



The Seagull

Newsletter of Naval Officers' Spouses' Club of Okinawa (NOSCO)

Tanja Groesbeck, Editor

www.noscokinawa.com

December 2007

SAVE THE DATE

- December 1: Raymond Ko Jewelry at NFGS
- December 1: World Aids Day
- December 1: Torii Station Krist-Kindle Mart & Christmas Craft Fair
- December 1-2: Camp Courtney Christmas Festival
- December 5-8: Uptight **and** Musubi Designs at NFGS
- December 5-12: Chanukah
- December 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- December 8-9: Kadena High School Holiday Bazaar
- December 12-15: Fongs Pearls at NFGS
- December 12-22: Raymond Ko at NFGS
- December 17: Wright Brothers Day
- December 23: *Tenno-tanjobi* (Emperor's Birthday)
- December 25: Christmas Day
- Dec. 26-Jan 1: Kwanzaa
- December 28: End of Year Blow-out Sale **and** Nicole Gonzalez at NFGS
- December 31st: *Omisoka* (New Year's Eve)

All Month Long:

National DUI Prevention Month
Safe Toys & Gift Month



Spending the Holidays Far From Home

There is plenty of cheer on Okinawa to help get you in the spirit of the season! Carols, lights, trees, hot cocoa, crafts, goodies, Santa, and yes, even snow!

- Christmas & Holiday Festival – Dec. 1st from 3 p.m.-10 p.m., and Dec. 2nd from 1 p.m.-10 p.m. at the Camp Courtney Commissary/PX Complex.
- Tinsletown – Dec. 1st from 11 a.m.-8p.m. at Kadena's Schilling Center parking lot.
- Krist-Kindle Mart & Christmas Craft Fair – Dec. 1st from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Torii Station Gymnasium.
- Lunch with Santa – Dec. 8th from 12p.m.-2p.m. at Camp Foster's "The Spot".
- Holiday Bazaar – Dec. 8th from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Dec. 9th 12 p.m.-5p.m. at Kadena High School.
- Festival of Lights – Dec. 22nd-25th and Dec. 31st-Jan. 2 4 p.m.-11 p.m. at Southeast Botanical Gardens.
- Christmas Fantasy – Dec. 22nd-27th from 4p.m.-10p.m. at the Okinawa Children's Zoo. Go to http://www.xmas-fantasy.com/top_e.htm for all the info!
- Stardust Fantasia – Nov.-Mar. at Kanucha Resort. For directions go to: <http://www.kanucha.co.jp/e/>.

Contact Kadena ITT (634-4322) or MCCS Tours + (646-3502) for further information and discount tickets for some events!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT...

Holiday Greetings NOSCO Members,

I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving here in Okinawa or abroad. I had the good fortune to be in the States, but I missed the many wonderful friends on the island. I am looking forward to celebrating here in Okinawa as the holidays continue. We are so lucky to have so many friends that are more like family when we are so far from home.

Speaking of celebrating with friends, our annual Navy Fleet Gift Shop Volunteer Appreciation Party is scheduled for December 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the Corpsman's Cove. Please be sure to stop by and enjoy great food and fun with the staff and volunteers of the Gift Shop. If you haven't received your invitation, please be sure to contact Susie Klein.

A special thanks goes out to Lissette Mize for organizing our annual Southeast Botanical Gardens event in November. It was such a fun thing to do! We made a beautiful fall-themed flower arrangement and had an amazing lunch at their buffet. I definitely will look forward to participating next year!

If you are wondering where your NOSCO directory is, it is in the process of being printed now. We had some small delays this year but promise to get it out to you as soon as possible. I anticipate approximately the first week of December. It is improved from last year with even more helpful information.

I hope you have all had a chance to stop by the Navy Fleet Gift Shop and see the fabulous Thailand shipment that opened on the day after Thanksgiving. There are so many beautiful items to buy, I have had a hard time narrowing it down! We also have Christmas items left from the Philippines so if you find that your home is not holiday-ready, make sure to come and see all the fun and festive things we have for Christmas. If you are getting ready for the many holiday parties that we have here, come to the Navy Fleet Gift Shop for your hostess gifts, we have hundreds of items \$25 and under and we can gift bag it and wrap it for you right there! Finally, do not miss our end of the year inventory sale on December 28. If you were waiting on that piece of furniture to buy, this sale is the time to do it!

I wish you all a holiday season filled with the love and laughter!

Warmest Regards,
Chris

ALL BECAUSE OF YOU...

