

Is it really time to go to the ER?

Page A-3



Sounds of the Season with the Air Force band

Page B-1



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ARCTIC WARRIOR

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WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

By Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Winstead
USARAK Public Affairs

The second Saturday of every December has a special meaning to those with loved ones who have lost their lives in service to our country.

On that day, the Wreaths Across America program honors fallen service members in national cemeteries each holiday season.

Service members and area citizens brought the tradition to Fort Richardson National Cemetery Dec. 10, placing more than 680 wreaths of evergreens with red ribbons on the veterans' headstones.

Among the service representatives presenting wreaths during the event's opening ceremony were U.S. Army Alaska Chief of Staff Col. Gary Agron and Lt. Gen. Stephen Hoog, Alaskan Command and 11th Air Force commander.

Wreaths Across America, started by Morrill Worcester, the owner of a decorative wreath company in Harrington, Maine, expanded to a national level after photos of his donations of wreaths to Arlington Cemetery were circulated in 2005.

Since then, the event has spread to every national cemetery in the United States thanks to the contributions of donors.

Following the ceremonial opening of the Fort Richardson event, in which representatives of each branch of service placed wreaths, guests were invited to help place the remaining wreaths in three sections of the cemetery.

While the entire cemetery wasn't able to be adorned with wreaths, each section has at one time been honored in such a fashion and sections are rotated each year.

"We started this tradition in Alaska with a donation of only about 90 wreaths, and now we are receiving almost 700 wreaths," said Cary Kimball of the Civil Air Patrol Alaska Chapter, which helped organize the event, in opening remarks at the event.

"I believe that one day we will cover this entire cemetery," Kimball said.

For information on the Wreaths Across America program, please contact Mary Rall, USARAK Community Relations at 384-2018, or visit www.wreath-sacrossamerica.org.



ABOVE: Wreaths adorn the headstones of Fort Richardson National Cemetery Dec. 10 during the local observance of "Wreaths Across America," a nationwide program honoring fallen veterans each holiday season.

LEFT: Army Col. Gary Agron, U.S. Army Alaska chief of staff, places a wreath on behalf of USARAK. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew E. Winstead/U.S. Army Alaska Public Affairs)

Army announces cuts in civilian personnel

USARAK Public Affairs
News Release

Alaska faces a potential loss of 78 civilian Army positions overall due to a mandate by the Department of Defense to reduce its civilian workforce.

Fort Wainwright may incur a possible loss of 62 positions, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson stands to lose 10 positions, and Fort Greely may decrease by six positions. There are approximately 2,200 Army civilian employees in Alaska.

In July, the Army announced a planned reduction of approxi-

mately 8,700 civilian employees nationwide by Sept. 30, 2012.

These cuts are based on Department of Defense resource decisions as reflected in the Fiscal Year 2012 President's Budget and require an overall reduction of Army civilian workforce to comply with decreased funding levels.

Alaska is not alone in facing personnel cuts. The Army has identified 70 different locations that may be affected by these reductions across eight commands and agencies, with nearly 90 percent of the cuts taking place within Installation Management Command, Army Materiel Command and Training

and Doctrine Command.

Thirty-seven states will be affected by these reductions, with the majority of personnel cuts occurring in those states with the largest military and Army civilian populations. Most of the civilian employees in Alaska Army positions are part of the Installation Management Command.

Local commanders are responsible for shaping their workforces within their allocated budgets and may use all available personnel management tools and options to achieve objectives while mitigating adverse impact on the workforce.

A reduction of 78 civilian

Army positions within Alaska does not necessarily mean 78 people will lose their jobs. The human resources policies and procedures within the DoD civilian personnel system provide multiple options that support our employees when their positions are eliminated.

Officials are still looking at numbers and weighing options. Some displaced employees could be moved into vacant positions.

Other reductions could be accomplished through attrition, by employees leaving for another location or employee retirements. Leadership and human resource personnel are working with the

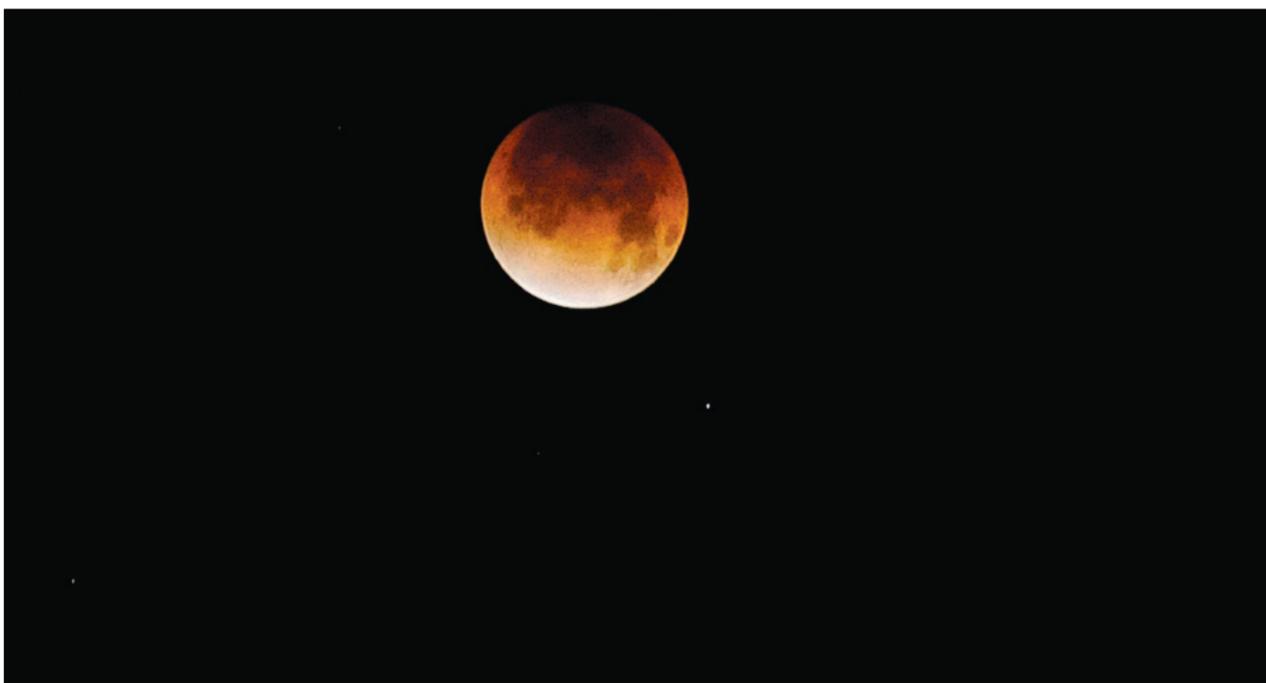
employees' union to ensure every decision is made with the employees' best interests in mind.

"Our people are our most critical and important asset and we will do everything we can to ensure they are taken care of," said Col. Ronald Johnson, Fort Wainwright garrison commander.

"Our civilian workforce is the continuity that keeps our military installations going. These are the folks who make things happen so the Soldiers can do their jobs. They are the people who take care of the families. It's my job to see that we take care of them as well," Johnson said.

Moon Condition Red

The last full moon of 2011 was eclipsed early Saturday morning at about 5:30 a.m. The eclipse was visible from the Anchorage area, and was – for early risers – an unusual and beautiful sight. The event was the last total lunar eclipse until 2014. For upcoming eclipses, visit eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov. (U.S. Air Force photo/John Pennell)



This is the last issue of the Arctic Warrior for 2011. Enjoy the holidays, and we'll be back with a new issue Jan. 6.

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Index

- Beating the winter bluesA-2
- Is it really an emergency?.....A-3
- NCO continues wife's passion.....A-4
- Briefs and announcements.....A-8
- Thoughts on Hanukkah.....B-2
- Community Calendar.....B-3
- Christmas Bird Count.....B-4



Filling the stockings

Wounded warriors and deployed troops have been receiving small stockings stuffed with treats, courtesy of a Ramstein Air Base master sergeant devoted to continuing his wife's legacy of service. See Page A-4.

Holiday greetings from PACAF leaders

By Gen. Gary North
Pacific Air Forces Commander

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The holiday season is here again — this past year really “Flew by!” It’s certainly fitting to pass a huge “Thank You” to our PACAF Airmen and their fami-

lies...thank you for all you do in the PACOM region and around the world.

