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A Garden Gathering



Members of NOSCO gathered at the South East Botannical Gardens on Tuesday, November 10. Each of us created a living arrangement to take home and then enjoyed a wonderful buffet lunch. Navy MWR also gave a presentation on their services. Thanks to everyone for coming, and to Sherri Vizcarra and Susan Bossert for planning the event!



...from our president



Happy Holidays!

I hope that everyone enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving here in Okinawa or somewhere with family or friends. As Christmas approaches it is a time of preparing for vacations back to the states, or some other adventures. With all of the hustle and bustle to go with it, I wish for each of you a glorious Christmas season filled with joy, friends and family.

A special thanks goes out to Sherri Vizcarra and Susan Bossert for organizing our annual Southeast Botanical Gardens event. We enjoyed a wonderful buffet, created lovely “living Ikebana” pieces that we can use year-round, and had a nice presentation from the Navy MWR. It was a wonderful time had by all.

The annual NOSCO directory is in the process of being printed. They should be finished sometime in December and you should be receiving yours very soon. They have a wealth of information in them so please take a moment to look through yours when it arrives!

We have a new NOSCO website up and running. Please take an opportunity to visit it at www.noscokinawa.com. It is a work in progress but we are excited about the improvements. We look forward to keeping you apprised of up-coming events and exciting things happening in the NOSCO community.

I hope you had the opportunity to visit the Navy Fleet Gift Shop and Kids Cottage for their Thailand opening at the beginning of November. It was a huge success. We still have plenty of fabulous items for great Christmas gifts. Please stop by sometime between now and December 18th. The hours are Wednesdays: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Thursday through Saturday, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. The last day the gift shop will be open before the holidays is December 18th so make sure and finish your Christmas shopping soon! We also have our End of Year Blowout Sale on December 18th as well. Make sure you stop by for that too!

If you are looking for a unique gift this holiday season, stop by the Navy Fleet Gift Shop and check out the Navy desk ornaments that are ceramic and sit on a cherry wood stand. They are for sale as a NOSCO fundraiser and make great gifts!

I wish each of you a very warm and wonderful holiday season. May your Christmas be filled with all the love and laughter imaginable. For those of you separated from family for the holidays I wish you peace and comfort filled with joy in knowing you will be with them soon!

Look for many exciting events starting in January!

Merry Christmas,
Angela Patangan
NOSCO President

Dental

By Lindsay Platt

The Dental Coffee Group met Saturday, November 20 at Cocok's. Megan Diaz-Freed and Mandy Allen organized "new" kind of Bunco at the Spa! Everyone had their nails done and had a fun and relaxing time.

Naval Hospital

By Maureen Domery

The Hospital Coffee Group had a great time on November 19 at Rene Pachuta's home playing Bunco and Right, Left, Center. We will be meeting in December for lunch at the new Ocean Breeze Restaurant on Foster.

CTF-76/CFAO

By Colleen Cooney

In honor of Veteran's Day, we headed to the Peace Memorial Park on Nov. 11th, followed by lunch at Thai in the Sky. On the 29th, we participated in an ornament/cookie/white elephant exchange hosted by Beth Landolt and Susan Bossert. What a fun afternoon!

December 7th we will be saying a sad farewell to Julie Stinespring with a lunch at Chili's. We also have outings planned to the art museum in Urasoe and an ice skating rink in Naha.



3rd Med

By Kelly Kaup

The 3rd Med ladies had a great night out at a favorite local Dragon Restaurant. Those of us who had never been were amazed at the amount of food we got so inexpensively! We will be taking a break over the Christmas season but we'll see where Devetta takes us on January 25th.



There will be a "General" coffee group starting for those spouses who don't fall into a specific command or those who would like to participate in a separate group. Please contact Kaylin Palmer at 932-1778 or apalmer515@aol.com for more information.

The Travel Group's

By Margy Metzler

We were a "Merry" group of adventuresses as we headed to the North Pole via our shiny grey Spacio sleigh. We chatted and laughed all the way with great anticipation of what we would find at Santa's "Okinawa" home.

What we found was the most wonderful, delightful, splendid and amazing home that is turned into a "Christmas Fantasyland" and restaurant for six weeks every year.

We were greeted as we entered by Head Elf, owner and decorator extraordinaire Yoko

Boughton. She is married to a retired marine and lived many years in the US. While she was living in North Carolina she went to a Christmas open house and was enchanted by what she saw. She said that she felt in her heart that she wanted to come back to her home and created her own fantasyland for the people of Okinawa and that is exactly what she did. All the nooks and crannies are filled with a lifetime of collecting — even the bathroom! Santa visits every Monday and Tuesday to delight and charm the little children. Although limited in selection, the food was very good and enough variety for everyone. If you want dessert, bring your own sugar cookies and maybe an extra few for the elves in the kitchen.

It is with a sad heart that I tell you that Yoko said this is to be the last year, but I think I saw a little twinkle in her eye so you never know.



