

THE SIREN



Presented By

Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District

August 2009

CHIEF'S CORNER

-Fire Chief, Taylor Robertson

Welcome to the August 2009 edition of the Siren.

This month's Chief's message addresses a part of our work that is one of the most traumatic and difficult for emergency responders to deal with: death in the field.

Having experienced three traumatic situations resulting in death of a patient in the last five weeks, I know first-hand that none of us are immune from the impacts of these events. The three incidents (ATV accident, drowning, and vehicle trauma/fire) have caused me to think about the importance of the support systems we have in place for our personnel and the importance of ensuring that all of our firefighters and EMT's have the assistance you may need after an event involving a death.

When Chaplain Gerke called me last night after the most recent incident, I can tell you that I was extremely appreciative of his caring and thoughtful approach. Even after 42 years of involvement with trauma and death, I am not immune from the potential impacts of these events. We are fortunate to have a Chaplaincy which is responsive to all of our needs.

I encourage you to always remember that while we would like to seem tough and "business-as-usual", we all need help at one time or another, and our Chaplains are always ready to assist. Thanks for what you do for all of us.

As always, my door is open and I look forward to seeing you.

Chief Robertson

ASSOCIATION NEWS

-President, Jeff Liming

I would like to thank all who were able to come out for the "hanging of the quilts" on Sisters Quilt Show Day! We had fourteen department volunteers and several career members participate in the morning and another good showing for the afternoon "take down". I had an opportunity to speak with Jean Wells in the morning about the day's events and she was very pleased to again have the fire department participate in the show. Jean was especially pleased with the number of folks we provided for the event. Great job to both of the companies and with the patience you showed in getting the quilts hung "just right!" Thirteen hundred quilts were displayed in the show and I know we helped display the gems. You may have noticed a film crew on scene. I am confident all of you are now part of the documentary on Sisters' Outdoor Quilt Show and especially you officers that agreed to be interviewed. Thanks again!

I would also like to thank those of you that volunteered to staff the third-out ambulance at our Association aid station downtown! It was a long day and you had many folks come by for directions and assistance. I recall that your ambulance became our first out a couple of times as the calls overlapped. Thank you for your professional response to all of the day's events! You represent our department so well and enhance our community image.

We have a fifth Monday event (to be determined) at the end of August. Do you have any suggestions?

Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer and as always, thank you for your support of the Sisters - Camp Sherman Fire and Ambulance Association!

CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

-Chaplain Hayes

Authentic August

I suppose, as a chaplain, it's understandable that I might ponder death more than the average person. I know that all of us who choose to volunteer or career in the fire/medic services see more than our share of life endings. This time of year seems especially prone to more of the "unnatural" deaths – those difficult times when one moment a family is enjoying a weekend outing together and the next moment they are losing a loved one.

In my own quiet and somber times reflecting on death, I am reminded that for those of us who deal with it on a regular basis, we frequently see how fragile and precious life really is. It is my hope that this knowledge makes us better people as we choose not to let little differences and squabbles interfere with our loving relationships. I trust that we know how important it is to live in the moment, be kind and patient, enjoy happiness, and live with an authenticity that affords us a regret-free life.

May we all remember that a tomorrow is promised to no one and today well-lived creates the legacy and memories we will one day be known for.

SCBA INFORMATION

-Captain Brown

The last fire drill held at Station 701 was the entertaining Water Ball Competition. As usual, it was fun to watch and some friendly competition added dimension to the activity. This evolution encompasses several basic skills we need to keep sharp to do our job properly and efficiently. There is hose pulling (and hose rolling), nozzle control, fire stream control and application, proper PPE donning and wearing, pump operation (engineering), water conservation, SCBA use and donning, and of course team work. As I watched each drill, the part where the teams were able to make the biggest difference in whether it was a close race or where they were able to shave time to win was in the SCBA donning portion. Each time there was a flurry of activity as personnel exited the apparatus, then it seemed to come to a standstill as the hose team was donning their SCBA's.

