



THE MOST STRESSFUL TIME OF YEAR: HOW TO SAVE YOUR SANITY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Family, food, presents, parties: These are the earmarks for the holiday season. They're also the most common causes of holidays stress. Instead of pulling your hair out or drowning your sorrows in gallons of nog, learn how to beat the stressors that threaten to turn your merry Christmas into a scary Christmas.

Party Plans:

Sharing the burden can keep you from stressing out over big holiday meals, whether you go for potluck-style or take responsibility for the Christmas meal only, with friends or relatives covering Thanksgiving dinner or brunch on New Year's Day.

If you're set on hosting, plan ahead. Clean your house one room at a time. Start planning your Christmas menu now and slowly start chipping away at the shopping list or look into having it catered.

"Presents" of Mind:

It's hard to decline invitations to fabulous holiday parties, and it's just as difficult to say no when it comes to buying presents.

We all feel like we have to spend three months' salary to make sure the kids are happy at Christmas but then we're still paying for it the next year. Then the kids have this expectation of the types and amounts of presents they're going to get, and that's not really teaching them the reality of money or what Christmas is about.

Instead of breaking the bank, focus on involving kids in family traditions -

including traditions they want to create themselves. Traditions are extremely important to kids, and sometimes we have it all planned out for them. You may fondly remember a Christmas movie from your childhood and want to have your kids watch it, but they may have other ideas. Ask them what they really want to do over the holidays.

When it comes to buying presents, think about how much you want to spend on each child and create a budget. For friends and relatives, try picking a theme each holiday: buy everyone clothes one year, books the next, etc.

If you absolutely have to do a little last-minute shopping, do it while your kids are in school or allow yourself to spring for a babysitter. You'll be less stressed if you're not dragging the kids through a packed mall.

Boredom Busters:

Once the kids are out of school, you've got a new problem: boredom.

It's common for us to want to cave up and be inactive over the holidays but then the kids are tired because they haven't been outside, so they don't sleep well, so they're cranky. And keep in mind that the most valuable gift can be the give of time. Save some of your summer activities for winter, and get the kids to help you restore a car or tie flies or you can tackle two things at once by getting your kids to help bake cookies you'll give to neighbors or package goodies to mail to faraway relatives.

In addition to getting the kids involved in holiday baking and present-wrapping, find a way to get involved in your community as a family. Kids respond amazingly well to that; they feel like they've done something for others, and it becomes really meaningful to them. That is what the holidays are really about.

By: Jamey Bradbury

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SECTOR ANCHORAGE LEADERSHIP

Sector Commander:
CAPT Paul Mehler III

Deputy Commander:
CDR Shane Montoya

Command Senior Chief:
SCPO Steven Gustin

Chief of the Mess:
MSTCS Tony McDade



OMBUDSMAN NOTE

I was recently sent an article that described what it was like to be a Coast Guard spouse. In this article, several spouses had provided what they viewed as their most valued piece of advice in hopes of inspiring others. Among the words of wisdom, there appeared to be a common thread:

Be Flexible & Open Minded:

No matter what life brings your way, the issues will always seem more difficult during times of deployment. Regardless of what you would like the outcome to be, there are times when it won't turn out like that. Be open minded to other outcomes. Roll with the punches. This journey is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you and your family. You are capable of handling anything that comes your way while your spouse is at work. Utilize your resources.

Take Advantage Of All The Places You Have Lived (even if you never wanted to go there):

Constantly moving from place to place and sometimes not getting orders to where you would like to go is not the end of the world. Where you live and the places you go are what you make of it. Enjoy the little things around you. When you remain positive in your surroundings, your spouse will be positive because you are.

This reduces the home stress for your spouse and allows them to focus on their unit. Not every assignment will be your favorite or the best for you, but learn to bounce back.

Accept The Coast Guard Will Sometimes Come First:

There will be times when you will become super frustrated at the Coast Guard: late nights, long hours, missed special occasions. It's okay to get angry and upset. You are human; just make sure you are venting it in the right places (example: NOT social media). Have a movie night with some friends or call a family member. They will know what you are going through and be there to offer you support.

Communicate With Each Other:

ALWAYS talk to each other. Communication can either make or break a relationship. It's okay to ask questions about the Coast Guard or about the next PCS. The only dumb question is the one not asked.

Be Positive:

Keep yourself busy while your spouse is working. Make friends when you can and surround yourself with people who will uplift and support you; not those who bring you down. Keep in mind that the Coast

Guard is small and bad mouthing fellow Coasties will often come back to bite you.

