

# THE SIREN



Presented By

## Sisters-Camp Sherman RFPD

July 2009

### CHIEF'S CORNER

-Fire Chief, Taylor Robertson

Welcome to the July 2009 edition of the Siren.

As we head into the warmest part of the year and our wildfire threat increases, I often think about the balance we all need in our lives when it comes to work and play.

Commitment to our work is critical, particularly when it comes to public safety. However, there is that part of being effective at work (and at firefighting and EMS) which includes being "effective at home". What this means to me is that you can't be effective in your work/volunteer life if you are not effective in your home life.

It has always been a struggle for me to work hard and play hard. Just working hard leaves many important life experiences unfulfilled: family time, vacation, rest, travel, or whatever makes you happy. Work (or play) can become one's primary focus, and the balance is lost.

My point in this discussion is to encourage all of you to take the time during this busy fire season to spend time with family and friends. Get away to find that balance. Remember that a great man once said, "The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play".

So, I hope you get a chance to enjoy this season and all it has to offer. Get out there and work hard and play hard too.

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

Chief Robertson



### ASSOCIATION NEWS

-President, Jeff Liming

The June fifth Monday BBQ and softball game was a terrific event and could not have been cooked or played on a better night in Sisters! I would like to thank John Gerke and Sisters Community church for allowing us the opportunity to use their facilities! Many thanks also to Rita Hodge for heading up the organization of our BBQ and to Don Boyd, Dave Wheeler and Stuart Honeyman for their help with the cooking and preparation. Special thanks to Thornton Brown and "C" shift for taking part in the BBQ in the midst of a busy day.

We fielded six pieces of apparatus in the Rodeo Parade and you looked great! Thanks to all our drivers and riders as we sparkled down the parade route. And sparkle we did as the department received a beautiful ribbon for the effort. This is an example of an Association event that shows our fire department off so well to the community and I thank you all for your support!

Speaking of rodeo, thanks also to you who crewed the third out ambulance this year for any of our five rodeo shows. Our crews were professional in appearance and responded to several calls. After this year we may want to add umbrellas to the rodeo ambulance. The Rodeo Association was pleased with our support and we have recently billed them for our services.

There is no rest for the weary and the Sisters Quilt Show is nearly upon us! Prepare for the second Saturday in July to hang quilts (and remove them later on) as well as staff our downtown ambulance and station 701. We need you. Please arrive at 701 at 0645 for assignment to quilt hanging crews and stay the day for call support if you can. We will remove quilts at about 1700 and look forward to seeing you again!

Thank you for your continued support of the Sisters – Camp Sherman Fire and Ambulance Association!

## CHAPLAIN'S CHAT

-Chaplain Hayes

Happy July 2009

It's kind of hard to believe, but the year is already half over. It seems like here in Central Oregon summer has only just begun, but already the days are getting shorter. Maybe this year we can enjoy a forest fire-free summer with plenty of warm days and cool,

bright starry nights. Have you had a chance to get out in nature and spend some time recreating? Sure, winter sports are what our area is known for, but summer brings its own variety of fun. So, while the sun still shines until nearly 9 o'clock each evening, go for a walk or a bicycle ride, snuggle in a hammock, bird watch, photograph, barbeque, garden, or sightsee. Just be sure to make time in your life for those things that fill your soul. Being in nature is one of the best healers and you don't even need a prescription! Be Safe – Be Grateful.

## SCBA INFORMATION

-Captain Brown

Thanks to Firemedic Crawford for taking on the maintenance of the SCBA's! He has attended some training for repairs and maintenance, and is getting all the testing equipment set up to assure the SCBA's are functioning properly. If there are malfunctions with an SCBA, be sure to tag it out of service and have an explanation of the problem attached. Place it in the SCBA room for the repair and drop a Repair Request in the Watchroom for Jay.

Take each drill to make sure you are familiar with the usage of our SCBA's. Not just the donning and doffing of the packs, but also the voice amplifiers and radio interfaces. These can be frustrating to put together when the call comes down, especially if you haven't done it for a while. Check your batteries in your issued amplifier to make sure it works when you need it most. Remember, if the red light on the top of the amplifier is flashing, that indicates a low battery condition. It should glow constant red when the batteries are in good condition and it should amplify your voice when you speak into the mask.

## COMMUNICATIONS

-Captain Brown

The Santiam Repeater is functioning pretty well. There are still some difficulties we are trying to overcome, but with the help of the Communications Technician from the Oregon Department of Forestry we are looking for the best possible solutions. It appears we need to install an amplifier on the unit to improve the "reach" of the output signal. They are also looking at the antenna performance to see if it can be improved with different equipment. For me, I guess I expected that this would be ongoing as the history of getting this communication link in place has taken a lot of time and patience. The technical aspect that we are now working on appears to be the "fine tuning" to assure we have the communications we need on the west side of the pass. We will keep you informed of any more progress on this project.

Firemedic Bruegeman has taken on the radio programming for all apparatus and portable radios. Officers, if you have a district issued radio bring it to Ben for any new frequency programming. There have been a few changes for the wildland frequencies and we need to assure that all communication equipment is the same.

Station 701 has completed the installation of a paging system that is connected to the dispatch radio in the Watchroom. This means that you will be able to hear all radio traffic and tone outs on Northwest Fire throughout the station. All operational rooms, administration offices, training areas, apparatus bays, living quarters and dorm rooms now have speakers installed with volume controls to assure no calls are missed. This is a feature that is traditional in fire stations and was a project we needed to complete after the contactor finished. One more Station 701 completion project finished!

