



JEFFERSON BARRACKS SATELLITE RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSWIRE JULY 2009

The staff of the Jefferson Barracks Satellite Retiree Activities Office publishes this NEWSWIRE. This publication is designed to directly inform all military retirees, spouses, widows, widowers and their families of changes to their benefits, the status of current legislation impacting their retirement, health related information and of activities at Scott AFB and Jefferson Barracks AFS.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR JULY

9 July Thursday—1300 Hours, Scott RAO monthly council meeting: Located at 215 Heritage Drive, Building P-10, Room A-209. The meeting includes reports from committee chairmen and other Directors generally related to Scott AFB activities and services. Updated reports from the Lambert/ St. Louis RAO and the Jefferson Barracks Satellite Retiree Activities Office (JBSRAO) are part of the meeting agenda.

16 July Thursday - Monthly luncheon 1100 Hrs. **Riverside Café** 7704 Ivory Ave, St Louis MO 314-544-7711. From I-55 (North) Exit right to Left on Germania to Alabama/Lemay Ferry – turn left to Ivory Ave: From I-55 (South) Exit right on to right on Carondelet to Alabama/Lemay Ferry-Turn left to Ivory Ave. Make sure to go under train trestle. Parking is on the street.

From the Director

Due to security reasons our office no longer has Internet access. I won't bore you with the details but we have been assured that the powers to be are working on a remedy.

This is a serious problem for us because we use the Internet to help our clients with their questions.

So please hold all your e-mails until this situation has been resolved at which time we will send out an e-mail announcing we are back in business.

In the meantime our Newswires will be coming to you via Gene Anacker's computer. If perchance you do not receive a Newswire it maybe our distribution list and Gene's may not be in sync. So please accept our apologies is this should happen.

CONSUMERS ARE WARNED TO GUARD AGAINST FRAUD

AS CENSUS WORKERS BEGIN VERIFYING ADDRESSES

As U.S. Census workers begin canvassing neighborhoods to verify addresses, consumers need to exercise caution about who is seeking their information, according to the Better Business Bureau (BBB).

For years, the BBB has warned consumers against giving their personal information to solicitors, whether they call on the telephone or show up at the front door. However, households are required to provide information to Census Bureau workers. At the same time, fraudsters may try to trick consumers by referring to the census in phone conversations, in person or by e-mail.

"Most people are rightfully cautious about giving personal information to unsolicited phone callers or visitors," said Michelle Corey, president and CEO of the BBB in St. Louis. "They may let down their guard if they believe the caller is a government worker. Unfortunately, scammers know that the public is more willing to share personal data when taking part in the Census. They may pose as government employees and solicit sensitive financial information."

In the first phase of the 2010 Census, workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. More than 140,000 U.S. Census workers are checking addresses so that every housing unit in the United States receives a questionnaire in 2010. Later, workers will gather every resident's name, age, gender, race and other relevant data.

U.S. Census workers will not ask for your date of birth or Social Security number.

Census data are used to allocate more than \$300 billion in federal funds every year, as well as to determine the number of congressional representatives in each state. In the census, households will be contacted by mail, by telephone or be visited by a census worker who will inquire about the number of people living in the house.

Law enforcement officials in several states have issued warnings that scammers already are posing as Census Bureau employees, knocking on doors asking for donations and Social Security numbers.

The big question is how do you tell the difference between a U.S. census worker and a con artist? The BBB offers the following advice:

- If a Census Bureau worker knocks on your door, he or she will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see the badge before answering questions. Never invite strangers into your home.
- Census workers are currently verifying only address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census. Census workers will not ask for banking and financial information nor will they solicit donations.
- Eventually, census workers may contact you by telephone, by mail or in person at home. However, they will not contact you by e-mail, so be on the lookout for e-mail scams that refer to the census. Never click on a link or open attachments in an e-mail that purports to be from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Blood Thinners Update

