Halloween safety tips

By MC2(SW) Gabriel S. Weber, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Before you put your costume together and stock up on candy corn, the safety team at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) has a few tips to keep the safety goblins away this Halloween.

When trick-or-treating begins, kids and parents alike need to be mindful of the potential hazards and steps they can take to minimize the danger.

"Costumes should be bright enough to ensure good visibility," said Maria Amansec, the recreational, athletic and home safety manager for CFAY. "As it gets dark and there's not a lot of illumination out there, the kids can be hard to see when they are walking on the sidewalks. Black or dark costumes are hard to see at night, unless the kids wear glow-in-the-dark or reflective tape."

In addition to visibility, Amansec said that proper fit and fire resistance are also important.

"I know some parents buy costumes online, so they should make sure the costumes will not ignite quickly or burn easily," she said. "Some kids also wear baggy costumes which can be a trip hazard, so they should not droop below the heel."

Masks should be securely fastened to prevent obstructing fields of vision, or non-allergenic cosmetics used instead, she added.

Besides a costume safety checklist, traffic safety is equally important as the sun goes down and excited trick-or-treaters take to the streets.

"Sometimes drivers may not see them," Dana Calvin, CFAY acting safety manager said of excited trick-or-treaters. "Children darting from door to door or through parking lots may not see a car backing out or turning into a parking space. We want the kids and their parents with them, to be mindful that there are other people on the roads."

Trick-or-treaters should walk using crosswalks and sidewalks whenever possible, carry flashlights and only go to lit houses for treats. Trick-or-treating hours in base housing areas are from 4:30 to 8 p.m. on Halloween night.

Calvin added that, when decorating within the home, it is important to keep electrical safety in mind and avoid running extension cords under carpets or rugs.

"The cord generates heat and the carpet could get hot and start a fire. Overloading a circuit, plugging too many devices into a socket could cause an electrical short, so be mindful of making sure that you don't overload your circuits and if you're going to display lights, make sure that you have a plan so that cords are not going to be out there for people to trip on."

Decorators should also use lights that are protected by the Underwriters Laboratory and should remember that candles are forbidden in base housing.

Contact Dana Calvin from the CFAY Safety Office at 243-5523 for more information.

Students get lesson on how to be good ambassadors

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Legal and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Teen Center joined forces with counselors from Nile C. Kinnick High School Oct. 7 at the Kinnick Little Theater to help teach freshmen and sophomores both what to do and what not to do during their time in Japan.

The two-part lesson was divided between the Teen Center and CFAY Legal; The Teen Center informed students on some of the things they could do on base and CFAY Legal was there to teach the kids the consequences of misconduct both on and of the base. CFAY Legal Paralegal Specialist Fernando Meave prepared a full brief for the kids, citing specific examples of the repercussions of bad behavior and detailed some of the differences between the legal processes in Japan and the United States and how the students could be adversely affected.

Kinnick High School (KHS) students listen during a special lesson created by ASACS Counselor Alice Ginkens and KHS Guidance Counselor Foster Jones outlining how to stay out of trouble and the consequences of misconduct while in Japan.

"Our relationship with the schools, specifically with Mrs. Ginkens and Mr. Jones, we were able to speak to the students about not only the potential for misconduct, but also the ramifications of them being involved in legal issues whether on base or off base," said Meave. "A lot of the teenagers don't have a good understanding of what it is like to be in jail, they don't have a good understanding of some of the special circumstances surrounding us here in Japan and the importance of staying out of trouble and being ambassadors in a foreign country."

Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Service (ASACS) Counselor Alice Ginkens worked with Kinnick High School Guidance Counselor Foster Jones to put together a guidance curriculum, which incorporates resources from the CFAY community to engage students, teaching them different ways to get by while living overseas in Japan. The program aims to reach all students throughout the year and to engage them in a manner that will help the students retain and take to heart everything they learn in the curriculum.

"Our intention is, 'Come to Yokosuka, we want you to have fun; but, don't get in trouble,'" said Ginkens. "We keep it very informative instead of 'don't do this, don't do that,' it's more to raise awareness with the students because a lot of times they... have a tourist mentality and are unaware of things they need to be aware of."

For more information on what you can do to help your child cope with the stresses of living in a new environment or to just make it through the ever increasing demands of adolescence, visit the Web site at www.asacs.org or give Alice Ginkens a call at 243-3515.

