

Issue 2010-01 — January, 2010

Notices

Korea Retirees' Schedule of Events

Jan 5 – USAG-Daegu RSO Office will be open Tue 1000-1400 at the Garrison Hq Building.

Jan 9 – the quarterly Osan AB Retiree Appreciation Day will be held at the Challenger Club starting at noon.

Jan 12 – the USFK Retiree Council will meet at the USAG-Yongsan Main Street Cafeteria starting at 0730. Council members are asked to be ready to start the meeting promptly at 0730. Attendance by non-council members is by invitation.

Jan 18 – all Korea Retiree Offices will be closed for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Jan 19 – USAG-Daegu RSO Office will be open Tue 1000-1400 at the Garrison Hq Building.

Jan 19-20 – USAG-Yongsan RSO Office will be open Tue & Wed 0900-1500 in the Soldier Support Center, Bldg 4024, Room 140.

Jan 26-27 – USAG-Yongsan RSO Office will be open Tue & Wed 0900-1500 in the Soldier Support Center, Bldg 4024, Room 140.

New Year's Day: Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual. — Mark Twain

In This Issue

Medical Care Matters

Walter Reed Patients Test Next-Generation Prosthesis

TMA Working on New "TRICARE Retired Reserve" Program

Pay Matters

Stop-Loss Pay to Start This Month

U.S. Savings Bonds

\$50 Billion in New VA Benefits

DFAS Prepares To Send 2009 Tax Statements

Medicare Part B Premiums

Legislation Matters

Supreme Court: Combat Experiences Should Factor in Trials

Community Matters

Officials Launch New Air Force Community Web Site

Army Launches New Website

AAFES Extends Exchange/Refund Policy for Holidays

Federal Service Matters

Poll Finds DoD and Education Important, but SSA has Biggest Impact

Recent Retirement Changes Summarized

Expert's View: How FERS Sick Leave Crediting Now Works

Insourcing Proves to be a Challenge

New FEHB Coverage Begins

Laughing Matters

Why I Like Retirement

Speaking German in Texas

Director's Corner

Another Korean Government Amnesty Expires

[The Chromosomolympics](#)

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Medical Care Matters

Walter Reed Patients Test Next-Generation Prosthesis

Wounded warriors at the Military Advanced Training Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., are testing a new microprocessor-controlled prosthetic knee. The X2 microprocessor knee, by Otto Bock HealthCare, is the result of a medical research project funded in support of the Military Amputee Research Program.

This project, administered by the Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center, had the goal of developing "an electronically controlled prosthetic knee joint that meets the specific demands of military staff in real world activity," said Troy Turner, Advanced Technology Research Program manager at TATRC. He added that in 2005, officials recognized that even the cutting-edge prosthetic devices weren't good enough.

"Otto Bock had the C-Leg," he said. "It was the best that was available, but not the best needed." Soldiers needed a prosthetic knee with a longer battery life that would enable them to walk and run backward and forward and go up stairs foot over foot.

Otto Bock developed a proposal that later was funded and has developed a new knee that has more durability and functionality, extended battery life, remote-control functions and can handle higher weight loads.

Adele Levine, a physical therapist at the center, said many patients were dealing with knee and joint pain with the C-leg, and saw relief almost immediately once they began wearing the new X2.

"Once I got the confidence to trust the leg that it would do what it was supposed to do, I almost got immediate relief," said Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Marcus Wilson, one of the three patients at Walter Reed testing out the microprocessor knee. "No knee pain or hip pain. Everything evened out." The leg enables him to stand in any position and rest on the amputated side, relieving pressure on his intact leg, he said. He also can run again without having to switch to another leg. "With the old C-Leg, you can't run," he said. "Now, it's as simple as getting a remote and putting it in running mode and going. As fast as you can go, the leg will keep up with you."