Your Support Truly Matters:

Letters and emails should be as positive as possible. Letting them know while they are underway or standing watch that you have it all together will give them peace of mind and allow them to better serve the mission. Know this will be difficult at times, "normal" life pressures always seem more difficult to handle when the spouse is not at home. Be resilient and make the best of every situation. You will be stronger for it in the end.

Above all, be your own person. Don't just be a "spouse", be someone others can look up to. Help when you can, be a part of a community, and be someone your spouse will be proud of.

Happy Holidays

~Jaime Whitney
(907) 980-9878
cganchorageombudsman@gmail.com

NEW YEAR FITNESS TIPS

Just 15 minutes of exercise before a meal can make a difference:

- * Take the dog for a walk
- * Family stroll down the block
- * Reduce the amount of sugar and bad cholesterol



Don't Get Stuck Doing All Exercise Indoors All Winter:

- * Cross country ski
- * Snow shoe
- * Go sledding
- * Keep running (stud your shoes)



Keep Exercise Levels From Stalling Too Long:

- * Deconditioning sets in after only 3 days of sedentary living
- * Exercise does not have to be intense; just be active



MILITARY CHILD OF THE YEAR

The nonprofit organization Operation Homefront is seeking nominations for 2015 Military Child of the Year; one child from each branch of military service, including the Coast Guard, will be recognized. The nomination deadline is Dec. 12.

The children, ages 8-18, will be recognized at a Military Child of the Year Gala on April 16, 2015, in Washington, D.C. They will also receive laptop computers and a \$10,000 award each.

The Military Child of the Year Award recognizes military children who demonstrate resiliency, leadership and achievement. To make a nomination and find out more, go to www.militarychildoftheyear.org.

For further information, please contact June Morse, Program Manager, at 210.659.7756 or June.Morse@operationhomefront.net



Logistics staff volunteer at the Soup Kitchen.

RECIPE: STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE MINI WHOOPIE PIES

6 TBS unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/4 all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
16 oz frozen strawberries,
thawed, pureed, and strained

ADVICE FROM ABOVE

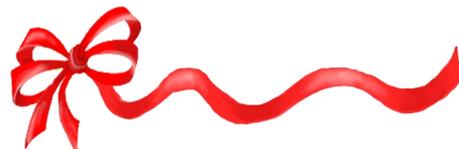
By: CDR Shane Montoya
Deputy Commander

DEAR DEPUTY: How much care do I truly need to put into cleaning my fishing gear? Yours truly, SADLY STOWING.

DEAR SADLY STOWING: The answer is do as much as possible so you don't blame your laziness for losing the trophy fish of a lifetime. I have spent many early season fishing trips watching angry anglers lose fish because of improperly cleaning/storing their gear over the winter and personally have chosen to learn through their mistakes vs. making my own. First off, throw out all your old and ragged lures/flyies; you are going to spend money on gas, the fishing trip, new gear and such, make sure your terminal gear is ready and up to the task as well. Secondly wash out your reels/line in soapy water; many reels have sealed bearing and such - read your reel instructions before applying any lubricant. I made the mistake of adding lubricant to several of my Ross flyfishing reels and have the lubricant gum up and ruin my reels disc drag system. After returning my third reel for repair, I actually got a call from the Ross company in Colorado telling me to stop lubricating my reels and

advised me they would not repair any more with similar damage. Check your lines and replace if needed, and run your fly line through a cleaning solution. Throw away all your used leaders and tippets. Wipe down and inspect your fishing rods. Store all in a dry area, temperature doesn't matter as long as your gear is stored dry. And finally take the time to clean, dry and stow your fishing clothes (waders, boots, etc...). Take care of your gear and your gear will take care of you.

Tight Lines and remember a successful fishing trip means a safe return home, bringing home fish is just a bonus to the adventure.



GOING BACK TO SCHOOL!

There is support offered through Coast Guard Mutual Assistance. The Supplemental Education Grant (SEG) provides up to \$250 a year per household for college expenses not otherwise covered. CGMA will also pay the origination fee for federal loans. Here's more: <http://www.cgmahq.org/Assistance/Programs/edu.html>

Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly spray mini whoopie pie pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Beat butter & sugar until fluffy. Add eggs & vanilla.

Mix flour, baking powder, & salt together. Add to butter mixture until almost combined. Add strawberry puree. Fill pie pan with 1 heaping TBS. Bake 9-11 min.

Cheesecake Filling:

8 oz cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Beat ingredients together until smooth.

