

Proud Defender



USS TAYLOR Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2010

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CO's Corner

Hello to all and hope your preparations for the holiday season are in full force. We have again had a very busy month that ended with a port visit to Savannah, GA to start December. I very much enjoyed the tiger cruise to Savannah and hope those that participated felt the same.

December will again be a busy month for us which includes some underway training time and some extensive in port maintenance. Additionally, I appreciate the long hours that some of your loved ones had to provide over the Thanksgiving period to get us ready for sea after that maintenance period. Also, I hope you are all aware that our Command Christmas party is planned for 11 December, so mark that day on your calendar..

As I send this note, I also want to share a little about what is ahead of us. In January, TAYLOR has two major inspections before we get underway for the end of the month and some of Febru-

ary. In support of this and the date change on one of the inspections, I had to make the difficult decision of shortening holiday leave periods by two days for each period from what was originally planned. The announcement and dates were provided to your loved ones last Friday. Starting in the middle of February, we will enter an extensive maintenance period that will have us in port for a while. Although this will be in port time, we will have a lot of work to complete as we start looking forward to our certification phases.

In closing, I again want to emphasize, as I did soon after taking command, what an honor it is to lead your loved ones. Your Sailors are continually taking challenges head on and perform at a daily level you should be proud of. I hope to see you all at the Christmas party.





Single Sailor Events

Here are a few events coming up, just for Single Sailors:

- Sunday Dec 12: Jacksonville Jaguars vs Oakland Raiders. Van departs Planet Mayport at 11:30, cost is \$5.
- Open to All is a Comics On Duty Night: Thursday, December 9, show-time at 8 pm. Featuring Steve Bills, Dave Mishevitz, Patrick Garrity, and Ian Gutoskie at the Castaways Lounge (this show contains adult situational comedy, 18 and up)



December Sports

Intermural Sports will take a break during the holiday stand down. They will resume in January.

Remember Pearl Harbor 5K/10 K Run December 14, 8 AM beginning at the Base Gym

Winter Lap Swim is M-F 6-8 AM and 10 AM to 1 PM

Did you know?

COMMAND FITNESS CLASSES...Command fitness classes are designed for groups of all sizes and all fitness levels. Make the mundane Command PT more motivating with the help of Mayport's certified Navy Fitness instructors. Classes are designed to meet the specific needs of Active Duty personnel, whether preparing for PRT, improving overall individual fitness levels (cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and flexibility) or maintaining healthy fitness habits throughout the year. Contact 270-7718 for more information.

A Magical Christmas

Come to the Beachside Community Center on Tuesday December 7 from 6:30-8:30 for games, prizes, sweet treats, children's performances, pictures with Santa (bring your camera!), and more. For more information contact 270-5680.



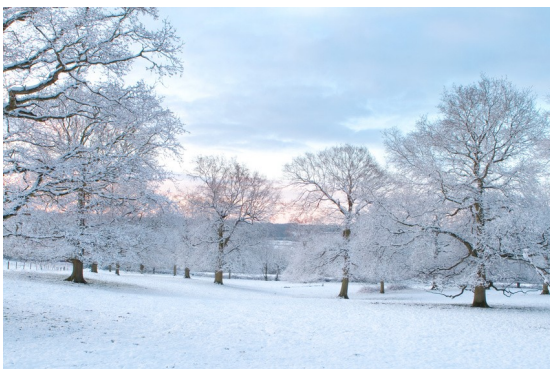
Jingle Bell Kids Winter Camp

Winter Camp at the Youth Activities Center will begin registration on Dec 1 and is open for children in Kindergarten through age 12.

Session 1: Dec 20-23

Session 2: Dec 27-30

For more information, please call 270-5680



ARMY NAVY Football Party

Saturday, December 11, kick-off is at 2:30.

Come to the Beachside Community Center for Tailgating, trivia, prizes, and more! Flag Football games will be held behind the Gym at 12:30 pm.



Holiday Events in Jacksonville



There are a LOT of events during the holidays in Jacksonville! The city of Jacksonville has put together a 44 page PDF highlighting all the events, available at <http://www.makeascenedowntown.com/News/September-Calendar-of-Downtown-Events.aspx>. Here are some of the highlights:

- Nightly Synchronized Christmas Tree Light Shows at the Jacksonville Landing. More than 78,000 lights dancing to the sounds of the season, Every day, every hour, on the hour from 6 pm till 9 pm (Sun- Thurs; 12 am Sat and Sun)
- Rotary Gingerbread House Extravaganza: Jacksonville Historical Society from 10 am- 5 pm, \$5 donation (adults) \$3 (children 3-16). Enjoy more than 40 gingerbread creations along with a scavenger hunt. Creations are built by professionals, chefs, school and youth groups, and more. Proceeds benefit the Ronald McDonald House, Habi-Jax, and 20 other local community charities.
- Local Window fronts have been decorated for the season by area artists, designers, and businesses! A map has been provided on page 11 of the previously mentioned guide.
- Trans Siberian Orchestra - Veterans Memorial Arena December 9, 7:30 pm
- Children's Christmas Party of Jacksonville: Prime Osborn Convention Center 9 am- 12:30 pm (or earlier if all toys have been distributed). This is a charity organiza-

tion that holds a huge, annual one day toy giveaway for infant children through age 12. Each child will be given several toys of their own choosing, as well as the chance to win a bike and helmet. Children must be supervised by an adult. Admission is on a first come, first served basis and no ID is required. For more information visit ccpoj.org or call 350-1616.

- Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra First Coast Nutcracker. Dec 17-19, multiple showtimes. Admission is \$18-\$43. www.jaxsymphony.org or 354-5547 for more information.
- Kwanzaa Celebration Program at the Ritz Theatre and Museum. December 28th. This program will explore and celebrate Kwanzaa's third principle, "Ujima" (Collective Work and Responsibility), with a film showing, dialogue and candle lighting ceremony.



- New Year's Eve Fireworks along the St. John's Riverfront-Northfront and Southbank. Ring in the New Year with a spectacular fireworks display

This is just a small sampling of the many events going on in our community. Be sure to check out this link for many more wonderful ways to celebrate the season!



TAYLOR Holiday Party

The USS Taylor will be having its annual Holiday Party on Saturday December 11 at 6 pm. This year's event will take place at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront (located at 225 East Coastline Drive). Tickets are \$25 for a sailor, \$10 for a guest and can be purchased from GSMC Thompson onboard the

ship. Dinner is a buffet which includes: Fresh garden salad, Tortellini and Vegetable Salad, Kansas City Round-Up (beef), Grilled Chicken Breasts, Oven Seared Grouper, Yukon Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable Medley, Rolls, as well as a chocolate fondue dessert bar. There will also be a

cash bar and raffle. Items include: 40" flat screen tv, 32" flat screen tv, Sony Blu-ray player, Kodak digital cameras, Toshiba laptop, Samsung home stereo surround sound system, PSP GO, gift cards, and special liberty chits. Additional tickets for the raffle may also be purchased for \$2 apiece

or 3 for \$5. Childcare is being provided onsite, free of charge. Please RSVP to GSMC as soon as possible so we can accommodate all. The Hyatt Regency is also providing us with a special \$89 room rate, if you'd like to stay on site that evening. We look forward to seeing everyone at this fun event!



Traveling with Kids- Holiday Travel Tips for Parents

Save your sanity and holiday cheer with these family holiday travel tips and travel games.

Car Travel

You're about to take a long road trip. If history repeats itself the trip will be riddled with whining, bickering and the usual nagging. This trip CAN be different if you try some new tactics. During the Holidays kids are bouncing off the walls and in a car the walls are much smaller. You'll want to provide simple entertainment for close quarters. Contrary to what some kids think, torturing siblings in not an acceptable form of entertainment. However, these suggestions are perfectly acceptable: Use a shoe box to make an activity box for each child. Fill it with surprises; stickers, notepads, stamp sets, Silly Putty and small toys. A walkman for each child and a book on tape can provide hours of peace and quiet.

*Sit down with your kids, a map and markers. Show them ALL of the travel plans. Where you are staying, how long the drive will take, how many stops

you plan on making and where you will eat meals. Provide a calculator, pencil and paper in the car. When they ask "How much longer", you say "We are driving a total of ___miles, we have driven ___ miles so far." Use your calculator to find your answer.

Plane Travel

Much of the suggestions above apply to airline/train travel as well. For traveling with babies call your airline ahead of time to see if any special accommodations can be made for space, bottle heating, nursing privacy, feeding and diaper changing. If you have been seated apart from your husband, older children or adult helper...politely ask the passenger next to you to if they are

willing to switch. Most passengers are MORE than willing to switch seats.

If your baby is crying when you ask - all the more convincing.

Travel Games

Take time during your trip whether car or plane to play with your kids.

Sing silly carols, play word games like 20 questions or ask questions that require a thoughtful answer:

"If Santa fell off your roof, what would you do?"

"If you saw a child that had little or no Christmas presents, how would you respond?"

Travel safely, sanely and with a smile - after all 'tis the season to be jolly!"

Save your sanity and holiday cheer with these family holiday travel tips .



Travel Safety for Car Trips and Air Travel

In addition to the usual stresses of the holidays comes the added load of traffic woes. This boost in gridlock hits right when the days are their shortest and the weather its unfriendliest. To avoid the pitfalls and potholes of winter-holiday driving, consider these handy tips.

Plan ahead to avoid a bumpy road. Allow extra time in a travel schedule. Bad traffic can often be avoided with a little preparation. The heaviest travel days are usually before and after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Consider taking an extra day off so that you aren't stuck in the pack. Also, try to minimize holiday stress by getting the bulk of your shopping done well before the holiday.

