Now that's workmanship!

By Chaplain William Stewart

Living in Japan, there have been so many wonderful opportunities to explore new places, things and ways of life. I continue to be impressed with so much here in the Land of the Rising Sun, but there has been one thing that really stands out; the craftsmanship and workmanship here. People seem to really take pride in what they do with an understanding that it affects not only them, but so many others around them. People taking pride in what they do is always so impressive.

Running into one of my good friends and his wife the other day at a store, we were standing in the furniture department as I had been looking at a cabinet for our home. I had been looking at several, but the one I was pondering had a big sign on it that proudly read, "Made and hand-crafted in Japan" but the smaller sign on it revealed a much larger price than most of the others. Argh, the curse of being a frugal Scotsman! The Japanese furniture led my friend and I into an interesting conversation though, and view that we both hold; that of the incredible workmanship of skilled Japanese artisans.

While the concept and institution of assembly lines developed in the early 1900s (actually made famous by Henry Ford and his automobile industry), there have been many people who have held on to the idea that mass production does not always produce the best result. That individually made products have within them a beauty, perfection and longevity that far exceeds the quality of their cookie-cut counterparts. And, while the price has to be increased for the craftsman to make a living, few can debate the difference in workmanship and value.

After returning home from the store that day, the discussion my friend and I had led me into deep reflection about another incredible example of workmanship… you and I. Out of all creation, it seems that God considers you, I and all humanity, to be his greatest work that he is most proud of. Yes, mankind has made a mess of things many times, but that was never the intent. After all, once created and given away, it is up to the owner then as to how the product is used. This is true with the gift of life as well, as every person is given free will (another gift) to do with his or her life as they choose.

Maybe most importantly then, we have to understand what this gift of life is all about and why we were created in the first place. Based upon my faith as a Christian, the answer I find in the Bible can seem almost too simplistic at times, but putting that answer into practice can only come from using the workmanship of God exactly as it was intended. The answer is, to love God and fellow man, and to help those around us just as much or more than we help ourselves. In other words, it's all about relationships. How we see God and one another, how we treat one another and how we take care of one another; there is no greater calling and purpose in life than this. We are truly the workmanship of God… and it is good.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. – Ephesians 2:10

P.S. Yes, I ended up buying the cabinet made in Japan! May God bless you all.

Heads Up Yokosuka

Community Announcements

Base Movie Theater Closure – The Fleet Theater will be closed from now to Nov. 3 and the Benny Decker Theater will be closed Nov. 4 to Dec. 2 for repairs and minor renovations. Call 243-5215 for more information.

Ikego High Rise Tower Housing Fire Evacuation Drills – As a life safety requirement of Fire Prevention Month, the CNFJ Regional Fire Department will conduct annual high rise tower housing fire evacuation drills in Ikego Oct. 24 from 10 a.m to 2 p.m. Each drill will last approximately 20 minutes. During the drills, use the stairwells to evacuate, not the elevators. After evacuating, please go downstairs to the party room for a briefing.

Commissary Halloween Costume Contest – A costume contest for kids in age groups 1-4, 5-8 and 9-13 will be held Oct. 31 at the commissary. Participants should come in costume and be ready by 3:45 p.m. Judging begins 4 p.m.

Fire Hydrant Flow Testing in Ikego – Annual fire hydrant flow testing will be conducted in Ikego Nov. 2 - 5. Hydrant testing can cause household water discoloration. If you notice discoloration, let the tap run for a few moments to clear. Please do not park in the vacinity of hydrants and remain clear of the area when testing is in progress. Call 243-4619 for more information.

Federal Employee Health Benefits Briefing – Representatives of the American Foreign Service Protective Association will hold Federal Employee Open Season Briefings Nov. 9 at the CNFJ Human Resources Office Training Room in building 1472. Two one-hour briefings will be held at 10:30 a.m. and at noon. To reserve a spot in the briefing or for more information, contact HRO Labor/Employee Relations and Services Eiko Norinaga at 243-8184 or by e-mail to eiko.norinaga.ja@fe.navy.mil.

Navy College Office Tuition Assistance (TA) – Navy College Officer TA/ Electronic TA (ETA) Briefs are conducted on the first and third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. For TA processing, submitted ETA/TA forms will be available for pick up the next day after 1 p.m. Command TA/ETA Briefs are provided for groups of eight or more at your location. Contact the Navy College Office located in room 347 on the third floor of the Fleet Recreation Center at 243-8131 or by e-mail to navycollege_yokosuka@fe.navy.mil for more information.