Foundations

By Chaplain Scott Shafer

Jesus tells a story about two houses. Essentially, in all aspects, they were alike...similar doors, similar walls and similar rooms. They were alike in all aspects except one, their foundations. One house was built upon a foundation of sand and the other was built upon a foundation of stone.

Most of us never pay any attention to a foundation. After all, what we cannot see, we often feel that we can safely ignore. Yet the foundation is essential to the integrity of the house. If a foundation has no integrity, if it will not hold together, then the house will fall. So, if a house is built upon stone, it will last. It will last through mighty storms and remain standing. A house built upon sand might look nice, but eventually it will shift and fall. When a storm arises, it's not going to survive.

Interestingly enough, the same holds true in our lives. If our foundations are built upon rock, then we find that we can weather an amazing set of circumstances. Yet, if our foundations are set upon sand, then we can easily fall. Its amazing how something that we cannot see can be so definitive of our existence.

What is your foundation? Is it appetite? Is your foundation based upon things that are temporary? I have seen people build their foundations upon wealth, but wealth doesn't seem to be doing so well today. What happens when the market falls? Do we fall as well? What about a foundation based upon promotion? What happens if you don't promote?

For me, the only true things in life are relationships. That is the foundation stone of my life. My relationship with my savior, Jesus Christ...and my relationships with all of the people around me is the foundation of my life. People may seem ephemeral (momentary), but in my relationships, I have found the stone of my life. Wealth goes away, but friends remain. Power is here for an instant and then it is gone. Yet, my wife has been with me for years. Despite all of the temptations of life, it is in my relationships that I have found the strength to not fall. It is in my relationships that I have found the integrity to weather the storm.

I don't know you...but I just want to ask, "What is your foundation? Are you going to be able to weather the storm?" Everything always looks the same on the outside, but when the storm hits, we learn the truth of how we have lived our lives, whether we are living upon shifting sand, or rooted upon eternal stone. Amen.

Head's Up Yokosuka!

Community Announcements

Passport Applications accepted at the Chapel of Hope – The United States Consul will be accepting first-time and renewal passport applications Feb. 27 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Chapel of Hope. For appointments, please call the U.S. Embassy at 03-3224-5000 and ask for the Passport Office.

Compass Program Night Class – The next available class will be held March 24 – 26 starting at 5 p.m. in the Take Room at the Fleet and Family Support Center Annex. Compass is a peer-to-peer mentorship program designed to help Navy spouses adapt to military life. Visit the Web site www.gocompass.org or contact Shelle at 264-7270 for more information or to register for the class.

Housing Multi-purpose Room Revised Policy – All Military Family Housing residents may make reservations 60 days in advance. The function must remain in the room. Use of the common areas such as the lobby, hallways, stairwells, elevator and etc., are prohibited. Children 10 years of age and younger must be supervised by an adult at all times. All windows and doors must be kept closed to reduce the noise level that may carry to the residents. Excessive disturbances and noise will not be tolerated at any time. Band practices or live musical entertainment is not permitted. Sponsors and their guests must use the overflow parking. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted. Requestor assumes full responsibility for party alcohol beverage consumption. Smoking inside and use of barbeque is prohibited. Pets are not authorized. Contact the Housing Facilities Office at 243-9067 for more information.

American Red Cross Community Courses and Training – If you'd like to become a volunteer, register to attend one of our volunteer orientations held the first and third Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. Call 243-7490 for more information or register by visiting our office located on the 2nd floor of the Community Center.

Phishing e-mails – Recent reports of phishing attacks trying to entice users into providing personal login information have been noted. In addition, unsolicited e-mails asking users to click an embedded link that connects their computer to a hostile domain or malicious Web sites have shown up on Department of Defense networks. Navy Systems Administrators or legitimate businesses will never send you an e-mail message asking for your personal information. If you receive an e-mail such as the kind just described, do not reply providing the requested information, open any attachments or click on any links. Delete the e-mail and contact your network administrator immediately.

Commissary benefits save service members, families more money

By Kevin L. Robinson,
DeCA Public Affairs

There's more pocket money for service members and their families when they shop consistently in the commissary – nearly $3,400, in fact, for a family of four based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture survey that measures grocery store purchases.

"In tough economic times our customers can always depend on their commissary benefit to help them make ends meet," said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) director and chief executive officer.

Each month, the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion calculates household purchases of grocery, meat and produce items. Once a year in October, DeCA's sales directorate examines the USDA's figures to determine monetary savings amounts for its customers in various family-sized units – a single military member, a couple, a family of three or four – based on the commissary's savings of more than 30 percent (See chart):

• A family of four saves nearly $3,400 annually based on spending an average of $898 per month or $10,783 annually. Previous savings calculated in October 2007 were about $3,100.

• A family of three saves more than $2,600 annually based on spending an average of $703 per month or $8,442 annually. Previous savings in October 2007 were more than $2,400.

• A couple saves more than $2,100 annually based on spending an average of $570 per month or $6,844 annually. Previous savings in October 2007 were more than $1,900.

• A single service member saves nearly $1,200 annually based on spending an average of $311 per month or $3,733 annually. Previous savings in October 2007 were about $1,600.

Commissary savings percentages are calculated based on an annual market basket study. Procedures differ somewhat depending on geographic location. In the continental U.S., DeCA captures prices through Nielsen's database of commissary and industry front end sales volume on more than 30,000 grocery items with a UPC (universal product code). Pricing comparisons for meat and produce department items in the continental U.S. are accomplished through in-store audits at 30 randomly selected commissaries to compare them with commercial retail stores within commuting distance.

Outside the continental U.S., DeCA conducts additional in-store audits, using a broad sample of grocery, meat and produce items. Savings percentages compare commissary prices, which include DeCA's five percent surcharge, to commercial prices with any applicable sales taxes included.

"We exist to deliver a commissary benefit to our authorized customers, the men and women and their families who sacrifice so much in the defense of this great nation," Sakowitz said. "The concept is simple: We sell items at cost, and if you shop regularly in a commissary, you will save at least 30 percent or more."

The chart below show savings amounts calculated from USDA figures published in October for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

2006

Family size	Monthly cost	Annual cost	Annual savings
Single	$268.06	$3,216.67	$1,029.34
Married	$491.42	$5,897.04	$1,887.05
Married w/one child	$601.42	$7,217.03	$2,309.45
Married w/two children	$770.40	$9,244.80	$2,958.34

2007

Family size	Monthly cost	Annual cost	Annual savings
Single	$282.76	$3,393.14	$1,058.66
Married	$518.39	$6,220.68	$1,940.88
Married w/one child	$641.56	$7,698.73	$2,402.05
Married w/two children	$821.75	$9,861.80	$3,076.68

2008

Family size	Monthly cost	Annual cost	Annual savings
Single	$311.10	$3,733.20	$1,161.03
Married	$570.40	$6,844.80	$2,128.73
Married w/one child	$703.55	$8,442.63	$2,625.66
Married w/two children	$898.60	$10,783.20	$3,353.58

The chart above shows commissary savings amounts of more than 30 percent calculated from U.S. Department of Agriculture figures published in October for 2006, 2007 and 2008.