

COMMUNITY CORNER

Great Escapes to offer local, national travel suggestions to public

By William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

"There's nothing to do around Fort Riley." Have you ever heard anyone say that? I know I have. But I am here to tell you, this is simply not true. And if you don't believe me, visit the Great Escapes Expo from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 31 at Riley's Conference Center. The Directorate of Fam-

ily and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, its Leisure Travel Center and local and national exhibitors will participate in the sixth annual expo that shows Soldiers, Families, civilians and retirees travel and leisure opportunities



Col. Clark

both near and far from the installation. These opportunities are great getaways for Families, couples or even singles. They allow us time away from the busy and hectic lives many of us lead; they allow us time to unwind; and they allow us the opportunity to lead more resilient lifestyles as we reduce our stress with fun activities. Hotels, zoos, outdoor excursions and other attractions are just a few of the more than 50 vendors represented at the expo. The expo itself can be a Family outing as several demonstrations will take place throughout the day. Activities on March 31 range from a catch-and-release fishing tank for children to hunting dog demonstrations and a science demonstration, where participants will shoot off a giant rocket.

Additionally, more than \$5,000 in prizes will be given away – these prizes range from Family vacation packages to hunting and fishing trips. I was told last year, a sergeant won a trip to Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, Mo., for himself and his Family. I suspect similar opportunities are in store this year. By attending the expo you can learn just what there is to do at Fort Riley, so you never

have to utter that dreaded phrase, "There's nothing to do around here."

For more information on the Great Escapes Expo, call 785-239-8990 or visit www.rileymwr.com.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for Community Corner, email riley.post.newspaper@comus.army.mil.

Farmers, gardeners gear up for spring growing season



Calun Reece | POST

E.J. Sisk, treasurer of the Master Farmers, Master Farm Homemakers, center left, assists fellow group members with finding their next tour stop March 15 at Fort Riley. The group enjoyed visiting the K-State Research and Extension, Fort Riley office, Fort Riley Community Victory Garden and the Fort Riley museums.

Farmers, homemakers tour post

By Calun Reece
1ST INF. DIV. POST

The Kansas State University Research and Extension Office at Fort Riley welcomed the Master Farmers, Master Farm Homemakers with a tour of post March 15.

Toni Jo Bryant, coordinator, Military Life Skills Program, K-State Research and Extension, took the group to the Fort Riley Victory Community Garden, historical museums and treated them to ice cream from K-State's Call Hall.

K-State and the group have a long history together. K-State is known for its comprehensive knowledge in agriculture, and generations of farmers have

passed through the halls of the school, Bryant said. "K-State has a legacy of strong individuals," Bryant said.

The Master Farmers, Master Farm Homemakers is an exclusive club made up of individuals who have demonstrated combined achievements as farmers and farmer homemakers, as well as good citizens and community leaders.

The group began in 1953 when K-State Research and Extension elected to take responsibility for selecting and coordinating new membership for the group.

Bill and Lois Strauss, one of the couples from the tour, were selected to be a part of the

group back in 1979. "It's a lifetime achievement," Lois said.

A farmer and farm homemaker must be nominated by local councils and districts. One, sometimes two, couples are selected from each area, and these selections go before the administrative areas of K-State Research and Extension to select the few who will attain life-long membership to the group.

Marvin and Floris Jean Hampton, farmer and farmer homemaker, were awarded their membership in 1980.

"These are best people, they are the real people," Floris said about the tour. "Agriculture is all of life and these people make it work."

Victory garden offers residents opportunity to grow own food

By Calun Reece
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Sometimes, there is nothing better than biting into a fresh, juicy-red tomato or tasting the first, deliciously sweet strawberry of the season – unless it's from one's own garden.

For individuals interested in getting back to the basics and unearthing the satisfaction of growing their own produce, join the rest of those green thumbs at the Fort Riley Community Victory Garden. The garden, located in the Forsyth neighborhood, is made up of 72 individual garden plots. The plots are open to all residents in post housing free of charge on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Angi Buckley, president, Victory Community Garden, said she is happy to share some advice to beginners or new gardeners in the area.