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Alfredo De los Santos has been using the new X2 microprocessor for a little more than two weeks. "Ever since I got this leg, it's been heaven," he said. "I went to Busch Gardens. I walked all day long. I only take it off when I go to sleep at night." De los Santos, who works out two or three times a day and recently participated in the Army Ten-Miler and the Marine Corps Marathon using a hand-crank chair, said that before using the X2 he occasionally would use canes to alleviate some of the back pain he was having because he enjoys being active. "Now, I can jump and mostly do everything," he said.

Levine said that with the X2 De los Santos has alleviated a lot of his previous concerns about the pressure he was putting on his intact side and his concerns with quality of living. "He is so much happier. He tells us this at least 20 times a day," she said. "He's always concerned about the future and his condition in 20 years; this gives him a lot of hope."

The knees are currently being fitted on 30 wounded warriors at Walter Reed and at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, and are expected to be widely available in 2011.

"It's what you make out of it," De los Santos said when asked about his hope with the X2. "If you can do this, you can do anything. You can accomplish anything, and you have to make the decision to make it work."

News of the Force (page 3), Dec 11

TMA Working on New "TRICARE Retired Reserve" Program

TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) put out a press release on Thursday saying that they were working to stand up the new TRICARE Gray Area retiree program that was created in this year's National Defense Authorization Act (that is the good news). They also indicated that it will be both slower to start and more expensive than we think is necessary (that is the bad news). We need to urge Congress to press DoD on both points.

The program, which TMA says is tentatively named "TRICARE Retired Reserve", will provide a TRICARE option for members of the Retired Reserve (who are not yet 60 and therefore qualified for TRICARE) to purchase TRICARE Standard (or Extra) coverage. (TRICARE Extra means that beneficiaries pay smaller out of pocket costs if they use network providers.) The benefit is the same as TRICARE Reserve Select; however, the costs are dramatically different. IN TRS present members of the Selected Reserve pay 28% of the costs and the federal government pays 72%. In the new Gray Area Retiree program the beneficiaries will pay 100% of the cost of the coverage.

DoD is taking the position that they cannot fold the new beneficiaries into the present TRS program but must stand up an entirely new program:

"We're working hard to coordinate all the details of eligibility, coverage and costs, and expedite implementation of this important program," said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the TRICARE Management Activity.

"This is a major benefit program with implementation on the same magnitude as TRS. It will require detailed design, development and testing, but qualified retired reservists should be able to purchase coverage by late summer or early fall of 2010."

This decision will delay the implementation of the program. As you can see Admiral Hunter is indicating that it will not start before late summer or early fall. This means those who plan to enroll in the program should save their medical receipts for 2010 with a view to being reimbursed for their expenses when the program is finally implemented. However, we will try and clarify with TMA if, in fact, reimbursement will be possible. The statement also makes clear what we have heard rumored behind the scenes. DoD intends to have a different risk pool from TRS and higher premiums for TRICARE Retired Reserve than TRS. TREA thinks both the delay and the planned higher premiums are not appropriate. We, along with other VSOs, are urging Congress to pressure DoD to change these decisions.

TREA Washington Update, Dec 18

Pay Matters

Stop-Loss Pay to Start This Month

DoD reports that the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will start making initial Stop-Loss payments by December 16. As they are confirmed, the applications are being sent in bundles of 1000 from DoD to DFAS. This means that probably the majority of members due will not see any money until next year. If you still have not applied use the below to make your application:

Army: <https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil>

Navy: send email to NXAG_N132C@navy.mil

Marine Corps: <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss>

Air Force: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss

NAUS Weekly Update, Dec 11

U.S. Savings Bonds

The U.S. Treasury reports holding nearly \$17 billion in unclaimed Series E savings bonds purchased between 1941 until 1980. Some may belong to service members who invested in savings bonds throughout their careers. Unfortunately, mature savings bonds may get misplaced or forgotten, and legislation has been introduced to have state treasurers assist in outreach efforts to track down bondholders.

The bills are H.R.4198, introduced in the House by Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-NV) & Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), and S.827,

sponsored by Senators John Rockefeller (D-WV), Pat Roberts (R-KS), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT). Refer to www.savingsbonds.gov/indiv/tools/tools_treasuryhunt.htm to see if you own any of these unclaimed Series E savings bonds.