The season always provides us the time to reflect on the truly amazing command achievements this year...achievements that would not have been possible without your professional commitment and personal dedication to our PACAF mission.

Central among these was the support levied by our Pacific team in Operation Tomodachi following the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan.

Your phenomenal efforts and outstanding outreach and support during this tragic event provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the Japanese people, underscoring and deepening our commitment to the government and the citizens of Japan.

PACAF Airmen also participated in

multiple combat operations, exercises and deployments throughout the theater and around the world, answering our nation’s call to support and promote peace and stability.

As always, wherever you are, please take some time to remember our warfighters who are in harm’s way this holiday season.

We offer our heartfelt appreciation and respect to them and their families and send our best wishes for a successful deployment and safe journey home.

The holiday season is an excellent and well-deserved chance to enjoy time with family and friends.

That said, we are all aware it may also be a difficult time for others. Pay attention to your wingmen and their families. Be on the lookout for those who may require some assistance. We are “all in” and as part of our

PACAF family we should all take care of each other, please!

This particular year, we should also reflect that seventy years ago Airmen worked together to respond to the call when Oahu came under attack and ushered in U.S. involvement in World War II.

Today, the men and women of PACAF continue to promote security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe. We are all proud to call ourselves PACAF Airmen.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Brooke McLean and I, alongside our command leadership team are humbled by the truly monumental work each of you does every day. As we look forward to 2012 and beyond, we wish you and your families the very best for the holiday season. Happy Holidays!

Priority Placement Program serves both employee, DoD needs

By Debbie Gildea
Air Force Personnel, Services and Manpower Public Affairs

Civilian employees adversely affected by actions such as transfer of function or base realignment and closure may be eligible for assistance through the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program.

“The priority placement program sometimes conjures concern when mentioned, but it is one of the most positive programs available, and benefits employees, the Air Force and the Department of Defense,” said Ray Gonzales, the Air Force Personnel Center workforce transition branch chief.

Depending on the situation, the program provides mandatory placement, matching eligible well-qualified employees to vacant positions throughout the DoD.

“That helps us maintain a relatively stable workforce and enables us to meet force management objectives as well,” Gonzales said.

Defense Department officials are working to bring civilian employment levels back to fiscal 2010 levels, which involves eliminating some positions and restructuring others, Gonzales said, adding that priority placement enables leaders to restructure while taking

advantage of an existing skilled, motivated workforce.

But PPP is not just for use during government-initiated actions, Gonzales said. It is also a useful tool for unexpected situations.

“The program helped us place employees and family members displaced by natural disasters, like Hurricanes Andrew, Katrina and Rita,” Gonzales said.

The intent of the program — during any displacement event — is to place qualified registrants in order to maintain a stable, trained, experienced workforce, Gonzales said.

For a PPP placement to occur, the registrant matched against a job vacancy must be well qualified for the position and certified by the current supervisor, he added.

“PPP doesn’t just benefit employees,” Gonzales said. “It’s a smart tool that will enable leaders to continue to accomplish their mission following displacement events, and it’s a money-saving tool allowing leaders to take advantage of available, educated, trained and skilled employees.”

For more information about the priority placement program and other personnel issues, visit the Air Force Personnel Services website or the Office of Personnel Management website at www.opm.gov.

Be a wingman this holiday

Anonymous commentary
Air Force News Service

The holidays are a time for togetherness, sharing and reflection. Our military brothers and sisters will be headed home for the holidays. Since this is normally a time when the operations tempo starts to slow down a little bit, it allows most of the offices around the base to implement a minimal manning schedule. This gives everyone a chance to rest, relax, and recharge their batteries before jumping into what will inevitably be another busy year.

For those who choose to remain in the local area for the holidays, the question that eventually comes to mind is: What do I do with all of this extra time? Sure, you might smirk at this question, knowing exactly what you intend to do with your down time. But the question you should ask yourself instead is: What are my teammates doing with this extra time away from work? If you are struggling to answer this question, you might want to re-evaluate your role as a leader and most importantly — as a wingman.

The term is used a lot because its importance cannot be stressed enough. A good wingman is not just there for you when you need a ride home after a night on the town. Instead, a good wingman should know

their fellow Airmen well enough to know when something is wrong, and then take action to help them through the situation. Just because the holidays are upon us does not mean you get to take a break from being a wingman. It means your role is more important than ever.

Everyone knows the holidays can be a stressful time of year and the reasons for staying in the local area vary from person to person. Loved ones are deployed. Plane tickets are too expensive to go home. It’s also just a fact of life that not everyone can be on leave at the same time. This is because we still have a mission to accomplish and teammates to support downrange. But just because someone is staying in the local area does not mean they should be alone for the holidays.

Although it usually provides a laugh to have a lieutenant speak from “experience,” I risk doing so because this subject is near and dear to my heart. Being prior enlisted, I can relate to what it feels like to live in the dorms and continue to work through the holidays. As a brand new airman first class, I was sent to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam.

For those familiar with Guam, you can imagine the high cost of airline tickets. For this reason, most people choose not to come back

to the continental United States for the holidays. Given the cost of airline tickets, I was content with staying in my dorm room the whole time playing Madden...’98.

I didn’t own a car, so dinner at the dining facility was also on the agenda. But that plan changed when one of the ‘tech’ sergeants in another flight told me (he did not ask) that I was going to spend Christmas with his family. I resisted at first, because it seemed like a weird situation to spend Christmas with people I barely knew, but I relented. I am forever thankful that I did.

Thanks to him, I spent that first Christmas away from home as part of a family, my new military (Air Force) family. I was provided with the opportunity to eat a home-cooked meal and hang out with his family instead of sitting back in my dorm room with just

my thoughts and Playstation. He accepted the responsibility of being a wingman.

So as you close up shop this holiday season, ask around to see what everyone has planned and do not stop asking until you have a legitimate answer.

And if someone plans on being alone, invite them in to your home and don’t take no for an answer. They won’t be sorry for it and they will remember the gesture for the rest of their lives.



Don't let short winter days make you SAD

By Army Staff Sgt.
Matthew Winstead
USARAK Public Affairs

Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a condition believed to be brought on by several different elements, many of which are part of living in Alaska, such as prolonged periods of darkness, long cold winters and distance from family and friends.

It’s more than just a case of the blues. Sometimes it lasts for months and it can have a negative effect on your professional performance and personal life.

Because it can be caused by environmental and climate-related factors, service members are often caught off guard by its effects, according to Air Force Maj. David Wright, director of Physiological Health and Resiliency on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Sufferers may wonder why they’re suddenly not enjoying previously enjoyable hobbies and experiencing unexplained fatigue.

“SAD is not considered a disorder in and of itself, rather it is considered a symptom of a larger condition that we will then treat,” said Air Force Maj. David C. Wright, director of Physiological Health and Resiliency on JBER. “Some of the things we recommend as official treatment options include light therapy, where patients expose themselves to up to 30 minutes of diffused white fluorescent light



Richard Salvidge receives a healthy dose of light therapy at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Light therapy from these lamps, more commonly known as “happy lights,” are a preventive measure against seasonal affective disorder. Salvidge is a civilian contractor out of Heidelberg, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by/Airman 1st Class Yash Rojas)

every day, and we highly encourage our patients to maintain their routine even if they aren’t feeling into it. Inconsistency tends to feed those negative feelings.”

Service members who experience seasonal depression often use their decreased enjoyment of their hobbies as an excuse to stop partaking in them, according to Wright. This often results in even more negative feelings as service members stop activities that normally make them happy.

The basic idea is that if you continue to do what you like doing, it will help see you through.

Keeping in contact with friends and family back home can help combat the feelings of isolation that can come with SAD, according to Wright. Engaging in activities like sports and recreational events are also effective measures to fight the condition.

There are several resources available to servicemembers on JBER, most of which do not require involvement from the service member’s chain of command, according to Wright.

“We understand that there may be some feelings of ‘Will this hurt my career?’ on the part of soldiers

struggling with the idea of seeking help. The vast majority of our classes and preventative instruction does not involve notifying the chain of command of someone who comes to see us,” Wright said.

The exceptions to that are if the person requests their leadership to be notified, or in cases in which there is evidence to suggest service members may harm themselves or others.

“In my opinion, asking for help is the way to go,” Wright said. “For those worried it may harm their immediate evaluations, I would argue that it shows better leadership po-

tential as it demonstrates that they know when to look for help and not get in over their heads.”

