facilities to organize their own private parties and functions. The staff and kitchen provide services on a par with the best available anywhere. Members can also just relax, hang around and take in the view. From the Club's Pen & Quill Dining Room, Masukomi Sushi Bar, and Main Bar you can gaze on what many consider one of the wonders of the world. And coffee is still only 100 yen a cup.

A Hands-on Place

Just about all of the Press Club's services and activities depend directly on voluntary participation of members: from the election of Club officers and Board directors to the Professional Activities Committee that invites our speakers to the committees that oversee food and drink, entertainment, the Club's newspaper, and Internet services that you are now using.

That's the lay of land at the FCCJ. About the only thing missing is what you will bring to the Club. That is one reason you will find that the FCCJ is indeed the club that was made for you.

We look forward to meeting you.