



the KINTAI
shimbun

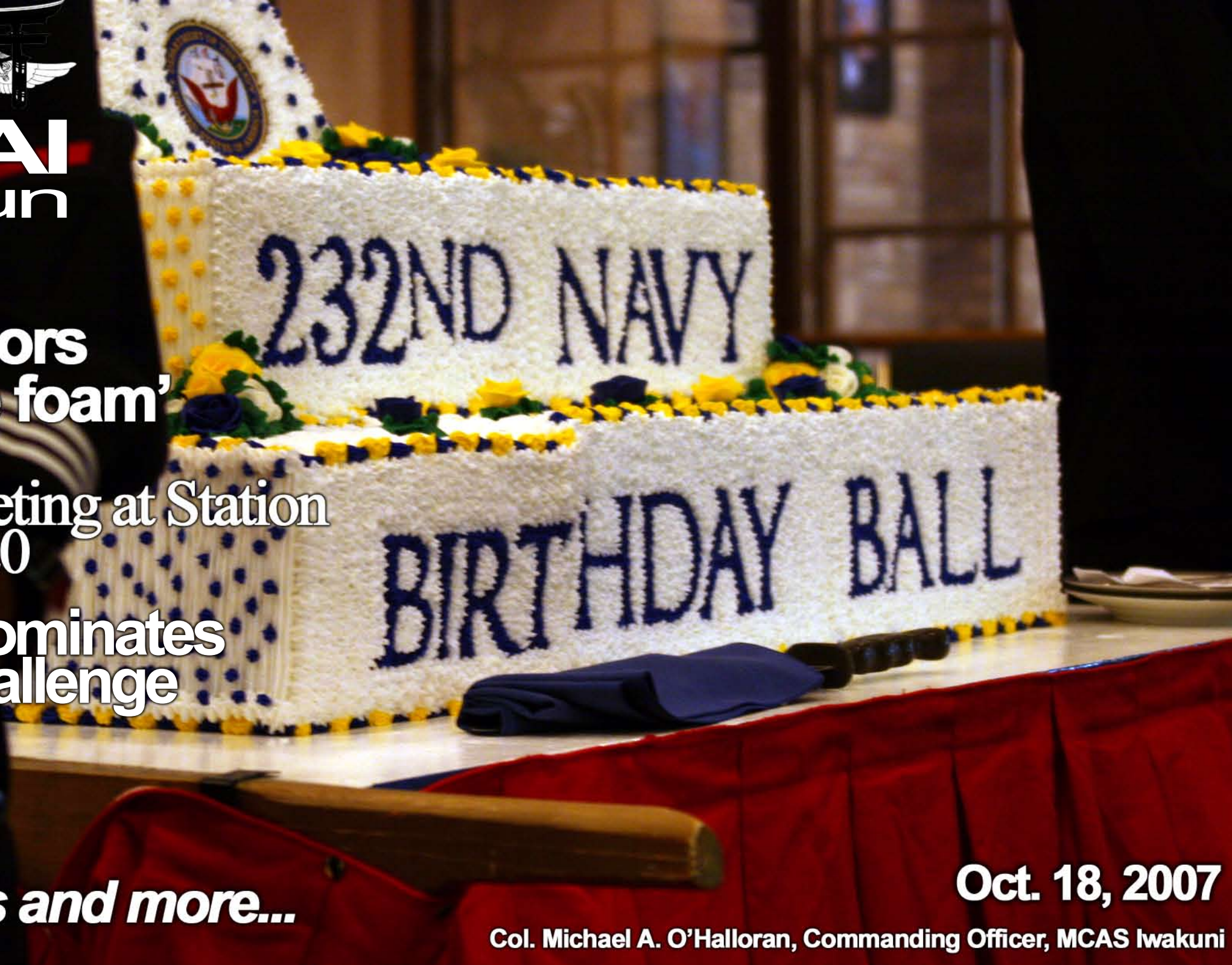
Iwakuni sailors 'drink to the foam'

by Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Town hall meeting at Station
Chapel Nov. 20

Ordnance dominates Gladiator challenge

by Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez



These stories and more...

Oct. 18, 2007

Col. Michael A. O'Halloran, Commanding Officer, MCAS Iwakuni

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A sailor stands by the birthday cake served during the Navy Ball at the Club Iwakuni Ballroom Oct. 12.

