

# FLEET FOCUS

## Lake Erie reaches out to communities

Ens. Ed Yandoc

USS LAKE ERIE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Navy enables individuals to make a career out of seeing the world, experiencing different cultures and meeting new people. Many Sailors, like the crewmembers of USS Lake Erie (CG 70), attempt to reach out and help those people they meet.

Lake Erie has several programs it uses to give back to the local community and reach out to the communities it visits. The programs include community relations (COMRELS) in foreign ports, community service in U.S. ports and the Personal Excellence Program (PEP) in its homeport of Pearl Harbor.

"[The programs] extend us beyond ourselves and give us a chance to do something selfless," said Chaplain Lt. Van Dickens. "Whenever you do an act of good will, you take with you a sense of satisfaction."

Dickens joined the Chaplain Corps in October 1994. He always had a special interest in the military a "call within a call." Dickens, who is the primary coordinator for the projects, cites several reasons why it is important to contribute to the communities.

"The military is the number one ambassador of the United States," said Dickens. "Whenever we have the opportunity to do something for the countries we visit, it's good for ourselves and it also enhances our relationship with the countries."

Dispersing Clerk 1st Class Kevin Sun also believes in showing the flag and fostering relationships.

"It's not just pulling into port for good times, it's pulling into port for good causes," said Sun. "We are representatives of the United States and doing this (community service) is creating social ties."

As the Chief of Naval Operations project ship for Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD) Lake Erie, has seen a substantial amount of underway time, especially during the last four months.

Lake Erie has sailed from the atolls of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the snow and rough seas off the coast of Alaska. These journeys have given the Lake Erie crew the chance to reach out to several different communities.

One of those communities was Majuro Atoll, capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, a chain of islands in the middle Pacific. The Marshalls are home to about 60,000 people, including about 25,000 on Majuro Atoll. It had been approximately 10 years since a U.S. Navy ship visited Majuro, so it was a learning experience for both the islanders and the Lake Erie crew.

Many of the younger Sailors learned quickly to appreciate the living conditions they had previously taken for granted at home.

There are only two U.S. accredited schools in the country. Thirty members of Lake Erie painted, fixed electrical wiring and did general repair and cleaning at one of the institutions, Assumption School.

The day became an opportunity to work hand in hand with different people, experience their culture and get to know them on a personal level. It also gave many Sailors a deeper appreciation of everyday things that they might take for granted.

The crew helped improve the learning environment at Assumption, which Dickens thinks is key.

"Anything we can do to promote education... education will be the secret to that island's future and its welfare," he said.

Vancouver, British Columbia provided a different setting, but Lake Erie Sailors still pitched in help the community. Crewmembers assisted in repairs and maintenance work on the Dunsmuir House, a Salvation Army drug rehabilitation center in downtown Vancouver.

In the next port of call, Seattle, Lake Erie Sailors helped an out-

reach church, which had been damaged in the recent, well-publicized earthquake that registered 6.4 on the Richter scale. Instead of visiting a distant tropical shore, Lake Erie was in the middle of two large cities. But needs still exist, despite the drastic change in setting.

Help is always welcome, just not always expected. According to Sun, many of the people they assist tell the men that there are not a lot of willing volunteers.

"Many times they're surprised, a lot of times there are no volunteers and they have to hire people to do the work."

The crewmembers can see the look in people's faces; they are making a difference and leaving a lasting impression.

"A year from now they'll remember Lake Erie and what we did while we were here," said Dickens.

Helping out the community isn't just something the crew does away from home. Lake Erie devotes time and effort to Navy Hale Keiki School (NHKS) through PEP sponsorship.

NHKS is a school with an enrollment of 178 students in preschool up through second grade.

