

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985
 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR NO. 26
 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2022

**Your
 FREE
 weekly
 paper
 Take one!**

**Things to do
 around town**

Haunts, guided nature walks, Lantern Festival, plant sale, Grand Ave. Festival, LA Chargers MNF vs. Broncos
See page 10

Local

Our feature local story ... an offshore support vessel demonstrates rare reload of weapons system pierside and while a ship is at sea.
See page 4

**ASYMCA SD
 Fall Festival**

Saturday, Oct 15, 10-3, at the ASYMCA Horse of the Sun Ranch in Pine Valley.
See page 11



WATERS EAST OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA (Sept. 30, 2022) - The Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, *USS Ronald Reagan*, a Navy fast-attack submarine, cruiser *USS Chancellorsville*, destroyer *USS Benfold*, Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy destroyer *ROKS Munmu the Great (DDH 976)*, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) destroyer *JS Asahi (DD 119)*, steam in formation in waters east of the Korean Peninsula. While underway, command of *Ronald Reagan* changed hands Oct. 7, in the area where the aircraft carrier recently redeployed in response to an uptick in North Korean missile launches. Capt. Daryle Cardone took command from Capt. Fred Goldhammer. *US Navy photo by MC3 Gray Gibson*

Defense Commissary Agency to lower shopping prices even further

by Kevin L. Robinson
 Defense Commissary Agency
 Service members and their families will soon see a 3-5 percent decrease in pricing on most grocery items in their commissaries as part of a Defense Department initiative to bolster the economic security and stability of the military community.

DOD's "Taking Care of Service Members and Families" initiative lays out comprehensive actions to support military members struggling with the financial impacts of inflation, supply chain disruptions and the pandemic.

"The department's added investment in our budget allows us to reduce commissary prices at the register about 3-5 percent on most items - particularly on food staples that struggling military families need



most such as bread, eggs, milk and more," Bill Moore, director and CEO of the Defense Commissary Agency, said. "With this boost we can achieve at least 25 percent in overall savings for eligible patrons who shop their commissaries."
 Commissary customers are expected to see price changes at most see **DECA, page 4**

DoD official discusses broad range of family issues, resources

by David Vergun, DOD News

As a military spouse, finding the right balance in life is difficult with so many priorities to juggle, said C. Eddy Mentzer. Mentzer, associate director, Military Community Support Programs, Military Community and Family Policy, spoke on an AUSA Military Family Forum Oct. 10. Even if balance proves elusive, it's important to take advantage of the variety of military and civilian resources that are out there, he said. "As a military spouse, my most trusted network is other military spouses," he said. "They're going to tell me what works and what doesn't work."

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, military spouses have shown they can successfully work in remote environments, Mentzer mentioned. Employment is one of the challenges for military spouses, he said.

A key to employment is speaking to potential employers, including within the military services, he said.

There are currently efforts underway within the Defense and State Departments to address the problems of employment, particularly in areas where restrictions to employment exist, he said.

Another possible employment opportunity are fellowships for military spouses, he said.

"This is something that we've been working hard on for several years to find the authority and the ability to place military spouses within corporate America with a paid stipend from the government," Mentzer said.

Mentzer said he expects to see the first military spouses placed with corporate America by January 2023.

Advanced certifications and licenses are also available for spouses, he said, encouraging spouses to contact their installation family representative or go online to helpful sites like Military OneSource. The Career Opportunities Program is another option where a spouse can contact a career coach.

It's important to keep growing personally and professionally, as well as looking for opportunities, he said.

Be the face of change during 2022 Combined Federal Campaign

The Combined Federal Campaign runs through January 14, 2023. The mission of the CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all. CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. See ads inside this issue!

Col. Nicole Mann first female Marine and Native American to lead NASA space flight

Marine Corps Col. Nicole Mann, on Oct. 5, became the first female Marine and Native American to lead a NASA space flight. Mann and SpaceX Crew-5 successfully launched into space from Kennedy Space Center, bound for the International Space Station with Mann serving as the mission commander. Semper Fi and Bravo Zulu, Colonel Mann. We wish her and the crew the best for successful mission.