A big thank you to
Lissette Mize
for coordinating last month's
Southeast Botanical
Gardens
Thanksgiving event
along side MOSC
coordinator, Emily Oki! The
gardens, Okinawan flower
arrangements, and lunch
buffet were enjoyed by all
who attended!



YOUR AWWA CORNER

By Laina Bell
(NOSCO Welfare Representative)

As this newsletter goes to print, our November AWWA meeting has not taken place. Please look to next month's newsletter for the latest updates with your Gift Shop \$'s given to charity. You make a huge difference by shopping and volunteering at the Navy Fleet Home Store and Kid's Cottage. Please remember that both shops have Gift Certificates available. They are perfect gifts for your child's teacher at the upcoming holiday time. Just an additional reminder that we join together each month with the other gift shops and thrift shops on island to give to charity. We are so excited that our Army friends have recently opened their brand new shop on Torii Station. Check them out for the latest in handy made crafts by military spouses.

Have a great Holiday Season!



~ REMEMBER TO
MAKE A WISH ~

DECEMBER 6TH: Lari Roberts-Howard
 DECEMBER 14TH: Suzi Habba
 DECEMBER 17TH: Paula Blivin
 DECEMBER 18TH: Susan Klein
 DECEMBER 22ND: Miki Waterman
 DECEMBER 29TH: Karen Wright

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!!

RECIPE ROUND-UP



~ It wouldn't be Christmas without candy ~

ROCKY ROAD

4 - 4 ½ ounces Hershey Milk Chocolate Bars
 3 cups mini marshmallows
 ¾ cup coarsely chopped walnuts

Melt chocolate in a large saucepan 'til smooth. Remove from heat and cool slightly (just long enough not to melt marshmallows). Stir in marshmallows and nuts. Spread into a foil lined 8"x8"x2" pan. Chill in fridge 'til set. Pick up foil and invert candy onto a cutting board. Peel foil off and cut candy into squares. Store in cool place in an air-tight container. *Mmmmm!*

CARAMEL SNAPPERS

1 cup pecan halves
 36 caramel pieces
 ½ cup chocolate chips, melted
 Grease a cookie sheet. On it, arrange pecans in groups of four, flat side down. Place one caramel on each pecan cluster. Heat at 325°F 'til caramels are softened, not melted (about six minutes). Remove from oven and with a buttered spatula, flatten caramels over pecans. Cool slightly. Remove from pan to waxed paper. Swirl melted chocolate on top and let sit 'til set. Store in an air-tight container. *Enjoy!*

If you have a yummy recipe to share in our January issue, please e-mail it to: tanjalyann@hotmail.com with the subject title "NOSCO Seagull Recipe".

OUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS NEED YOU!!

NOSCO sponsors special interest groups in several different areas. These groups are a great way for members with similar interests to get to know each other and share their passions, but

WE NEED LEADERS!!

Without you, the following groups aren't able to get up and running:

Baby Lunch Bunch	Bible Study
Board Gaming	Book Club
Cooking	Dining Divas
Diving	Hiking/Geocaching
Playgroup	Quilting
Scrapbooking	Stamping

Or any other interest you would like to share with others!

If you're ready to bring people together while doing something you love, please contact Elizabeth Biddle, 1st Vice-President, at biddlene@hotmail.com

TRAVEL GROUP

If you love to travel, here's your chance to get out, explore, and make new friends in the process! Our Travel Group is looking for a co-chair to help organize a trip(s) for this coming year. If you are interested in doing so, please contact Laina Bell at lainabell1@yahoo.com.

MAH JONGG GROUP

The group meets every Tuesday morning from 10:00 a.m. to about 1:00 p.m. on Kadena. We take a break during play and have a pot luck salad lunch.

Never played Mah Jongg?? It's a very addicting game that is played with tiles, but is more like gin rummy. You can learn to play in one morning. Feel free to stop by if you are interested and see how it's played. You will be hooked, too!! E-mail Pam Caruso at PSCaruso@aol.com for more information.



Bring a little bit of Asia home from the...

NAVY FLEET GIFT SHOP

Are you looking for the perfect holiday gift? We have a wonderful selection of beautiful items from all over Asia. Select from elegant teak furniture, lovely handbags, candles, jewelry, and much more. Hurry in for the best selection!

DATES TO REMEMBER!

