

Two from CWU will run for county in Japan event

CWU News Services

Running for more than 13 miles straight is probably nobody's idea of fun. But, if you have to do it, it might as well be part of an all expenses-paid trip to Japan. Central Washington University chemistry professor Dr. David Lygre and CWU science technician Jody Scheffelmaier will each get that opportunity.

They've been selected as the 1995 Kittitas County representatives to the Sanda Masters Marathon in Sanda City, Japan, on Dec. 17. The runners are chosen by the Kittitas-San-

da Friendship Committee, chaired by Jerry Williams, owner of Jerrol's.

"I'm very excited — I've never been to Japan," said Lygre. "I know all of the male runners who have gone (in previous years, representing Kittitas County) and a couple of the female runners. They've told me they all had wonderful times."

This is the fourth year in a row that participants from Kittitas County have been invited to run in the race hosted by its sister community. Even though it's referred to as a "marathon," the run will actually be only half that distance — 13.1 miles overall.

"I've had a lot to do to get ready,"

said Scheffelmaier, who is a former marathon runner. "I'd been doing 10-mile runs and I thought another three miles wouldn't be that bad. But, I've needed to do some extra training."

For Lygre, the problem has been just the opposite. He's a well-known ultramarathoner, running in races of 100 miles and others lasting 24 hours at a time.

"The distance isn't my favorite," acknowledged Lygre. "It's difficult, not because of concerns about finishing, but because the shorter the run — the faster the pace. I've had to do more training at a faster pace."

Both say they don't feel pressure to try to win.

"I'll finish reasonably well," predicted Lygre. "But, there will be many people who finish before I do, and there's no way I could change that, no matter how hard I trained. The only pressure I feel is to be a good ambassador for Kittitas County."

Scheffelmaier said: "I'm fairly competitive, but I haven't competed for about 10 years. I feel confident, but as far as finishing, I won't be up at the top."

About 4,000 runners are expected

to take part in the race. Lygre and Scheffelmaier will start at the head of the pack.

"That's actually a problem," Lygre pointed out, "because we'll get nearly trampled at the beginning. We'll probably have to run a little faster than we want to at the start not to clog up traffic."

He has previous experience running in a big crowd. Lygre ran, along with about 10,000 others, in the Honolulu Marathon in 1983.

Barbara Hodges, administrative assistant for CWU international studies and programs, was one of the county's representatives at last year's race. She expects that Lygre and Scheffelmaier will enjoy the cultural exchange elements of the trip.

"The thing I found most satisfying was having the opportunity to spend time with people of another culture," said Hodges. "Not just seeing the historical sites — which were fabulous — but seeing and experiencing the community through their eyes."

While in Japan, Hodges stayed with a host family, as will Lygre and Scheffelmaier.

"Because of my sparse Japanese, I

felt dependent on my host family," acknowledged Hodges. "They were very kind, open and generous people. They welcomed me to their home, and I was able to see what their daily lives were like, even the small things like meal times and how the family interacted. It was all interesting to me.

"It gave me a broader perspective on Japanese lifestyles, beyond what one hears on the news."

This is not the first experience with Japanese culture for Lygre and Scheffelmaier.

Scheffelmaier lived in Japan as a child. And Lygre's family hosted two Japanese students last summer.

"It was a delightful experience just to talk about everyday things," he said, "and to see their reaction how we do things. The shoe will on the other foot over there."