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Staff Page Motophoto

IWAKUNI SAILORS 'DRINK TO THE FOAM,' CELEBRATE 232ND BIRTHDAY



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Unfortunately, not all could be in attendance for the 232nd Navy Ball. An empty table set for one commemorates those prisoners of war and missing in action whose sacrifices ensure such celebrations continue on every year.

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun staff

Oct. 13, 1775: The Continental Congress authorizes the procurement, fitting out, manning and dispatch of two armed vessels to intercept munitions ships supplying a far superior British Army in America. The first sailors would soon prove their mettle in individual engagements and successful raids on merchant ships during the Revolutionary War.

With nearly half a million personnel and more than 270 deployable battle force ships, the U.S. Navy has grown considerably since then. Every year, however, a special night is set aside to “drink to the foam” and celebrate their illustrious heritage.

More than 250 service members and family gathered at the Club Iwakuni Ballroom for the 232nd Navy Ball Friday night.

“We’re 232 years young as the United States Navy ... and that’s a great thing to celebrate tonight,” said guest speaker and Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Japan Rear Adm. James D. Kelley.

“We are honoring all those who have gone before us by the celebration tonight, we are honoring all those that are serving right now, and by God we are honoring all those that are going to follow us,” he added.

The ringing of a bell signifying the arrival of the official party and the color guard presenting the American and Japanese flags meant the ball was officially underway. Seaman Apprentice Teodoro Ries, a hospitalman at the Branch Health Clinic here, celebrated his third Navy Ball in Iwakuni this year, and says he feels practicing his service’s formal traditions is what makes the event so enjoyable.

“It’s great to get together with the other naval personnel on base and celebrate our birthday, to be proud of what we do every day and what our shipmates and fellow sailors have had to do,” he said.

Following dinner, Kelly delivered a speech in which he commended his fellow sailors and encouraged them to maintain the air station’s strong inter-service relationship.

“Tonight is all about spending time with

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Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Navy Ball attendees enjoy the birthday cake served at the Club Iwakuni Ballroom Oct. 12.

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our closest friends and our closest allies: the United States Marine Corps,” he said.

Kelly also stressed the importance of remembering those who were unable to join in the evening’s festivities.

“This night is also about those that can’t take the time tonight or tomorrow because they’re so doggone busy - forward-deployed in the middle of a global fight on terrorism – that they’re not going to be able to take the time to celebrate,” he added. “We’re going to have to do a little celebrating for them tonight.”



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Side Boys for the Navy Ball stand ready to usher in the official party at the Iwakuni Ballroom Oct. 12.

And celebrate they did. After the cake-cutting ceremony and a rousing rendition of Anchors Aweigh and the Marines’ Hymn the tables cleared as everyone headed to the dance floor. According to one Marine, you didn’t have to be a sailor to enjoy the good times.

“(Sailors) came out for the Marine Corps

Ball, so it’s good to get a little perspective and broaden your horizons,” said Cpl. Alex C. Nunnelee, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron food service specialist.

“There’s not as many people as at the Marine Corps Ball ... but I’m having fun, doing a little dancing, basically just reaping the benefits.”

PROTECTING IDENTITY REQUIRES PREVENTIVE MEASURES, COMMON SENSE

Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun staff

Identity theft has been called “the crime of the new millennium” because it’s a new and anonymous way of leaving its victims broke with little means of detecting the culprit.

Iwakuni investigators stress that with a little bit of common sense, preventive measures can be taken to stop the wrongful use of a victim’s identity for economic gain.

In Iwakuni, identity theft has crept into the lives of unsuspecting Marines and sailors. The most common crimes, having to do with automated teller machines, can be attributed to Marines trusting their own roommates with their debit cards, said Master Sgt. Christopher N. Wikel, Provost Marshal’s Office chief investigator.

“Usually the story goes that a Marine will tell his roommate to go pick him something up at the Crossroads and then give out his own debit card and pin number to take care of the transaction,” said the Hastings, Fla. native. “Then, he’ll check his account balance a few days later and realize he’s broke or worse: under a large amount of debt.”

Immense amounts of damage can be done to the victim’s financial status and reputation before even realizing he’s been subject to such offenses. The victim oftentimes spends vast amounts of out-of-pocket money trying to restore his financial situation and man in many cases never be fully repaid for the crime, Wikel said.

Victims of identity theft need to quickly respond to avoid a daunting recovery process. Robyn M. Hogue, PMO criminal investigator says reporting such activities and taking immediate action as soon as they are discovered could lessen the amount of damage.