Dec. 1st	Raymond Ko Jewelry (fine jewelry from Hong Kong)
Dec. 5-8th	Uptight (linens from India) AND Musubi Designs (obi handbags/wraps)
Dec. 12-15th	Fongs Pearls (fine Jewelry from Hong Kong)
Dec. 12-22nd	Raymond Ko
Dec. 22nd	Last day to shop before we close for Christmas!
Dec. 28th	End of Year Blowout! Shop this special day for huge discounts
Jan. 16th	Store reopens with the Shanghai Shipment!

WE thank YOU...

for making us a successful organization! Because of your patronage and volunteerism, we are able to contribute portions of our profit to educational scholarships and to both Japanese and American charities!

NFGS welcomes NOSCO members to volunteer at the shops. It is an opportunity to make new friends, browse the merchandise early, and earn funny money to spend in the store!

Home Store: Wed. 10-6, and Thurs.-Sat. 10-3
643-7841

Kids Cottage: Wed.-Fri. 10-3, and Sat. 12-2
645-8812

www.noscokinawa.com

DECEMBER IS NATIONAL SAFE TOY & GIFT MONTH!

GIVE THE GIFT OF SAFETY BY...

- **Choosing toys according to a child's age, interests and skill level.** Look for well-made toys and follow age and safety information on the warning labels. Children under age three can choke on small toys and toy parts.
- **Watching children while they play to avoid injury.** A toy intended for an older child may be dangerous in the hands of a younger child.
- **Joining in your child's play.** Your participation adds to your child's fun and development while being observed.
- **Teaching children to put toys away after playing.** Safe storage prevents falls and other injuries.
- **Checking old and new toys regularly for damage** such as sharp edges or small parts. Make any repairs immediately or throw away damaged toys.

For more information on how to keep your kids safe this holiday season, check out Safe Kids USA at:

<http://www.usa.safekids.org>

DON'T FORGET NOSCO'S WEBSITE

Next time you're wondering where to go or how to get something in particular done on Okinawa, go to www.noscokinawa.com, which is full of useful tips and information for living and playing in the jewel of Japan!

There is a special Web Resources tab that has links to all types of groups and organizations that are designed to make your life on island the best it can be!

Plus, there's a whole lot more of important info – so check it out today!

COFFEE TALK



~CTF-76~
by Stephanie Ouellette

November has been a relatively quiet month for CTF-76. At the beginning of the month, we all gathered at The Barrel restaurant to say sayonara to our awesome Secretary, Tanja Groesbeck. Her presence will be sorely missed, though I am sure we might see her from time to time. Thanks, Tanja, for all your hard work and best wishes to you and your family.

At the end of November, we gathered again to eat and say good-bye to Narumi May and Sezlyn Johnson at Macaroni Grille. We wish them and their families all the best as they embark on new adventures.

Our next meeting will be a holiday brunch and gift exchange at Tanja's house on December 13th. We hope to see and welcome some of our newer spouses at this fun event.

I have taken over the Coffee Group's secretarial duties and Staci Hawley-Praske has graciously stepped up to be our new Coffee Group Representative for NOSCO. Thank you, Staci, for volunteering for this important job! You'll be working with a great group.

~Dental~
by Suzanne Secrest

We are looking forward to December Bunko hosted by Caroline Hutto. We are meeting on December 4th at 6 p.m at Caroline's. The theme for this month is Holiday.

CULTURE CORNER...

The holiday season brings plenty of reasons for our host country to celebrate...

December 23rd:
Tenno-tanjobi
(The Emperor's Birthday)

Emperor Akihito was born on this date in 1933. The Imperial Palace in Tokyo is open to the public on this day to hundreds of thousands of well wishers waving flags in his honor.

December 25th:
Kurisumasu
(Christmas)

Although not a national holiday in Japan, this Western celebration is becoming more and more popular here. Symbols such as carols, Santa Claus, and strings of lights have become a fun part of the celebration. Christmas cakes with strawberries and whipped cream is a welcomed treat during this time.

December 31st:
Omisoka
(New Year's Eve)

During the year's end there are several activities you may hear about around town:

- *Osoji* (spring cleaning) is completed to get ready to welcome in the new year, including people's minds and bodies, with a clean state.
- *Bonenkai* (forget-the-year) parties are held to celebrate the past year.
- Just prior to midnight, *toshi-koshi* (crossing from one year to the next) *soba* is served in houses and temples across Japan and are eaten as the New Year is rung in.
- At midnight, gongs at local temples are run 108 times, once to eliminate each type of earthly desires that are believed to be the cause of human suffering.
- An annual t.v. spectacular, *Kohaku Uta Gassen*, is watched by thousands as popular musicians compete in a game show and once the winner is announced, various New Year's celebrations are shown from different regions in the country.