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Top 5

- Army on track to field 24 systems in FY23 in bid for a modern force
- NKorea launches 2 missiles toward sea after US-SKorea drills
- Task force seeks lighter Javelin missiles, robot dogs for infantry
- Navy, Marines Corps offer gun locks to prevent suicide
- Competition heats up for Army's future tactical UAS



Army

- Two Fort Hood brigade commanders fired amid investigations
- Newer Strykers, better kit solve networking power problems, Army says
- Army readies latest batch of advanced networking gear
- Army's much-touted robot dogs might not arrive for a decade or more

Navy

- Hawaii to allow DoD to start removing remaining fuel in Red Hill pipes
- Navy jet flew across Baltic hours after Nord Stream burst

Marine Corps

- Marine recruit collapses during training, dies

Air Force

- Supply chain woes delay KC-46 refueling vision system upgrade to 2025
- Dawn Patrol Rendezvous returns to the Air Force Museum
- AFSOC's MC-130Hs grounded by cracked parts along with ACC, AMC fleets

Coast Guard

- Coast Guardsman becomes millionaire with his Thrift Savings Plan

- Coast Guard captain describes encounter with Chinese, Russian warships off Alaska

National Guard

- National Guard struggles as troops leave at faster pace

Veterans

- 107-year-old WWII veteran finally receives Silver Star 77 years after his discharge
- Veterans unemployment under 3 percent for seventh month in a row

SECNAV reinforces DoD commitment to island nations

WASHINGTON—Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Carlos Del Toro recently participated in two events focused on furthering the United States' relationships with island networks and island nations around the world.

On Sept. 21, Del Toro traveled to New York for the second members meeting of the Local2030 Islands Network. The network brings together a diverse set of island nations, states/provinces, communities and cultures from all regions of the world dedicated to addressing the climate crisis through locally-driven peer-to-peer solutions.

During a roundtable discussion focused on net-zero and climate resiliency efforts, Del Toro reiterated the Department of the Navy's commitment to combatting climate change as outlined in the department's "Climate Action 2030". Attendees included several foreign heads of state, foreign ministers, and U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry.

Del Toro said that the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps efforts, while critically important, are just one component of DoD's larger "Climate Adaptation Plan" to address what Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has recognized as

an "existential threat."

"The U.S. Navy-Marine Corps team takes its responsibility to build resilience against climate change seriously," said Del Toro at the event. "The Department of Defense, and indeed the entire U.S. government, have made a commitment to island nations to combat climate change, and the Department of the Navy is already working with island nations on their climate defenses."

Separately, as a part of President Biden's first ever U.S.-Pacific Island Country Summit last week, Del Toro participated in a reception with PIC leaders to discuss maritime issues affecting economic prosperity and regional resilience such as maritime domain awareness, maritime security, and law enforcement cooperation, including combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Del Toro, who has learned about some of these issues firsthand during official visits to Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and the Philippines discussed the Navy's maritime information sharing tools that support counter IUU fishing and MDA initiatives.

The U.S. Navy has a long list of projects with island nations, including the Naval Construction

Battalion "Seabees" work addressing drought on the Marshall Islands and rebuilding shorelines and wetlands on islands across the Blue Pacific. The Navy-Marine Corps team also conducts the annual Pacific Partnership mission, working with local governments to strengthen environmental infrastructure and resilience and joint training exercises to better responses to climate-induced disasters.

Del Toro's participation in the events advance two Department of Defense initiatives: fostering closer partnerships with island nations around the world and mitigating the threat posed by a warming climate.

"No matter where I am, two re-occurring themes that inevitably come up during my conversations with foreign dignitaries are the impacts of climate change and the importance of maritime domain awareness," Del Toro said. "While these topics may not necessarily be connected, they are critically important – not just for island nations or networks, but for everyone. Events like the Local2030 Network and U.S.-PIC Summit, where we are sharing better practices, strategies, and lessons learned, further one of the Department of the Navy's enduring priorities – strengthening our relationships with Allies and partners."

Armed Forces Dispatch (619) 280-2985

Published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com

Publisher.....Sarah Hagerty

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CFC #11322

North Korea fires more missiles, concern is possibility of resuming nuclear testing

North Korea conducted another ballistic missile launch Oct. 5 launching two short range missiles. "The United States strongly condemns this irresponsible act, which violates numerous unanimous United Nations Security Council mandates," said Pentagon Press secretary Brigadier General Pat Ryder.

"In response to the DPRK's provocative ballistic missile launch, the USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group joined by two Japanese Navy destroyers, and one Republic of Korea Navy destroyer arrived October 5, in the Sea of Japan to conduct trilateral Ballistic Missile Defense exercises.

These exercises send a clear message of allied unity between our nations and enhance the interoperability of our collective forces. The

exercises also demonstrate the deep strength of our trilateral relationship with Japan and the Republic of Korea, which is resolute against those who challenge regional stability."

North Korea reportedly fired two more ballistic missiles into the sea early Sunday, Oct. 9, the seventh such launch in two weeks, just hours after the U.S. air craft carrier USS Ronald Reagan wrapped up joint drills off the Korean peninsula. Seoul, Tokyo and Washington have ramped up combined naval exercises in recent weeks.

According to Reuters, "Officials in the South Korean capital have said the uptick in the North's missile launches could signal it is closer than ever to resuming nuclear testing for the first time since 2017, with preparations observed at its test site for months."