Treasury Hunt's database is limited — it doesn't contain a record of all savings bonds and only provides information on Series E bonds issued in 1974 and after. For additional information or claim submission guidance, visit the Treasury Hunt website www.savingsbonds.gov. [Source: MOAA Weekly Legislative Update, 11 Dec 09]
RAO (Baguio) Update, Dec 15

\$50 Billion in New VA Benefits

[The National Association for Uniformed Services] NAUS applauds Department of Veterans Affairs] VA Secretary Shinseki's recent decision to expand presumptive Agent Orange benefits to an additional 185,000 Vietnam Veterans and their widows.

This new ruling will lead to a at least a 20 percent increase in VA awards for those who served in Vietnam and have any of the newly presumed service connected disabilities of B cell leukemia's, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

Although VA has not finalized the rules, NAUS encourages our members to apply for these new benefits. VA expects to finalize the rules in early 2010. We also encourage you to sign up new members who also may qualify. While by law NAUS cannot help you with your claims, we can and do offer advice on where to go and how to get assistance for your claim filings.

In order to assist with claims backlog and new exams the VA will accept letters from family physicians that support claims for Agent Orange related conditions.

Thousands of widows whose husbands died of Agent Orange disabilities may qualify for retroactive benefits and back pay, as well as DIC payments.

VA will re-examine about 86,000 claims, previously denied before 1985, to see if they meet the new criteria. \$14 billion is expected to be paid related to heart disease alone.

Both VBA and VHA expect to be deluged by this increase in new claims. NAUS encourages its members and potential new members to contact the NAUS staff, for such assistance as we can offer. We will pass on any new information, about the claims process and how to ensure your claims are as complete as possible, as we receive it.

NAUS tips its hat to Board member Win Reither for providing up-to-the-minute information on this important message to servicemembers and families whose health has been adversely affected by Agent Orange.

NAUS Weekly Update, Dec 18

DFAS Prepares To Send 2009 Tax Statements

Service members, retirees, annuitants and federal civilian employees of the Defense Department will receive their 2009 income tax statements soon. Persons who receive their pay through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) who use myPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>) can gain access to their W-2, 1099-R, 1099-INT, and retiree and annuitant account statements two weeks earlier than those who receive theirs by mail.

For example, retirees signed up for myPay were able to view their statements on Dec. 10; mailings were not scheduled to begin until Dec. 16 through Dec. 31. All statements will be mailed by Jan. 29; most DFAS customers will receive theirs earlier.

Armed Forces News Issue, Dec 18

Medicare Part B Premiums

Under current law, people turning age 65 in 2010 and those with incomes above \$85,000 (\$170,000 for a married couple) will face steep Part B premium increases as of Jan. 1. Other Medicare-eligibles are protected by a law that bars Part B premium hikes in years when there's no Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. But there's no such protection for the 25% of beneficiaries who will first become eligible for Medicare next year or who have higher incomes. And those groups will get hit with extra premiums to help make up for the fact that the other 75% won't be paying more.

extract from MOAA Legislative Update, Dec 18

Legislation Matters

Supreme Court: Combat Experiences Should Factor in Trials

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that lower courts that weigh cases involving veterans convicted of serious crimes should consider the adverse mental-health effects of combat before imposing the death penalty.

In a Nov. 30 opinion, the high court upheld a Florida federal district court ruling that George Porter, a Korean War veteran, should have been allowed to present evidence during his trial that he endured great hardship as a soldier during two long and brutal combat operations.

Porter was convicted of first-degree murder in 1988 for killing his wife and her boyfriend two years earlier. He was sentenced to death for the first charge. Court records show that Porter initially represented himself, but eventually was assigned a lawyer. The defense attorney, in turn, only spoke to Porter once and never asked him to provide evidence that his combat experiences left him traumatized.

