



Schweinfurt Dispatch



Serving the Military Community of Schweinfurt

Feb. 8, 2007

Valentine's Day VA briefing open to all

Story by Kimberly Gearhart

The local Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) will sponsor a Veteran's Affairs (VA) benefits briefing Feb. 14 from 8 a.m. to noon in the Ledward Theater.



The briefing will focus on benefits veterans and families can receive once the Soldier separates from the service, but is open to the entire community.

"Any current ACAP client should register with us. We ask that community members who want to attend call us so that we can gather contact information in case there is a last minute change," said Laura Merkle,

ACAP contract installation manager.

Anyone who wants to attend, even at the last minute, is encouraged to stop by, regardless of registration.

VA benefits advisors come to Europe each year and conduct briefings between February and September. There will be one

briefing per month in Schweinfurt during this timeframe.

"Between September and February, there are no VA advisors in Europe, so it's important people attend now, while the experts are here," Merkle said.

Advisors will discuss medical and financial benefits available for separating military members, as well as touch on survivor benefits.

"I highly recommend it for anyone, service members, spouses. It's also great for anyone that works with military. You don't have to be a subject matter expert in order to help with suggestions," Merkle said.

Soldiers currently going through medical actions, or retiring medically, are especially encouraged to attend.

"The medical benefits are a main focus of the briefing, since it is all so complicated. Some benefits need to be applied for while the Soldier is still on active duty. They need to be sure they know the timelines so that they do not miss an opportunity," Merkle said.

For those who have specific questions about their own unique situations, VA advisors will be available after the conference for a Q&A session.

Advisors will rotate monthly through the US Army-Europe community, also visiting the nearby communities of Bamberg and Ansbach, which are serviced by the ACAP agency here.

The ACAP website www.acap.army.mil has useful information for separating Soldiers, family members, and commanders, as well as links to local ACAP agencies.

For more information about ACAP and available services, visit bldg 290 on Ledward Barracks, or call 354-6019, 09721-96-6019.

Fire in the hole!

Anvil troopers from 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry practice their mortar skills as part of a live fire exercise at the Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 3. Mortarmen sent over 200 rounds of 120mm ammunition downrange as they honed and certified their skills in preparation for the CAV's upcoming deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Capt. Steven Whitmore



News Briefs

Manage your money

Schweinfurt ACS holds a class on money management Feb. 15 from 9 to 10 a.m. in the Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room, building 230. Learn how to manage you money by planning, setting goals, and following through. To sign up or for more information, call 354-6933/6751 or 09721-96-6933/6751.

Bamberg symphony orchestra in town

The Bamberg symphony orchestra performs



at the downtown Schweinfurt Theater Feb. 9. Performance begins at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call 09721-510, Mon. – Fri. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. or Sat. 9:30 a.m. to noon.

First aid class Saturday

The American Red Cross in Schweinfurt holds a certification class Feb. 10 at the Red Cross Conference Room. Upon completion of the class, participants will be certified in standard first aid with adult CPR/AED. The class goes from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and costs \$35. To sign up, call 354-1760 or 09721-96-1760.

Heartlines contest

Ledward and Leighton libraries have a composition contest extending the month of Feb. Enter your 100-word composition to win an AAFES gift card. Is your love legendary? Read about famous sweethearts. Which historical pair is most like you and your sweet baboo? Tell us why by submitting your composition to the library. For more information, call 354-6121 or 09721-96-6121.

Italy ski safari

Outdoor recreation travels to Italy to enjoy the slopes of very popular ski resorts Feb. 16-19. Cost is \$269 which includes bus transportation, three overnights, three breakfasts, and two dinners. Lift ticket is not included. Half-price equipment rental is available from Outdoor Rec. Call 353-8080 or 09721-96-8080.

Dodge ball tournament sign-up begins Monday

Finney fitness center hosts a dodge ball tournament Feb. 24. Registration is held Feb. 12-21 at Finney fitness center. Space is limited to four teams per division. Each team is guaranteed five games. Teams must consist of six players. Prizes will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place teams in each division. For more information, call 353-8234 or 09721-96-8234.

Parents night out respite care

Sign up has already begun for CYS Outreach Service’s parents night out Feb. 16, 6:30 – 11 p.m. Children will be cared for at no cost to families. Open to all families with children 6 weeks old to fifth grade. Children must be registered with CYS, and reservations for the night must be made in advance. For more information, call 354-6517/6414 or 09721-96-6517/6414.

ABCs of FRGs

Schweinfurt ACS holds a class on learning the ropes of FRGs in the Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room, building 230, Feb. 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. Are you new to your Family Readiness Group? Let ACS help. Topics to be discussed are committees and roles and responsibilities of FRG leaders. To sign up or for more information, call 354-6933/6751 or 09721-96-6933/6751.