Most everyone did well and most improved with each rotation through the evolutions. The point I want to make is that you need to be familiar with this part of your PPE not so much as to save time during competitions, but so it will be easy and not frustrating when you are required to use it during actual calls. Some people breezed right through the donning portion each time and some had difficulties. The best way to improve your performance is to practice donning the SCBA when you are at the stations. Just ask the duty crew and we will help you get the equipment set up and work with you as you practice donning and doffing the apparatus. It should be second nature to have all the buckles connected, the straps properly tightened, your face piece on and the connection made to the regulator, breathing air. The final part is always do a buddy check for complete coverage by your PPE to help eliminate exposed skin to burns, or the entrance of water from the opposing team's water stream!

COMMUNICATIONS

-Captain Brown

There is no news to report with our communications equipment this month. The Santiam Repeater is still functioning, just doesn't have much range due to the lack of power from the transmitter. The research continues for an amplifier to boost the output to our maximum licensed amount to improve the range and efficiency of the site to make it safer for our responses to the west side of the pass. I haven't heard of any repairs needed on equipment recently, but that is probably due to Firemedic Bruegeman taking care of the radios lately. There have been a couple of minor problems with portables, but they have seemed to repair themselves

(must be the radio gnomes). If you have any difficulties with any communications equipment, be sure to report it immediately. This assures the repair is done promptly and the equipment isn't forgotten for an extended period of time. A reminder to replace the batteries in the portable radios each time they are used, this also assures the equipment works properly when you need it and it gives the chargers a chance to "condition" the batteries regularly which will extend their service life. It can be frustrating to turn on a radio during an incident to have it dead or go dead in a short time due to the battery not being fully charged. Also, check the batteries in any issued equipment to maintain proper communications at all times. If you cannot be heard, you can't communicate.

FACILITIES

-Captain Brown

We recently had the One-Year Warranty inspection of Station 701 with the contractor and the architect. It seemed to go smoothly and most points of concern were not disputed. I hope to see crews around the station doing repairs in the next few weeks and completing the construction of the station. If you notice any areas in need of repair during your time at the station, please let us know so it can be addressed during this last part of the project. Thanks to everyone for their help and patience during this project! Also, thanks to everyone who helps keep the stations in a clean and ready state, making response quick and organized. As always, if you find something in need of repair at the outlying stations, please let me know so it can be fixed promptly.

Some of you have noticed the white board for messages in the Watchroom at Station 701. This has been placed to make sure information gets passed on from shift to shift and makes it easier to track the progress of repairs and projects. Remember to fill out repair requests and get them to the appropriate personnel so we know what the problem is or how to troubleshoot the situation. Please don't just leave a note on the white board; we may not know what you mean exactly without proper documentation which can cause a delay in getting repairs completed. Thanks for your help!

RESPONSE INFORMATION

-Captain Brown

Looking back on the statistics, we are already ahead of last year for the monthly total runs and well on our way to at least meeting the previous year. This is without any brush fires or wildland incidents! There have been more than a few days where multiple calls kept the ambulances jumping. As is the custom for each Quilt Show, this year produced many medicals calls with a number of transports. Thanks to everyone who was available, either in the Aid Tent, at the station, or who rotated around to help cover the needs. As I mentioned, there have been a noticeable lack of wildland calls this year. Don't let this fool you, July is still one of our busiest months for calls and the last month proves this. It also speaks to the increased number of people enjoying our area and this has not been without a tragedy. Thanks to everyone who responded to the frustrating call that ended in a drowning. I have talked with many of you and realize how hard it is to "stand by" when everyone on scene (the public) are expecting us to do something to "fix" the situation. Remember, we are

The temporary maintenance employees have been working at the substations, completing summer projects and maintenance. A fresh coat of paint on Station 702 has improved the exterior appearance. The grounds at Station 703 and 704 are neat and trimmed, with the exterior cleaning of the stations pretty much complete. Make sure and thank them for their contributions to our district properties when you see them. In addition to the annual facilities projects, they will be starting on the annual hose testing soon. If you have never assisted in this important equipment maintenance, you are welcome to participate. You will get a first-hand look at how the hose you use is tested to make sure it will perform when you need it most. You will also get an opportunity to improve your hose rolling (and unrolling) skills during these tests. We have a large amount of hose to test each year and the more people to help, the faster it goes. Maybe even a little competition will add some more fun to this task!