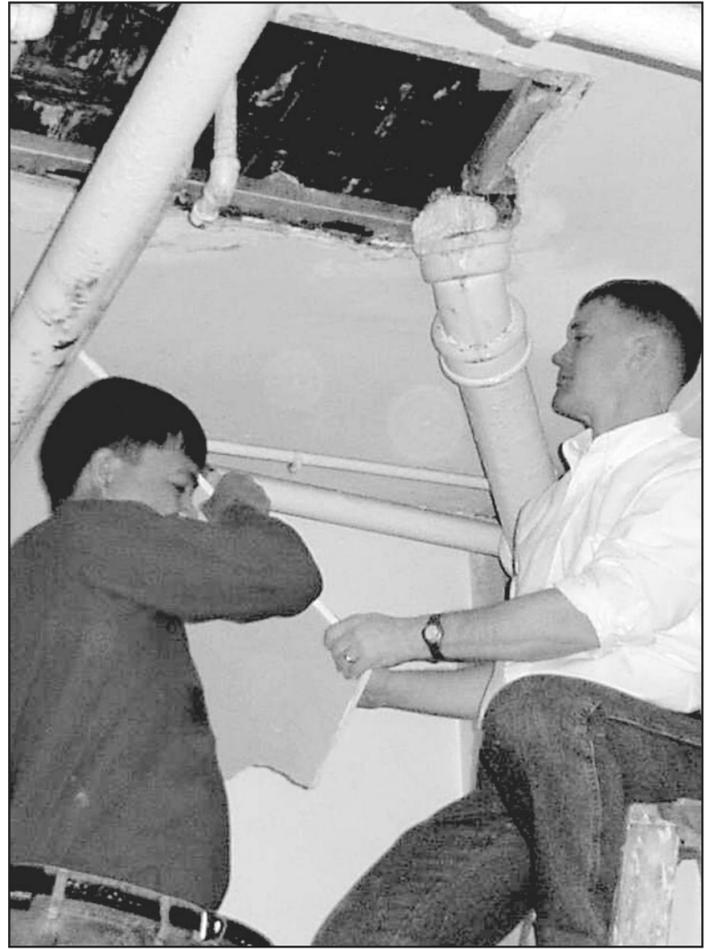
Lake Erie, which has had a relationship with NHKS since the 98-99 school year, has welcomed the children aboard for tours, and has conducted grounds work, maintenance and repairs.

"We are always looking for ways to get involved with our community," said PEP coordinator Religious Program Specialist 1st Class Fermin Ancho.

"There's a joy that comes with helping out," he said.

Helping out is exactly what Lake Erie Sailors do. NHKS is a non-profit organization; the majority of the money in its budget goes into the teaching staff.

Lake Erie's aid helps keep the cost of tuition more affordable for the parents. In addition to repairs, the crew has planted vegetation on the school grounds so that the students can learn science in a "living



Lake Erie photo

USS Lake Erie (CG 70) Sailors fix-up a ceiling as part of a community relations project. Lake Erie has several programs it uses to give back to the community. Some of these programs include community relations in foreign ports, community service in U.S. ports and the Personal Excellence Program (PEP) with a local school in Hawaii.

classroom." They also set a positive example for the kids.

"It makes a positive impression on our children to see adult role models performing helpful tasks

for them and their school," said NHKS Director Diane Tabangay.

To the Sailors of Lake Erie, it's simply about lending a helping hand.

## Safety Fair gives VP-4 hands-on approach

By Lt. Mark Brummett

PATROL SQUADRON FOUR

Patrol Squadron Four (VP 4), based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH), Kaneohe Bay, held a Safety Fair at the end of March, in Hangar 104 for its 350 personnel. While the "Skinny Dragons" recently entered their 29th year of mishap-free flight, it is due in large part to the emphasis placed on safety. This year's event consisted of numerous booths and demonstrations, emphasizing both on- and off-duty safety.

A safety stand-down, where members of the squadron take a day to focus on the safety aspects of their job and surroundings, are required every quarter. The purpose is to keep

safety in the forefront and reinforce good safety habits. Most safety stand-downs are in a lecture format with personnel sitting down in a large auditorium listening to a group of speakers. The VP-4 Safety Department decided to take a different approach to the norm.

Instead of the typical format, the Skinny Dragons conducted a safety fair, a practice that has been used in the Navy for some time. Held within and just outside of hangar 104, the fair allowed for demonstrations that could not have been conducted within an indoor facility.

Lt. Bill Pennington, VP-4's Ground Safety Officer, was one of the key members organizing the fair.

"By having booths set-up in the hanger where people

can walk around, there is more inter-action with the speakers and one-on-one conversations," said Pennington.

One of the most sobering demonstrations was the drunk-driving course.

Officer Sherman Dowkin from the Honolulu Police Department conducted the demo, which consisted of a course with numerous turns defined by traffic cones to simulate the roadway.

Many Skinny Dragons, including Commanding Officer Doug Yancey, weaved through the course driving a golf cart while wearing goggles that blurred vision to simulate intoxication.

A fire inspector from the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Federal Fire Department discussed and informed

folks on the importance of fire safety.

He also instructed personnel on how to properly use a fire extinguisher by letting them extinguish a contained fire on the hangar ramp area.

Aaron Lowe from the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources came to provide information on recreational safety while hiking on Oahu.

Maps and information for some of the most popular hikes on the island were available at the fair and can be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to 2135 Makiki Heights Dr. Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

Former District Commodore Robert Airhart from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary provided infor-

mation on boating safety.