“Reporting to PMO and signing an affidavit will be the beginning of your recovery process,” said the Fayetteville, N.C. native. “After that point, the victim needs to cancel any further transactions on his debit or credit account and if possible put a credit fraud alert on his account.”

Credit fraud alerts let financial institutions know that there has been criminal activity on an account, usually resulting in an investigation launched to track the offender. A few precautions could have prevented the crime altogether, Hogue said.

“Common sense saves the day again,” said Hogue. “Never let anyone know personal information, especially pin and checking account numbers, social security numbers and personal information that would otherwise grant someone access to your accounts; a mother’s maiden name or the city in which you were born are good examples.”

Not only do these preventive measures keep offenders from using your pin number to make fraudulent transactions, but they can also deter someone from using your identity to start dummy checking accounts, ordering credit cards under your name, buying property fraudulently, or many other common crimes of identity theft.

Wikel said that because there is no group that helps victims recover lost assets from stolen identities, the victim has to be his own organization to insure his reimbursement. A few years ago, there was no federal crime for identity theft and offenders could not be prosecuted.

For more information go to www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud/websites/idtheft.html or contact PMO at 253-3303.



Photo illustration by Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez
In Iwakuni, identity theft has crept into the lives of its unsuspecting Marines and sailors. Iwakuni investigators encourage Marines to invest in a paper shredder to destroy any documents containing personal information that would aid a criminal in committing crimes of identity theft.

Seminar tells how to become \$1,000,000-Marine

by Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun staff

More than 100 station residents filed into the Sakura Theater Monday to attend a seminar on financial fitness that covered three main staples of money management – save, reduce debt and invest.

Kelvin Boston, a renowned financial journalist, along with Military Saves and station financial advisors, lectured station residents on how to attain and maintain a healthy financial future.

The three-hour seminar also included a presentation by Navy Federal Credit Union and lectures from Frank Tomaszewski, a resident expert on the Thrift Savings Plan.

The seminar was a chance for station members to obtain a wide range of financial tips from experienced advisors who practice what they preach.

Sarah A. Shirley, a 13-year non-profit financial manager, Florida Air National Guard

125th Fighter Wing chaplain and Las Vegas native, says she reached financial freedom after years of learning from victims of unhealthy financial practices.

“It may sound bad, but I like to say I learned very well from my client’s mistakes,” said Shirley. “After a couple of years in the business I wanted to help them more than just telling them to pray.”

During Shirley’s lecture, participants were introduced to her social marketing campaign called Military Saves, an initiative she created to persuade, motivate and encourage military families to save money every month. The Department of Defense-sponsored program calls for individuals to create a savings arsenal.

The savings arsenal is a tried-and-true method for military families to save an agreeable amount of money each month for vast profits and returns in the future, Shirley said. The arsenal includes starting an emergency fund for unexpected events, saving money and buying items in cash to reduce



Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez

Sarah A. Shirley, 13-year non-profit financial manager and Las Vegas native, with the help of Sgt. Maj. Devell Durham Jr., Marine Aircraft Group 12 sergeant major and native of Avon Park, Fla., tries to instill in participants her slogan, “Build wealth, not debt,” as part of her social marketing campaign during a financial seminar held at the Sakura Theater here Oct. 16.

debt while investing in real estate or share certificates to make long-term profits grow considerably.

The Navy Federal Credit Union used its presentation to define several methods

for military members to invest in long and short-term savings. Some short-term accounts required a lower initial start-up rate than long-term investments. An Easy

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Start Share Certificate can be opened for a one-year term with only \$100, while one-to-seven-year certificates have minimum start-up fees ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000.

For military members who would rather save toward their retirement, the station financial advisor, Frank X. Tomaszewski, emphasized the benefits of the popular Thrift Savings Plan and how it helps service members.

“The TSP provides retirement income with little risks and steady return,” said the Albuquerque, N.M. native. “Basically, you receive how much you have contributed with additional earnings over time.”

The TSP, readily available to service members from their basic training throughout their career, is not unlike an Individual Retirement Account in that they both provide income to retirees. The TSP, unlike an IRA, has no tax limitations and offers the possibility of changes in investment options, Tomaszewski added.

Tomaszewski helped coordinate Boston’s stop in Iwakuni in an effort to educate station residents on financial fitness. Boston, a distinguished financial journalist, best-

selling author and South Wilmington, Del. native is participating in a money education campaign, reaching out to the armed forces in the Pacific region.