Schweinfurt Dispatch



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The Schweinfurt Dispatch weekly newsletter is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt, IMCOM-Europe and the U.S. Army authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1.

The newsletter is published and distributed bi-weekly in an electronic format. The newsletter can be viewed on the U.S. Army Schweinfurt Website at <http://www.schweinfurt.army.mil>.

This newsletter is a command information product that places emphasis on events and activities occurring throughout the Schweinfurt and Lower Franconia areas.

Information and photos included in this

newsletter are acquired from sources that highlight events, programs and activities in Schweinfurt and Lower Franconia.

Dates, times, locations, and the events themselves might change or be cancelled without prior notice.

To be added to the Schweinfurt Dispatch distribution list, please email: Mark.Heeter@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil or elvira.gladwell@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil.

For more information about the Schweinfurt Dispatch, or to reach the USAG Schweinfurt public affairs office, call 354-1600/6381 or (09721) 961600/966381.



- 9 FEB --** Bamberg Symphony performs 6 p.m. in downtown Schweinfurt Theater. Call for tickets 09721-510.
- 10 FEB --** Wasserkuppe skiing, depends on snow, call 354-6715 to sign up.
- 12 FEB --** Point of Contact (POC) training 9-11 a.m., Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room. Call 354-6751 to sign up.
 - Stress Management class 9 a.m. to noon, Leighton ACS, Bldg 14. Call 350-7103 to sign up.
- 13 FEB --** Parenting Skills class 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Leighton ACS, call 350-7103 to sign up.
 - ABCs of FRGs class 9 a.m. to noon, Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room, call to sign up 354-6933/6751.
 - Community Update Forum 6 p.m., Schweinfurt Elementary School
- 14 FEB --** Special CYS parent's night out 6:30-9:30 p.m. Sign up at CER. Must use Deployment Care card.
 - Smooth Move Seminar 9 a.m. to noon, Ledward ACS, Bldg 242, call 354-6751 to sign up.
 - VA benefits briefing 8 a.m. to noon, bldg 290, Ledward Barracks, call 354-6019.
- 15 FEB --** Managing your money class 9-10 a.m., Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room. Call ACS to sign up 354-6933/6751.
- 16 FEB --** CYS regular parent's night out 6:30-11:30 p.m., Sign up at CER. Sign up begins Feb. 5.
 - Italy Ski Safari departs 5:30 a.m. on Friday, returns late night Monday, \$269
 - Spring youth soccer, baseball, and softball registration ends, call 354-6822 to sign up.
- 17 FEB --** Flea market in Schweinfurt on Wirsingstrasse 13 from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 - School Age Services special Saturday opening 9 a.m. to noon. Celebrate deployed family members. \$3 per hour per child. Reserve slot in advance, call 354-6974.
- 18 FEB --** Daytona 500, watch NASCAR event at Leighton CAC. Call 350-6305 for info.
 - Fasching's Dance at the TG Sportsclub in Schweinfurt 7:30 p.m.
- 19 FEB --** Flea market for children's clothes and toys at Kindergarten Christus Church in Schweinfurt from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 20 FEB --** Fasching's Parade in Schweinfurt starting at 1 p.m. Begins at Spitalbunker across the street from St. Joseph's Hospital.
- 24 FEB --** Czech Republic Shopping Trip. Passport required, call 354-6715 to sign up.
 - Dodge ball tournament at Finney fitness center. Call 353-8234 to sign up. Games begin at 10 a.m.
- 27 FEB --** AFAP Conference begins, Conn Barracks, get in your issue form today. Call 354-6933 for info.
- 28 FEB --** Mardi Gras Party, Leighton Community Activities Center, call 350-6305 for info.
- 3 MAR --** Winter Kid's Festival, Conn Barracks
- 9-11 MAR --** Leighton Spring Bazaar, Leighton Fitness Center

Community 6 week outlook calendar



Kimberly Gearhart

February Aerobathon draws crowd ready to sweat

The USAG Schweinfurt Directorate of Morale, Welfare and Recreation put on another Aerobathon Feb. 3 at the Kessler Fitness Center. Twenty-seven people participated in several exercise demonstrations, such as the spinning class pictured above. Instructors like Paul Stubbs, right, led classes in step aerobics, Pilates, and yoga in an effort to get the community interested in fitness and exposed to different exercise options available in the Schweinfurt military community. Participants received free tee shirts as well as a good start to their new fitness routines.

10 hours of childcare at no cost to parents

Story by Kimberly Gearhart

It is no secret that deployments place added stress on families. Those left behind have to be mother and father, as well as trying to remain strong and sane for their deployed spouse.