HHS spends \$290 million on drug for use in radiological and nuclear emergencies

www.hhs.gov/news

As part of long-standing, ongoing efforts to be better prepared to save lives following radiological and nuclear emergencies, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is purchasing a supply of the drug Nplate from Amgen USA Inc; Nplate is approved to treat blood cell injuries that accompany acute radiation syndrome in adult and pediatric patients (ARS).

Amgen, based in Thousand Oaks, California, developed Nplate for ARS with support from the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the HHS Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), as well as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health.

BARDA is using its authority provided under the 2004 Project Bioshield Act and \$290 million in Project BioShield designated funding to purchase this supply of the drug. Amgen will maintain this supply in vendor-managed inventory. This approach decreases life-cycle management

costs for taxpayers because doses that near expiration can be rotated into the commercial market for rapid use prior to expiry and new doses can be added to the government supply.

ARS, also known as radiation sickness, occurs when a person's entire body is exposed to a high dose of penetrating radiation, reaching internal organs in a matter of seconds. Symptoms of ARS injuries include impaired blood clotting as a result of low platelet counts, which can lead to uncontrolled and life-threatening bleeding.

To reduce radiation-induced bleeding, Nplate stimulates the body's production of platelets. The drug can be used to treat adults and children.

Nplate is also approved for adult and pediatric patients with immune thrombocytopenia, a blood disorder resulting in low platelet counts. Repurposing drugs for acute radiation syndrome that also are approved for a commercial indication helps to sustain availability of the product and improves healthcare provider familiarity with the drug.

DECA

continued from page 1

locations by mid-October. Pricing on some products and categories will vary.

Before the additional funding, DeCA was able to provide service members and their families with discounted groceries that cost on average 22 percent less than civilian grocery stores for fiscal year 2022.

"Going forward with the department's initiatives, we want to sustain the increased savings through fiscal year 2023 and exceed the 25 percent benchmark to the extent our resources allow," Moore said.

"In addition to the savings, we provide healthy food options, clean and safe stores, convenience and premier customer service for our service members and their families," Moore said. "Commissaries are there when our military families need them most, even in disasters or pandemics or periods of inflation. We're an insurance policy to ensure food security for our military families."

"Taking Care of Service Members and Families" aligns with DOD's overall campaign for economic security, first announced November 2021 when the department unveiled its "Military Leader's Economic Security Toolkit" on Military OneSource. The webpage is a central landing spot to help leaders connect service members and their families with resources they need to help boost their economic readiness.

The commissary benefit portion of the economic toolkit is spotlighted on the DeCA website, specifically on its "We're Stronger Together" page that links military members to the following patron savings and nutrition options:

- Timely sales promotions as well as specific items highlighted in the biweekly sales flyer
- Private label brands and "Your Everyday Savings!" programs that offer better prices on popular, core items
- Healthy options with dietitian-approved recipes, meal plans and quick, ready-to-eat, economical meal options via the deli and 174 dietitian-approved fueling stations

DeCA is also expanding efforts to ensure all eligible patrons know about their benefit, particularly targeting the millions of disabled veterans who became eligible for the benefit in January 2020, Marine Sgt. Maj. Michael Saucedo, senior enlisted advisor to the DeCA director, said.

"We are working closely with veterans' groups to reach our disabled veterans and with the active duty military to increase awareness of the benefit to troops earlier in their careers," he said. "And as we spread the word on this much-needed benefit to all our eligible customers, we are striving to anticipate our patrons' needs, offer premier customer service and do what it takes to be their grocery provider of choice."

Commissaries are also pushing out more initiatives to include the following to help boost the benefit for eligible patrons:

- Expanding hours of operation and using technology to improve access in more convenient ways than ever before. To date, 56 stores have converted from six- to seven-day operations, seven stores have converted from five- to six-day operations and 43 stores have adjusted hours to better fit the shopping preferences of their communities.?
- Working with installations on piloting bulk deliveries to barracks or other specified locations with plans to expand
- Expanding online shopping and curbside pickup with online payment now available at all stores
- Piloting home grocery delivery at eight ?locations, with agency-wide expansion planned soon thereafter?

"The commissary system's commitment to saving military communities money has not wavered for over 30 years," Moore said. "We remain steadfast in our efforts to improve the quality of life of our eligible patrons by saving them at least a quarter on every dollar they spend on groceries compared to 'outside the gate' grocery stores. That's \$50 back in your pocket on a \$200 grocery bill."



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Navy demonstrates rare vertical launch reload

Courtesy Story
Commander, 3rd Fleet

NAS NORTH ISLAND - The Navy demonstrated re-arming the vertical launch system aboard destroyer USS *Spruance* here last week.

This was the first time the Navy has tested VLS reloading from an offshore support vessel platform, using Military Sealift Command fleet experimentation ship MV Ocean Valor.