"Anytime you start a new garden, it takes time to get established. Kansas is both very easy and very hard to garden in – we have both extreme heat and wind, and yet a lot of sunshine and good soil."



Calun Reece | POST

The Fort Riley Community Victory Garden welcomes all living in post housing to sign up for a garden plot this year. The garden is located in the Forsyth neighborhood.

Nine-year-old Jakob Buckley, an avid, returning gardener from last year who also is the junior president of the Victory Community Garden, said he is looking forward to planting carrots, tomatoes, zucchini and watermelon in the upcoming season.

"Kids are great little harvesters," Angi said. "A lot of kids have lost that connection, and it's a small way to bring that back."

This year, there will be a new gardening spot for all chil-

dren of current gardeners as well. The garden spot will be "by kids, for kids, so they can play and plant and learn," Angi said.

In its third planting year, the community garden is a community effort with support from organizations and groups such as U.S. Army Garrison Fort Riley, Picnic Military Housing, Kansas State University Research and Extension at Fort Riley and the Officer and

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Exchange customers receive satisfaction, according to survey

AAFES PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DALLAS – At 116 years of age, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service may not have "moves like Jagger," but its shoppers are getting plenty of satisfaction, according to a recent American Customer Satisfaction Index survey.

The ACIS was developed to provide information on satisfaction with the quality of products and services available to consumers. In the latest survey, the Exchange scored higher than ever before as its operations equaled the industry of excellence.

In addition to the ACIS, the Exchange also relies on a Customer Service Index to provide localized, real-time snapshots of the job Exchange facilities do to improve the value of support provided to Soldiers, Airmen and their Families. The CSI score for 2011 was a 77, another all-time high score for the Exchange.

"We're excited about the satisfaction level shown by Exchange shoppers," said the Exchange's Senior Enlisted Adviser Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Helm. "We continue to maintain an intense focus on customer service in an effort to

meet, or beat, shoppers' expectations.

The CSI survey, which addresses customer service, pricing, sales associate availability, merchandise assortment and many more key issues, is administered at 130 Exchange main stores around the world.

"Feedback from military shoppers is an invaluable tool in our on-going effort to provide the best service possible," Helm said. "Both the ACIS and CSI enable us to ensure that when Soldiers or Airmen shop, the Exchange is top of mind and their first choice."

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and junior golf, beginning this summer

Current classes also include: Ballet, Hapkido, Guitar, Drums, Gymnastics, Judo, Hip Hop, Tae Kwon Do in Junction City, American Heart Association CPR and First Aid, Babysitting and Wiggles and Giggles.

Anderson cited the following advantages to participation in SKIES instructional programs:

- Development of positive self image and leadership skills
- Enhanced status among peers
- Accommodation of various learning styles and developmental stage
- Discovery of new knowledge, skills and talent
- Character development
- Exploration of personal interests
- Encouragement of cre-

- Increased individual competence
- Exposure to positive behavior
- Reduction of school drop-out rate

Classes are offered Monday through Thursday on a pay-as-you-go system. Most classes meet once or twice a week and have about four classes a month.

The average class runs 30 minutes for younger children and 45 minutes for older children.

Classes are available for sign up monthly via WEBTRAC, located online at www.rileymwr.com, by registering at Child, Youth and School Services' Parent Central in Building 6620 on Custer Hill or by contacting Anderson. All children must be registered with CYSS to participate. For more information on

how to enroll in CYSS, call 785-239-9885.

Anderson said she encourages new customers to check WEBTRAC for a listing of open spots in each class after the 15th of each month.

Families of deployed service members are entitled to \$300 in free SKIES classes, Anderson said.

"This eligibility is from 30 days prior to deployment and 90 days upon return," she said.

Anderson also said she is always looking for instructors who have a special talent, love to work with children and can pass a background check.

"Adults with special interests and areas of certification are welcomed to apply for contract positions with the program," she said. For more information on SKIES, call Anderson at 785-240-5821.