PHOTO BY KELLY PAYNE

If you would like to take the children to see Santa you must have pre-paid tickets and a small gift for Santa to give each child. No regular dining on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Although you do not need reservation for regular dining it would be a good idea to call and give Yoko a heads up. Her telephone number is 982-5610

Directions: Take expressway north to the Ishikawa exit (#6) as you exit there is a LEFT turn merging lane go that way at the next light (there will be pedXing bridges overhead) turn LEFT. Go about 1-½ blocks and you will see a "Carnex" gas station sign (yellow & round) on your left. Just before this sign is a road that looks like an alley turn LEFT and go to the end of the road and turn LEFT you will see the house on the right. You can't miss it with all the lights and decorations also a "Key Coffee" sign. There is parking in front of the house and also before you reach the house you will see parking signs.

So from my home to yours I would like to wish you and yours a Very Joyous and Safe Holiday Season.

January will find the travel group heading out to pick Micans and planning our off island trip. The travel group is open to all members or NOSCO and MOSC. If interested please contact me at: margymetzler@yahoo.com



Merry Christmas to all and to all Konnbanwa!

News From The Navy Fleet Gift Shop

Vendors:

Royal Phoenix
Jewelry & Japanese Gifts

Dec 2nd-12th

Fong's Charms

Dec 16th-18th

Great Gift Ideas!

Kokeshi Ornaments,
Navy Desk

Ornaments, &

Kokeshi Nativity Sets!

The Gift Shop will be closing
December 18th at 3pm. We will
Re-open Mid-January.

Look Forward to Our
Shanghai Shipment in
January!



Fire and Bell Festival

By Heather Upp

Begin This New Year Ablaze!

For our first New Year's Eve in Okinawa, we joined hundreds of others at Peace Prayer Park in a most unique celebration of the old and the new.

We enjoyed a concert inside the large peace monument with the world's largest lacquer Buddha as the backdrop. Following this enjoyable peace-themed concert performed by school children and Okinawan artists, everyone proceeded outside and down the long flight of stairs toward the rest of the park. Several hundred adults and children of all ages assembled on the stairs, roads and paths below.

As the New Year drew close, a fire was lit atop the tall peace tower. Then before our eyes, the fire slid gracefully down lines suspended high above the stairs and paused, lighting a brazier filled with wood at the bottom of the stairs. One by one, each person was handed a torch, which we each lit from the brazier, and the hundreds of blazing torches processed up the stairs.

We followed the crowd in making concentric rings around a large unlit brazier. We were all in one community, united by the light we each carried and feeling the excitement. The fire of peace that had been shared

through the crowd would be used to light our way into the new year. The flames from the torches burned away the bad of the prior year and purified us to start fresh and new.

At the stroke of midnight, the youngest torch-holders at the event lit the large brazier that we were assembled around. Loud cheering resounded and thus began the ongoing New Year's greetings and wishes for peace shared among all. In traditional Japanese style, no festival would be complete without a spectacular fireworks display. To ensure that none of last year's ills would enter this promising new year, each person had the delight of ringing a large cast iron bell. When the swinging pole hit the bell, the deep reverberating ring spread out through each person and across the park, clearing the old and making way for the new.

This annual Fire and Bell Festival was the most memorable New Year's Eve celebration we may ever have and a wonderful way to embrace our new home. We encourage your family to take part and make memories of a lifetime.

The Fire and Bell Festival will take place Dec. 31 - Jan. 1, 2200 - 0100 at the Peace Memorial Park. There is no fee to participate.



Navy Fleet Gift Shop

*The last day to shop
for the holidays is
December 18 - our
End of Year Blow-
out Sale!*

Open Wednesdays
10am - 6pm
Thursday - Saturday
10am - 3pm

*Stop by and check out the new
U.S. Navy desk ornaments!*

Happy Birthday

Michelle Volkmann	Dec 2
Sarah Yaroslaski	Dec 15
Miki Waterman	Dec 22
Karen Wright	Dec 29

AWWA Corner

By Amy Pettle, AWWA Chairperson

Each month, NOSCO donates money to various American and Japanese charities through AWWA (American Women's Welfare Association). Your Navy Fleet Gift Shop dollars and volunteer hours make these donations possible!

There is nothing to report this month.

If your organization would like to apply for a grant through AWWA, applications can be obtained by emailing our AWWA Board at awwaokinawa@yahoo.com. Please contact me directly with any questions concerning AWWA at ampettle@yahoo.com.

Any comments or submissions for
The Seagull can be
submitted to Editor
Colleen Cooney at
poofy77@hotmail.com

Curry House Laxmi

By Colleen Cooney

Every time my husband and I move to a new location, one of our first orders of business - before we unpack the boxes or set up our internet service - is to find a good local Indian restaurant. As we left a wonderful little place we frequented in Maryland, I was skeptical about finding anything as good on a little island like Okinawa. Of course now that we've been here a while, I can happily report that there are a few places we can choose from that never fail to satisfy our cravings for Indian curry.