The demonstration is being conducted to provide proof of concept that an offshore support vessel can reload the weapons system pierside and while the ship is at sea, with a goal of expanding the capability of VLS reloading in expeditionary environments.

The launch system re-load has been tested previously, in 2016 and 2019, using other Military Sealift Command platforms.

Spruance, named for Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, who commanded U.S. forces at the Battle of Midway, is homeported in San Diego.

The ship returned to the Naval Base San Diego in August following a seven-month deploy-



Sailors aboard destroyer *Spruance* guide training ordnance into the ship's forward vertical launch system cells. US Navy photo by MC3 Taylor Crenshaw

ment with Carrier Strike Group 3 to the U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleets. *Spruance* was also one of 38 ships from 26 partner nations who took part in Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2022 in the Hawaiian Islands Operating Area from June to August.

Built in 2002, MV Ocean Valor is an MSC-contracted vessel that supports logistics experimentation for fuel, stores, passengers and ordnance delivery.

The demonstration will not include live ordnance and there is no danger posed to the residents of San Diego, the harbor or sea life.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

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Local photo gallery



ABOARD USS BUNKER HILL (Oct. 7, 2022) - Boat-swain's Mate 3rd Class Byron Shoemaker receives a package from a Naval Air Crewman on the flight deck here. *Bunker Hill* is operating with the *Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group in preparation for an upcoming deployment. US Navy photo by MC3 Jordan Jennings



MCRD, SAN DIEGO (Oct. 6, 2022) - A new Marine with Lima Company 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, rings the liberty bell during a motivational run here. The motivational run is the last physical training Marines conducted while at MCRD. US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jacob Hutchinson



SAN FRANCISCO (Oct. 9, 2022) - Marines, Sailors, Coast Guardsman, and local authorities participate in the Italian Heritage Parade during San Francisco Fleet Week. US Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Aldo Sessarego

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Officer recognized for research on 'wolfpack tactics'

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Leonard Weston
Naval Postgraduate School

Advancements in technology towards secure communication between submarines will significantly affect how they could operate in groups, or modern "Wolfpack Tactics." This award-winning analysis conducted by Navy Lt. Spencer Kitten addresses undersea warfare concepts that support NAVPLAN 2022 efforts to strengthen our nation's integrated deterrence. Kitten was one of five graduating Sailors from the Naval Postgraduate School's Department of Operations Research selected to present their theses to a panel of judges, professors and peers for the Military Operations Research Society Stephen A. Tisdale Thesis Award competition. When the dust settled, Kitten's examination of submarine force tactics through his thesis, "Revisiting Submarine Wolfpack Tactics Using Computational Methods," was selected as the winner of the Summer Quarter's MORS/Tisdale award. "We strongly believe in supporting the next generation of Operations Research trained naval officers and are happy to have had the opportunity to sponsor and help shape Kitten's research," said Dr. Michael Kopp, head of the Submarine Operations Research Group at Undersea Warfare Development Center.

Marines chip in at Marin Food Bank

by MC2 Kaylianna Genier, Navy Region Southwest

SAN FRANCISCO - Marines volunteered at a pop-up food pantry run by San Francisco-Marin Food Bank as part of a community relations event held during the 41st annual San Francisco Fleet Week Oct. 5. The food pantry run by San Francisco-Marin Food Bank is just one of several activities and events for Sailors and Marines to get involved with the local community. "We're so lucky to have these Marines, plus some other community volunteers, helping us do this work," said Katy McNight, director of community engagement at San Francisco-Marin Food Bank. "We can't do it alone; We need all the volunteers we can get." More than 20 Marines, and several more community volunteers, prepared bags of fresh fruits and vegetables for the local community. "It's fun and it's an opportunity to give back to the community," said Gunnery Sgt. Miguel Villalobos, assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 11. "It gives us a chance to give back to the people we work for." According to McNight, Sailors and Marines have been volunteering at San Francisco-Marin Food for the past eight years.

Survey asks service members about discrimination, extremism experiences

by Katie Lange, DOD News

Service members: if you've been wanting to make your voice heard on issues related to race and discrimination in the military, now's your chance to do so. On Sept. 26, the Department of Defense released the 2022 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey for a random selection of active-duty, reserve and National Guard members to take. For the first time, too, the survey will measure the estimated prevalence of exposure to extremist activity in the military. Diversity, equity and inclusion are important to the DOD, which is committed to promoting dignity and respect within the workplace. This survey lets the department and Congress know how the military is living up to those ideals. Survey participants have the chance to detail their experiences and perceptions about unit climate and cohesion, as well as diversity and inclusion. They can also give their thoughts on the effectiveness of policies to improve racial and ethnic relations, as well as the complaints process. Service members who were invited to take the survey should have received an e-mail invitation from weo-survey@mail.mil and a note in the mail with instructions. However, if you're not sure you received either and would like to check your eligibility, visit the survey page at <https://dodsurveys.mil> and click on "Don't have a ticket number?" to look up yours. FYI -- If you're using the ticket number lookup, you'll be redirected from the .mil website to a .com website. Survey officials say that's a safeguarded site; however, if you still have questions about its legitimacy, you can call (571) 372-1034 or e-mail the address above.

