New Year's resolution: Keep the Sabbath holy

By Chaplain Allen Vaughan

Just before the end of 2010, I took my family on a much-needed and long-awaited vacation. For a chaplain, taking leave around the holidays is a rare occurrence, because it is the busiest time of the year in our profession. But, my children were out of school, so I bit the bullet and took leave.

Like so many others, I am guilty of carrying too many days of leave on the books, and I am guilty of becoming so tied up in my work that I don't notice the steady accumulation of days in the "use or lose" block of my leave and earning statement. Even though I try to take one day off every week, sometimes that doesn't always happen.

I know I am not the only one who struggles with this. It is an epidemic in the military, as well as in the civilian corporate world. There are those who might complain, and others who might brag, about the number of hours they put in at work and how long it has been since they have taken a vacation.

Unfortunately, there is a price to pay, and it usually comes at a cost to our physical, emotional and spiritual health, and the health of our significant relationships, such as with our spouse or family.

In the Book of Genesis, second chapter, these words are written: "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."

And, when the Ten Commandments were handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, God commanded: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the lord your God. On it you shall not do any work… "

Some faiths set aside the Sabbath as a day for worship, while others observe it simply as a day of rest and reflection. Many Christians view Sunday as their Sabbath, while those of the Jewish faith observe the Sabbath from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. When I was stationed in the Middle East, Friday was the established day of rest and worship.

We know that there is a natural rhythm to life, a rhythm of activity and rest that is vital for our physical and mental health. Farmers know that they must rotate crops and allow some fields to lay fallow for a period of time in order to give the land a "rest," thereby keeping the land fertile and productive.

Why is it, then, that some of us have a difficult time taking genuine rest on a regular basis and then end up working ourselves to exhaustion? Admittedly, there is a heavy work load that some are asked to bear, especially those in positions of leadership. Oftentimes, the mission requires us to put in long hours. But, I believe we begin to lose something very important when work becomes our "god." We tie our worth into what we do, rather than who we are. And, who we are is tied into our relationships with God and the people we love, as well as the people with whom we work.

Observing a Sabbath is not just a way of honoring God, but it is a necessary means of taking care of what God has given us. God has given us our health. God has also given us our faith, our families, our marriages, our children, our neighbors and our shipmates. We need to take care of these precious gifts.

My New Year's resolution is to manage my leave better than I have in the past, and to care for what God has given me. If I can keep the Sabbath holy in my life, then I am better able to keep my focus on who I am in relation to God, my wife and my children. As a result, my work and what I do will be a truer reflection of who I am, which, is a child of God. Blessings to you in the New Year!

Housing residents go green in New Year

By CFAY Housing Services Center

The Housing Services Center wishes all residents of family and bachelor housing a very Happy New Year! During the New Year, let's all make a New Year's resolution to do our part in keeping the Earth Green! Recycle, recycle, and let me think about this one... recycle!

The simple act of separating trash correctly and placing it in its appropriate container has a profound impact on the recycling program, so we need you to do your part. Also, place bulk trash (large unwanted household goods and appliances) for pick-up where it belongs, and not in any common area as it causes a safety hazard.

The designated bulk trash areas for Yokosuka and Ikego are:

- By trash cans inside their enclosed area for townhouse residents.
- Immediately adjacent to the enclosed trash container area for tower units.
- Next to the outside trash container for Bachelor Housing residents.

Don't forget to call for bulk trash pick-up. Yokosuka residents should call 243-6558 and Ikego residents should call 246-8302.

Negishi Housing Detachment residents should leave bulk trash near the trash container located along the road. Contractors will automatically pick up the bulk trash, without being called, at regularly scheduled times.

Thank you for keeping Yokosuka base and its housing detachments clean and a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Client confidentiality is core to NMCRS commitment

By Lisa Aszklar, NMCRS staff writer

The goal of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) is simple: to improve the lives of Sailors, Marines and families through both financial management education and need-based assistance. To meet that goal, NMCRS has established a list of guiding principles that have been fundamental to a successful track record of assisting Sailors, Marines and their families.

First, NMCRS promises to provide the same high caliber service our clients have come to expect since we opened our doors 106 years ago.

Second, NMCRS recognizes that members of today's armed forces face challenges that differ from the needs of personnel who served decades ago. As an organization, we are committed to evolving with today's military so that there is never a gap between the needs of our clients and the types of service we provide.

Third, recognizing that personal financial health is critically important to not only military readiness but also the success of the military family, NMCRS has pledged to provide the means for clients to develop their own problem-solving strategies through financial counseling and educational programs such as "Budget for Baby."