While the district court determined that the attorney should have done so, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed and upheld the trial conviction and sentencing. Porter appealed the conviction to the Supreme Court. In issuing their decision, the justices said, "Like the District Court, we are persuaded that it was objectively unreasonable to conclude there was no reasonable probability the sentence would have been different if the sentencing judge and jury had heard the significant mitigation evidence that Porter's counsel neither uncovered nor presented." With the decision, Porter will be granted a new trial, in which the critical evidence will be allowed.

Armed Forces News Issue, Dec 4

Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account. —
Oscar Wilde

Community Matters

Officials Launch New Air Force Community Web Site

by Master Sgt. Stan Parker

Air Force officials have launched a new Web site to meet social and informational needs of Airmen, civilians, retirees and their families.

The entire Air Force family: all Airmen, married and single; spouses; children; Air Force civilians; and retirees are invited to log on to **www.usafservices.com**, the official community Web site of the Air Force. The Web site allows users to add friends, send messages and update their personal profiles to notify family and friends about themselves.

Registered users will find the site allows for real-time socializing through the use of private or public chats, according to Mrs. Eliza Nesmith, Airmen and family services chief. Officials are not just optimistic based on the site's popularity, but also by feedback received regarding its functionality.

Additionally, users can join networks or create forums ranging in topics from deployed-spouse support to families with special needs.

"The new Web site is going to be very exciting and useful for Airmen and their families," said Ms. Nesmith. "We have about 2,200 users who are using the site right now, from an initial 600."

Although Airmen and families may be surprised by the absence of Air Force Crossroads, officials emphasized this important capability will continue to exist under the new domain.

Airmen will see advantages of the new site, particularly the new social networking feature, Ms. Nesmith said. The feature called "My Journal", under the "Share" tab functions much like Facebook and allows registered users to invite friends, join groups and post photos or videos. Like commercial sites, users can restrict access, allowing only those known to them to view their

information and post messages.

Active duty, retirees, reservists, Guardsmen, Department of Defense employees and others who are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System may register as users on the site.

Users will notice that the Web site does not require the use of a common access card, but under optimized security measures, users can create a unique account username and a 15 character password, Ms. Nesmith said. Despite increased security measures, the site will be accessible from government and personal computers, she added.

As this new site was launched, Air Force officials discontinued GI Mail. Over the past few years, officials have noticed the feature was an important tool for families to stay in touch, while others used it for their official mail or even to pay bills.

"We are very sensitive to drawing down that capability ... but the social networking and contact with family during a deployment is going to be an easy and important part of usafservices.com," Ms. Nesmith said, noting a messaging feature, forums and a real-time.

While there is no capability or contact list link between Air Force Crossroads/GI Mail and the new usafservices.com Web site, users can click on the webmaster link to solicit help.

"Once Airmen and their families get accustomed to using the Web site, they will find that it is a very user friendly site that will give them much more flexibility than they have had on similar Web sites," Ms. Nesmith said. "During this Year of the Air Force Family, we really want to take a look at policies and procedures and see what we can do better. This is one of them."

Senior leaders have designated July 2009 through July 2010 as the Year of the Air Force Family, maintaining their commitment and attention to Airmen and their families as a top priority. Airmen and Family Support is one of the four pillars on which the Year of the Air Force Family is built, including Health and Wellness, Education, Development and Employment and Airman and Family Housing. (Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Air Force Retiree Service Release No. 12-05-09, Dec 9

Army Launches New Website

My.Army.Mil is the U.S. Army's new user-customized Web site — the first of its kind across all military branches in [the Department of Defense] DoD. The Army launched this Web site Dec. 4 in an effort to create a more personalized browsing experience and to connect the Army community. Learn more at <http://my.army.mil/login/>.

NAUS Weekly Update, Dec 11

AAFES Extends Exchange/Refund Policy for Holidays

Military shoppers checking off their holiday lists at Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) facilities between Thanksgiving and Christmas can breathe a little easier if gifts don't measure up as AAFES has extended its refund/exchange policy for the holidays.

While AAFES' standard policy states that items in new condition may be exchanged or returned within 15, 30 or 90 days with a sales receipt, the new holiday return/exchange policy will extend these guidelines through Jan. 31, 2010 for any items purchased between Nov. 26, 2009 and Dec. 24, 2009.