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Interpersonal Edge: Good fences create good work

by Dr. Daneen Skube
Tribune Content Agency
Q: I'm in a job where managers, co-workers, and customers

constantly demand more than I can give. I try to meet everyone's expectations, but feel burnt out and resentful. I'm worried that setting

boundaries will get me fired. How can I deal with unreasonable and unrealistic expectations without jeopardizing my job?

A: You deal with unrealistic expectations by negotiating with everyone on task trade-offs. People tend to go from requests to demands if you keep over functioning. You'll need to train people to treat you differently or burned out and resentful will be your new normal.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet and educator, sagely noted, "He that respects himself is safe from others." Knowing our organic limits and communicating what we can and cannot do is respecting yourself. Confrontations, blaming, or venting that people want too much is not respecting yourself or being effective.

When we burn out responding to demands and finally throw a fit, all we do is scare people. We fail to train anyone in more realistic expectations. If we are realistic about our limits, we find disappointing people more comfortable. If we over promise, we guarantee not delivering and disappointing people later.

None of us enjoy that look on people's faces when we tell them "no." Learning phrases like, "If

there was anyone I would like to fly for, it would be you!" You can also try, "I have to make trade-offs between doing x or doing y, so which one do you prefer." The bottom line is you are letting people make

choices between which things you can realistically do.

To start creating fences write down everything people are asking you to do. Now use different colored highlighters to figure out which of these tasks are trade-offs and which tasks you can do in a normal day. If in doubt, underestimate what you can do and under promise.

When, predictably, people give you the sad face when they hear you cannot fly, paraphrase them. Try this: "I see you're disappointed that I can get three of these items done and you get to pick which three." None of us can never disappoint people. Embrace that all of us are, occasionally, inadequate to the wishes of others.

Be careful you do not explain or defend yourself when people give you their best disappointed face. First off, explaining yourself does not result in anyone being less disappointed. Second of all, no one cares about your explanation once they hear the word, "no," as they stop listening.

If you want to avoid explaining and defending yourself, you'll need to embrace discomfort with your inadequacy. Try looking in a mirror, taking deep, slow breaths and saying, "I'm occasionally such a disappointment," with serenity. Any emotion we can allow (like inadequacy) will no longer control your behavior.

When you accept others will find you to be a disappointment sometimes, you'll also not need to blame or shame them for their

demands. Being able to state, "I can see you want x, and I'm not able to provide x," with serenity calms everybody down!

At first, you'll disappoint lots of people frequently. Over time, people learn where the fences (boundaries) are and will be more reasonable in their requests. You get to trade being burned out and resentful for being energized and powerful... and all it will cost you is a little guilt at first.

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Air Force launches narrative performance statements for award nominations

The Air Force recently transitioned from bullet-style writing to narrative-style performance statements for award nominations.

Performance statements consist of plain-language words and are efficient, increase clarity, and improve the ability to understand an Airman's performance correctly and equitably.

For all award nominations, on or after Oct. 1, 2022, will consist of performance statements. This includes all Air Force and installation-level nominations except for Department of the Air Force-level awards already announced as bullet-style inside the award criteria.

Guidance for writing perfor-

mance statements is deliberately not overly prescriptive to enable flexibility and freedom when capturing performance. The two basic principles of performance statements are standalone and readability. Each statement must include an action and at least one of the following: impact or results/outcome. Additionally, performance statements will avoid the use of uncommon acronyms and abbreviations.

The 1206 guidance can be found at <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Awards/>. The acronym and abbreviation ruleset can be found at <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Acronyms/>.





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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

Before I sit down to write my column, I tap the button on my Roomba robot vacuum cleaner with my toe. It wakens and emits a series of beeps before backing off its docking station and fastidiously following my unspoken orders. There's something comforting about the soft whirr of its motor rambling, bumping and pivoting around my house.

My Roomba inevitably gets stuck under the buffet and calls out "Error!" for my assistance. After coming to its rescue, I plop onto our couch with a sense of security. "Things are being taken care of," I think to myself.

Moby, our yellow lab, disagrees. While sitting at my feet, he side-eyes the suspicious object traversing our foyer, sucking up tiny tumbleweeds of carpet fuzz, dirt, and dog hair. It soon enters the family room, making a beeline for my Birkenstocks. Just as I take a sip of my pumpkin spiced coffee, Moby leaps onto the couch beside me.