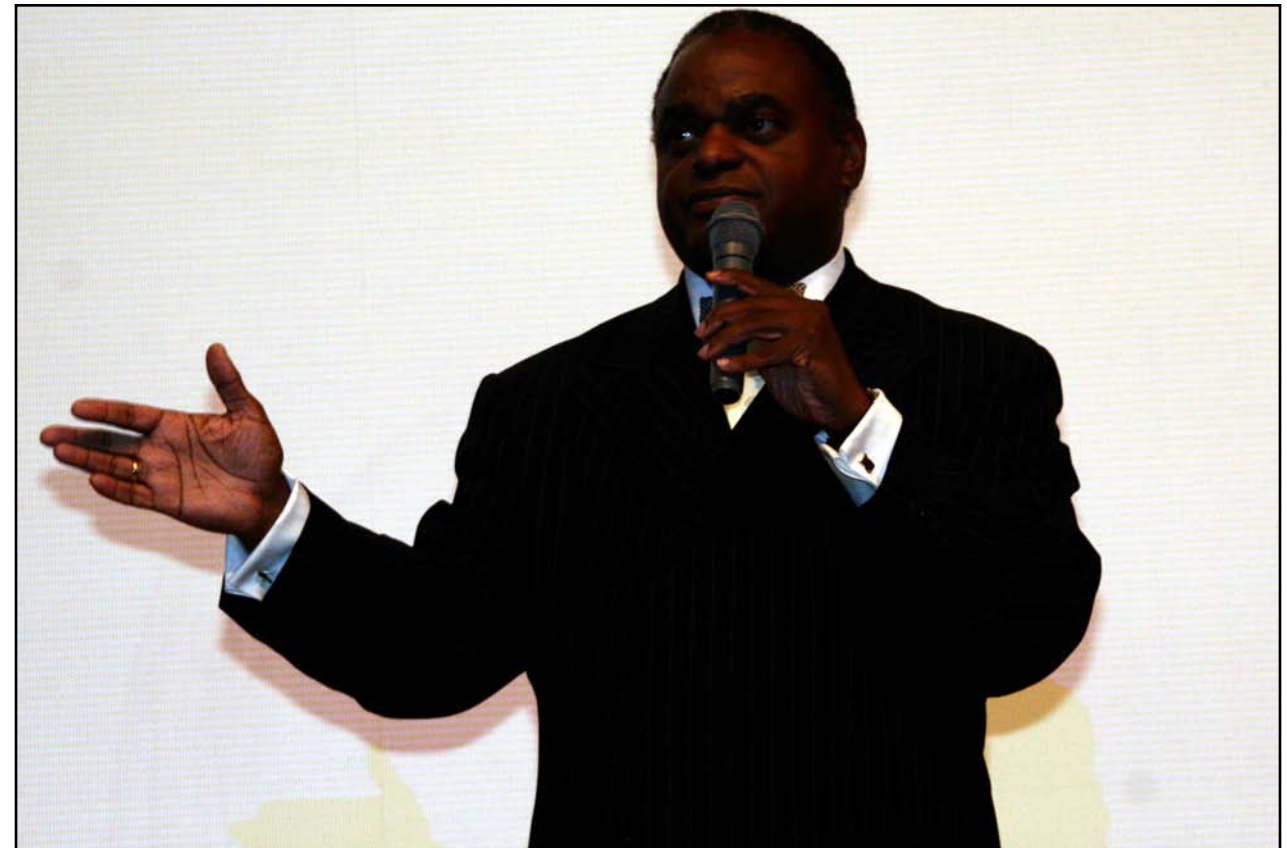
“I am excited to be here and witness service members begin their journey toward financial freedom,” said Boston.

Boston stressed to participants that the most prominent reason for not pursuing financial dreams is fear.

“Fear will tell us that we will fail. Second-hand stress instilled on us from others will infect our minds and keep us from reaching our financial goals.”

-Kelvin Boston

“Fear will tell us that we will fail,” he explained. “Second-hand stress instilled on us from others will infect our minds and keep us



Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez

Kelvin Boston, financial journalist and South Wilmington, Del. native, encourages participants of a financial seminar to begin a healthy financial life at the Sakura Theater here Oct. 16.

from reaching our financial goals.”

Boston’s animated presentation encouraged the participants to begin a healthy financial life and take risks for greater returns. He asked his audience to study a list of their financial goals and to start investing

immediately.

“Like me, I want you all to be the masters of your economic destiny,” he ended.