To assemble: spread filling on one cake, press a fresh strawberry slice into filling. Refrigerate until ready to eat.



HOLIDAY DECORATING SAFETY

By: The Chief's Mess

While decorative lights and other electrical decorations add to the splendor of the season, they can increase the risks of fire and electrical injuries if not used safely.

Follow these basic safety guidelines to help prevent serious electrical and fire hazards as you decorate your home and yard this season:

Candles:

- Avoid using candles when possible. Consider using battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles.
- If you choose to light candles, place them away from combustible items, such as decorations and wrapping paper.
- Do not leave pets unattended in rooms that contain lit candles or decorations.
- Extinguish all candles before you leave the room, go to bed or leave the house.

Christmas Trees:

- Because heated rapidly rooms dry out live trees, be sure to keep the stand filled with water.

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." This label indicates that the tree is more resistant to burning.
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters.
- When decorating a tree, only use non-combustible or flame-resistant materials.

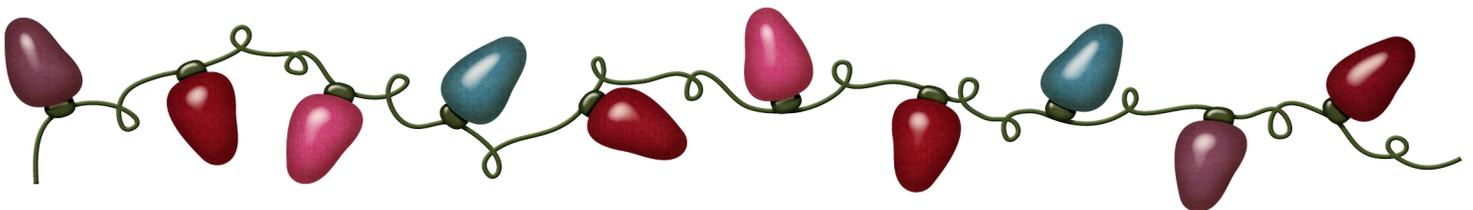
Lights and Electrical Decorations:

- Always purchase electrical decorations and lights from reputable retailers that you trust.
- Before decorating, determine how many outlets are available and where they are located.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat.
- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration. Cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
- Never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights together.

- Consider purchasing LED lights, which use less energy and run cooler than traditional incandescent lights.
- Do not mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.
- Turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving the house or going to sleep.

Fast Facts:

- Christmas tree and holiday decoration fires result in twice the injuries and five times more fatalities per fire than the average winter holiday fire.
- 45% of home decoration fires start with candles.
- On average 260 home fires begin with Christmas trees each year, resulting in 12 deaths, 24 injuries.
- Roughly 5,800 people per year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for falls associated with holiday decorations. More than half of these injuries were caused by falls from ladders or roofs.



A NEW YEAR MONEY CHALLENGE

Wouldn't it be nice to set a little extra money aside for a rainy day, or an easy way to save money for an up-coming vacation? With the new year upon us, try this easy 52 week money challenge.

The challenge is simple. For every week that passes in the new year, set aside the same amount of money. For example: week 1-set aside \$1.00, week 2 - set aside \$2.00, week 3 - \$3.00, week 4 - \$4.00 and so on. You get the idea.

If you do this for all 52 weeks of the year, you will have \$1,378.00 set aside for a rainy day, spending money for your vacation, or money for Christmas presents at the end of the year!



WHY STAY HOME WHEN YOU CAN DO THIS!

[Dec. 2 - Jan. 10: Wonderland of Toys](#)

In this beloved holiday tradition, the museum's atrium is transformed into a dazzling tableau of toys, dating back to the 1800s.

Anchorage Museum
907-929-9201
anchagemuseum.org

[Dec. 6: Family Ski Day](#)

Join recreation staff for a family ski day at Russian Jack Springs Park. Classic ski equipment is available to try out courtesy of Anchorage Park of Recreation Outreach Ski program. Instructors will teach you the basics: how to get up when you've fallen down, walk, glide, turn and classic stride. Dress in layers and be ready for fun! Ages 6+. 12:30-3:30 pm. FREE

907*343*4217 / www.muni.org/active

[Dec. 13: Gingerbread House & Holiday Carnival](#)

Children will make and decorate gingerbread house, crafts, get their picture taken with Santa, and make a present for a friend all in celebration of winter. Ages 2-13 yrs. 1-3 pm.