"Moby, it won't hurt you, you block head!" I exclaim, grimacing at the fresh stain on my cotton sweater.

If you don't own a robot vacuum cleaner, you probably find this scenario somewhat odd. You're probably wondering why any sane person would assign human personality traits to a simple household appli-

Relationship rhumba with my Roomba

ance. I may be crazy for forming an emotional relationship with my Roomba, but I am not alone.

Over 40 million people around the world have purchased Roomba robot vacuum cleaners since an MIT professor and two dweeby students invented them two decades ago, not to mention others who bought robot vacuums made by competitor brands. Researchers have found that human owners tend to personify their robot vacuums, assigning them as male or female (we believe our Roomba is nonbinary), giving them names (my favorites: Meryl Sweep, Rosie, Lurch, Optimus Grime, Vlad the Inhaler, Dirty Hairy, Alice and Dustbin Bieber), and forming emotional bonds (one owner even introduced his Roomba to his parents as his new girlfriend).

Roombas have made their way into our hearts and pop culture, as evidenced by internet videos of Roombas terrifying dogs and transporting cats, and recurring "Parks and Recreation" sitcom character "DJ Roomba." However, many robots are portrayed as scary machines programmed to kill, like HAL, Terminator, and Ultron. No wonder there are disturbing internet posts of Roombas strapped with knives and chain saws, with captions like "Alexa, intruder alert, release the Roomba!"

Speaking of Alexa, Amazon's WiFi-connected smart speaker is not to be trusted. I refuse to upgrade my 600-series Roomba to a WiFi-capable model which can scan, map and memorize my home's interior layout and communicate with Alexa

for optimal cleaning. My old school Roomba can't receive commands from our Alexa, which of course, prevents them from conspiring to kill me and conquer the human race. I'd much rather have my dim-witted Roomba bouncing blindly against my furniture and leaving swaths of dirty floors in its wake than risk robot world domination.

My phone, television, computer, microwave, refrigerator, thermostat, toothbrush and thermostat are WiFi connected, but unlike my Roomba, they can't move around the house. I certainly don't want my mobile Roomba to buddy up with Alexa, turn against me, and become a human battering ram.

"Police are looking into the mysterious death of housewife Lisa Molinari, who was found fatally pummeled on the kitchen floor of her home on Wednesday. No suspects have been named in the case; however, the medical examiner identified what appeared to be miniature tire marks on the victim's body. No witnesses have come forth to make statements, although it was reported that an Alexa device on the victim's kitchen windowsill emanated an evil snicker..."

As I sit on my couch tapping away at my laptop, I hear my Roomba emit a familiar sing-song tune, indicating that it has finished its task and returned obediently to its docking station. I'm not sure if my robot is good or evil, male or female, threatening or harmless, high tech or low budget. All I know is that it sucked up a helluva lotta dog hair while I wrote this column, and for that, I am grateful.

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



Participating in car club activities, including the San Diego Miata Club's SURF 'N' SAFARI, is a huge benefit to driving a sports car. Some clubs are dedicated to one particular make or model of car, whereas other clubs welcome all sorts of makes and models. Some clubs gravitate mostly towards competitive motorsports events; others are focused more on social events; and some are both.

I have been a member of various car clubs stretching back decades — first in Western Canada, where I am from originally — and, more recently, in California, which is where I moved to in the 1980s.

I've owned many sports cars over the years, four of which being Mazda Miatas. Aside from my especially enjoying driving them on public roads (the more tight turns, the better!), I also autocrossed them from the late 1970s until just a few years ago (autocrosses are relatively low-speed, competitive driving events that usually include some very tight, slow turns, and are often held in parking lots, on courses delineated by traffic cones).

In San Diego there are many car clubs. One car club that is particularly large and active in social events, including road trips, is the San Diego Miata Club (SDMC). A small group of members, including myself, used to also regularly compete in the Sports

San Diego Miata Club's SURF 'N' SAFARI 2022

Car Club of America's San Diego Region autocrosses.

According to long-time SDMC member Steve Waid, the club started in March, 1996. He and his wife joined in early 1997. His first Miata was a used 1990 model, but how he ended up choosing it, which became their first of several Miatas, was not what you might expect. He was looking for a particular yellow Corvette roadster — the 1987 Indy Pace Car model. However, since those proved hard to come by and he had driven a Miata once, they decided to "just go get a Miata until we find the Corvette." "Well, guess what? It's 2022. We still haven't found that Corvette!"

Every few years the SDMC holds our special SURF 'N' SAFARI event, made possible thanks to the efforts of a large group of enthusiastic volunteers. Miata drivers come from across the country and beyond to participate in the Miata fun and camaraderie. SURF 'N' SAFARI 2022, which was held this past weekend, was headquartered at the Singing Hills Golf Resort at Sycuan.