In a setback for the fledgling field of personalized medicine, Medicare has decided not to pay for genetic tests intended to help doctors determine the best dose of the blood thinner Warfarin for a particular patient. In a proposed decision posted on its Web site 4 MAY, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said that there was not enough evidence that use of the tests improved patients' health. But the agency said it would pay for the tests as part of clinical trials to gather such evidence. The Warfarin response tests, which cost \$50 to \$500, look at variations in two specific genes in a patient. They are among a group of new tests that seek to tailor medical treatments based on a patient's genetic makeup. Such tests might help tell which drug would be best for a particular person, or whether a patient might be susceptible to dangerous side effects. As many as one million or more Medicare patients a year start therapy with the drug, which is used to prevent life-threatening blood clots. But determining the proper dose of Warfarin is notoriously tricky. Even a slight change in dosage can mean the difference between too little, which would not be effective in preventing blood clots, and too much, which can cause dangerous internal bleeding. Tens of thousands of people end up in the hospital each year with complications from Warfarin, which is also sold under the brand name Coumadin.

Medicare said there was little evidence that use of the genetic test led to better outcomes for patients compared with the existing procedure, in which doctors estimate an initial dose based on a patient's age, weight and other factors. Then they test the blood's clotting propensity every few days and adjust the dose accordingly. Some studies have shown that using the genetic test might allow the proper dose to be achieved more quickly. But Medicare said there was little evidence that doing so translated into a lower risk of blood clots or hemorrhages. Conclusions about health outcomes, it said, "seem to us premature, even though they are intuitively appealing." Medicare's proposed decision will be open for public comment for the next month. Edward Abrahams, executive director of the Personalized Medicine Coalition, which advocates such genetic testing, said the expensive clinical trials required by Medicare might be unreasonable for diagnostic tests. Several diagnostic companies, including Nanosphere, Osmetech and ParagonDx, sell Warfarin genetic tests to hospitals and other laboratories. Some labs offer their own tests.

The decision was not a complete pushback, said Bill Moffitt, Nanosphere's chief executive, pointing to Medicare's willingness to pay to help generate evidence of the tests' usefulness. Kathy Hudson, director of the Genetics and Public Policy Center at Johns Hopkins University, agreed with Medicare's decision. "We should pay for what works," she said. Medical societies were divided on the issue. And the Food and Drug Administration recommends, but does not require, a genetic test for patients starting on Warfarin. Critics say that there are various practical problems with the Warfarin genetic tests. The test results often do not come back fast enough to influence the initial dose. And simply knowing which variants of the two genes a patient has does not automatically tell the doctor what dose to give. That depends on other factors as well. Moreover, use of the genetic tests does not eliminate the need to periodically test the patient's blood-clotting propensity. [Source: New York Times Andrew Pollack

H.R. 2647 Authorizes TRICARE for Gray's

After a successful effort by NGAUS, its members and its partners, the House included Representative Robert Latta's (R-OH) bill in the NDAA, H.R. 270 The legislation would authorize all Gray Area Retirees (Reserve Component retirees who are not yet age 60) and their families to purchase TRICARE Standard (TRS) coverage at a premium equal to the full cost of coverage to the Department of Defense (DoD) as determined by the Secretary of Defense on an actuarial basis. Currently, Retirees and their families are only eligible to receive Reserve retirement pay and TRICARE at age 60. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has reported this bill to be "budget neutral."

Based on the current TRS rates (28% of actual costs), the full cost to DOD for TRICARE Standard that would be charged to retirees under HR270 and S.731 would be \$169.68 for individuals and \$643.46 for families.

New prescription ATM eases patients' wait time

by P. A. Tezuka
Space and Missile Systems Center Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AFNS) -- The 61st Medical Group recently introduced a prescription-dispensing machine during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Base Exchange here June 13. The ScriptCenter Express Prescription Refill and Pickup Center is the first of its kind in Los Angeles County, the Air Force, and the Department of Defense.

Officials attending included Col. Anita Latin, 61st Air Base Wing commander; Col. Brian Deckert, 61st Medical Group commander; and leaders from neighboring communities. Mark Debruin, chief executive officer from the Asteres Corporation, provider of the ScriptCenter machine, was also present during the ceremony.

Located in the lobby of the Base Exchange building, the machine is a first in the nation.