Station CO to host town hall meeting

Col. Michael A. O'Halloran, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni commanding officer, is scheduled to host a town hall meeting at the chapel here from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Nov. 20.

O'Halloran is also scheduled to appear on American Forces Network Iwakuni's "Commander's Corner" radio show at 10 a.m. Nov. 5 to address and respond to community issues.

Residents are encouraged to first send their concerns and recommendations through the interactive customer evaluation (ICE) prior to attending the town hall meeting to ensure prompt and adequate solutions.

- *To access the Town Hall Concerns Comment Card located on the ICE Web site, click the ICE icon located on the bottom-left side of the www.iwakuni.usmc.mil home page.*
- *Once loaded, scroll to the bottom and click Show all.*
- *Next, click Town Hall Concerns (Base Chapel) at the top of the comment card list.*
- *When filling out your concerns ensure recommendations for solving the problem are provided as well.*

Station unveils new storage units

Marine Corps Community Services will open its new storage units to the public on Oct. 25. The Grand Opening ceremony is scheduled to commence at noon, directly across from building 1710.

Halloween information

Trick-or-treating will commence on Oct. 31 from 5 to 7 p.m. During this period, the Provost Marshal's Office will provide walking and driving patrols throughout the area to ensure mishap free and safe environments.

Vehicular traffic will not be allowed in Monzen housing area during this time frame. Monzen Gate will also be closed for pedestrian safety. For further information contact PMO at 253-3423 or 253-3609.

Registering guests for "Trick or Treating"

- *SOFA personnel may sponsor guests (up to 10 per family). All guests must be escorted by sponsor.*
- *MLC/IHA employees may sponsor their immediate family members (e.g., spouse, children, children's spouse(s), brother(s), sister(s), parents, and spouse's parents).*
- *Sponsors must meet their guests at the Contractors' Gate between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. All guests may exit the air station via the Main Gate after the event.*
- *Guests' vehicles must not park in the barracks area or in housing.*
- *Sponsors need to pre-register their guests at the PMO Administrative Section, building 608 prior to 4 p.m., Oct. 30.*
- *"Trick or Treating" will be limited to the housing areas only. BOQs, BEQs, and office spaces will be off limits.*

- *From 4 to 7 p.m. Oct. 31, air station residents will not be permitted to sign guests aboard the installation unless they have been pre-registered with the PMO Administration Section. All other visitors must be signed on before or after these times.*

Haunted house

Oct. 30, 3:30 to 8 p.m. at Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 headquarters, building 128. All station residents are invited; Trick-or-treating for the young and scary fun for those who dare. For more information, contact with MWSS-171 at 253-4780 or 253-6501.

Koto, taiko concert, magic show

Oct. 19, 7 p.m. at Station Chapel. Free and open to everybody. For more information, contact the Officer's and Spouses' Club at 253-2478.

WIC Overseas

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Overseas is a nutrition program that supplements healthy foods and provides education on various health topics. Pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding mothers, and children ages 0-5 may participate. Keep in mind that while overseas you may have a higher income and still qualify for participation. Call 253-4928 for more information.

We need your help!! - Girl Scout

Iwakuni Girl Scouts is looking for adult volunteers to help with next years troops. To make a difference in a girl's life, call at 253-638 or e-mail to TLRhorst@aol.com

Konichi-what?

Speech contest promotes communication between two cultures

by Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun staff

Communication is key in any relationship, especially when it comes to an overseas military installation and its host nation. For the past 46 years the Japanese-American Society here has held a yearly event in which language is not a barrier for the two nations.

Sunday marked the 46th annual JAS Japanese/English Speech Contest at the Sakura Theater with more than 90 participants and their families in attendance supporting the yearly cultural exchange.

“We felt this was one of the most successful contests we’ve had,” said JAS President Dave Moore.

This marks the second year the event has been held on base, and JAS has received overwhelming positive feedback for opening the gates to the Japanese participants, added Moore who is a native of Fort Worth, Texas.

Divided into 10 different groups, the Japanese and American contestants gave person-

ally prepared speeches in each other’s native language and were evaluated by a mixed panel of American and Japanese judges on elements such as pronunciation, vocabulary, content and expression. Elementary and junior high school students were required to give a one-minute speech, while high school students and adults spoke for three minutes.

Mayumi Okada, a 13-year-old Marifu Junior High School student, says she spent one month preparing her speech about her dream of becoming a writer, and her graceful delivery belied the anxiousness felt getting up in front of such a large crowd.