'TIS THE SEASON FOR



Coordinators and volunteers with the US Marine Corps Toys for Tots program on Okinawa will be working overtime during the holiday season to extend the reach of the 60-year-old charity in the region.

This year, Thailand and Guam have been added to the Okinawa's Toys for Tots area of responsibility. They hope to deliver some 11,000 toys to needy children throughout those countries, here in Okinawa, and in the Philippines this holiday season. In addition, some 3,000 military families in need are generally given toys for their children in these areas.

If you can open your hearts and give a toy, you are able to donate your gift at any of the entrances as the post/base exchanges around the island. There is a need for toys for children of all ages, but toys for pre-teens and young teenagers are typically in short supply every year.

If you'd like more information or to make a monetary donation to this worthy cause, please go to: <http://www.toysfortots.org/> and click on "click to donate money".

Reading 'Round the Ryukyus

Available at your local library, Reading 'Round the Ryukyus kits allow individuals to check out the materials needed for a book club meeting. In every book club bag are 10 copies of the selected book and an accompanying guide that includes forms and information to assist the discussion leader.

For established group, Reading 'Round the Ryukyus offers an easy way to branch out of your comfort zone. Stick strictly to classics? Maybe a discussion about the fate-bound couple in Jennifer Crusie's *Bet Me* will give your group a lighthearted break before diving back into *War and Peace*. Or, take a respite from romance and tackle the grotesquely engaging *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*.

In addition to providing options to expand title selections, Reading 'Round the Ryukyus is a springboard for those starting a book club. The readers' guide includes suggestions about organizing a book club, selecting titles, and maintaining effective discussions.

Reading 'Round the Ryukyus kits may be checked out for six weeks, but they cannot be renewed. Groups can reserve kits in person or by phone. Please remember that if another group has a kit, the wait may be a little longer than for other library items.

Titles of Reading 'Round the Ryukyus kits please call Foster Library for availability, 645-9442.



THERE'S A PLACE JUST FOR YOU WITHIN NOSCO...

THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS ARE CURRENTLY OPEN:

- **NOSCO BOARD / COMMITTEES:**
CFAO Coffee Representative
CFAO Advisor
Chaplains Advisor
Secretary

If you are interested in filling any of the above spots, contact NOSCO President, Chris Morse, at morsechristine@hotmail.com.

- **NEWCOMERS' ORIENTATION:**

Do you make a great first impression? Then be the first to welcome spouses to the island!

If you love to talk to and meet new people, this just may be the right volunteer job for you!

Plus, you will earn Weekend Gift Shop Dollars!

Please contact our Hospitality Chair, Mindy Manuel, at jmmanuel7@yahoo.com for more information on serving in this area.

NOSCO 2007-2008 EVENT PLANNING

MONTH	COFFEE GROUP	EVENT
JANUARY	CHAPLAINS	TBD
FEBRUARY	USNH / 3 rd MED BN	TBD
MARCH	DENTAL	TBD
APRIL	NOSCO	ART AUCTION
MAY	NOSCO	SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION
JUNE	NOSCO	END OF YEAR PICNIC

2007-2008 NOSCO BOARD

OFFICERS

Honorary President	OPEN
President	Chris Morse
1st Vice President	Elizabeth Biddle
2nd Vice President	Mike Toone
Treasurer	Vicki Lane
Secretary	OPEN
Parliamentarian	Paula Blivin

COMMITTEES

AWWA	Laina Bell
Consumer Affairs	Steve Emerick
Gift Shop Director	Sara Sladecsek
Hospitality	Mindy Manuel
Membership	Amanda Harrington
Publicity	Shari Biery
Seagull Editor	Tanja Groesbeck
Ways and Means	Rachel Broom
Website Editor	Mike Toone

COFFEE GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

3d MED BN	Sara Bailey
CTF-76	Staci Hawley-Praske
CFAO	OPEN
Chaplains	Stephanie Brooks
Dental	Suzanne Secrest
GMO	Paula Blivin
USNH	Melanie Hardy and Pam Caruso

ADVISORS

3d MED BN	Debbie McCue
CTF-76	Lari Roberts-Howard
CFAO	OPEN
Chaplains	OPEN
Dental	Amy Colaianni
USNH	Cathi Cox and Carla Thorson

The Seagull

If you have news for NOSCO, please e-mail it to tanjalynn@hotmail.com