Our first full day featured a choice of drives on what were predominantly two-lane, winding public roads through San Diego County's scenic back country. I chose to go on the longest of these drives: the 5½-hour Desert View Tower Run. Its location was a way station for travelers for centuries. To get there we enjoyed a brisk drive along San Diego County's Historic Highway 80. On our way back, we stopped for lunch at beautiful Lake Cuyamaca. Other drive choices were the Mt. Helix, East County, Camel Dairy and Julian runs.

After our runs, we took advantage of snacks, socializing and goodies in the resort's hospitality suite, followed by our first of two banquets: the California Luau Buffet. Live music was provided by the incredible Gary Seiler (visit GarySeiler.com).

The next day (Saturday) was the SURF 'N' SAFARI rally. Designed to take the better part of the day, it required following a lengthy and convoluted set of rally instructions that were devised by the aforementioned (and devious) Steve Waid. One of his stated goals was to level the playing field so that the rally did not favor locals over out-of-towners, intentionally making the instructions tricky to understand. It certainly had the desired effect on me. I was unable to even correctly follow the directions to get out of the first destination: San Diego's Balboa Park.

Between my utter confusion with the rally instructions, the fact that I did not have a navigator, and the massive crowds of people in the park that day, I soon decided to be gracious and let someone else win the rally. That evening we enjoyed our second banquet, where Steve publicly acknowledged my utter inability to decipher his rally instructions.

On Sunday, we met one last time to recognize several special cars, and to take group photos of the orange 30th Anniversary Edition 2019 Miatas (one of which was mine).

To see the most photos and the latest text, and to explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, visit AutoMatters.com and AutoMatters.net. Search by title or topic, or click on the blue 'years' boxes.

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Haunted Hotel, Scream Zone, Haunted Trail, Thru Oct 31. www.SanDiegoHaunts.com
Camp Pendleton College Fair, Fri, Oct 14, 9-2. Free. Pacific Views Event Center.

22nd Annual Boy Scout Troop 2000 Haunted Hotel at Olivenhain Meeting Hall. Oct 14-15, 21-22. www.olivenhain.org
Carmen at California Center for the Arts, Escondido. Oct 14-16. www.artcenter.org

Mary Poppins at Moonlight Amphitheatre. Oct 14-22. www.moonlightstage.com
SD County Archaeological Society Arch in the Park, Sat, Oct 15, 10-3. Free. Los Peñasquitos Ranch Adobe. sdcas.org/arch-in-the-park

Water Lantern Festival, Sat, Oct 15, Kit Carson Park in Escondido www.waterlanternfestival.com
Wildlife Hike with a Ranger, Sat, Oct 15, 1-2:30. Free. Chollas Lake, 6350 College Grove Dr.

Graham Nash. Sat, Oct 15, Humphreys. humphreysconcerts.com
Charlie & the Chocolate Factory, Sat, Oct 15, 2 & 7pm. \$13-\$16. Poway Center for Performing Arts.

Movie in the Park: The Bad Guys at Cottonwood Creek Park, Sat, Oct 15, 7-8:30pm. www.encinitasca.gov

Guided Nature Walk: Fall Season, Sat-Sun, Oct 15-16, 9:30-11am. Free. Mission Trails Regional Park, San Carlos. mtrp.org

Bike MS: Bay to Bay Sat-Sun, Oct 15-16. Orange and San Diego counties www.nationalmssociety.org

Lakers vs. Clippers at Crypto.com Arena, Thur, Oct 20, 7pm.

Great Pumpkin Beerfest, Sat, Oct 22, 2:30-9. Gaslamp Quarter. greatpumpkinbeerfestsd.com

Western Surfing Association Championship Tour Event, Sat-Sun, Oct 15-16, Ocean Beach www.surfwsa.org

CA Native Plant Society Fall Plant Sale, Sat, Oct 15, 8-3, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

Grand Ave Festival Escondido, Sun, Oct 16, 9-5. Free family event: music, food, vendors. www.escondidochamber.org

Ride and Stride and Horse Heritage Festival, Sun, Oct 16, 8:30-3. Walnut Grove Park, San Marcos. www.keepitequestrian.org

Free Interpretive Nature Walks, Sun, Oct 16, 9-10:30. Free. Moderately paced. Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve, Escondido.

LA Rams vs. Carolina Panthers at SoFi Stadium, Sun, Oct 16, 1:05pm. www.therams.com

LA Chargers vs. Denver Broncos at SoFi Stadium, Mon, Oct 17, 5:15pm. www.chargers.com

Sinister Trails in Encinitas, Thru Oct 31, tickets atsinistertrails.com

Big Horse Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch at Big Horse Feed and Mercantile Temecula, thru Oct 30. www.bighorsecornmaze.com

Haunted Harvest at Fort Cross Old Timey Adventures, thru Oct 29, 8pm and 8:30pm. fortcross.com

Into The Breeches, Oct 19-Nov 20, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Solana Beach. NorthCoastRep.org

SD Int'l Film Festival and Women's Film Series, Oct 19-23. www.sdfilmfest.com

Lakers vs. Clippers at Crypto.com Arena, Thur, Oct 20, 7pm.