“My leg was shaking and I was just hoping not to make any mistakes,” the first-time participant said. “I’m still shaking, in fact.”

Slightly more relaxed was this year’s four-time winner Ani Erhart, 9, who says experience participating in the contest helps alleviate the stage fright.

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Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Michiko Terashima delivers a three-minute speech in English as her fellow competitors look on during the Japanese-American Society’s 46th Annual Japanese/English Speech Contest at the Sakura Theater here Oct. 14.

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“It’s scary because everybody’s looking at you and there’s a time limit, but I think it went pretty well ... everybody (sounded) good,” said the Matthew C. Perry fourth-grader.

According to Erhart, JAS has been an outlet to polish her Japanese skills while spending time with others her age.

“It’s a good way to communicate with Japanese people,” she said. “We have lots of fun events and it helps you learn more Japanese.”

Making contributions to the local community in forms of cultural exchanges is the main object of JAS, and by engaging in each other’s language and spending time together, the contest helped do just that.

“We feel like this really goes a long way towards our goal of maintaining a good relationship,” Moore said.



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

James Chambers, an M.C. Perry Elementary seventh-grade student, delivers a speech in Japanese during the Japanese-American Society’s 46th Annual Japanese/English Speech Contest at the Sakura Theater here Oct. 14.

The 2007 Japanese-American Society’s 46th Annual Japanese/English Speech Contest first-place winners are:

Yuuto Hikida
1-3rd grade, English

Yui Inoue
4-6th grade, English

Raven Chapman
Elementary beginner, Japanese

Ani Erhart
Elementary advanced, Japanese

Maiko Higashi
Junior high school, English

Scott Kaiya
Junior high and high school beginner, Japanese

Michiko Terashima
High school, English

James Chambers
Junior high and high school advanced, Japanese

Saijo festival celebrates sake, draws 140,000



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

A vendor pours a sample glass of Mongolian sake during the 2007 Saijo Sake Festival Oct. 13. Festivalgoers had the opportunity to sample over 900 different kinds of sake throughout the two-day event.

Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler
Shimbun staff

Peanut butter and jelly, macaroni and cheese, milk and cookies. Though these ingredients are good individually, combine them together and you have a recipe for success. By melding two of Japan's most cherished cultural assets – rice wine and the street festival – Saijo has discovered a pairing which once a year draws swarms of thirsty visitors to its normally quiet streets.

The 2007 Saijo Sake Festival attracted more than 140,000 guests eager to learn about and sample the small town's most popular export.

Every year, Saijo opens its eight breweries to the public, giving them an inside look at the sacred art of sake-making. The Kamotsuru brewery offered displays on how the rice was harvested, refined, malted and mixed to create their nationally-acclaimed brand of sakes.

"I learned that (making sake) is an art just like wine or beer-making in the states," said



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Sake enthusiasts crowd around a stand serving sake poured from a giant bamboo dispenser into bamboo cups during the 2007 Saijo Sake Festival Oct. 13.

Cpl. Daniel Casey, station commanding officer's driver and native of Albuquerque, N.M. "I also learned that I prefer it chilled

rather than warm."

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According to one master sake crafter, Kamotsuru's secret to producing the best rice wines is the time taken and level of expertise employed by the brewery's dedicated staff.

The combination of skill and the finest rice is what makes the best sake, said Aomoto Tadayoshi, a native of Akitsu.

"Raising kids and making sake is the same," he added. "The more time you put into them, the better they turn out."

Sake Square was the festival's main sampling area where, for 1,500 yen, connoisseurs could taste their pick of 900 different types of sake. From 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. the square bustled with patrons trying to find their favorite vintage.

"The lines were long, but well worth it," Casey said. "They were broken down in to which region of Japan that (the sakes) were from: Kyushu, Shikoku, Chugoku and Hokkaido. The atmosphere was very energetic and lively."

Just like wine and cheese, certain Japanese appetizers go well with sake, and the festival was in no short supply of vendors offering a



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

A visitor at the 2007 Saijo Sake Festival hams it up while lifting a large barrel of sake at the Kamotsuru brewery during the 2007 Saijo Sake Festival Oct. 13. Little did some bystanders know the barrels were empty, making them fairly light.

variety of delicacies.

Bring a big appetite, recommends Casey. There was a lot of tasty food to complement the sake like wasabi and squid soup or charred miso paste.

Though most of the breweries closed by late afternoon, the party continued well into the night as visitors drank, socialized and enjoyed the fun vibe of Sake Square.