"With the great deals that AAFES offered over the Black Friday weekend, it's very likely that many purchases were for presents," said AAFES' Chief of Staff Col. Virgil Williams. "In the event that the gift is the wrong size, fit or style, we want to ensure that military shoppers get exactly what they want to enjoy throughout the New Year."

The extended holiday return/exchange policy will end on Jan. 31, 2010 at which time the standard return policy will go back into effect.

AAFES News Release 09-089, Dec. 15

Federal Service Matters

Poll Finds DoD and Education Important, but SSA has Biggest Impact

The Gallup Organization has reported that people most frequently cite [the Department of Defense] DoD as the agency most important to the future of the country, with the Department of Education cited immediately after that — particularly among younger demographics, but when asked which agency has the biggest impact on peoples' lives, Americans most often cite the Social Security Administration.

That's not to say views of government are at all rosy. In fact, according to a Gallup study on individual experiences with federal agencies, most people have neutral to negative views of the federal government. (Views of Congress are abysmal by comparison.)

The study was based on 41,876 responses in May-June and weighted to match specific demographic targets and population estimates. It said that while 78 percent of Americans express positive views of the military, half express neutral views regarding federal agencies, with more – 34 percent – expressing negative views than positive – 20 percent.

Gallup said that while the neutral to negative skewed views of federal agencies may mean people have not had enough experience interacting with the government to really base an opinion, those views also present "an opportunity for federal agencies to build a positive brand image" based on factors such as "impact, prestige, and most desirable employer."

Ability to Solve Problems the Most Important Driver of Satisfaction

The study found that the most important factor driving public satisfaction with an agency is its ability to resolve problems in a satisfactory way.

Gallup asked survey participants to rate 31 aspects of their interactions with federal agencies from providing accurate information and response time to website evaluations. Just 27 percent of respondents who experienced a problem had a high level of satisfaction, but when the problems were resolved overall satisfaction was 76 percent.

By targeting satisfaction drivers, managers can attempt to influence the aspects of individual interactions that have the most impact on overall satisfaction and make the best use of limited resources, the study said.

It said knowing how and why people interact with an agency is helpful, but that detailed measurements of specific interactions are "critical."

Gallup noted a wide range of variance in satisfaction across agencies as well as within agencies individually that it said may go unnoticed without workgroup- level data that managers can use to manage performance of teams that deliver services to citizens.

It said the only way to manage performance variation is to provide feedback at the level where it originates.

Managers need satisfaction measures to base strategic actions, and without detailed workgroup-level data, managers are left broad data without the means to target interventions, the study said.

Federal Manager's Daily Report, Dec 1

Recent Retirement Changes Summarized

[The Congressional Research Service] CRS has issued a report summarizing changes in federal retirement benefits enacted as part of two laws this year. For a closer look, go to <http://www.fedweek.com> in the hot free info section of our website.

FEDweek Weekly Issue, Dec 9

Expert's View: How FERS Sick Leave Crediting Now Works

Rather than immediately giving full credit for a [Federal Employee Retirement System] FERS employee's unused sick leave when he [or she] retires, the benefit has been phased in, with half credit given to any one retiring through December 31, 2013 and full credit to those who retire on or after January 1, 2014, writes benefits expert Reg Jones. "I'm tempted to call this the 'No FERS Employee Retires in 2013' provision of law," he writes. You'll find his column at www.fedweek.com.

FEDweek Weekly Issue, Dec 9

Insourcing Proves to be a Challenge

Federal agencies appear to be making only limited progress in carrying out an Obama administration initiative to bring in-house some of the work that has been granted to contractors over the years, [the Government Accountability Office] GAO has reported.

The administration issued guidance earlier this year calling for more insourcing due to a view that some contracts are wasteful and that some involve work that is inherently governmental in nature.