"Legally, most state laws require this [type of] machine to be attached to the pharmacy," said Maj. Agnes Lee, 61 MDG pharmacy flight commander. "They wouldn't allow this machine to be located outside the pharmacy. Fortunately, we are in a military facility so we can go out of the norm."

The idea of having the ScriptCenter on base was a result of brainstorming the possibility of setting up a satellite pharmacy at the Base Exchange. A member from the base suggested it after seeing one at another base. However, due to funding and staffing shortages, another idea was developed through a technology, which was already available.

The machine is like an Automatic Teller Machine; but instead of cash, the machine dispenses medication. The ScriptCenter is available to active duty, retired, family members and others with valid military identification cards. Patients and family members can enroll online or at the ScriptCenter. Medication is ordered by calling the 24-hour automated refill line and requesting the Base Exchange as the pick-up site. Prescriptions can be picked up after 2 p.m. on the second day after ordering.

The machine is easy to use with no complicated steps and is available in both English and Spanish. Using the ScriptCenter is also free.

"It was very easy and simple to follow ... I tried it myself," Major Lee said.

One unique feature about this machine is its biometric technology option. "You simply put your finger on the scanner and it will scan the thumb print," said Major Lee. However, patients must still use their PIN number when using biometrics.

The machine also takes a picture of the person picking up the prescription so the pharmacist can track who picked up the prescription. Currently, refrigerated medication and bulky items cannot be picked up but may be available in the future. Controlled substances will still need to be picked up at the pharmacy.

The ScriptCenter will benefit patients by cutting down on the long waiting period experienced at the pharmacy and can also get their prescriptions filled without worrying about the pharmacy hours. In the past, it could take as long as two hours during peak hours. According to Major Lee, on bad days, picking up a prescription could take three hours. Weekends, holidays, medical staff training days and exercises could lengthen the wait hours imposed on patients.

"So we had quite a few closures and that had a negative impact on our patients and more hardship to our pharmacists because they had to catch up with all our volume," Major Lee said.

The ScriptCenter will alleviate many of these delays and increase patient accessibility.

"The ScriptCenter will increase patient access by over 106 percent," said Major Lee. "That's 2,300 hours per year. That's pretty significant."

Editor's Note: As of the date we are not certain if and when this service will be available on Scott AFB.

RELIEVING MOTION SICKNESS

For some people – no matter whether they're traveling by plane, train, or automobile – motion sickness is an unpleasant detour. Fortunately, a remedy that's thousands of years old may actually alleviate this peril of modern travel.

Ginger—a medicinal herb with powerful yet gentle healing properties—has long been used in Asia to sooth the discomfort of nausea. And now it's available in a great tasting, fast acting gum that's especially convent for travelers.

Ginger gum, from the makers of Sea-Band, provides 25 mg of ginger oil in each piece of drug-free nausea relief. It works by quickly delivering the healing benefits of ginger under the gum while increasing production of saliva, the body's natural defense against nausea. Plus, there are no side effects—making it easier to get back to enjoying your trip.

Ginger Gum is available at most drugstores. For more information go to www.sea-band.com.

Editor's Note: I found this article in a local newspaper in Shell Knob, Missouri. Thought it might be useful to our Readers. I have not tried it so I don't know if it is affective. It is well known that ginger does help sooth the stomach.

Stop the Itching from Mosquito Bites

This article is from a local newspaper in Southwest, MO

Hate that itch when a mosquito has bitten you? Well I stumbled upon a way to end the itch of a mosquito bite instantly! I hate mosquitos. I hate the awful itch that comes from their bite-even more.

One spring morning I was cleaning my yard and carefully removing any stagnant water from around my potted plants, when I got a nasty bite from a mosquito. I went inside to get rubbing alcohol to put on the bite and some calamine lotion. I located the rubbing alcohol; in the medicine cabinet-but realized I was out of calamine lotion. I put the rubbing alcohol on my skin, and of course - began to scratch the irritated bite area.