Adopt-a-Sailor serves up holiday for service members

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Forward-deployed Sailors are accustomed to living in foreign environments and making sacrifices their counterparts back home may not. Nevertheless, the holiday season is a particularly tough time for many single Sailors stationed aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) without family to celebrate and feast with during traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving.

The CFAY Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) has taken the lead this year in helping to ensure that many single Sailors will be able to enjoy a little piece of home here in Japan this Thanksgiving with the Adopt-a-Sailor program. The program provides Sailors the chance to enjoy a home-style Thanksgiving dinner with volunteer families who decide to open there homes and share the holiday for those without family in Yokosuka.

According to Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Randall Clift, CFAY DAPA coordinator, there has been a tradition aboard ships for many years amongst senior Sailors to invite their junior counterparts to holiday dinners at their own homes.

"Unofficially it's done on every ship, in the Navy, chiefs and first classes invite single Sailors that don't have family or are not going home for Thanksgiving; because, normally everyone saves their leave for Christmas, especially the first couple of years in the Navy," said Clift.

Applications for individuals who wish to take in a Sailor for the holiday are now being accepted and may be downloaded from the CFAY Web site at https:// www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka. Once the application form is filled out, they need to be faxed to 243-5088.

Although everyone is encouraged to participate in the program, there are some guidelines in place to help maintain a smooth and efficient process. Families are limited to inviting four, or fewer, Sailors to their homes. Hosts may live no further than 50 miles from CFAY and visiting Sailors must return to their quarters in accordance with their liberty card requirements. Additionally, volunteers are required to bring a copy of the request form along with a valid driver's license in order to pick up their adopted Sailor.

In cases of emergency or late returns, hosts are asked to call the CFAY command duty officer at 090-8046-5954. Additionally, no requests regarding the race, religion or sex of Sailors will be honored. However, it will be helpful for the hosts to indicate if they intend to serve a particular ethnic food or adhere to a special diet so that hosts may be matched to meet Sailors' preferences.

CFAY Energy Fair promotes awareness, conservation

By Fumiyo Sato, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) and Japanese corporations came together to educate Sailors, civilians and spouses about energy conservation at the commissary red brick area Oct. 14.

In the second annual event, several Japanese vendors in the Kanto Plain, including Tokyo Gas and Tokyo Electric Company, joined the Navy Exchange (NEX) and the commissary to promote energy efficient products at their booths.

"The main purpose of the Energy Fair is to promote energy awareness and get people to realize that energy conservation is important and to actually take part in saving energy," said Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East (NAVFAC) Resource Efficiency Manager Michael Gabiga. "The Navy has mandates that recently passed through Congress and presidential and executive orders. They had the Energy Policy Act in 2005 and [Energy] Independence Security Act of 2007 that President [George W.] Bush signed. Most recently, President [Barack] Obama signed an executive order to keep track of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the carbon footprint and saving energy ties into all those orders and acts."

The Cogeneration Power Plant, which officially opened Nov. 12, 2008, plays a significant role of reducing the energy consumption in the CFAY community where housing is the largest energy consumer.

"The cogeneration power plant helps energy conservation and reducing costs," said Tokyo Gas Public Sector Sales Section Manger Fumio Asada.

According to Gabiga, there has been a change in energy consumption since last year. "It has gone down," he said. "We've noticed the trend in housing and other activities on base, but there is more to be done."

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, during his remarks, encouraged attendees to take action to save energy consumption by offering a few suggestions.

"Things like don't leave water running when you don't need it, turn lights off when you leave the room and don't leave lights on during the day," Weed said.

During the Energy Fair, attendees had the opportunity to learn about new products, such as waterless toilets, electric cars, energy saving lights and other items available at the NEX and the commissary.

"It was very interesting. I am glad that I saw this," said fair attendee Örn Hrafusson, after seeing the water-saving faucet.

At the NEX booth, a representative introduced energy saving light bulbs, concentrated laundry detergent that needs less water to clean, candles and other energy efficient products.

"A lot of people aren't conscious about how simple it is to really conserve energy," said NEX Associate Development and Customer Relations Specialist Angelique Adams. "So as they stopped by, they go, 'I didn't know you carried this or I am familiar with that,' but I think that it brings to them not only knowledge but understanding of how simple it really is [to save energy]. I think it will bring more awareness if we continue to do it. It's a group effort everyone needs to be involved in; it benefits all of us in the end."