trained to a certain level and we are not to exceed that training. Some times it is because we up to a certain standard (Basic, First Responder, etc.) and other times it is because we don't have the proper equipment and training. We always need to keep in mind that our safety comes first and if we ignore that to try and help mitigate a situation, we run the risk of becoming part of the problem, not part of the solution. We all have that Can-Do attitude and will, and truly want to help others. That is what makes working with everyone so rewarding. But as we have seen so many times in similar situations across the nation, it can also cause the problem to get bigger. Don't let this happen to us, stay safe, keep your gear in top shape, and maintain your skills to the highest standard so you will be ready to respond to the emergencies as required!

FIRE & EMS EQUIPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

-Captain Ast

I discovered that one or several personnel have been disposing of contaminated biohazard sharps (used needles) in an unacceptable manner here at 701. As you may know, we have a biohazard collection tub that we store our full sharps containers and biohazard waste in until it's collected by our contracted disposal service. This biohazard collection tub is for biohazard waste that's generated by our EMS activities only.

When opening the tub, I found sharps containers that did not have lids secured and someone had deposited an overfilled Ziploc bag with used needles (personal use). Open sharps containers and improperly packaged sharps pose an obvious hazard for the collection and disposal personnel. This negligence could not only result in an exposure to a needle stick, but could also result in significant fines to the department.

For those of you that generate biohazard sharps waste via self administered injections, etc, do not use the

collection tub here at 701 for your personal use, as we pay a fee for disposal of the waste. Instead, contact your garbage disposal service and they will arrange to collect your sharps free of charge and provide you with approved sharps containers.

I would like to remind those of you that respond to mutual aid and conflagration fires of the proper storage of your structural PPE that may be stowed on top of the apparatus. Your structural PPE should be stored in your issued turnout bag and zipped shut. Your turnout bag serves several purposes: 1) it prevents your PPE items from flying off the apparatus; 2) It reduces your PPE's exposure to UV exposure, which breaks down your gear; 3) it reduces debris, water, dust, etc. from soiling your gear; and 4) it reduces the likelihood of your PPE being damaged by hot embers. Your turnout bag was issued for the protection of your PPE first, and not for the storage of your personal items. Should you have room for personal items after storing all your gear, use the space. Otherwise, plan on bringing an extra duffel bag for your personal items.

Be prepared for the busy months ahead and stay hydrated!

Please wish the following people a Happy August Birthday...

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|------------------|-----|------------------|------|
| • Susan Houck | 8/2 | • Thornton Brown | 8/14 |
| • Cody Meredith | 8/6 | • David K. Moyer | 8/21 |
| • Liz McKittrick | 8/8 | • David Gentry | 8/28 |

FIRE PREVENTION

-Captain Wheeler

This month we have the opportunity to have a display at the Country Fair at the Episcopal Church. It will be on Saturday August 8th. It runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will have the puppet show there as well as a display of different fire prevention material. I could use any help I can get. I will provide for lunch and drinks.

I would also like to give some ideas for fire prevention tips for our members in their own home use.

- Do not smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Do not run electric cords under rugs.
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use. (TV's, heaters, etc)

- Be sure to have a smoke detector and fire extinguisher.

These ideas will help our members be a little safer at home. Remember practice what you preach. If you have any concerns or questions feel free to call me. Have a good month.



FIRE FITNESS

-Fire Medic Storton

Lately I've been reminiscing about how flexible I used to be while noticing now how flexible I'm not. Do you remember the last time you were able to touch your toes without a snap, crackle or a pop? Neither do I. When you wake up and roll out of bed does it take time for your back and legs to loosen up. Yeah, me too! Too bad we're not Cirque Du Soleil freaks, because normal people like us become less flexible the older we get. If only there was something we could do about it!!!

Light days are as important to your workout regimen as hard days. Not only will I suggest you stretch after every workout, but I will suggest that a long warm up and stretching are your light days. Beware; stretching isn't for sissies. You can over do it and hurt yourself with intense stretching as easily as lifting too heavy. If you want to start feeling younger and healthier, let's get started.