Needless to say-that itch can be unbearable and cause the skin around the bite to swell. To make a long story short - after I applied the rubbing alcohol, I put a piece of scotch tape directly on top of the bite and to my surprise - the itch stopped - immediately! I left the tape on for about 4 hours and when I pulled the tape off, I could actually see the poison extract from the mosquito - on the tape. Somehow the adhesive on the tape collected the fluid from the bite and I held the tape up to the light and I could see the tiny penetration hole on the tape from where I was bit.

I have been using tape to end itching form mosquito bites ever since. It's funny how a simple piece of scotch tape can halt an unbearable itch. Apparently, the tape keeps the area around the bite from naturally expanding. After I removed the tape there was no further itching and no black mark left. I put some more rubbing alcohol on the skin after removing the tape. I know it may sound weird, but the next time you get a irritating mosquito insect bite, after you place your antiseptic on the bite-place a piece of scotch tape directly on top of that bite and feel instant relief with no insatiable urge-to scratch!

Odds and Ends

A comment from Howard Rhodes, Eads TN on a recent article in the AF News Service. "This country stands on the shoulders of giants those who serve and so many who gave their lives in military service"

A toll-free telephone news line has been set up for those Air Force retirees and surviving spouses who do not have computer access. By calling (800) 558-1404, retirees and spouses can stay informed using this new easy-to-use menu-driven service. Callers can select from several different topics that are compiled from various electronic news sources. Topics include pay and annuity matters, medical and health care, and other benefits and entitlements.

Fabulous Fox Theatre Tickets

Information, Tickets and Travel (ITT) has tickets for the following upcoming shows at the Fabulous Fox Theatre:

Mary Poppins, Aug. 23 @ 6:30 p.m., Aug. 28 @ 8 p.m. and Aug. 29 @ 2 p.m.

The Phantom of the Opera, Sept. 23-Oct. 17, 2009

Visit www.375FSS.com or call 256-5919 <<http://www.375FSS.com> or call 256-5919> to purchase tickets.

Judge Squashes Laws Restricting Recruiters

Yesterday, a federal judge in Oakland threw out voter-approved laws in two Northern California cities barring military recruiters from contacting minors.

U.S. District Judge Sandra Brown Armstrong ruled that laws passed in the

Humboldt County cities of Arcata and Eureka in November were unconstitutional and invalid.

The finding was not unexpected by proponents of the laws, which passed with 73 percent of the vote in Arcata and 57 percent in Eureka. The federal government quickly sued to overturn the laws, which have been stayed ever since.

NAUS Note: It is gratifying to see common sense in regards to military recruiting efforts. Those that rail against the military have no problems enjoying the liberty and freedom that have been guaranteed by the American military since the first Minute Men took up arms in defense of the country. Although we anticipate future attempts to threaten recruiting efforts, hopefully this outcome will serve as a template for judicial actions throughout the country. Well-done Judge Armstrong.

This quote is from the comedian The Cable Guy. I think maybe all of us young and old should laminate it and keep it on us as a reminder before we do something stupid.

"Life isn't like a box of chocolates. It's more like a jar of jalapenos. What you do today might burn your butt tomorrow."

Things to Remember

Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.

Note to Our Readers: The Newswire will at times provide links to web sites for additional information. To our readers who receive the Newswire via the U.S. Postal Service, you are not getting full use of this publication. We strongly recommend that you have the Newswire sent to you via e-mail. For those readers who do not have Internet access you can come visit us at Building 65 Jefferson Barracks. We would be happy to download and print a copy of any information that you may need. See our office hours at the heading of this publication. Your local library also has computers for patrons to use to gain access to the Internet.

STILL SERVING

73, Jerry

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Office hours are 0900 to 1200 hours Tuesday and Thursday.
On the 2nd and 3rd Thursdays the office will be closed at
1100 Hrs for the staff to attend Scott Retiree Council meeting
and monthly luncheon.

Office Hours are 0900-1300 Hrs Monday - Friday

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Disclaimer: Information and views expressed in the Newswire may not reflect the practices and policies of some Government Agencies. Every effort is made to verify information provided in this publication, the SRAO staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of this furnished by other agencies.