"This is my first time at the festival, and it



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

A man rinses his cup with pure spring water used to make Saijotsuru sake at their brewery during the 2007 Saijo Sake Festival Oct. 13.

is so much fun even though I don't usually drink sake," said Hiroshima native Fukui Sayuri. "It's a good way for ladies like me to enjoy sake in public and make some new friends."

ORDNANCE SWIMS, HOPS, CRAWLS, CLAIMS NO.1 TROPHY AT GLADIATOR COMPETITION

Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez
Shimbun staff

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 “Ordnance” walked home from the Penny Lake field here with the first-place trophy Friday after finishing the Gladiators Ultimate Unit Physical Training Competition with 49 points.

The competition marked the end of the President’s Challenge, an eight-month program created by the President’s Physical Fitness & Sports Council. Units from Iwakuni have competed against each other in the challenge for three years for a first-place trophy and \$500 cash prize.

Ordnance competed against nine teams from Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 for a first-place trophy and \$300 toward its unit party fund, an account used for events like barbeques and family functions.

The station-wide competition included nine team events, four water events and five

field events. Winning first place in an event earned teams 10 points, seven points for second place and five points for third place.

During the first four events of the day, Marines got wet at the Ironworks Gym pool as they faced off to see who the quicker, stronger and better prepared team was in the kayak relay, river raft race and canoe tug-of-war.

“It was hard to stay balanced while on the kayak, especially because we had to use our hands to paddle,” said Lance Cpl. Eric T. Dobbs, H&HS aircraft rescue firefighter and “Crash Crew” team member.

Before the afternoon events, the scores from the water events were tallied. Ordnance had the lead with a score of 25 and the MWSS-171 Engineers were trailing by three points.

Dobbs said his team was not so hot in the water, third place with 17 points after the water events, but well prepared for the afternoon field events.

SEE GLADIATOR ON PAGE 13



Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez

Pfc. Dmitri A. Gee, Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 water support technician and Honolulu native, prepares to thrust his partner, Cpl. Stephen M. Labonte, MWSS-171 combat engineer and Decatur, Texas native, through an obstacle course during the Gladiators Ultimate Unit Physical Training Competition at the Penny Lake fields here Oct. 12.

GLADIATOR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

“We have the bigger guys on our team, so we’re guaranteed to win the strength competitions like tug-of-war,” said the Hoxie, Ark. native.

The competitors moved to Penny Lake field for the afternoon games. There, the Marines clashed in events including the 10-legged race, human-ball race, obstacle course and tug-of-war at the Penny Lake fields.

Ordnance consistently dominated the field events, earning one of the top three positions in each game and finishing with the high score.

“We put our strongest guys up for each event,” said Staff Sgt. John L. Beckett, MALS-12 ordnance technician and native of Franklinton, La. “Constant physical fitness within our unit definitely helped us pull through.”

Ordnance claimed victory after holding onto the lead for the entire competition.

Cpl. Joshua R. Hackey, H&HS Crash Crew team captain and Lakeland, Fla. native justified his team’s second place victory with a score of 47, two points behind the champs.

“It’s cool to walk around base knowing you’re the top unit in the President’s Challenge.”

- Lance Cpl. Eric T. Dobbs

“Crash Crew has won this overall competition for the past two years and this season is no different,” Hackey said. “We came in second today, but because of our record in the President’s Challenge, we’re going to finish as the overall high-scoring team.”

Crash Crew claimed six out of nine of the competitions in the President’s Challenge for this season.

“This is the third year of the President’s Challenge, and it has become a healthy way for units here to vigorously compete against each other for pride on the air station,” said



Lance Cpl. Kyle T. Ramirez

Marines from Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 ordnance section leap into their raft during the River Raft Race in the Gladiators Ultimate Unit Physical Training Competition at IronWorks Gym here Oct. 12.

Alma Dickinson, Marine Corps Community Services health promotions director and Portland, Ore. native.

Winning means more than a cash prize to participating Marines.

“It’s cool to walk around base knowing you’re the top unit in the President’s Challenge,” said Dobbs. “It’s the sought after respect that keeps teams coming back the next year to do it again.”

Warriors taking part in a recent Marine Corps Martial Arts Program green belt course climb the rope at the obstacle course on the base's north side Oct. 17. The class was demonstrating obstacle course techniques for a visiting group of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 spouses taking part in Jane Wayne Day.