If you suspect you have seasonal affective disorder or seasonal depression, call Military and Family Life Consultants for informal meetings that do not go on record. Civilian counselors are on staff to assist service members and family members. The office, in Building 600 on the Richardson side, can be reached at 384-0405.

Help is also available at the Behavioral Health Clinic at 384-0405, or the Mental Health Clinic at 580-2181.

ARCTIC WARRIOR

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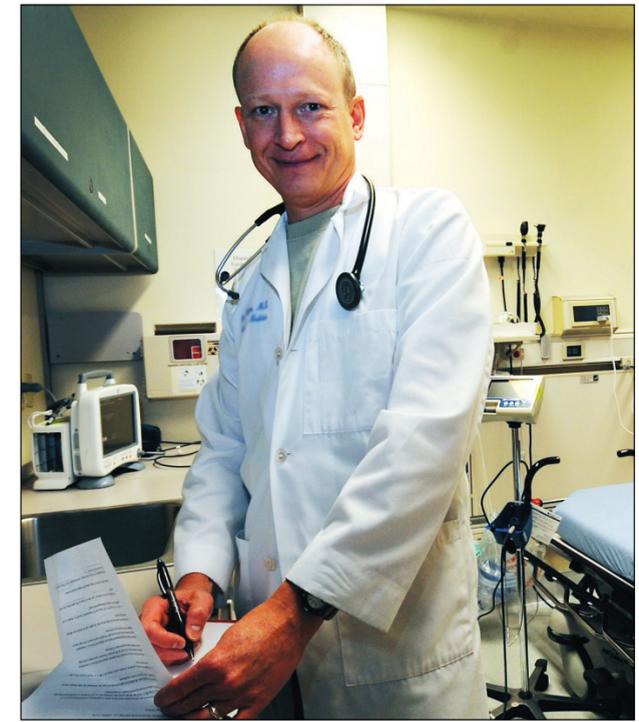
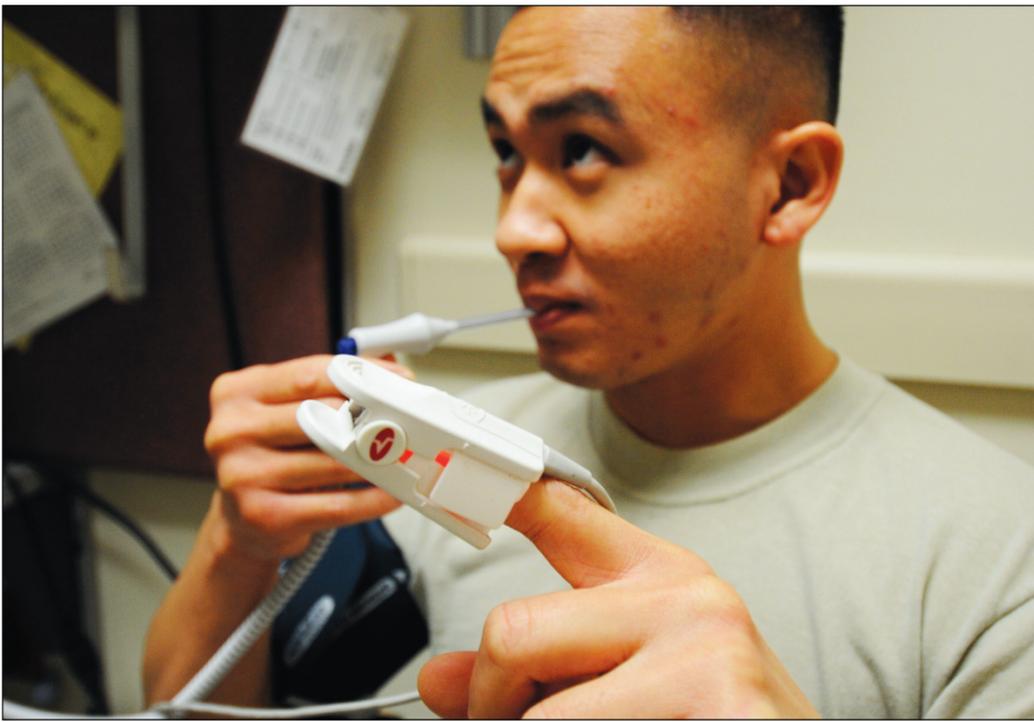
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When you feel terrible, is it time for this...

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Cynthia Spalding
JBER Public Affairs

“Man, I’m so sick. I think I need to go to the emergency room.”

The key word here is “think.” Many times patients that seek medical attention at an emergency room could be better helped if they scheduled an appointment with their primary care manager.

Maj. Richard Weber, 673d Medical Operations Squadron emergency room flight commander, said, “seventy-five percent of emergency room patients are routine colds, upset stomachs and prescription refills that could be taken care of by appointment with the member’s primary care representative.”

The ER has seen an increase in the number of patients seeking care at the ER unaware of open PCM appointments. Knowing when to and when not to go to the ER could alleviate wait times and ER patient overload.

“In the ER, the word ‘emergency’ is set up ideally for life- and limb-threatening situations,” Weber said. “Emergent is when we need to do something right now, urgent is when need to do something soon.”

The following questions and answers, provided by Weber, are common and the ones doctors and nurses wish potential patients would think about before coming in to the ER.

Who is eligible for care?

Any military beneficiaries. Veterans Affairs personnel, dependants, civilians and contract workers who are injured while on duty are all eligible for care. If a civilian is visiting the base and is injured, we provide care to stabilize, then they are transferred to a local hospital off base.

What is provided?

“We provide everything from reassurance, as in a mother’s concern for a child, all the way to resuscitation of a trauma victim,” said Weber.

How sick or injured do I need to be?

Ideally, a high-level need of urgent care is preferred in order to receive emergent care.

For example, as a medical tool, the emergency room is designed for the guy who fell on the ice today and needs care versus the guy who is coming in for knee pain that he’s had for the last six months.

As an analogy, you would not take your car to the body shop for an oil change; it’s not the most efficient use of that service. Primary care is for the on-going symptoms of pain.

Why do I wait long hours?

There is a triage system the ER uses, which is the initial screening that allows us to identify those who are in urgent need of our care versus those that can wait a little longer.

For example, someone with chest pain will trump someone with a cold. The triage is a simple way to rate the severity of the emergency.

The next trump card is when our ambulances come in, they take priority.

Should I call an ambulance?

Again, ideally when life, limb or eyesight is threatened is when you should call.

A time not to, for example, would be a minor sprain, cut fingers or just needing a ride to the hospital.

If an ambulance is sent out on a non-emergency call and your loved one is in need of emergency care, it could be delayed do to the non-urgent call that was previously made.

What if I go into labor?

Birthing labor is usually an expected event. The Labor & Delivery unit is also open 24 hours. Expectant mothers can go directly to L&D or we can assist them getting there.

Are there times people don’t go to the ER when they really should?

In the military healthcare system, problems more arise more often when patients bypass other closer ERs to get to a military hospital because patients believe they won’t be “covered” at an outside ER, Weber said.

A quick call to TriCare or their PCM afterwards will start the process of covering non-military ER visits.

There are many avenues patients can use to contact their PCM such as MiCare, Tricare online, or even leaving a telephone message with their PCM. Medication refills can often be done over the phone as well.

“I hope that patients will start to understand that it is not first-come, first-serve in an ER, it’s the patient with the most emergent need that comes first,” Weber said.



...or is it really an emergency?



TOP LEFT: Senior Airman Owen Wijaya demonstrates having his heart rate and temperature checked as part of a triage system in the emergency room Dec. 8. The ER has many capabilities to serve patients from scraped knees to trauma stabilization. Knowing the difference between emergency and non-urgent needs can help you receive the best care for your situation. Wijaya is a medical technician with the 673d Medical Operations Squadron.

TOP RIGHT: Maj. Richard Weber, 673d Medical Operations Squadron emergency room flight commander, poses for a photo Dec. 8.

CENTER: Cecilia Meyers demonstrates helping a patient at the check-in window of the emergency room.

ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Clarence Kelley and Senior Airman Kianay Vaughn, both of the 673d MDOS, demonstrate preparing an ambulance for an emergency Dec. 8. (U.S. Air Force photos/Staff Sgt. Cynthia Spalding)

Master sergeant continues wife's dream of serving troops

Ramstein NCO makes treat-filled stockings for deployed, wounded troops after wife's passing

by Airman 1st Class Trevor Rhynes
Air Force News Service

"She was my best friend for 27 years," said Master Sgt. Lee "Pepper" Spaulding, of the 24th Intelligence Squadron, 693rd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group. "Jenny made me a better man.

