



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

January 2020

Submarine Races?

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Our January meeting will feature a presentation by Ernie Bitten on being a judge at the International Submarine Races. No, that isn't a slang term for romance in a car at the beach, it's a real thing. For over 25 years, the Foundation for Underwater Research & Education has sponsored the International Submarine Race as the capstone Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics event for thousands of young men and women. This biennial design competition for human powered underwater vehicles, hosted by the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, provides valuable educational experiences to the best and brightest engineering and science students from throughout the world.

The International Submarine Race was created in response to the recognized challenge that a shortfall in the ocean and marine engineering fields and scientists was looming in the near future. The

race provides a platform for teams at all grade levels to develop a one or two-person "wet" submarine. Crew members breathe SCUBA from the air supply carried aboard the submarine and propel the submarine over an underwater course. Each submarine is unique, designed from "scratch", and relies upon novel techniques for propulsion and guidance.

Ernie Bitten is a retired nuclear submarine Navy Captain. He served 8 years on active duty on 3 submarines and as an instructor at the Naval Submarine School, and 18 years in the Naval Reserves supporting various submarine repair facilities and the Naval Sea Systems Command. He retired after working at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation for 20 years and then taught algebra and calculus part time at WSU Tri-Cities for 12 years. He has a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, Master's degrees in Ocean Engineering and Business Administration, and a Professional Engineer's Registration in Nuclear Engineering. Ernie also is an avid pilot with a Commercial pilot's license, Flight Instructor's Certification and a Light Sport Aircraft Mechanic's Certification. He previously served as the Navy's judge at the Internal Science and Engineering Fairs for several years and most recently was asked to judge the International Submarine Races.

Our meeting will be on January 21 at the Clover Island Inn, this time featuring a "Taste of Italy" buffet. Reservations to Bob Allen by Thursday, January 16. (Sorry for the short notice, I just got back from a trip.)

Dues

Annual dues of \$25 are due in January. Beat the rush and send your dues now to:

Paul Seipt
232 Somerset Street
Richland WA 99354

Or better yet, bring your dues to the January meeting.

HqMOAA sends . . .

Veterans Hold Financial Edge Over Civilian Counterparts, Study Finds

Military service pays, according to a recent Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Veteran households have higher incomes and are less likely to be in poverty, particularly when comparing data of minority households. Some key reference points from the Pew Research Center article that explains the numbers:

- "The median income is roughly \$20,000 higher for households headed by a veteran with a high school diploma, compared with non-veteran households with the same level of education."

- "In 2017, the poverty rate for non-veteran households was 6.4 percentage points higher than the rate for veteran households (13.0% vs. 6.6%)."

- "In 2017, black veteran households had a poverty rate of 9.6%, versus 23.2% for black non-veteran households, a difference of 13.7 percentage points. The rate for Hispanic veteran households was 7.6%, compared with 18.6% for Hispanic non-veteran households."

"Though the report does not provide the reasons for such differences, military education, leadership/mentorship, self-discipline, cultural structure, and emphasis on personal financial management probably help prepare people for real life's financial challenges," said Lt. Col. Shane Ostrom, USAF (Ret), MOAA's program director for financial and benefits education/counseling and a certified financial planner. "MOAA can help build on that foundation with expertise in areas of specific concern to current, former, and retired servicemembers, and their families."

All Veterans Would Get Dental Care Help Under This Proposed Plan

A proposed Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pilot

program would help all veterans access free or discounted dental services in their local communities.

Currently, VA only provides dental care to veterans who have a service-related dental problem, are former POWs or are rated as totally disabled as a result of their military service. Under this current law, only about 8% of veterans are eligible for dental care from the VA.

Now, VA wants to begin an at least five year long pilot program that would connect veterans with dentists in their area who offer free or discounted dental care to all veterans -- not just those with a service-connected disability.

Dental care isn't cheap, and VA says they spent over \$1.1 billion offering dental care to veterans in 2018. This new program wouldn't end all VA dental care, just make it easier for all veterans to find affordable dental care in their communities.

Note, however, that Congress continues to enact "savings and efficiency" guidelines aimed at cutting the cost of caring for veterans and retirees. Do not be disappointed if you never get free dental care.

January Meeting

Tuesday, January 21

Clover Island Inn
Social hour at 6:30
Dinner at 7:00
\$35.00 per person

A reservation made is a reservation paid.

Reservations by
Thursday, January 16 to
Bob Allen
627-6226
MOAA.TriCities@charter.net

Menu

Stuffed manicotti smothered
in sausage marinara
Chicken marsala
Steamed Vegetable Medley
Pasta alfredo
Bread sticks
Orzo pasta salad
Caesar salad
Tiramisu