28.5167 latitude by 33.95 longitude

By Chaplain Norbert Karava

It is not a coincidence that we find an ever-increasing emphasis placed on numerous ethical trainings in various formats and perspectives: Professional Ethics, Character Counts and Ethical Advisement to mention a few.

It seems that there has been a growing realization that an amoral focus on either performance or production is self-destructive in at least two dimensions: First, it dehumanizes the hapless carbon-based life forms that are tasked with performance and production, and second, ultimately undermines and compromises both performance and production (amoral, carbon-based, slave life forms are just so unreliable) to such a degree that even cynics and moral relativists must at least pretend to care about morality in the interest of maintaining profitable levels of performance and production.

Not to worry, we have PowerPoint to clothe the shabby and embarrassing truth with the garments of professionalism and decency!

We witness a gradual evolution from an intuitive, pre-rational sense of fair play on the playground to an increasingly formalized and articulated ethos to rules of conduct to, finally, ethical standards. The problem, old as man, concerns the ultimate authority at the heart of morality, if there really is such a thing: If it is a violation of ethical standards to help oneself to the paper clips and stationery at the office, does this have something to do with a moral precept akin to "Thou Shalt not Steal," appealing to a "Transcendent Authority," or is it simply a violation of agreed-upon rules of conduct and behavior?

I opine that that the multi-tasking, bleary-eyed, carbon-based, cubicle-dwelling life form will ask himself such questions, one way or another: "Why is my conscience obliged by the mere collective opinion of an ethics committee?" Or, "Am I really an evil man because I violated the latest draft of ethical standards, hot off the email distribution list?" And looking at the BMWs in the privileged parking spaces of the company archons, he will be hard pressed to worry much about paper clips, or even, ye gods of corporate leadership forbid, the sacred stationery.

Try as we might to leave the "Transcendent Authority" out of the moral precept upon we build our ethical standards, call it perhaps the quirkiness of the human mind, we quickly succumb to the temptation of rewriting our morality in the ethical standards that we individually or collectively draft for ourselves and our institutions in answer to the pressing and practical needs of the hour.

To this purpose we employ both humor and even our language against our native moral frankness. We are tempted to take the moral precept "Thou Shalt not Steal" and blunt its unsettling edginess with the quasi-humorous "Gear Adrift, Gear a Gift" or the euphemistically technical sounding "Tactical Acquisition."

Mount Sinai arises not only at certain geographical coordinates of our planet's surface, but from out of the depths of the human heart entertaining a presence that knows neither latitude nor longitude.

Middle school student wins VFW Post 1054 essay contest

Yokosuka Middle School (YMS) 8th-grade student Kamolwan Thistle, receives a certificate from YMS Principal Geoff Fong and YMS teacher and Veteran's of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1054 member Robert Rose June 10. Thistle won the VFW Post 1054 annual Patriot's Pen essay contest at YMS. This year, middle school students wrote 300-400 word essays with the theme, "Does Patriotism Still Matter?"

Photo by Dale N. Duncan Jr.

Academic Skills Program changes now include online access

By Naval Education and Training Command and Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy Academic Skills Program offered through 21 Navy College Learning Centers (NCLCs) is moving to an online-only version available to service members, Department of Defense civilians and family members, announced in Naval Administrative Message NAVADMIN 216-10, released June 29.

The Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) provides access to basic educational and academic skills at no cost to the student. The online course is currently available, but as of Sept. 30, the current academic skills program available in NCLCs and the shore-based instructor-led English, math and language basic skills courses will no longer be available to shore commands. The academic skills courses currently delivered to deployed Sailors through the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE) will remain unchanged for qualified units.

The OASC is a self-paced skills course and customized program that evaluates an individual's reading level, vocabulary and math ability based upon a pre-test. It designs individual lessons to increase proficiency in each of these academic areas. Participants may also choose an abbreviated review with shortened lessons through the online course.

The switch to online-only academic skills training gives Sailors 24-hour worldwide access to OASC from any computer with an internet connection, not just at their Navy College Center.

"It also expands the amount of learners that can take the courses, so we've been able to include family members and government civilians," said Ann Hunter, the Navy's Voluntary Education (VOLED) service chief.

"Each lesson is supported by interactive exercises such as drag-and-drop matching, video-game-style multiple choice or dynamic flash cards," added Hunter. "Quizzes and practice problem sets also help students gauge how well they are mastering the material."

One of the benefits of the OASC is that it can help Sailors who need to increase their Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score in order to qualify for specific Navy ratings.

"Sailors need justification to retake the ASVAB; they need to be able to show that they have improved their educational and academic skills since their initial test. Currently the OASC does not produce a certificate of completion. However, the Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN) section 1236-010 suggests other options for demonstrating positive improvement in education as a justification for retest of the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT) version of the ASVAB. Completion of the OASC can help fulfill that 'improvement' requirement and help service members reach their career goals," Hunter said.

"OASC has the added benefit of standardizing academic skills programs across all services. "OASC replaces academic skills programs for all the services, resulting in the elimination of redundant programs, saving resources. This has been a successful "joint" voluntary education initiative whereby all service members and their families use the same program for academic skills development," added Hunter.

OASC is available at www.nko.navy.mil via the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) Learning Tab and on the Navy College website under the academic skills link.

Navigation to OASC is also available at http://www.petersons.com/DANTES/.

For information on the Naval Education and Training Command, visit https://www.netc.navy.mil.

The Chief asks:

"Did you know, throughout history renewable energy sources, such as sunshine, wind, water, vegetation and the heat of the earth, have been successfully harnessed and used to provide energy?

"Almost 2,500 years ago, the Greeks designed their homes to use winter sunlight for heating. Large, south-facing windows were used to collect solar heat, which was stored in massive walls and floors for gradual release throughout the night.

"The wind has also been used as an energy source for centuries. Some of its early uses include propelling ships and pumping water.

"Today's technological advancements have developed more efficient means of harnessing and using renewable energy sources, and these sources are gaining increasing popularity.

"If you didn't know, now you know." MCC(SW/AW) Eric Hannah, CFAY Public Affairs