"This is what she would have wanted done, so this is why I'm doing it."

It started in 2004 while Spaulding was deployed to Southwest Asia. His wife, Jenny, started making simple stockings to send in place of care packages.

"I was deployed with approximately 50 people and Jenny sent more than 100 stockings," he said. "Our job was to give them out to the people around us."

After Spaulding came back from deployment, his wife decided to expand their project.

With help from members of his unit, the Spauldings were able to fund "Jennywings Holiday Stockings."

"We made enough for Airmen deployed from our unit and decided to send some to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va.," he said.

For the Spauldings, reaching a fraction of service members was not enough. They were ready to spread their holiday cheer across the world.

"My wife wanted to come here to do the stockings," Spaulding said of Ramstein Air Base. "This is where all of the wounded come through, and she wanted to support as many of them as possible."

However, Jenny wasn't able to see her goal accomplished. In April 2009, she lost her battle with bone cancer.

"Six months after she passed away, I got orders to come here," Spaulding said. "Coming here was truly a unique opportunity that I had to take."

Spaulding took to the sewing machine and continued his wife's dream.

"A big reason I continue doing this is because it's how I work out my grief," he said. "Continuing this project is what she would have wanted me to do."

Spaulding began working on the stockings as soon as he was settled here. With the help of a long-time friend, he was able to expand the project.

"I have volunteered for what feels like my entire life and this is one of the most rewarding for me," said Linda Towne, a supervisor at the Ramstein Base Exchange. "Being able to support our service members, injured and deployed, really does mean a lot to me," Towne said.

As far as production of the stockings goes, there has been a lot of improvement.

"Last year we did about 200 stockings, which included our group, a unit in Hawaii, the wounded warrior Christmas party put together by the United Service Organizations, and the Combat Aeromedical Staging Facility," Spaulding said.

With more than 500 stockings already made this year, Spaulding and his partner sought the help of Ramstein Air Base Airmen

and family members.

"This year we have invited the community to help," Towne said. "We work long hours, have doubled last year's stockings and added downrange hospitals.

"Next year, given the willingness of volunteers, we hope to double this year's numbers as well."

The difference between a conventional care package and these stockings is simple – the look.

"These are easy," Spaulding said. "When you walk into some places and there is a big box of care packages, it could look intimidating. We made the stockings small, giving us the option to tailor them to the person receiving it."

Once all the stockings are made, they are sent out to a variety of agencies and locations.

Jennywings Holiday Stockings works with Soldiers Angels, the USO and a hospital located at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, as well as deployed service members downrange.

For Senior Airman Steve Johnson, also with the 24th IS, receiving a stocking broke up the everyday routine that comes with being deployed.

"I received a Jennywings stocking last Christmas while in Iraq," Johnson said. "When I received it, it momentarily stopped time and put me in the holiday spirit."

"Small things like this remind us that there are people back home who are thinking about us."

Providing service members with a morale boost during the holiday season is something that Spaulding hopes to continue for a long time.

"I plan on doing this for years, eventually retiring here for a while," Spaulding said. "But while I'm here, I'm going to be doing this."



A "Jennywings Holiday Stocking" hangs on a wall at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Dec. 7. The Jennywings program was created by Master Sgt. Lee Spaulding and his wife Jenny as a way to bring holiday cheer to deployed and injured service members. Spaulding continued and even expanded the program after Jenny's passing, and now distributes more than 500 stockings to service members each year. (U.S. Air Force photo illustration/Airman 1st Class Trevor Rhynes)

Ring in the New Year at JBER-E's Wired Café

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Cynthia Spalding
JBER Public Affairs

Soldiers, Airmen and barracks and dorm-dwellers are invited to attend the New Year's party at the Wired Café Dec. 31.

This is the second year that the Wired Café, located centrally in the Elmendorf dorms, has hosted a New Year's Eve party.

"We had a great turnout last year," said Dan Evans, Cadence International Chapel young adult ministry pastor. "Our goal was to really tailor the event to the Airmen who are underage, unable, or uninterested in joining in the typical New Year's festivities downtown. This is a unique option for them; it's literally just a few minutes' walk from their dorm."

This year's event will include hourly prize giveaways, free pizza, games and of course, the countdown to the New Year.

The party will start at 9 p.m. and last until 1 a.m. Bring friends and any fun, loud noise-makers to help ring in the new year.

"It was a truly memorable experience. My friend Joe even proposed to his fiancé there," said Senior Airman Steven Adams, a C-17 Globemaster III crew chief with the 3rd Maintenance Squadron. "Laughter, funny food challenges, video games, meeting new friends, darts and lots of prizes made up the night. It didn't feel like I was on base or even the dorm campus."

This event is provided by Airmen, for Airmen, is open to anyone with base access. Prize giveaways are offered only to dorm residents.

The Wired Café is open year-round for Airmen. Primary as an out-reach to single, dorm-dwelling Airmen, the café offers a centrally-located social atmosphere where homemade dinners are made every Friday, gaming systems, free wifi, coffee and a kitchen area are all available for use. As a reminder, the dormitory campus and the Wired Café are alcohol-free buildings.



Airmen cook for dorm residents during a Friday-night meal at the Wired Cafe. The weekly meals offer dorm residents an alternative to dining halls. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jack Sanders)



A forklift of cookies

Birchwood ABC Elementary School sixth grader Hunter Harr sits behind the wheel of a 10 K AT forklift while cargo movement specialist Senior Airman Josef Lenz of the 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron describes the controls and capabilities. Harr is one of four students from the school who recently delivered banners and 60 dozen cookies to the 773rd Logistics Readiness Squadron as a gift to service members on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (U.S. Air Force photo/Erin Eaton)

Air Force expands FY12 officer voluntary force management measures

By Eric M. Grill
Air Force News Service

Air Force leaders announced Dec. 6 the expansion of voluntary officer separation measures for fiscal 2012 as part of the service's ongoing force-management initiatives.

Air Force leaders implemented a tailored, multi-year program in 2010 to reduce the personnel numbers to meet the service's authorized end-strength level of 332,800 active-duty Airmen by Sept. 30, 2012.

In September, the Air Force announced the FY12 Officer 10-8 Commission Waiver Program allowing eligible officers in the line of Air Force, Line of the Air Force-Judge Advocate General, Chaplain, Biomedical Service Corps and Medical Service Corps competitive categories, unless specifically

excluded, to retire with reduced active commissioned service.

Based on Air Force needs, eligible officers may request to retire with at least 20 years total active federal military service and a minimum of eight years total active federal commissioned service as of the approved retirement date.

Also announced in September was the FY12 Officer Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Program which allows officers otherwise eligible for the 10-8 Commission Waiver Program to help facilitate their retirement no later than Sept. 1, 2012.

The expansion to the voluntary FY12 Force Management Program now include the FY12 Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Waiver Program be-

ing offered to lieutenant colonels and below as well as the addition of the FY12 Time-in-Grade Waiver Program and the FY12 PALACE CHASE Program.

The Time-in-Grade Waiver Program is offered to lieutenant colonels in certain competitive categories or Air Force specialties.

The program allows them to request retirement in their current grade if they have two years time in grade and 20 years total active federal military service as of the requested retirement date.

The Limited Active Duty Service Commitment Waiver Program is now open to officers in selected Air Force specialties to request retirement or separa-

tion prior to completing specified active duty service commitments or service obligations. Officers approved for a waiver must retire no later than Sept. 1, 2012 or separate no later than Sept. 29, 2012.

The FY12 PALACE CHASE program provides additional active duty service commitment waiver authority for lieutenant colonels and below in select Air Force specialties to facilitate transfer from active-duty service to an Air Reserve Component.

Transfer to an Air Reserve Component results in a one-to-one (not less than one year or greater than six years) commitment.

Air Force officials regularly review the service's manpower

and personnel capabilities to ensure they align with current, emerging and future Air Force missions.

Airmen transitioning from active-duty service as a result of force management are eligible to continue serving in the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

Additionally, Airman and family readiness centers around the world host the Department of Labor Transition Assistance Program, offering Airmen information about the GI Bill and vital resources for a successful transition from the Air Force.

For more information on force management programs, visit the Air Force Personnel Services website at <https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/>.



Briefs and Announcements

JBER Pharmacy Closure
673d Medical Group Pharmacy Services will not be available on Dec. 23 and Dec. 30 in recognition of the Pacific Air Forces Family Days. The pharmacy will also be closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Full service will be available on all other days surrounding the holiday weekends.

