"The Journey"

By Chaplain Barry A. Metzger

Over the past few weeks I have been giving thought and actually following through with some self care measures. *"The Journey,"* a poem written by Mary Oliver was brought to my attention by a good friend a couple of weeks ago and the message resonated so I thought I would share it and see if it has meaning for others.

"The Journey"
Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began,
Though the voices around you were shouting, their bad advice-
Though the whole house began to tremble
and you felt the old tug at your ankles
"Mend my life," each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do.
Though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations,
though their melancholy was terrible,
it was already late enough, and a wild night,
And the road full of fallen branches and stones.
But little by little, as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice, which you slowly recognized as your own,
that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world,
determined to do the only thing you could do
determined to save the only life you could save.

We have so many things constantly vying for our attention, errands, lists to knock out and work to accomplish. I would venture to say that if we are "only" hearing the voices around us, consumed by the ankle biters, maybe it's time to take a step back and consider another voice that may have been lost over time. Circumstances in our unique environment don't always allow for sweeping changes but maybe it's time, in a quiet place of meditation or evening walk or however you may choose, to listen to a voice we have possibly neglected; a voice that has grown almost unrecognizable over the course of months or even years. The voice I'm talking about may have been pushed down but it's our own voice and it encourages us to have fun, to laugh, to play with our kids, to try something new. Maybe in doing this we can find more balance and joy.

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Nakabayashi went on to express her thanks for relief efforts following the March 2011 earthquake.

"Everyone in Japan and in the government appreciated that effort and we will never forget that."

Jun Matsumoto congratulated everyone on the Bon Odori festivities and also thanked CFAY for Operation Tomadachi following the Great East Japan Earthquake of last year.

Matsumoto said that the key to foreign diplomacy and Japanese defense is based on the Japan-U.S. alliance. He added that it not only relies on the government, but it is important to deepen mutual relationships within small communities like this we see here today at Negishi base."

The ceremony closed with the guests performing the traditional opening of a sake barrel together with wooden hammers. The sake was donated by AIU Insurance and was then distributed free to festival-goers.

The Far East Edition U.S. 7th Fleet Band kicked off the entertainment on stage. Other performancers included the Hongo Ohayashi Music Team preforming a lion dance, the Sagami Dragon Drummers playing Taiko drums, and folk dance displays from the Kanon Awa Odori Team followed by Bon Odori folk dancing amongst the crowd. Numerous vendor booths provided food, fun and refreshments.

Festival attendees commented on how much their families were enjoying the air toys and carnival games run by Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR).

Yokohama resident and Negishi neighbor, Yoshiaki Shimamoto said the carnival games and bouncy houses were very enjoyable.

Yoshinori Mamiya, a Yokohama resident, was happy to be visiting again with his wife, son and daughter.

"Last year we visited and my son got a dinosaur but this year his sister got a prize," said Mamiya.

The Equine Museum of Japan had two ponies on display and children were allowed to sit on them.

According to Fumihiko Murai, curator of the museum, it was his first time onboard Negishi and he was excited to see interesting bands and interesting American things.

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"We are the only enlisted career field that is providing this type of program designed to educate Sailors," Dawson said.

For many junior Sailors it was the first time they had an opportunity to learn in great detail what it takes to manage their careers.

"I know now that I really need to start looking ahead based on the timeline they showed me," said Logistics Specialist Seaman Jacob Bilski," a NAVSUP FLC Yokosuka Customer Service Representative. "Whether I'm on a ship or shore based, west coast or east coast, I have a lot to think about and I really appreciate that they took the time to tell us what we need to know."

According to Dawson, the path of a Sailor's career varies and will not be the same for everyone.

"You can't be afraid to ask questions," said Dawson. "You must take ownership of your career and not rely on other people to do it for you."

To be competitive today you need to have a diverse portfolio and have done a variety of different things in your career, Dawson said.

"Looking to stay in one place your entire 20 years is not sound decision making," Dawson said. "Everyone has to find the balance that works for their family and career and figure out how to get it done."

Dawson stated that he and Rear Adm. Mark Heinrich, NAVSUP Commander and Supply Corps Chief, are doing everything in their power to put Sailors on a path towards success and the roadshow is one tool to do just that.

Dawson thanked all the Sailors who participated and shared the impact of the work they perform in supporting the fleet.

"As a Supply Sailor you have your finger on the pulse of the moral and the quality of life for many Sailors and their families," Dawson said. "Thank you for what you do."