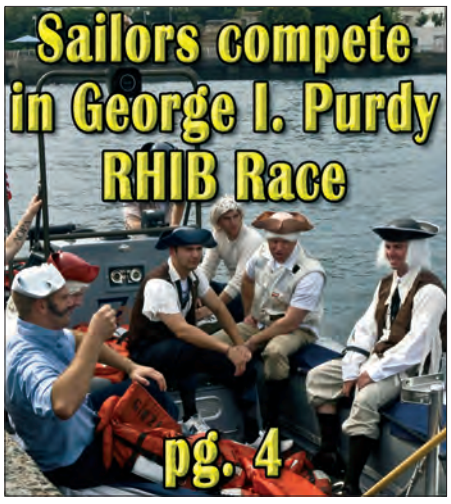
Serving Yokosuka for 50 years

Seahawk 海鷹 Umitaka

U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

Vol. LX, No. 40 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka Oct. 9, 2009



Moneywise seminar helps community improve financial future

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

In an effort to help personnel prepare for their futures and navigate the current economic downturn, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) hosted Moneywise seminars in the Community Readiness Center Sept. 23 - 25.

The Moneywise seminar, which is an extension of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television series bearing the same name, is an informative seminar aimed at preparing people for their financial futures.

"Our purpose is to help people understand how to use their resources effectively and we do that through education," said Moneywise Military Tour Executive Producer Kelvin E. Boston, who is also the host of the PBS series. "Our focus is more on basic financial strategies that will help individuals and families increase their net worth over time."

According to Boston, some people in the military are doing well at saving or investing for the future, yet some are not.

"What we learn from those who are doing well is they basically do three things, all the time," said Boston. "They always try to reduce their debts; they always try to save and they all use all their military benefits. They don't leave anything on the table.

Moneywise Military Tour Executive Producer Kelvin E. Boston speaks to CFAY personnel about ways to effectively save for their futures during the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) sponsored Moneywise seminars held at the Community Readiness Center Sept. 23 - 25.

Boston and the other speakers at the Moneywise seminars encourage military members and their families, as well as Department of Defense civilians, to systematically reduce their debt by taking advantage of the resources available to them on base.

"One of the things I suggest that people do, especially members of the military, is go down to your Fleet and Family [Support Center], go down to your community resources center and make an appointment with a financial counselor," said Young America's Financial Coach Peter Bielagus, who was a guest speaker at the seminars. "In the civilian world you can do that [but] it's going to cost you somewhere between $100 and $350 an hour. [However] in the military world, it's completely free of charge and they can take you step by step through a financial plan."

According to Boston, one thing that some financially successful military members do is make a commitment to save just 25 to 50 percent of their annual pay raise.

"That way it doesn't impact the family's current income… that's how they increase their savings," he said. "Sometimes they put it in their Thrift Savings Plan, some times they put it in a credit union, but just by doing that, it helps them increase their net worth over time."

In addition to the programs offered through FFSC, military benefits play an important role in helping people secure themselves financially.

"Right now we can't talk enough about the G.I. [Bill] benefit, about the V.A. (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) mortgage… and also about the pension benefit that military members have," said Boston "Those three, if used effectively, can help families."

The path to financial security lies in having the tools to pave the road to success and empowering individuals with those tools is the main goal of the Moneywise seminars. However, simply having the tools and knowledge is not enough. It takes motivation.

"Don't kid yourself that there is going to be a good and convenient time to focus on your financial life," said Bielagus. "So many people do; they say once I get back from overseas, once I finish my deployment, once I get my next pay raise, once I get through this divorce… then it will be a good time to focus on my financial life. I'm hear to remind everybody that's not true. There is never going to be a good time. So, you might as well get started today."

Appreciation dinner recognizes importance of area ombudsmen

Story and photo by Fumiyo Sato, CFAY Public Affairs

More than 140 people came out to show their appreciation to Yokosuka area ombudsmen at a dinner held in their honor Sept. 18. This year, 36 ombudsmen from 31 ships and shore commands were joined by their spouses, co-workers and commanding officers at the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Officer's Club.

The Navy Ombudsman Family Program was established by Admiral E.R. Zumwalt, Jr. then Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), recognizing the issues and concerns unique to Navy families. It allows Navy spouses to present complaints, viewpoints and suggestions directly to commanding officers.

"This volunteer program is designed to provide better communication between Navy families and Navy officials," said Fleet and Family Support Center Ombudsman Coordinator Brenda Ray. "Ombudsmen are chosen individually by the commanding officers of each command. They announce the position, and in turn, applications are taken and interviews held by the commanding officer, at which point, he decides who will take the position."

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, who was the keynote speaker, spoke of his appreciation to all the ombudsmen for their contributions and support.

"I cannot say enough [about] what our ombudsmen do. They absolutely refused to be recognized by name for what they accomplished," said Weed. "That is something truly rare and unique. They do it unselfishly everyday without fame and fortune, and I truly and genuinely appreciate that."

During his speech, Weed revealed as a surprise, a conceptual drawing of the Ombudsman Park fountain, which will be built near the Navy Lodge. "We will have a monument to Navy ombudsmen; to truly recognize how important they are," said Weed.

Following a cake cutting with Yokosuka ombudsman chair and vice chair, Weed and Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ) Rear Adm. Richard Wren presented a certificate, command plaque and gift to each ombudsman.

After all the ombudsmen received their certificates, the entire audience stood and applauded for their contribution and hard work. The dinner concluded with a commemorative group photo.

"My favorite moment was the revealing of the Ombudsman Park fountain," said Space and Naval Warfare Command Ombudsman April Young. "I felt honored to be there and was overwhelmed with the gifts of appreciation."

(Left) Yokosuka Ombudsmen Vice Chair Nizzah Bradley, CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed and Yokosuka Ombudsmen Chair Colleen Bourgeois cut the cake during the Ombudsmen Appreciation Dinner Sept. 18.