For emergency pharmacy support, please visit the 673d Medical Group emergency department.

Defense Biometric ID System registration

All DoD ID card holders are required to enroll into the Defense Biometrics Identification System on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to include Active Duty, Reserve, Army National Guard family members and retirees.

All personnel are required to be registered by January 2012. Register at the People Center, Building 8517, Room 100 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. or at the main entrance of the JBER hospital. People can also register at the Visitor Control Center which is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Personnel not registered by January 2012 will incur delays at the gate and be forced to the already busy Visitor Control Center to gain access to JBER.

Dining facility change

The Wilderness Inn, in Building 647 assumed all JBER-Richardson dining facility operations Oct. 31. The Gold Rush Dining Facility in Building 655 closed and is scheduled to reopen 90 days after the return of 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

Hours for the Wilderness Inn are:

- Monday thru Friday
- Breakfast: 7-9 a.m.
- Lunch: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Dinner 5-6:30 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday
- Breakfast: 8-10 a.m.
- Lunch: noon to 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner 4-5:30 p.m.

Renters insurance

Aurora Military Housing is providing free renter's insurance

to tenants of all Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson housing.

The renter's insurance will be provided, at no cost, to all existing and future JBER residents under a blanket policy with Great American Insurance.

For those tenants currently under the Aurora Allstate Policy, conversion to the new policy will be totally transparent and will be taken care of by Aurora.

Aurora will continue to honor its reimbursement arrangement with those tenants who have previously elected renter's insurance coverage by an insurer other than Allstate.

These tenants will be grandfathered under the previous reimbursement option and will continue to receive reimbursements during their stay with Aurora. A copy of the insurance policy will be available at the Aurora Military Housing office or visit www.auroramilitary-housing.com.

Military publications

Visit the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Public Affairs Office, 10480 22nd Ave., Suite 123, for copies of the following official military publications: the 2011 JBER Installation Guide and Phonebook (limited supply), Air Force Priorities poster series (large and small sizes), and Airman Magazine (2011 almanac issue).

City of Anchorage maps are also available.

Call 552-8918 for information.

Air Force ID card changes

Due to long wait times for walk-in customers, effective Monday, all military members or Department of Defense civilians will be required to schedule an appointment via the Military Personnel Section Customer Service Appointment website at <https://673fssmpscustomerseer.clickbook.net>.

The MPS will only see military members on a walk-in basis if their card is lost, needs to be unlocked, certificates need updating, or it ceases to function.

It is also highly encouraged for appointments to be made for civilian employee, dependent, Reserve, National Guard and retiree ID cards.

Furnishings management

The Furnishings Management Office offers 90-day loaner furniture for Airmen arriving at or leaving JBER-Elmendorf.

The FMO also has appliances for Airmen residing off base, for longterm use.

Delivery and pick-up is provided for 90-day loaner furniture and appliances. The FMO also has longterm furniture for ranks E-1 through E-5.

These items are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The service member is responsible for transporting these furnishings. Airmen should take a copy of PCS orders to the Government Housing Office at 6346 Arctic Warrior Drive to schedule delivery. Call 552-2740 for any questions regarding the FMO program. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Soldiers can call 384-0092 for the JBER-Richardson FMO.

Rental Partnership

The Rental Partnership Program is available to all eligible active-duty members and consists of two options. The first option, RPP Plus, includes utilities and sometimes cable costs providing an easier budget with a set rental payment year round.

The other option, RPP 5 Percent Below Market, saves the member five percent off the rental fee that other tenants pay however utilities are paid for by the tenant.

Both options are made available with no deposits or fees to the member with the exclusion of pet fees as it may apply.

This program is designed to provide active-duty military personnel, enlisted and officers, accompanied and unaccompanied with affordable off-base housing.

An allotment must be executed under either option of the RPP for the rental payments which is made directly to the landlord resulting in a more trouble free transactions.

See RPP officials at the Capital Asset Management Office, Building 6346, Arctic Warrior Dr., or call at 552-4328 or 552-4374 for further information and assistance regarding this program.

U-Fix-It Store reopened

The U-Fix-it Store, previously known as the Self Help Store on JBER-Richardson, reopened in Building 706 to all Aurora Military Housing tenants.

Assorted items for maintaining your home may be issued from the U-Fix-It Store.

The items available are subject to change and limits and some may have a cost.

There are also American flag kits, and fire extinguishers available. U-Fix-It work includes all home maintenance activities.

Its purpose is to allow the occupant to make minor improvements and repairs to their home and cut down on the amount of service orders at maintenance.

This allows tenants to do work in their homes themselves, thus improving the appearance of the interior as well as the exterior of the home.

There are two stores located on base. The JBER-Elmendorf location is 6350 Arctic Warrior Drive and it is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. (closed for lunch noon to 1 p.m.).

The JBER-Richardson location is Building 706 1st St., open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday; Saturday usage will require using the JBER-Elmendorf location.

For U-Fix-It information call 743-9070. A window blind cleaning machine is currently located at the JBER-Elmendorf location.

There will also be window blind cleaner installed at the JBER-Richardson within one or two months.

A "reservation required to use" policy is in place with the priority going to military members PCS-ing. For more information, call 552-4439.

MiCare registration

MiCare, the online personal health record and secure messaging application, has been available to patients and medical group staff at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson since December.

More than 2,400 patients have already signed up to take advantage of the ability to communicate with their primary care clinicians online.

Registered patients also have access to electronic records, allowing them to view and maintain their health records.

The 673d Medical Group is the first Air Force site to test this system.

Once registered, patients have the ability to participate in the study by completing a short series of surveys during the course of the next year. This provides an opportunity for all active-duty, retired and dependent patients to have an impact on shaping the future of Air Force health services.

To register, visit the Military Treatment Facility, where enrollment specialists are available in each primary care clinic.

All beneficiaries who are enrolled in the family health, pediatrics, flight medicine and internal medicine clinics are eligible to participate. Patients need to show a military identification card and provide information, including name, social security number, birthday and email address.

The enrollment specialist will enter the information and patients will receive an email which contains a link and instructions for completing the registration process.

The project team is monitoring results in order to develop future implementation plans.

The Air Force is also interested in understanding how this new technology impacts the quality of health care provided to patients, as well as the overall well being of the patient population.

A research team is conducting a study in conjunction with this pilot program.

Trespass notice

Trespassing on JBER-Elmendorf's two Combat Arms firing ranges for any reason is both illegal and dangerous.

Firing on each range is based on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson requirements and can occur at any time.

The outdoor range is located one mile north of Sixmile Lake and the indoor range is located in Building 4309 Kenny Ave.

For more information about this notice, call Combat Arms at 552-1846.

Thoughts on Hanukkah

Page B-2

Get out and join the Christmas Bird Count

Page B-4

www.jber.af.mil/news

COMMUNITY

Volume 2, No. 49

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

December 16, 2011



Members of the Air Force Band of the Pacific perform for a near-capacity crowd at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Anchorage Dec. 6. The show was one of two free concerts done to promote relations between Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and the Anchorage community. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Blake Mize)

Band shares 'Sounds of the Season' with Anchorage



Members of the Air Force Band of the Pacific perform for a near-capacity crowd at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Anchorage Dec. 6. The show was one of two free concerts done to promote relations between Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and the Anchorage community.

Senior Airman Blake Mize
JBER Public Affairs

The Air Force's Band of the Pacific put on a pair of shows at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Anchorage Dec. 6 and 7 that drew near-capacity crowds.

Air Force Maj. Michael Willen, Band of the Pacific commander, said that the "Sounds of the Season," as the shows were dubbed, was a gift from the military to the community of Anchorage and featured some of the Air Force's premier musicians performing traditional holiday songs. The audience feedback from the shows was extremely positive, he added.

"Many concert goers are repeat visitors from previous years and look forward to this event every December," he said. "It is a family-friendly event and entire families are often a large part of the audience."

Children who attended the event were also pleased to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus, who greeted the dozens of kids who were invited on stage to hear the story of Santa Claus.

"The kids especially look forward to seeing Santa and Mrs. Claus, who visit the concert every year," Willen said.

Willen also said the Air Force Band is a vital aspect of the Air Force mission as a whole that is directly tied to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force's priority to partner with the joint and coalition team to win today's fight.