Great Pumpkin Beerfest, Sat, Oct 22, 2:30-9. Gaslamp Quarter. greatpumpkinbeerfestsd.com

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6pm Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile pg
Saturday, October 15
3:30pm Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile pg
6pm See How They Run pg13
Sunday, October 16
1pm See How They Run pg13
3:20pm Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile pg
Thursday, October 20
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Saturday, October 15
11am Minions: The Rise of Gru (pg)
Monday, October 17
5pm The Black Phone (r)
Tuesday, October 18
11am Finding Dory (pg)
5pm Godzilla vs. Kong (pg13)

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143 MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242 ★

Friday, October 14

6pm See How They Run (PG-13)
9pm - No Movie -
Saturday, October 15
12pm - No Movie -
3pm Lyle, Lyle Crocodile (PG)
6:30pm See How They Run (PG-13)
Sunday, October 16
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ASYMCA hosts largest Fall Festival in east county

PINE VALLEY – The Armed Services YMCA San Diego ushers in the season of pumpkin lattes and autumn with its annual Fall Festival. More than 600 military families and community members will gather at the ASYMCA's Horse of the Sun Ranch on October 15 from 10am-3pm in Pine Valley, in east San Diego county.

There will be activities for the entire family to enjoy such as laser tag, pony rides, petting zoo, bounce houses, archery, and rock climbing. Families can chow down on delicious food and drinks. The

fun doesn't stop there! The pumpkin patch allows families to choose their perfect pumpkin for carving and family pictures!

Set a reminder for the Fall Festival located in the Cuyamaca Mountains at 28271 Old Hwy 80, Pine Valley, CA 91962.

About the San Diego Armed Services YMCA

The San Diego Armed Services YMCA (San Diego ASY) is the leading non-profit that makes military life easier for active duty service members and their families.

The San Diego ASY gives military personnel and their loved ones the support and resources they need to be resilient, confident, connected, and secure. Founded in 1920 as a national affiliate of the YMCA, its mission is to enhance the lives of service members and their families in mind, body, and spirit.

Through programs and services that are relevant to the unique challenges of military life, the ASY strengthens the military community. The San Diego ASY is, and always will be, dedicated to making military life easier. www.ASYSD.org

Run, walk or volunteer at Veterans Day Silver Strand Half Marathon & 5K

Come celebrate Veterans Day weekend at the Veterans Day Silver Strand Half Marathon and 5K on Sunday, November 13!

The Half Marathon, 10 miler, and 8 miler all start at 7:15am at Sunset Park in Coronado, just across the bridge from downtown San Deigo.

The 5k run starts at Silver Strand State Beach at 7am. It is a flat, fast run or walk with the waves of the Pacific Ocean on your right and the San Diego Bay on your left. Cap off your run in your new Silver Strand Race Hawaiian Shirt at a California Beach Party!

This event is presented by Life Sports Foundation and Koz Events and will benefit the Challenged Athletes Foundation(CAF) - Operation Rebound, which is dedicated to strengthening the mental and physical well-being of veterans, military personnel and

first responders with permanent physical injuries by empowering them with sports and fitness. Help our wounded soldiers and first responders from the front lines to the finish line!

"It's such an honor to put on this event benefiting our nation's Veterans and first responders," said KOZ Events co-owner, Tobias Panek. "We hope to help raise the \$20,000 needed to enable CAF Operation Rebound to provide sports wheelchairs for our nation's military and first responders.

For a typical amputee, most insurance companies won't cover the cost of adaptive sports equipment. That means that if someone experienced joy from surfing, snowboarding, running, or cycling before an accident, those opportunities are no longer available unless they can afford the significant expense of specialized athletic equipment and prosthetics.

The Veterans Day Silver Strand Half Marathon atmosphere is truly like no other. Take full advantage of living the active lifestyle San Diego has to offer. This is an annual event where communities and families from all over come together to honor our hero's, accomplish personal goals, and soak up the sunny, beachy San Diego vibes post event.

The Silver Strand races are incredibly inclusive and welcome runners, walkers, skaters, handcycles, wheelchairs athletes.

Not Running? Volunteer! A great volunteer enriches the athlete's experience. Each volunteer receives their own special volunteer edition red Silver Strand Hawaiian Shirt. Please email volunteer@kozevents.com

Go to SilverStrandHalf.com to register. Use Code: DISPATCH10 to save 10% on new entries

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