However, a GAO report has found that of nine agencies it reviewed, none had met a deadline set by a spending bill for developing insourcing guidelines and procedures, and only one, State, had issued even preliminary policies. As of the end of September several did not even have first drafts written. Several of the agencies said they were waiting for further guidance from [the Office of Management and Budget] OMB, some of which didn't come out until after the deadline, and some of which is still pending. [Department of Defense] DoD, though, did comply with a similar requirement set by a separate, prior law, GAO added. DoD along with [Department of Homeland Security] DHS have announced insourcing efforts concentrating on acquisition-related jobs.

FEDweek Weekly Issue, Dec 9

New FEHB Coverage Begins

Beginning in January are the new premium rates paid by both employees and retirees under [Federal Employees Health Benefits] FEHB — effective January 1 for retirees and with the first full pay period of the year for most active employees. Premiums on average are increasing by around 9 percent in 2010, although within that average is a wide variation of actual changes, with some plans exceeding that figure substantially while others had smaller increases or even lowered premiums. Also note that coverage changes also take effect at the same effective dates as the premium changes. Further, any changes in plans or levels of coverage elected in the FEHB open season also begin.

FEDweek Weekly Newsletter, Dec 30

Laughing Matters

Why I Like Retirement

- Number of days in a week: 6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday
- Bedtime: Three hours after falling asleep on the couch
- Biggest gripe: There is not enough time to get everything done
- Benefit of being called a senior: The term comes with a 10% discount
- What is considered formal attire: Tied shoes
- Why do retirees count pennies: They are the only ones who have the time
- Common term for someone who enjoys work and refuses to retire: NUTS!
- Reason retirees are so slow to clean out the basement, attic or garage: They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there
- What retirees call a long lunch: Normal
- Best way to describe retirement: The never ending Coffee Break
- Biggest advantage of going back to school: If you cut classes, no one calls your parents
- What do retirees do all week: Monday through Friday, NOTHING. Saturday & Sunday they rest
- Why doing nothing is hard work: You never know when you're done

RAO (Baguio) Update, Dec 15

Speaking German in Texas

Near Fredericksburg, Texas, where there is a large German-speaking population, a farmer walking down a country road notices a man drinking from his pond with his hand.

The farmer shouted: "Trink das wasser nicht. Die kuhen haben dahin gesheissen."

(Which means: Don't drink the water, the cows have s*** in it.)

The man shouted back: "I'm from Washington and just down here campaigning for our new tax plan, but I can't understand you. Please speak in English."

The farmer replied: "Use two hands, you'll get more."

from the Internet

Director's Corner

Another Korean Government Amnesty Expires

On December 31, 2009, the amnesty expired for foreign persons who are in Korea illegally. These may be persons with a valid passport but whose visa has expired. Or it may be for persons whose passport has expired. The amnesty provided an opportunity to 'get things right' with the Korean Government. The only penalty is a requirement to remain outside of Korea for one year before applying for re-entry.

I'm pretty sure that there are some U.S. military retirees who were eligible for the amnesty but who decided not to take advantage of it. I'm also pretty sure that they were able to come up with an excuse, however lame, to justify remaining in Korea illegally. No excuse is sufficient to break the law of the host country. Being an illegal alien in Korea is not the same as being an illegal alien in the U.S., where the penalty is relatively light.

Anyone caught illegally in Korea will face the Korean justice system, a significant fine and possibly even jail time until the fine is paid, followed by deportation for two years or more. Is that sufficient reason for others who are aware of their presence to 'keep the secret'? Not if they consider what the effect might be upon themselves.

What's really upsetting to me is that those who remain here illegally for whatever reasons reflect adversely upon the reputation of all non-SOFA U.S. military retirees living in Korea. What's worse is that harsher rules considered for action to prevent illegal military retirees could be applied to the entire non-SOFA retiree community as a result of the selfish actions of a few. The effects can also spill over to rules regarding our civilian medical care.

Jack Terwiel

The Chromosomolympics

By Gene Weingarten

(Note: Here's an article I thought about including in Laughing Matters, but decided that this is serious stuff.)

I think it's nuts that the International Olympic Committee is going to convene a group of medical experts to try to come up with a sure-fire scientific test to identify who is male and who is female. Surely there are much cheaper and simpler ways to do this.