"Locally, the Air Force Band of the Pacific is directly tied to U.S. Pacific Command's strategy based on partnership, readiness and presence," Willen said. "Our organization's capabilities are

well suited for enhancing U.S. relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, and we have done so within the last year by performing public concerts in Australia, Singapore and Japan on behalf of the U.S. State Department, U.S. Pacific Command and Pacific Air Forces."

The goal of the concerts is more than to just entertain, Willen said. The performances are meant to lift the spirits of the men and women in the fight.

"The PACAF Band "Top Cover" deployed to U.S. Central Command and gave 54 dynamic performances for more than 10,000 U.S. military, coalition partners, U.S. embassies and communities in and around our bases. Our performances are designed to create positive, long-lasting impressions of the United States and the U.S. Air Force in our audiences worldwide and lift the morale of our military members and coalition partners," Willen said.

Although the Air Force Band plays an important role in boosting morale abroad, they are also instrumental in local community relations.

"We serve as ambassadors for not only the Air Force, but members of all branches of the military who are stationed in Alaska," Willen said. "During our performances, we communicate the many positive contributions that our military members are making throughout the world on a daily basis."

"Additionally, we thank the communities for being supportive of the military, as they are our neighbors, friends and support network for our families, many of whom are stationed far from home."

BBB lists Top 12 holiday schemes to separate you from your money

BBB news release

Gifts and appeals may seem like true love, but Better Business Bureau serving Alaska, Oregon and Western Washington says be aware of the top 12 schemes of the holidays.

12. Trip Troubles: Before visiting relatives, evade overly enticing travel deals. Watch out for unexpected hotel and flight "confirmation" or "cancellation" notices—which trick consumers into clicking unsafe

links to "stop" unreal reservations.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/dont-let-scams-ruin-a-vacation-10473>.)

11. Getaway Goons: When shopping or vacationing, don't become a target for theft. Guard your belongings, be observant and pack lightly. Avoid broadcasting travel plans



or empty homes on social networks—as it may entice burglars.

10. Cheating Charities: Be skeptical of seasonal charitable solicitors who use high-pressure tactics, won't answer basic donation questions or can't provide proof of charity affiliation. Don't trust solicitations with invoices for past due payments.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwest>

ernwashington.bbb.org/article/holidays-the-time-for-smart-giving-13668.)

9. Good-For-Nothing Gift Cards: Avoid purchasing from disreputable third parties and examine gift cards closely for terms, restrictions, fees and expiration dates. Use cards early as they may become non-redeemable if retailers go out of business.

(For more, see <http://alaska.bbb.org/article/gift-cards-are-not-always-the-perfect>

See Scams, Page B-2

Hannukah celebrates the miracle of rededication and light

Commentary from the
673d ABW Chaplain's office

My father was also an Air Force chaplain. Being a combo "PK" and "OK" ("preacher's kid" and "officer's kid") had its challenges, but one very distinct positive was interacting with families of many different religious faiths (or "no particular" faith).

I learned that mutual respect goes a long way in creating a true dialogue, and I committed to a lifetime of learning and effort applying/translating at least one aspect of another's faith into my own.

This year, the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah – celebrated for eight nights – falls between Dec. 20 and 28.

Although I could have written about this holiday based on my own research and understanding as a Christian chaplain, I thought it would be much more appropriate to have the first female rabbi to become an active-duty Air Force chaplain share her Hanukkah message with you.

The following was written by Chaplain (Capt.) Sarah Schechter of Joint Base Andrews, Md.

In America we are blessed with the opportunity to practice our religion freely. But it has not always been so throughout world history, and it was not like this for Jews under Syrian-Greek rule 2,200 years ago.

Hanukkah is the annual celebration of how Jews overcame this great adversity, with a little help from God.

The story of Hanukkah is recounted in First and Second Maccabees found in the Apocrypha, a Biblical book that is extra to the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible and canonized in the Catholic Bible.



In the 2nd century B.C.E., Israel and other countries came under the conquest of the Greek emperor Alexander the Great.

When he died, his kingdom was divided in half and Israel came under the Greco-Seleucid Empire ruled by his son, Antiochus III.

Antiochus III was also a benevolent ruler, but when he died in 176 B.C.E., his son Antiochus IV Epiphanes declared Judaism illegal. He desecrated the Jewish temple, and anyone caught studying the Bible, praying at a sanctuary, or observing the Sabbath was put to death.

It was against this historical backdrop that a tiny group of Jews called the Hasmoneans rose up in defiance of this horrible oppres-

sion. The leader of this effort was the Jewish priest Mattathias who famously said, "Whoever is for God, follow me."

His sons joined him and they became known as the Maccabees, literally, the "Hammers." The Maccabees and others "hammered away" against intolerance and triumphed.

In many ways Hanukkah is about the miracle of perseverance and the Godly value of freedom.

When the Jews recaptured their temple, they cleaned it and rededicated it – in fact, the Hebrew word for "rededicate" is Hanukkah.

So Hanukkah is the festival of rededication: rededication to one's principles, rededication to one's heritage and rededication to God.

But Hanukkah is also known as the festival of lights.

In ancient times a seven-branched menorah (candelabra) was always lit at the temple as a symbol of God's presence.

The fuel was a specially refined olive oil grown from a nearby grove (the Mount of Olives).

With the temple's defilement, most ritual items had been carried off or destroyed, yet miraculously, one flask of this oil, untouched, remained.

After the temple had been completely cleaned, the priests poured the precious little oil into the menorah hoping to bring light for at least one day.

The miracle, and hence the reason Jews light personal menorahs

to this day, is the oil lasted not one, but eight days, enough time for more oil to be processed for future illumination.

When we look at the burning lights of the menorah, we remember that just as God transformed the nature and essence of the oil, God can transform our nature.

This year, may we all be partners with God in transforming darkness into light and may each of us reflect God's heavenly splendor, to each other, here on earth.

(Editor's note: Information provided by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Keith Muschinske, 673d Air Base Wing Installation Chaplain; and Chaplain (Capt.) Sarah Schechter, Joint Base Andrews, Md.)

Scams

From Page B-1

holiday-gift-7928.)

8. Gotta-Have Goodies and Gadgets: Dodge deceptive deals and "free" offers on desirable toys, jewelry and electronics in audacious auctions, classified ad sites, social media posts, pop-up ads, online coupons, sweepstakes and surveys.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/free-trial-offers-24784>, and <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/completing-surveys-can-increase-telemarketing-calls-and-junk-mail-21026>.)

7. Cruel Credit Catches: During the big spending season, discard ads and offers for high-interest credit cards, costly layaway programs and payday loan traps.

6. Jester Jobs: Laugh off limited-time job offers for high-paying mystery shopping gigs and online work-at-home tasks. "Employers" may steal data from applications, fail to send start-up materials or induce paycheck money transfer schemes.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/job-scams-24716>.)

5. Suspicious Santa Sites: Steer away if "Santa" requests unnecessary personal data, doesn't abide by advertising laws or fails to disclose contact details and privacy policies.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/I-Saw-Mommy-Emailing-Santa-Claus-31280>.)

4. Dodgy Domains: Dangers may be hiding in holiday-themed articles, music, screensavers and other downloads. Before surfing the Web, social media sites or emails, update anti-virus protection and check firewalls. Avoid shopping or banking online on unsecured Wi-Fi networks at public places, like airports and hotels.

(For more, see <http://alaskaoregonwesternwashington.bbb.org/article/free-movie-and-music-downloads-could-be-costly-25766>.)

3. Hacking Holiday E-Cards: Do not click links or attachments in e-cards and other holiday greetings from unfamiliar senders. Ensure spam filters are set.

2. Bogus Bank Emails: Disregard sudden emails or text messages about bank account issues. Instead, contact banks or financial institutions directly to verify.

1. Deceiving Deliveries: Don't accept notices about delivery delays or confirmations on unordered packages; phishers and smishers often pose as well-known retailers or shipping companies to gain false credibility.

(Editor's note: The BBB serving Alaska, Oregon and Western Washington Works to advance marketplace trust. BBB is a neutral not-for-profit organization supported by BBB Accredited Businesses. BBB provides ethical business standards, BBB Business Reviews, Charity Reviews, complaint handling, marketplace events and tips.)

ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON
FORCE
SUPPORT SQUADRON

Happy Holidays from the 673d Force Support Squadron

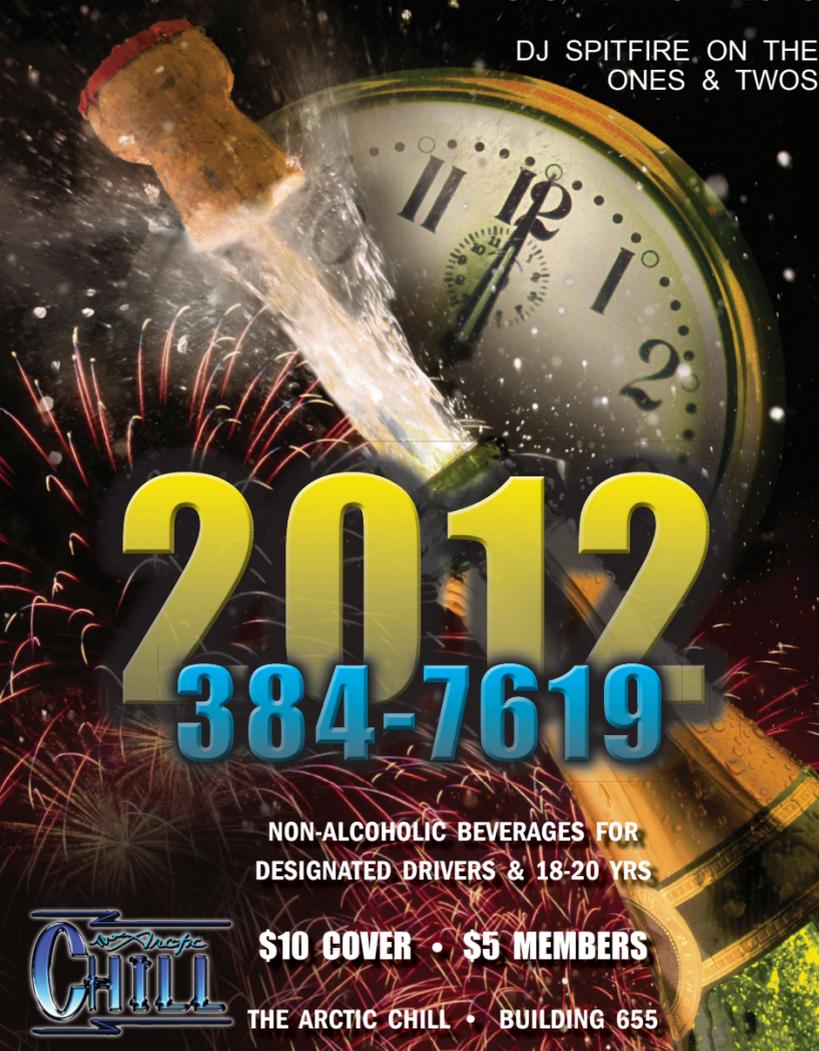
THE ARCTIC CHILL 4TH ANNUAL
NEW YEARS EVE
Celebration
DECEMBER 31 • 8 P.M. - 2 A.M.

OVER \$1,500 IN CASH & PRIZES
INCLUDING 2 ANDROID TABLETS

CHAMPAGNE TOAST AT MIDNIGHT

SNACKS ALL NIGHT LONG

DJ SPITFIRE ON THE
ONES & TWOS



2012
384-7619

NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES FOR
DESIGNATED DRIVERS & 18-20 YRS

\$10 COVER • \$5 MEMBERS

THE ARCTIC CHILL • BUILDING 655



Get Ski Conditions and
Updates at
facebook.com/hillbergskiarea

AT HILLBERG SKI AREA

December 18 • Noon - 5 p.m.

Santa & His Elves On the Slopes
Passing Out Prizes & Small Gifts
(while supplies last)

Dog Sled Rides on Hillberg Lake

Adults	\$10
Children 12 & under	\$5

December 23 & 24

Santa, Elves & Reindeer
Take Over Hillberg

FREE Lift Tickets for all Santa, Elves & Reindeer
in Costume (tubing tickets not included)

NEW YEARS EVE BOWL
DEC. 31
9 P.M. - 1 A.M.

1 Lane for Maximum of 5 Bowlers	\$120 PER LANE	Party Favors
Unlimited Games		Champagne or Sparkling Cider
Shoe Rental	Polar Bowl	Door Prizes
Snacks on Every Lane		Alcoholic and Non-alcoholic Drink Specials
2 Large Cheese or Pepperoni Pizzas		
1 Liter of Soda		

CALL 753-PINS FOR MORE INFORMATION

This package is by reservation only. Reservations can be made Dec 1 - 29 and must be paid in full at time of reservation. Payments are 100% refundable if canceled by 5 p.m. Dec 29. You will choose your lane and type of pizza at time of reservation. Reservations must be done in person at the Polar Bowl.

Community happenings

FRIDAY
Curator's Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center tour
 The Anchorage Museum hosts a tour of the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center, with more than 600 Alaska Native artifacts on loan. Curator tours are offered on the third Friday of each month at noon. For information call 929-9200.

FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY
Alaska Aces games
 The Aces battle the Ontario Reign at 7:15 p.m. all three nights at the Sullivan Arena. Visit www.alaskaaces.com or call 258-2237.

SATURDAY
Christmas Village
 The Dena'ina center hosts the fourth annual Christmas Village, featuring 200 vendors selling an assortment of gifts for everyone on your list. Admission is free. For information call 272-5634.

Christmas Around the Samovar Russian style
 St. Innocent Russian Orthodox Cathedral hosts this festival of food. Gourmet cookies, tea, Christmas foods, fish pies, clam chowder, borscht and more provide a taste of Russian culture from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information call 338-1440.

Gingerbread carnival
 Get into the holiday spirit with the kids by making and decorating gingerbread houses, having photos taken with Santa and making presents for friends. Head to the Spenard Recreation Center from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Parents must stay with the children. For information, call 343-4495.

Anchorage Ballet Christmas 2011
 International guest artists join the Anchorage Ballet performing favorites from "The Nutcracker" at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Guests include the Momentum Dance Collective. For information visit www.anchorageballet.com or call 569-3267.

SUNDAY
Family Holiday Pops
 The Alaska Center for the Performing Arts hosts this holiday concert starting at 4 p.m. to put

you in the mood for the season. For information call 263-ARTS.

WEDNESDAY
Night Lights bus tour
 See Anchorage's brightest houses from a comfortable motor coach with plenty of refreshments. Be at the Sears Mall parking lot for the tour which starts at 5:45 p.m. For tickets and information, call 350-4869.

THROUGH WEDNESDAY
It's A Wonderful Life
 The beloved holiday classic comes to life as a 1940s radio broadcast at Cyrano's Off-Center Playhouse. Get into the holiday spirit with this classic. For information call 274-2599.

DEC. 29 AND 30
Mannheim Steamroller
 Wrap up the holiday season with America's favorite holiday celebration. The Alaska Center for the Performing Arts hosts this dazzling multimedia show starting at 7:30 p.m. both nights. For information call 263-ARTS.

DEC. 31
Fire and Ice celebration
 Come to the town square at 5 p.m. in downtown Anchorage for the Fire and Ice New Year's Eve celebration, featuring fire jugglers, silk acrobats, a light show, music and more. Ring out 2011 with the 8 p.m. fireworks spectacular. For information visit www.anchoragedowntown.com or call 279-5650.

New Year's Eve dance
 Dance your way into the New Year at the Dena'ina Center with Five Star Entertainment's DJs and three different themed dances. For information visit www.fivestartalaska.com.

JAN. 7
Silent film double feature
 Revisit the first days of cinema with Buster Keaton's "One Week" and Harold Lloyd in "Safety Last" at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. These classic film showings start at 8 p.m. For information, call 274-8668.

JAN. 12 THROUGH 21
Beauty and the Beast
 Disney's animated hit comes to

life in Anchorage in this Broadway musical. Times of the show vary, usually at 7:30 or 8 p.m. with matinees available.

For schedule and information, call the ACPA at 263-ARTS.

JAN. 14
Josh Ritter concert
 Americana singer Josh Ritter, hailed as a gifted arranger and lyricist, brings his unique style to the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 p.m. For information call 263-ARTS.

Rage City Rollergirls
 Anchorage's own flat-track roller derby takes over the Dena'ina center once again, with plenty of action. Doors open at 6:30, and wheels roll at 7. For information, visit www.ragecityrollergirls.com.

JAN. 19 THROUGH 29
Anchorage Folk Festival
 Anchorage unplugs with folk performances from local musicians and masters from beyond the state. Hundreds of acts from all over the world converge on Anchortown, all free. For information call 566-2334.