The auxiliary provides classroom instruction, as well as sailing classes to all interested members of the community. Commodore Airhart and his group operate out of the Kaneohe Bay Yacht Club. You may find him routinely patrolling Kaneohe Bay in his own vessel.

A list of local classes and schedules can be obtained by calling 1-800-368-5647. Several other departments in VP-4 also set up booths, including Aviation Life Support Systems (ALSS).

Formally known as the parachute riggers, ALSS encompasses much more than just parachutes. An eight-man life raft was deployed in the hanger and survival equipment, including the use of the PRT-5 radio beacon, were

demonstrated.

"Life rafts are only used in emergency situations, so aircrew don't normally get the opportunity to practice with them in a friendly environment," Parachute Rigger 2nd Class Randall Lewis stated.

The Safety Fair is held by VP-4 once during the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle. Learning from past experiences, the hands-on approach provided a wealth of information for those present.

"People prefer this format where they learn hands-on, by participating in the demonstrations," said Pennington.

Flying the P-3 Orion, VP-4 operates out of MCBH Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Yancey has led the Skinny Dragons since April of this year.

## NEPMU 6 Hygiene Lab recognized for quality service



Lt. Deidra Ramos photo

From left to right: Dr. Roy Ishikawa, CIHL Department Head, and CIHL Chemists: Dennis Lee, Paraluman Bonifacio, Dwight Fujiwara, and Bill Matsuura. The The Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit 6 (NEPMU6) Consolidated Industrial Hygiene Lab (CIHL), has met all criteria for Laboratory Accreditation by the Commissions on Office Laboratory Accreditation (COLA), a national healthcare accreditation organization. Accreditation is given only to laboratories that apply rigid standards of quality in day-to-day operations, demonstrate continued accuracy in the performance of proficiency testing, and pass a rigorous on-site laboratory survey.

## Chaminade hoopsters visits submarine

By JOCS(SW/AW) Darrell D. Ames

COMSUBPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Chaminade University men's basketball squad, coming off their finest season in 14 years, celebrated the end of 'finals' week by touring the Pearl Harbor base fast-attack nuclear submarine USS Cheyenne (SSN 773).

"This experience was simply unbelievable," said first year head coach Aaron Griess.

"The submarine was impressive enough, but it was the crew and their professionalism that impressed me the most."

Griess had high expectations for the 2000-01 Silversword basketball team. Those expectations proved to be right on target as he guided the Swords to the school's best overall record since the 1986-87 season.

"Our team worked hard this season to accomplish a winning record and they stayed focused all season long. I saw that same focus and determination in the eyes of Cheyenne Sailors," Griess added.

Chaminade finished the season with a 16-11 overall record and 10-8 in Pacific West Conference play, good for third place in the Pacific Division. Griess' 16 wins also marks the most wins for any coach at Chaminade since they've been at the NCAA Division II level.

"I have the utmost respect for these men and what they do," said assistant coach Brian Heminway. "The technology in the equipment and the ability to run everything is almost overwhelming to me. It's obvious this crew has to be pretty intelligent to make everything run smoothly," he added.

"Our guys did an excellent job of staying focused throughout the entire season," said Griess. "We've faced our share of adversity this year with injuries and disciplinary sus-

pensions, but we've continued to bounce back. That's a tribute to the character of our team. However, basketball is just a game. A nuclear-powered submarine crew has much more at stake when they face adversity."

What made this year's Chaminade team special was their ability to win on the road. The Silverswords went 6-5 during their typical, grueling road schedule that spanned five different states.

"Despite our success on the road we still lost five games away from home," said Wilburt 'Big Will' Krol, Chaminade's 7 foot 2 inch senior post player. "These guys on Cheyenne can't afford any road losses. When they go on deployment I'm confident they will go undefeated on the road."

Senior guard, David Toya, who broke into the record book in 2000-01 with 107 career steals, said teamwork was the key to Chaminade's winning record.

"Our success this season was a result of dedication to the team, hard work and learning to play together," he said. "I felt the same fighting spirit on USS Cheyenne."

Everybody looked like they knew and liked each other and they were all in tune with each other. You have to have that special bond if you're going to be successful as a team."

As team Cheyenne sails into the new millennium solid teamwork will continue to guide the crew to future success.

Cheyenne is the namesake submarine of Cheyenne, Wyo. The city is world renowned for the annual Cheyenne Frontier Days festival, a 10-day western celebration featuring the world's largest outdoor rodeo.

The submarine is a member of Submarine Squadron Seven and is the fourth U.S. Navy vessel to bear the name.