A reader named Worth Cooley-Prost wrote in to suggest one: Instruct subject to remove a pair of socks from the top drawer of a dresser. If subject leaves drawer open, subject is male.

I like this test, but it might not be 100 percent conclusive. Gina Barreca and I came up with some backups.

- Leave the athlete in a room with a vending machine that has a bag of Crunchy Cheez Doodles hung up on a spiral and waiting to drop. All men – and only men – will rock the box.
- Ask the subject to tell you, correct to the nearest 500 miles, the current odometer reading of his or her car. All men can do this. Women can do this only at the actual moment they are driving the car out of the dealer showroom.
- Give the athlete a stack of photos of seven babies. Then shuffle the pack and ask the athlete to put them back in the original order. There is not a man alive who can do this.
- Present a folded road map to the athlete and ask him or her to find someplace on it. A man will hand back the map refolded perfectly. A woman will fold it any which way, leaving it all lumpy and billowy, and not care.
- Offer the athlete two muffins of almost equal size. The female will always take the smaller one. The male will always take the larger one or, more likely, both.
- Give the athlete a cold can of beer and instruct him or her to go right into the bathroom to take a quick shower. Once you hear that the shower curtain has been drawn and the water is running, go into the bathroom. If the can of beer is not on any visible surface, the athlete is a man.
- Bring the subject to a department store with instructions to find the "Linens" department without asking for help. A

woman will do this within three minutes. After 45 minutes, you will find the man wandering around aimlessly in electronics.

- Present the athlete with a stack of 1,700 greeting cards and ask him or her to select the three that are the "most fun." Observe the instantaneous reaction. Only a woman will smile.
- Wear a sweater of a very specific color. Ask the athlete what color it is. If the athlete says "pink," the athlete is a man. Any of these responses identifies a woman: "coral," "peach," "salmon," "pumpkin," "nasturtium," "seashell," "apricot," "coral-peach," "peach-pumpkin," "salmony-coral-seashellesque," etc.
- Present a fully stocked refrigerator. Ask the athlete to locate the Jarlsberg cheese. If the Jarlsberg cheese is ever located, the athlete is a woman.
- Quietly but devastatingly ... fart. A woman will squirm, make a face and do everything possible through her bearing, posture, attitude and subtle change in her tone of voice to register that she is aware of the faux pas, is discomfited by it, but is definitely not the author of it, while doing or saying nothing that could possibly be construed as an accusation, even though there are only two of you in the room. A man will laugh.
- Inform the subject that there is something hanging precipitously out of one nostril. If the subject immediately and embarrassedly produces a handkerchief, the subject is female. If the subject whips out a cellphone and takes a picture ...

Jewish World Review, Dec 1

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Last year, this column ended 2008 contemplating the new administration asking, "... in which direction will the change take us?" We now have some of the answers. First, the country is deeper in debt and with higher unemployment than when we asked the question. That's the not-so-good news. On the other hand, inflation has not been a problem as evidenced by the lack of a cost-of-living adjustment that would be caused by inflation.

Still, there are a lot of questions that we'll see resolved in 2010, one way or another. High on the list for retirees is health care. Will health care reform, if implemented, incorporate the military health benefits, or will TRICARE and VA health care be continued separately? As the Association of the U.S. Navy (AUSN) [states](#): "There are certain assurances written into the House bill, Section 311 of HR. 3962 on Health Care Reform; however, these are not guarantees! This is not a guarantee at this stage since it is left up to interpretation and not applicable to the entire ACT. At this time, AUSN and others do not see this type of language in the Senate bill under consideration – HR 3590, Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Amendment in Senate). The lack of these guarantees is troublesome."

How will military budgeting decisions affect the force and the installation infrastructure? This is another all-important concern to the military retiree community wherever it is located.

Once again, the year ends with uncertainty, so anything we may try to divine at this point is only speculation. There is one thing that is real, however, and that is our wish to you for a happy, healthy and safe 2010. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Jack & Punee Terziel

One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: To rise above the little things. — John Burroughs