Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Spring Festival offers opportunity for cultural exchange

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Neither cloudy skies nor chilly winds could deter more than 40,000 people from joining together for cultural exchange during the 17th Annual U.S. – Japan Spring Festival held on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) March 28.

During the festival, which was formerly known as the Cherry Blossom Festival and is held each year in Yokosuka during cherry blossom season, CFAY opened its gates to the public to help foster relations between United States and Japanese citizens.

"The annual Japan – U.S. Spring Festival has served for many years to draw together people from, both, within Yokosuka City and without, and continues to be a lively day for Japanese [and] U.S. [citizens] interchange." said Yokosuka City Mayor Yuto Yoshida, during his opening remarks. "I believe this is a truly meaningful celebration for Yokosuka City and I thank the U.S. Navy for their cooperation in opening the base to the public."

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, also addressed the crowd during the event, and spoke about the long and rich history the United States and Japan have shared.

"We celebrate not only cherry blossoms, but your friendship that has deepened over the years, between America and Japan," said Weed. "At the first arrival of Commodore [Matthew C.] Perry in 1854, we have sought ways to work together closely and broaden our mutual understanding and deep appreciation for each other's culture."

(Left) Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed listens as Yokosuka CIty Mayor Yuto Yoshida provides opening remarks during the 17th annual U.S. - Japan Spring Festival held on board CFAY March 28. This year's festival included a dance performance and appearances by the Midori Gaoka (Green Hill) Girl's High School Baton Club and the Takeyama Self-Defense *Taiko* Drum Squad.

For the attendees, the event offered a day filled with food and entertainment.

"This year's program features a variety of exciting events including a dance performance and appearances by the Midori Gaoka (Green Hill) Girl's High School Baton Club and the Takeyama Self-Defense *Taiko* Drum Squad," said Yoshida. "American food vendors are also available for your enjoyment while you view the cherry blossom trees in Kosano Park."

Additional entertainment included a fire truck display by Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Fire Department, performances by the Yokosuka Sparkling Spurs, which is a Japanese country and western line-dancing troupe, a rock climbing wall, ship tours and live music.

The food and entertainment helped to serve as a positive representation of the relationship between Americans and Japanese.

"Our long-standing alliance and genuine friendship have blossomed through a robust cultural exchange and economic development program that is like no where else in the world," said Weed.

CFAY announces plans to construct Irish pub on base

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed made this St. Patrick's Day one to remember by announcing plans to construct an Irish pub during a ceremony outside the bowling alley March 17.

Although the specifics of the project are still under review, the all hands facility will be built in the back corner of the parking lot adjacent to the bowling alley and be approximately 876 square feet in size.

"This has been two years in the planning. Groundbreaking is actually going to start in the fall of next year," said Weed. "We expect this to be done in the summer of 2012; hopefully right in time for my retirement ceremony so I can come back to Japan and retire here at the grand opening of the Irish pub. No pressure."

According to Yokosuka Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Food and Beverage Director Chip Kreisman, the idea for the project stemmed from a trip Weed took to Washington, D.C. while on temporary additional duty (TAD) and has blossomed under the cooperation between Yokosuka MWR, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East and Commander Naval Installations.

"[Weed] had heard that there were several concepts that we we're doing in the Navy, notably at the Naval Yard in Washington, D.C. He was TAD, saw it, fell in love with it and thought it would be a great addition to our Yokosuka community," said Kreisman. "We are, at this point, working on the conceptual design. It is funded and that is 100 percent. I think it is going to be a tremendous success."

The project is a MWR non-appropriated fund program that will be predominantly funded with locally-generated MWR profits, which means that no extra money will come out of resident's pockets or from the U.S. Government. The pub will cost approximately $2.1 million to construct.

The centralized location of the pub, the variety of items to be on the menu and the assorted beverages that will be on tap should help transform the pub and the area around it into a popular spot for residents.

"That really is the reason, to support our single Sailors," Weed said. "We have the galley here, the bowling alley - this is becoming single Sailor central."

(Left) Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Community Activities Director Mark Richards and MWR Entertainment Director Earl Murray unveil a billboard depicting what the new CFAY Irish pub may look like once it is built during an announcement ceremony held March 17, outside the bowling alley. The new pub is expected to be completed in the summer of 2012.

Photo by John Sullivan

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CFAY ceremony celebrates Women's History Month

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) honored Women's History Month with a ceremony at the Adm. Arleigh Burke Officer's Club March 23.

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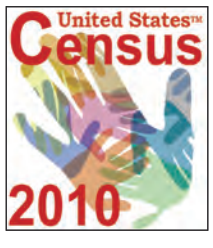

Defense Department gears up for U.S. 2010 census

The Defense Department is working with the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure that all military personnel are accounted for in the 2010 census.

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