Make sure cars are well-equipped for travel. Breaking down in the dark, in bad weather or in the cold can crush the holiday spirit. It's a good idea to take the car in for a winter "check-up." A mechanic can inspect the antifreeze, battery, windshield wipers and other cold-weather components. Make sure that the tire pressure is at the recommended levels, as tires can be hazardous in wet weather when they are not filled to proper levels.

Think before you drive. Leon James, professor of psychology at the University of Hawaii and an expert on driver psychology,

reminds us that the highways are a community. As much as we may want to think we are isolated in our steel and glass bubbles, driving is really a social interaction without words. To understand holiday driving conditions, think of the way people act outside of their cars in this time of year. Many are worried, preoccupied, hurried, distracted and all those states of mind that make them easily agitated and less careful. On the road, this means that everyone should be more vigilant than usual, give people more distance and be forgiving when someone does something rash or absent-minded. Avoid confrontations, and try not to let other drivers bring you out of the happy holiday zone.

Ease on down the road. Don't think of driving as a chore. Consider traveling to be part of the vacation. Rather than getting cranky from thinking that you are losing vacation time, try to find ways to enjoy the time you spend driving. This might include playing favorite holiday music or pre-recorded holiday "talking books," singing holiday carols or chatting with passengers as if sitting on the couch back at home.

Carry equipment for on-the-road emergencies. If traveling in bad weather or in snow country, prepare for problems by packing flares, blankets, a first-aid kit, flashlight, water and

snacks. It's useful to have a shovel to dig out the wheels in case you get stuck, and a bag of kitty litter to pour under the wheels for traction. Also remember to pack the cell phone for emergencies, but be prudent about using it while driving in holiday traffic or in bad weather.

Pack tire chains if you heading into the snow, and consider putting them on before leaving home.

Drive responsibly. Once you get on the road, drive slowly and carefully. It's the time of year when to-do lists can run long and we all have places where we would much rather be than on the road, but a defensive approach pays off in the long run.

Don't drink and drive. Be aware of your physical and legal limits and the potential dangers of intoxicated driving.

If you're traveling by air, here are a few suggestions to make the air more hassle free:

- **Pay attention to your health before traveling.** The best way to prevent the spread of the flu is to stay home if you're sick or have flu-like symptoms.
- **Practice good hygiene while traveling.** Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.



Wash your hands regularly to help prevent the spread of germs and illness.

- **Ensure your government-issued ID and boarding pass are out and ready.** Getting all travel documents together and ready before you get in line will help security officers quickly verify that you, your identification, and your boarding pass match and are valid.
- **Wear easily removable shoes and jackets.** Wearing footwear that can be easily removed helps speed the process for X-ray screening. Be prepared to remove all shoes, jackets and other outerwear for screening.
- **Take out liquids and laptops.** Remember the 3-1-1 rule for liquids, gels and aerosols at the checkpoint: 3-ounce bottles or less for all liquids, gels and aerosols; 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic zip-top bag; and

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Travel Safety (cont'd from page 5)

1 bag per passenger placed separately in a security bin for X-ray screening. The liquid restriction applies only to carry-on bags. Passengers can pack larger quantities of liquids and gels in checked baggage.

- Be prepared to remove your laptop from its case and place it in separate bin for X-ray screening.
- **Use TSA Family Lanes if you or your family needs extra time or assistance.** Last year, TSA expanded its popu-

lar Family Lanes to every security checkpoint in the United States. Family Lanes allow infrequent travelers, those with small children or passengers who need additional assistance to move through security at their own pace. Officers in these lanes work with passengers to screen medically necessary items like baby formula and insulin.

time for all travel, pack light, and bring extra patience for you travels!

Remember to allow extra

Sugar Cookies (Perfect for gift-giving!)

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- Powdered sugar, for rolling out dough

Directions

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside. Place butter and sugar in large bowl of electric stand mixer and beat until light in color. Add egg and milk and beat to combine. Put mixer on low speed, gradually add flour, and beat until mixture pulls away from the side of the bowl. Divide the dough in half, wrap in waxed paper, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Sprinkle surface where you will roll out dough with powdered sugar. Remove 1 wrapped pack of dough from refrigerator at a time, sprinkle rolling pin with powdered sugar, and roll out dough to 1/4-inch thick.

Move the dough around and check underneath frequently

to make sure it is not sticking. If dough has warmed during rolling, place cold cookie sheet on top for 10 minutes to chill. Cut into desired shape, place at least 1-inch apart on greased baking sheet, parchment, or silicone baking mat, and bake for 7 to 9 minutes or until cookies are just beginning to turn brown around the edges, rotating cookie sheet halfway through baking time. Let sit on baking sheet for 2 minutes after removal from oven and then move to complete cooling on wire rack. Serve as is or ice as desired. Store in airtight container for up to 1 week.