JAN. 27 AND 28
Mike Garson in concert
 Famous for years of touring with David Bowie, keyboardist Mike Garson pushes any and all limits with a seamless blend of rock, classical and jazz music. Check him out at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 p.m. both nights. For information call 263-ARTS.

JAN. 28 AND 29
Anchorage Symphony
 The Anchorage Symphony presents "Out of This World," a collaboration with Emmy-nominated astronomer and artist Dr. Jose Francisco Salgado. Together they present an awe-inspiring music and video performance of "The Planets" at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts at 8 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. For information call 274-8668.

ONGOING
Thursday Nights at the Fights at Egan Center
 Seven boxing matches at the Egan Center begin at 7:30 p.m.

every Thursday evening. Tickets are available at the door or in advance through Ticketmaster. For information call 263-2800.

1, 2, 3 Magic classes
 Family Advocacy hosts this class on handling difficult behavior in children and encouraging good behavior in a clear, fair way. The techniques work even for children with disabilities and attention deficit disorder. This three-session class meets from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Education Center in Room 224. For information on this or any other programs offered by Family Advocacy, call 580-5858.

Wired Cafe for Airmen
 The Wired Cafe is located at 7076 Fighter Dr., between Polaris and Yukla dormitories. The cafe has wireless Internet and programs throughout the week. There are also free home-cooked meals Thursday evenings, served at 6:30 p.m. For information, call 552-4422.

Sing-a-long at the Zoo
 Pre-school aged kids can explore the world of animals through music with musician Annie Reeves. Children can sing along with the guitar, or play with the musical instruments for kids. Sing-a-longs are held at 10:30 a.m. Mondays at the coffee shop greenhouse. For information email klarson@alaskazoo.org.

Planetarium shows
 Through 3-D graphics, surround sound and a dome screen, the Anchorage Museum's planetarium offers a fascinating way to learn about astronomy, the solar system and more. For information, call 929-9200, or visit www.anchoragemuseum.org.

Chapel services

Catholic Mass
Sunday
 9 a.m. - Soldiers' Chapel
 10:30 a.m. - Elmendorf Chapel 1
 5 p.m. - Soldiers' Chapel (Evening Mass ends Dec. 18)
Monday through Friday
 11:40 a.m. - Soldiers' Chapel
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
 11:30 a.m. - Elmendorf Chapel Center
Thursday
 11:30 a.m. - Hospital Chapel

Confession
Sunday
 4:30 p.m. - Soldiers' Chapel
Monday through Friday
 Before/after 11:40 Mass - Soldiers' Chapel

Protestant Sunday Services
Joint Liturgical Service
 9 a.m. - Elmendorf Chapel 2
Celebration Service
 9 a.m. - Elmendorf Chapel 1
Contemporary Protestant Service
 11 a.m. - Soldiers' Chapel
Gospel Service
 Noon - Elmendorf Chapel 1
Contemporary Protestant Service
 5 p.m. - Elmendorf Chapel 1

Buddhist
Soka Gakkai Goshu
 7 p.m., first Friday of the month - Chapel Center (10427 Kuter Ave.)

Christmas, holiday services at JBER chapels

Soldier's Chapel
Dec. 24, 5 p.m. - Christmas Vigil (Children's Mass)
Dec. 24, 7 p.m. - Christmas Eve candlelight service
Dec. 25, 9 a.m. - Christmas Mass (usual time)
Dec. 25, 11 a.m. - Christmas Day Protestant service
Dec. 31, 6 p.m. - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God vigil
Dec. 31, 8 p.m. - New Year's Eve Watch Night service

Chapel One
Dec. 17, 5 p.m. - Simbang Gabi (Filipino Mass)
Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m. - Christmas Eve pageant
Dec. 24, 7 p.m. - Christmas Eve candlelight service
Dec. 25 - Sunday services as usual
Dec. 31, 6 p.m. - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God vigil
Dec. 31, TBD - New Year's Eve Watch Night service
Jan. 2, 8:30 p.m. - Epiphany Mass

ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON Experience Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson

Single Service Member's Christmas at The Arctic Chill
DECEMBER 25
 BAR OPENS AT 3 P.M.
Food... Fun... Games...

Win NFL Tickets
 EVERY NFL Game Shown

Super Bowl Party Package
Weekly Prizes
New Football Menu
FREE Member Breakfast
 Sundays • 8 a.m.

Arctic Chill
 18 Years and Older
384-7619
 The Arctic Chill • Bldg 655
 Sundays • 8 a.m.
 Mondays & Thursdays • 3 p.m.
 Fridays • 3 p.m. - 3 a.m.
 Saturdays • 6 p.m. - 3 a.m.

Arctic Oasis
Winter Wonderland
December 17 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 \$5 per person - Lunch Included - Limited Availability
 Visit With Santa, Take a Horse Drawn Carriage or Dog Sled Ride
 See the Reindeer or Do a little Holiday Shopping and....
 Don't forget your camera!

NOON
Year's Eve
 December 31 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Sparkling Cider Toast • Noon

\$3 per person
 Tickets on sale December 15*
 Hats • Noise Makers • Confetti • Popcorn • Cotton Candy
 Snow Cones & Bouncy Land
 Limited availability

2ND ANNUAL COUNTDOWN TO.... NOON
 The Arctic Oasis Community Center 552-8529

Willow Snowmachine Trip
 January 7: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Cost \$150

Alyeska Ski/Snowboard Trip
 January 13: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cost \$100

Petersville Snowmachine Trip
 January 14: 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. Cost \$150

JBER Richardson Outdoor Recreation Center Special Trips
 To register, call 384-1475 or 1476

NEED CHILDCARE?
 The Child Development Program has openings for various ages in the Full-Day Program and Part-Day Preschool Program.

Call Central Registration at **384-7483** for additional information.

Enjoy Alaska safely this holiday season

Nuthatches (below), common redpolls (right) and chickadees are some of the frequent visitors to many area bird feeders during Alaska's winter months. The birds are year-round residents, but having a bird feeder out during summer months is not recommended because the feeders also attract bears.



A black-capped chickadee sits in a tree on a snowy Alaska day. Although many of Alaska's migratory birds will be out of state during the National Audubon Society's 112th Christmas Bird Count, there are still plenty of species to look for without straying too far from the comforts of home. (U.S. Air Force photos/John Pennell)

Counting is for the birds

Audubon's holiday tradition runs through Jan. 5

Compiled from National Audubon Society news releases

The count period for the 112th Christmas Bird Count began Wednesday and continues through Jan. 5.

During the count period, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations.

Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission — often before dawn.

For over 100 years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind or rain to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations — and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition — and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

Before the turn of the 20th century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century,

and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition — a "Christmas Bird Census" — that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

Thanks to Chapman's inspiration and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario, to Pacific Grove, Calif., with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America.

Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

Want to participate in a Christmas Bird Count near you?

To find the date of a Christmas Bird Count near you and/or to register for a count go to <https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcregistration>.

There is a \$5 fee to participate in the CBC for all field participants aged 19 or older.

Since the Christmas Bird Count began over a century ago, it has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteer citizen scientists. Your local count will occur on one day between the inclusive dates.

If you have more than one local count, they will probably be conducted on different dates within the CBC season. You can pick the most convenient date, or participate in more than one count.

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, but everyone can participate. The count takes place within "Count Circles," which focus on specific geographical areas.

Each circle is led by a Count Compiler. Therefore, if you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced bird-watcher.

In addition, if your home is within the boundaries of a Count Circle, then you can stay home and report the birds that visit



A spruce grouse sits in a tree near Wasilla. Watching for and counting birds can be fun for the entire family.

your feeder once you have arranged to do so with the Count Compiler.

If you have never been on a CBC before your first step is to locate and contact your local Count Compiler to find out how you can volunteer.

Volunteers have been counting birds on the CBC for more than 110 years, and their contributions represent a tremendously valuable resource for learning more about bird behavior and bird conservation.

A lot has happened to early winter bird populations and distributions in the last 110 plus years, and the Christmas Bird Count is an invaluable resource to discover those changes.

In addition, the 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held Feb. 17 through 20.

The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across the U.S. and Canada. Please visit the official website at www.birdcount.org for more information.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count

birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States.

Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005.

Failure of seed crops farther north caused the Siskins to move south to find their favorite food.

On the www.birdcount.org web site, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators.

Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website's photo gallery.

All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes like bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs and many other products.