Spenard Recreation Center
907-343-4355
www.muni.org/active

[Dec. 12-14: Colony Christmas](#)

A Norman Rockwell Christmas celebration featuring horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides, craft fairs, Colony Christmas triathlon, parade of lights, Christmas caroling and fireworks.

Palmer
907-745-2880 / palmerchamber.org

[Dec. 14: Noel](#)

Along with a vibrant collection of classical works and carols, Alaska Chamber Singers will present a jazzy take on familiar Christmas songs featuring some of Anchorage's favorite jazz musicians.

Eagle River
907-333-3500
alaskachambersingers.org

[Dec. 19-28: A Christmas Carol](#)

Witness Ebenezer Scrooge's miraculous Christmas Eve transformation in a new adaptation by Arlitia Jones and Michael Haney.

Alaska Center for Performing Arts
anchorageconcerts.org

[Dec. 20-24: Christmas Fun!](#)

Reindeer tours, wagon rides, visits with Santa, holiday light show, games and crafts, a bonfire and more.

Williams Reindeer Farm, Palmer
907-745-4000 / reindeerfarm.com

[Dec. 22: Little Elves Workshop](#)

A fun time for your kids to get into the holiday spirit. Sing holiday music with Mr. Clay, decorate cookies, and make holiday crafts. 10:30 am to noon.

Spenard Recreation Center
907-343-4355
www.muni.org/active

[Jan. 17: Polar Bear 5K Run & Birthday Party](#)

A fundraiser for the Polar Bear Project. After the race, join us for the birthday part, an event for the bears and wild polar bears being born in dens. Go behind the scenes to visit with the bears and enjoy some birthday cake.

Alaska Zoo
907-346-2133 / alaskazoo.org

[Feb. 1: 19th Annual Alaska Ski for Women](#)

XC skiing, costumes, camaraderie and a cause! A special focus of this event is ending the cycle of violence against women and their families.

Kincaid Park
907-246-7609
anchoragenordicski.com



Like us on Facebook US Coast Guard Sector Anchorage

FISHER HOUSE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: CHRISTMAS STOCKING "STUFFING"

The Fisher House has a simple - yet meaningful - opportunity for Sector Anchorage to help spread much needed holiday cheer.

The Fisher House has 12 stockings, each is 10 inches tall. Each stocking is hung outside a guest room door with a note explaining the stocking is meant to stay throughout the holiday season but the contents of the stockings are for the guests. The Fisher House would

like to have each stocking filled with small surprises. Simple gifts are best: candy, dollar-type items, travel size toiletries, \$5 gift cards, get well notes, etc.

The stockings can be stuffed onsite by volunteers on [Sat, Dec. 13](#) or items donated can be given to Dave Welch at Sector Anchorage any time before then. You can also contact Jaime Whitney, Sector Anchorage Ombudsman,

907-980-9878 for an alternate drop off.

All of the families in the Fisher House have a service member affiliation, live in Alaska but not Anchorage; all are going through unexpected circumstances without their "normal" support systems. Anything we're able to do to help these families feel love and support from the Coast Guard community during the holiday season would be a blessing.

Commanding Officer
US Coast Guard Sector Anchorage
P.O. Box 5800
JBER, AK 99505-0800



