MCCS/USNH Health & Wellness Corner
AUGUST 2003

Planning A Last Minute Summer Vacation?

Take your healthy lifestyle with you. It may be tempting to let your guard down on vacation, but you can have fun and stay healthy away from home. Here are some suggestions to consider when planning your next trip:

- Stop by the grocery store before you go and pack healthy food for the trip. Consider items like whole grain crackers, fresh fruits and vegetables, juice, and sandwiches for lunches and midday snacks.
- Pack hats, shirts, sunglasses, and sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher.
- Check out the activities at your vacation spot, and make it a priority to build physical activity into your vacation. Walk or ride bikes to look at the local scenery, swim at the pool or ocean, and consider learning a new sport or activity.
- Indulge in the local delicacies and add variety to what you eat. Find out what fruits and vegetables are native to the area you are visiting and try some.

As your family plans quality time together, incorporate your regular healthy habits into your summer or take advantage of the time to start new ones.

MCCS Massage Therapy

Unwind from the long summer days with a relaxing massage with one of our professional massage therapists.

For more information or to make an appointment, call:

Camp Kinser	637-1114
MCAS Futenma	636-2674
Camp Foster	645-3985
Camp Courtney	622-9221

Wanted: A Few Good Fingers…

MCCS Health Promotion has openings for Certified Massage Therapists. Please call 645-3910, for more information. We are looking for Massage Therapists for Camp Courtney and Camp Hansen. Great money, flexible hours, established clientele!

August Health Promotion Calendar

Tobacco Cessation: 5-week class starting **Aug 19** at 1700 in the USNH Galley. Call 645-2620 for information or to register. Aug 6 at 1200, Counseling Center Camp Foster

Lose Weight The Easy Way: Discover the most effective exercise and nutrition tips to maximize your physical activity and dietary needs. **Aug 14 & 21**, 1600, USNH, CPMU Building. Call 645-2620 for details.

BALANCE: Monthly weight management support group. Meets **Aug 21,** 1730, Lester Chapel. Call 645-3910 for more information.

UPCOMING RUNS

Kishaba Kids Running Challenge:
Aug 16, Kubasaki High School Track
Kids of all ages are welcome! Free! Awards, refreshments for all participants.

0700	adults and all ages	open 1600 meters
0730	all ages	400 meters
0745	all ages	800 meters
0800	toddlers	toddlers dash!

Run 2 Remember 911 5K, Sept 6 starting at 0630. Sponsored by the Okinawa Mustang Association in memory of those we lost in the Sept 11 tragedy. Call 643-7489 or 643-7285 for more information. Applications available in Health Promotion.

Naha Marathon December 7, 0900. Applications are now available. Contact Health Promotion at 645-2620.

Pacific Wellness Association Running Club. Keep current on the latest running news, training advice, and meet new training partners. Contact Health Promotion at 645-2620.

Mt Fuji Climbing Race

by Dave Elger

During my lengthy stay here on Okinawa (going on 7 years now), I have "enjoyed" participating in several endurance sporting events. You only live once, right? I've competed in 26.2-mile marathons in exotic countries such as Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, and Hawaii. I biked 330 kilometers (206 miles) in the 2-day non-competitive Tour de Okinawa. I've done some 1500-meter open water swims at Oura Wan Beach, Camp Schwab. I have NOT, nor do I ever intend, to enter a full Ironman Triathlon. I respect anyone who can finish one of those, but even if I live twice that is one event that I'll most likely take a pass on.

Although I've been told many times that I cannot leave Japan without climbing Mt. Fuji, this was another adventure that never really sparked my interest. Why would I want to climb Mt. Fuji? Everybody does that. Then one day I came across information about a ½ marathon Mt. Fuji Climbing Race. Perfect.

According to the race web site, this is the 56th annual run up the mountain. Held on July 25th, the 21-kilometer race to the summit starts in Fujiyoshida and climbs a total of 9,770 feet. Challenging, but something that I could manage. Or so I hoped.

The first 5 miles of the race weren't too bad. Well shaded on a nice trail, and with the exception of the first kilometer, all uphill. Next time you're at the gym, just set the treadmill at an 8% or 10% incline for a few miles and you'll get the idea. The stretch between 5 and 10

miles proved a bit more challenging, with some short little climbs over steps and rocks. My time at Station 6 (10 miles give or take) was 1 hr 57 minutes, and little did I know that the "fun" part of the course was still ahead. At that point all running was replaced by slow, steady, uphill, never ending climbing. The pace wasn't bad, but I kept looking up, where as far as I could see was a winding trail of people disappearing into the clouds. People that I had no hope of catching. Below me was a similar image, only they were passing me one by one. I was supposed to be in a race, yet here I was falling farther and farther behind. Racing was a forgone conclusion, so I focused on reaching that still invisible summit, chatting with hikers carrying their precious walking sticks along the way. Forget place and time, I just wanted to get this one over with. Finally, right at 4 hours, I crossed the finish line! I was happy to beat the 4 hr 30 minute cut-off with a half hour to spare, but then it hit me that I still had to get down. That took another 2 hours.

Was it worth it? I'll remember this race for the rest of my life, so I guess so. Could I have done better? Sure, if I'd done a lot more uphill running and Stairmaster training. It was harder than I'd imagined, but not as painful as running a full marathon. Will I go back? You know what they say about Mt. Fuji. "One who never climbs Mt. Fuji is a fool, and one who climbs it twice is twice the fool." That bit of wisdom certainly applies to the Mt. Fuji Climbing Race. One thing for sure; I won't be going out of my way to run up any hills for a while.