Many of you may know this already, but review is what we do to keep it all straight. According to my research below are unanimously the top five benefits to stretching:

- **Increase in flexibility and range of motion:** Aging sucks! But as long as we are not suffering from significant medical issues, we can at least do something about our level of flexibility. With greater flexibility we will feel younger and perform better.
- **Improved circulation:** With better blood flow comes faster healing. What's not to like?
- **Better posture:** Minimizes aches and pains from light strain due to bad posture. I'm also going to step out on a limb and say that better posture affects your mood and how others perceive you. Don't believe me? How do you look and feel slumped over vs. when standing at "attention"?
- **Stress relief:** Where do you keep your tension? Many people keep it in their shoulders, which can lead to stress headaches. How many of you like to soak in a hot tub to "loosen up"? How do you feel afterward? Relaxed?
- **Improved coordination:** Maintaining a full range of motion through your joints keeps you functioning better. Ever been injured and learned to compensate? It's just not as good as new.

Let's also review quickly the Dos and Don'ts of stretching so that we are all on the same page.

- **Do:** Warm up first. The idea is to bend, not break.
- **Do:** Hold your stretch for at least 30 seconds. Your muscles need time to stop resisting you and go with the flow.
- **Do:** Relax and breathe through your stretch.
- **Do:** Stretch both sides. If you stretch the chest, stretch the back so as not to become lopsided.
- **Do:** Stretch before and after your workout. Here's the generic formula: Warm up – light stretch (to get ready) – workout – Cool down - Good stretch (to get flexible).
- **Don't:** Bounce or jerk (Ballistic Stretching) as it causes small tears, which result in tighter muscles. Lightly moving through your range of motion such as trunk twisting is Dynamic stretching. Dynamic = good. Ballistic = bad.
- **Don't:** Stretch so far and hard that it hurts. Pain means stop!

With the basics behind us let's talk about advanced stretching. Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) is a type of advanced stretching that will get you really flexible really quickly. It was first used for physical therapy with lots of success, and then used for athletes to improve performance. I did this for years and it truly works. You must be careful not to overdo this as you can hurt yourself. A good rule of thumb is to gauge your effort with your level of fitness. If you are not in great shape, go easy. If you're a pro give it what you got.

Continued on page 6

CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

-Chaplain Gerke

I've talked about making choices before in this column, but I ran across a quote the other day from Lou Holtz when he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame that says it better than I could. When asked how he was able to be so successful as a football coach, he said, "You have to get people to make good choices. Wherever you are in life, good or bad, it's because of the choices you make. Choose to succeed rather than fail. Choose to work hard rather than to loaf your way through it.

We had a plan and wouldn't compromise on our core values." I then ran across some other quotes from him that I thought were good, too. One was "Do right. Do your best. Treat others as you want to be treated." Another is "It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it." How about "No one has ever drowned in sweat." Or "Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it." He also said "I can't believe that God put us on this earth to be ordinary." Thank you, Lou, for your words of wisdom. Be safe, and know I pray for all of you.

FIRE FITNESS cont.

PNF is a type of stretching which includes holding the stretch and simultaneously contracting the muscle in intervals. To reiterate **you must be very well warmed up before trying PNF stretching.** To perform PNF stretching let's use the hamstring on the back of your leg as an example. A partner helps a lot, but you can still do this on your own. Hold your leg out front and lightly stretch your hamstring normally and hold. Now use your hamstring muscles to lightly pull your leg back for 5 seconds, but with your hands or partner, do not allow your leg to move. Relax and stretch a little deeper. Repeat, then stretch a little deeper. After 3 sets your leg may feel a little like Jell-O, wobbly, but loose. Look at the pictures to help see the idea.



Stretch



Resist



Stretch Deeper

Try PNF stretching on any muscle group to gain flexibility. Just promise me you'll start easy. I have hurt myself stretching too hard before and it is extremely counter-productive. Let me know if I can help.

Ready. Set. Stretch!