Finally, NMCRS has promised that our services and programs will be administered by compassionate, trained staff who are committed to providing, on a consistent basis, a workable solution to the service member's needs.

NMCRS recognizes that every client is a valuable member of our military family and possesses a number of important rights. These include the right to meet with a representative in a non-judgmental atmosphere; a guarantee that they will be treated in a manner that maintains dignity and self respect; and an expectation that the nature of the meeting between the client and NMCRS will remain confidential, as set forth in the society's written policy. This last item is crucial in light of the ease with which personal data may be breached, electronically or otherwise, in today's world.

The NMCRS confidentiality policy is straightforward: the client's personal information will remain confidential within the society, and members of the staff are prohibited from discussing that information, except on a "need to know" basis.

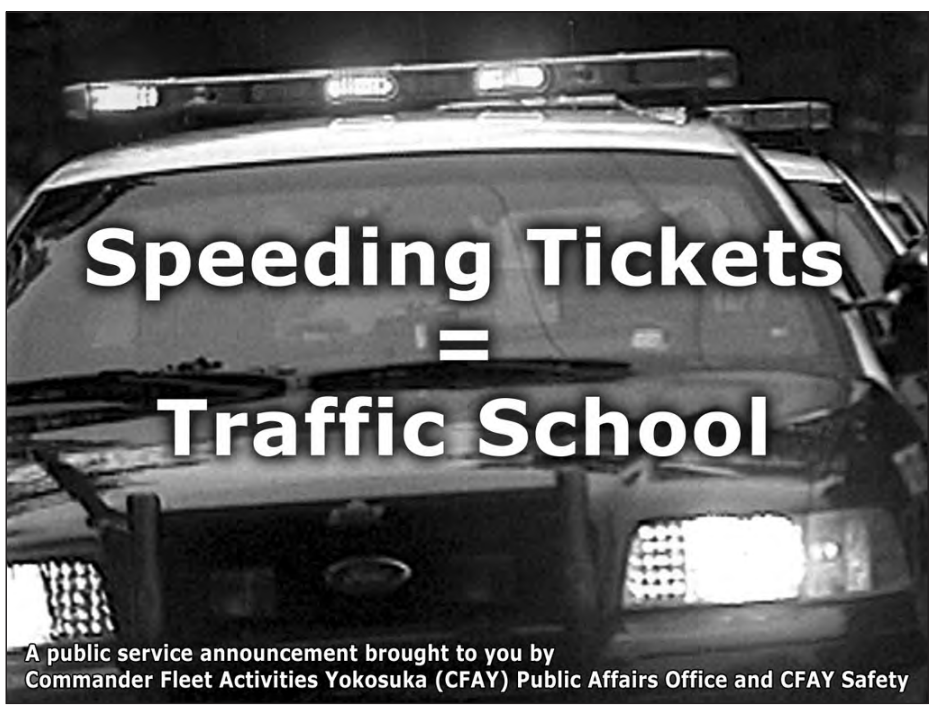
This does not apply if, for instance, the service member has engaged in criminal acts, misconduct, or behavior affecting discipline or the security of the command. In these cases, the society does not require the service member's permission to inform the command of these occurrences.

Because of the personal nature of the information discussed between the NMCRS counselor and the client, there is normally no requirement that a command representative - someone in a position of authority over the client - accompany the service member. If the client requests that a command representative join the meeting, the caseworker would make certain that the client understands that this is their right, not an NMCRS requirement.

Otherwise, NMCRS will engage the command only if a case is unusual in nature and only with verbal or written permission of the service member. In these cases, the command representative will only be provided information that relates directly to this request for assistance. In other words, the caseworker would not discuss previous history that's not relevant to the current request.

If the NMCRS counselor determines that it is necessary to involve the command but the service member objects, then the society will do its best to identify other organizations that may be better able to render assistance.

Clients are always welcome to bring a spouse when they meet with NMCRS staff, but only in certain cases would a spouse be required to attend. Furthermore, if the spouse requests information on the service member's past dealings with the society, that request would be denied, unless the service member authorizes the society to divulge that information.

NMCRS privacy policy is designed to uphold the self-respect and dignity of the military members whom we serve. We take seriously our commitment to act as responsible stewards of the personal financial information collected in any meetings between the service member and our staff.

This is one more way we have earned the respect and trust of Sailors and Marines around the world, one service member at a time, and why they should always consider NMCRS as their first resource when facing financial difficulties.