Our more recent find was Curry House Laxmi, which we had a lot of trouble finding the first time because we had no specific directions on how to get there - only a general idea of the area it was in. But when we finally found it, it was worth the effort!

The owner is half-Japanese, half-Indian, and she also speaks excellent English, which helps if you have any questions about the menu or food. There is an English menu as well.

It is noted on the menu that: "No water and flour is used in our curry. Instead, plenty of onion and tomato is stewed for a long time to make our curry soup. Egg placed on top of every dish helps the power of spice. Thousand years of Indian history, spice is believed to cure and prevent sickness. Try our curry, and live a healthy life!"

That said, none of the curries we tried were at all spicy, but there was a "spice" shaker at the table which could be used to heat up your dish. Though I usually enjoy my curry on the hot side, I was so pleased with the flavor of the curry that I forgot about spicing it up. It was mild, but by no means was



This is a full-sized portion of mixed veggie curry with rice.

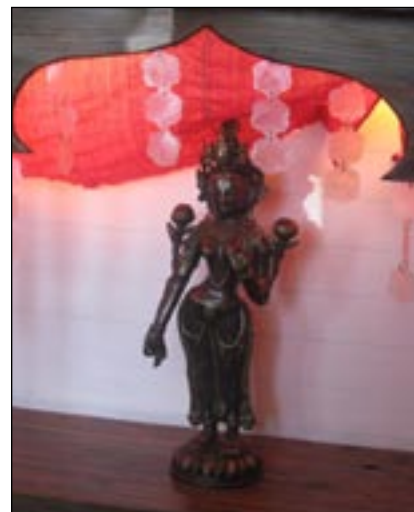
it bland. We tried a few different curries, including mixed vegetable, white curry (with chicken), and one made with edamame beans - they were all delicious! The recommended cheese topping (100 yen extra)

was very tasty! Our 2-year old twins gobbled up the half-portion of white curry, which is made with a yogurt base - though I should preface that by saying that they love Indian curry, which may or may not be normal!

The lassie (a yogurt drink) was excellent and made with fresh fruit - pineapple, peach or orange - there is also plain. The nan (bread)



Pineapple lassie



We also loved the decor inside the restaurant!

was on the thick side, but hot and tasty (also a favorite for my girls). We found the prices to be very reasonable, curries ranging from 840 - 980 for lunch, and we liked the fact that you could order half-portions for 200 yen off the normal price. All the curries are served with rice, nan is extra, and during lunch, soft drinks are included in the price (100 yen extra for a lassie instead). And like many businesses on Okinawa, Laxmi does have a stamp card.

Laxmi is located at 1392 Shimabuku, Kitanakagusuku Village
Tel: 098-931-0141
Hours: 1130 - 2100 (last order)
Lunch hour: 1130 - 1430
Closed Mondays.

Directions: From Kadena gate 2, turn right onto 85. Just past the Koza Sport Stadium, follow 85 to the left (23 is straight). Cross 330 and pass the Awase Golf Club. Make a left on 22 and follow for 1 or 2 kms. Laxmi will be on your left. Look for this sign!



Recipe exchange

Christmas Wreath Cookies

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cornflakes
- 1 stick (1/2 cup) of butter
- 30 large marshmallows
- 1 tsp green food coloring
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Red cinnamon candies (found in baking section near sprinkles)

*no-bake recipe -
great for kids!*

Directions:

- Melt butter and marshmallows in medium saucepan
- Remove from heat and blend in food coloring and vanilla
- Immediately pour mixture over cornflakes and gently mix until cornflakes are coated
- Drop by teaspoon onto wax paper and top with 4 - 5 cinnamon candies per cookie. Let cool and enjoy!

Thanks to my mom for this fun recipe!

To share your favorite recipe, please submit by email to poofy77@hotmail.com.

**CHECK US
OUT ONLINE!**

WWW.NOSCOKINAWA.COM



**"What you don't know,
your Marines don't know."**

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

**Camp Foster: Bldg. 5674, 645-7808, M-Fri 0830-1600
Camp Hansen: Bldg. 2339, 623-5043, M-Fri 1000-1400**

Did you know that . . .

The Society protects client confidentiality? When you make an appointment to meet with a Society Counselor to review your spending plan, discuss your financial needs and get help from the Society, your conversation remains a private matter between you and the Society. It is no one else's business. The only time the Society would contact your command (and even then ONLY with your permission) would be if the severity of your financial problems was beyond our ability to provide assistance, or if you wanted your commanding officer to appeal the Society's decision to deny support to you.

If you have financial difficulties, please consider the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society your first resource.

Did you know that . . .

Volunteering for Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society has many rewards?

Join the Volunteer Team and:

- Make a Difference***
- Help people in need***
- Develop new skills***
- Improve existing talents***
- Make new friends***
- Stay in touch with old friends***

Flexible schedules allow you to make a world of difference by assisting military families, with training and mentoring provided with each Volunteer position. Reimbursement for mileage and family member care is available.

Call our offices @ 645-7808 or 623-5043 to explore the Society's many volunteer opportunities!