Family Holiday Party

WHEN: Thursday, December 11th

TIME: 1700-2000

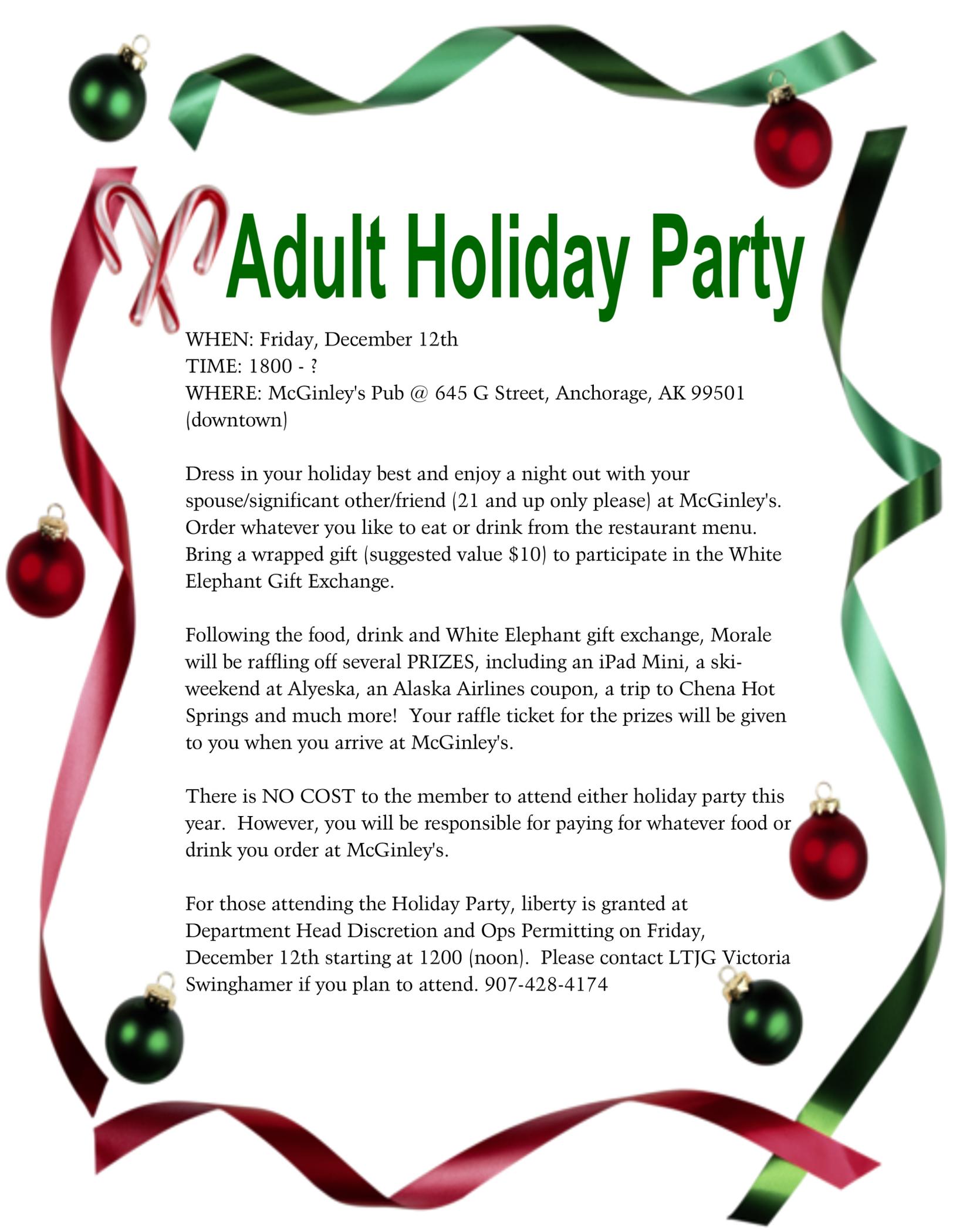
WHERE: Dallas Subdivision Community Center @ 4228
Femoyer Avenue, JBER, AK 99506 (on base)

The Family Holiday Party is a pajama party for the kids from ages 0 - 12. Bring your kiddos in their PJs for food, activities, and a visit from SANTA!! For food and beverage, Morale will provide pizza, fresh-baked cookies, milk and hot chocolate.

Please bring a wrapped gift for your child with his/her name on it (suggested value is \$10) that Santa will give to your child during his visit. A photographer will be there to snap your child's Christmas 2014 photo with Santa.

Morale will host the following activities for the kids: cookie and ornament decorating, pass the parcel, minute to win it, etc.

If you and your child/children will be attending the FAMILY HOLIDAY PARTY please contact Senior Chief Kevin Roman or LTJG Victoria Swinghamer with your children's names/ages. 907-428-4174



Adult Holiday Party

WHEN: Friday, December 12th

TIME: 1800 - ?

WHERE: McGinley's Pub @ 645 G Street, Anchorage, AK 99501
(downtown)

Dress in your holiday best and enjoy a night out with your spouse/significant other/friend (21 and up only please) at McGinley's. Order whatever you like to eat or drink from the restaurant menu. Bring a wrapped gift (suggested value \$10) to participate in the White Elephant Gift Exchange.

Following the food, drink and White Elephant gift exchange, Morale will be raffling off several PRIZES, including an iPad Mini, a ski-weekend at Alyeska, an Alaska Airlines coupon, a trip to Chena Hot Springs and much more! Your raffle ticket for the prizes will be given to you when you arrive at McGinley's.

There is NO COST to the member to attend either holiday party this year. However, you will be responsible for paying for whatever food or drink you order at McGinley's.

For those attending the Holiday Party, liberty is granted at Department Head Discretion and Ops Permitting on Friday, December 12th starting at 1200 (noon). Please contact LTJG Victoria Swinghamer if you plan to attend. 907-428-4174