Lance Cpl. Noah S. Leffler

Female Staff NCO Academy director makes history



Cpl. Juan D. Alfonso

by Cpl. Juan D. Alfonso
MCB Camp Butler

Sgt. Maj. Romona D. Cook is the first female to serve as director of a Staff Non-commissioned Officer Academy. Cook is the director for Marine Corps Base Camp Butler's Staff NCO academy.

Since the Marine Corps began enlisting women in 1918, female Marines have steadily risen to increased levels of responsibility and continuously distinguished themselves throughout the Corps.

Sgt. Maj. Romona D. Cook earned a place in Marine Corps history this year when she took the helm as director of Marine Corps Base Camp Butler's Staff Noncommissioned Officers Academy, earning the distinction of first female director at any Staff NCO Academy.

Hand-picked by former Sergeant Major of

the Marine Corps John L. Estrada, Cook was selected as a standout among her peers.

"I remember receiving a phone call from Sgt. Maj. Estrada," Cook said.

Estrada said he was looking for a well-qualified Marine, and I was the first person that came to his mind, she said.

The Los Angeles native's career began Sept. 26, 1982 when she reported for recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. After that, her career took off, sending her to units under every major subordinate command within the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

Among her many assignments in the Corps is a tour as a drill instructor at Parris Island. And in February 2003, she deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the sergeant major for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. A year after she returned from Kuwait, she was deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

After more than 25 years of service, her vari-

ety of experiences leading Marines, both in and out of combat, gave her a better sense of what Marines do every day at all ranks and billets.

"I've been fortunate to have been to places that have let me see all the different sides of the Marine Corps," Cook said. "It's part of why I enjoy being the director. I have a little bit of experience in all the different backgrounds that the students come from. It helps me understand where they're coming from when they have a problem and what difficulties they face every day as NCOs and Staff NCOs."

Since she assumed her duties as director, she has made several changes that have led to increased morale of both the students and her staff, according to Sgt. Ana M. DelValle, the Staff NCO Academy's administration chief.

"I've been here through a lot of directors, and she is nothing but good for the academy," DelValle said. "Since she got here, she's been tweaking the academy, looking at everything across the board and making things better for everyone."

Cook's duties often lead to counseling staff and students who are experiencing troubles in their lives, either professionally or personally. She proves herself daily as a Marine leader with how she handles any issue that may arise, according to her staff.

"She's a very approachable leader," DelValle said. "I haven't met many sergeants major who can put their Marines at ease as easily as she does. If we come to her with something, it gets taken care of. She's not just a great role model; she's a great Marine."

Cook says being director isn't about being a woman or the role model others see her as; it's about the students and what they get out of the academy.

"I love mentoring Marines," Cook said. "That's why I enjoy being a director. I remember when I was a young NCO. The rank didn't give me confidence; it was my first taste of professional military education – my first NCO course. That's what I want every NCO and Staff NCO to leave the academy with, a sense of confidence in their leadership that they can pass on to their Marines."



Capt. Luke Esposito
Oakland, Calif.

“Right now the only thing I can think of is the playing of the National Anthem in the morning. There are a few other PA systems that are playing songs at the same time which are stepping on our National Anthem, and I know a lot of people are concerned about it. I know it’s not too big of an issue, but it’s something people are interested in having fixed.”

Station residents have recently gained several new opportunities to have their voices heard by the station commanding officer. A Nov. 20 town hall meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Station Chapel, a “town hall concerns” comment card on the MCAS Iwakuni Customer Evaluation Web site and a Nov. 5 Power 1575 AM Commander’s Corner appearance are all means for concerns to be addressed by Col. Michael A. O’Halloran. So we were wondering...

What question or issue would you like to present to the CO?



Petty Officer 1st Class Sean L. Mosley
Chicago

“We have civilians here that are stateside-hired that get a lot of privileges. I would like a way for people that stay in Iwakuni when they retire to compete for those stateside-hire positions. There should be an open forum for those positions. I’m getting ready to retire, so that’s why I’m concerned about this.”

Cpl. Kenneth Kottra Jr.
Kenosha, Wis.

“As a 21-year-old NCO, I think it would be a nice privilege to be able to drink in the barracks. I don’t understand why taking alcohol out is solving a problem when you can still drink outside or at the club. Why should my peers that are the same age and rank, but are married, have this benefit?”



Pvt. Kathryn L. Miller
Cummings, Ga.

“Visiting hours in the barrack need to be longer. Some people don’t get off work until odd hours, like shift workers, so why shouldn’t they get the same privileges?”



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