In an effort to help alleviate some of that stress, the USAG Schweinfurt Child and Youth Services (CYS) program is offering a special Deployment Care Card. The card entitles eligible patrons to 10 free hours of child care per child per month.

“The card is done to assist families during times of deployment when they need a break. We feel a real need for parents to have a breather ... to rest, to regroup, to refresh,” said Bonnie Cornelison, CYS coordinator.

In order to qualify for the no-cost care, one needs only be a member of the USAG Schweinfurt community whose children are registered with CYS. There are no rank restrictions, and although the cards refer to deployment care, you need not have a deployed family member to qualify.

“People are delighted, but also a bit confused. You don’t often see something free that there are not a lot of rules about,” Davis said.

That confusion is often related to the idea that “nothing is ever really free,” which is true. The program, while free to parents, is still being subsidized by the Army with CYS funds.

“We get additional funds from IMCOM-Europe and from IMCOM because we are in a deployment state, and so they provide us with a lot of extra support,” said Kristina Davis, program operation specialist for CYS.

That extra support, and some close budget management, allowed the Schweinfurt CYS program to implement this special respite option.

“Because we’re a community that is so heavily involved in the deployment, we wanted to offer some additional support for all the families in the community,” Davis said.

No-cost care hours can be used at the Child Development Centers (CDC), School Age Services (SAS), or with Family Child Care (FCC) providers in both Schweinfurt and Wuerzburg.

Eligible participants can pick up their cards at either Central Registration in The Commons in Schweinfurt, or at the Leighton CDC. Cards are good for 10 hours in the month you receive the card, and 10 for two subsequent months. Unused hours do not roll over.

In addition to space-available hourly care, parents’ nights out, and SAS special Saturday openings, CYS will offer special openings each month just for card users.

“We are encouraging people to take advantage of this respite option that is at no cost to the family,” Cornelison said.

The deployment care card program will continue to be offered for as long as Schweinfurt is a deployed community. For more information, call Central Registration at 354-6414 or 09721-96-6414.



Creative pottery makes deployment time fly by

Story and photo by Sandra Wilson

Have you been looking for an activity to do with your child that gets you out of the house and puts your hands in motion?

The Arts and Crafts center currently offers a Mom and Me Pottery class on Fridays and Saturdays. It's an opportunity to do a creative activity with your child without the mess ever touching your home.

Nikki Gagliardo teaches the class and encourages everyone to participate. Children as young as four or five can come with their parents and create several crafts to take home over the course of the six-week class.

"[This class is] to get some of the families out of their houses into the

community during the deployments. And even not during the deployments, I've seen so many families just sit around and watch TV and play video games, and I think that's so unhealthy," she said.

The fee for the six-session class is \$65 which includes all supplies and use of the shop's equipment.

Some of the crafts made in the class include coffee table coasters, necklaces, picture frames with tiles, wind chimes, and tick-tack-toe boards and pieces.

"It's fun. It's something to get their imaginations going. It's all about having fun and being creative and teaching them what they can do with their pound of clay," Gagliardo said.

Diana Choudhri, who attends the

Saturday class with her 8-year-old daughter, described her satisfaction with the pottery instruction.

"We are happy with [the class]. My daughter is happy. She likes being creative," she said.

Karina Kuho and her two children ages 8 and 11 take the class together as well.

"My kids love it. It's cool to have a kid's class. It gives us something to do with Dad being gone on Saturdays. And you certainly don't get this kind of art at school," she said.

A new project begins Feb. 16 in the existing classes and all who are interested are invited to attend. The next full six-week sessions begin March 23 and 24.

Gagliardo also emphasized her availability to offer classes catered to the times and schedules of prospective crafters. When the shop is open, she welcomes all to stop by and is willing to teach almost any craft.

"As long as I'm here and I have the open space and schedule it's not a problem," she said.

Whether you want instruction or just want a table for your own crafting, the Arts and Crafts center provides it all.

FRG groups and birthday parties often take place at the facility. Sometimes it's just the space that is needed for groups and parties to meet. Other times, the people are interested in doing crafts like painting t-shirts or ceramics, bead necklaces, or other crafts. For birthdays, parents can bring in cake, ice cream and pizza. FRGs snack while meeting and crafting as well.

For the individual crafter, the facility space is available for \$2 an hour or only \$1 with a frequent user card. This includes the use of all of the center's nonexpendable equipment like the potter's wheel, firing kiln, loom, and more.

"Come in and take a look around. We have a lot to offer. You can do a two day thing, you can take a six-week class, you can bring your own crafts that you just don't have space for in your own house," Gagliardo said.



Karina Kuho shows her 8-year-old son, Mateo, how to paint a clay coaster in the Mom and Me Pottery class at the Arts and Crafts studio.