## Please wish the following people a Happy July Birthday...

- |                  |      |                       |      |              |      |
|------------------|------|-----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| • Gail Butler    | 7/3  | • Jeremy Ast          | 7/20 | • Les Schell | 7/29 |
| • Peter Storton  | 7/12 | • Jeff May            | 7/21 |              |      |
| • Andrew Mustola | 7/12 | • John Pagano         | 7/22 |              |      |
| • Jay Crawford   | 7/13 | • Sequoia Hoffstetter | 7/25 |              |      |



## FACILITIES

-Captain Brown

As the weather turns warmer (finally), we are seeing more people out enjoying the area. With the city park right across the street, we are also seeing more people looking at the station and the apparatus. I think with the glass doors showing off our equipment, it has created a draw for visitors at the park. I know that on my shift, we see people wandering over from the Village Green to look through the bay doors at our apparatus quite frequently. It always makes me smile to see the children looking through the lower windows at the “big red trucks” with their parents doing the same a few panes higher. Of course, we try to take the opportunity to show off our tools and make sure the kids get a treat from the fire prevention goodies. Even if this is just an occasion the parents take to entertain their kids for a few minutes, it is still a great opportunity to give a little back to the people we serve, or may serve as they come through our community. One of the recent visitors was a fire chief from northern Idaho who was admiring the station. It seems everyone has an interesting story about their district, and this man and his wife were no exception. What they left me with as they departed was their comment about “how lucky we must feel to have such a nice station and newer apparatus.” We really do have nice equipment and facilities throughout our district and it has happened through careful planning, hard work, and support of our residents through their

property taxes and the recent bond. Thanks to everyone who helps keep our properties in such good shape. It shows our appreciation to the community, and to our leaders who have the foresight to plan ahead to make our responses and job that much more effective and nicer.

Be aware, if you are in the living quarters (upstairs) at Station 701 and a call is initiated, there is a safety feature on the fire pole access doors that may catch you by surprise. There is an electric strike on the door to prevent any accidental access to the fire poles. When you want to open the door, press the button on the upper left door jam to release the strike (you will hear a “click”) then push the door open. The button has been placed out of reach of our younger visitors for their safety, but within an adult’s reach to access the fire poles. If you “load” the door by pushing on it before pushing the button, it will not open, causing a delay in opening the door. You can imagine the scene if several people are moving to use the door and the first person gets caught at the door, unable to open it easily. Be sure check out the operation next time you are at Station 701.

As always, if you notice any needed repairs, contact me so we can either schedule it or if necessary get it completed right away.

## RESPONSE INFORMATION

-Captain Brown

After a quick tally, we are still on track for an increase in responses for 2009. With warm weather and the vacation season upon us, I am sure we will be back to the anticipated increase in summer calls. I keep hearing about the possible “stay-cation” idea keeping people close to home to save money. But as I see the string of vehicles coming through Highway 20, especially on the weekends, I wonder how many are from the area. It appears to me there are still quite a few people traveling into the area to enjoy the opportunities in Central Oregon.

Thanks to everyone who was available for the Sisters Rodeo ambulance coverage and to those who were at the station and responded to the calls on that weekend. As it was the end of the Spring term for our students, we were a bit shorthanded for responses from Station 701 as they were preparing for their summer vacations. It was a busy weekend and the response times were kept to a minimum with those that pulled shift at the station.

I know it is a bit confusing as to who is on shift with our new 48/96 schedule, we are still getting used to who works when! Any time you can commit to a shift is appreciated. With the students off for the summer and the summer help starting a bit shorthanded, there are plenty of opportunities to join in on the fun. Remember, there is the “carrot” of a meal voucher for a four hour shift spent at Station 701, not to mention the fellowship of hanging around and responding with people who want to help those in need.



## FIRE & EMS EQUIPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

-Captain Ast

Since I was absent for a majority of June, my submission this month will be short and sweet. First of all, thank you all for your support and prayers as Michelle and I begin this new chapter of our lives. Dane is doing well and is looking forward to meeting you all!

I mentioned in a previous article that we would someday have the capability of sending our 12-lead ECG data for cardiac patients to the hospital via cell phone fax transmission. After a lot of work troubleshooting, finding the correct cell provider and phones, and software revisions from Zoll, our defibrillators now have the ability. This will allow our medics to send ECG's to the hospital during transport in order to allow review by a cardiologist and hopefully minimize the time it takes between our arrival at the hospital and the patient receiving the advanced cardiac care that they need.

As a reminder, the King airway tubes have been placed in service. They're in the scope practice for all three EMT certification levels granted you've received

the formal training. If you have not yet received the training, please contact Chief Karjala to schedule it as soon as possible.

Have a safe July!



## EQUIPMENT NEWS

-Captain Lovegren

We are moving into the real fire season now that hot summer days are coming. This is harder on equipment and vehicles. Watch the temperature gauges more often and make sure your pumps are circulating water. The pumps and shafts can heat up quickly in hot weather. Remember to open the hoods for better radiator cooling when the engine is stationary for long periods of time.

This is also the time to remember to keep yourself rested, cooled and hydrated. You don't work any better than your engine if you are overheated. We are coming into the high-risk time of year for heat related illnesses, on and off the job. Heat illnesses can begin in temperatures as low as 80-85 degrees. Outside temperature is not the only contributing factor; work effort and clothing also affect your temperature. Working on the fire line in our nomex digging line will quickly overheat our bodies. Set a safe pace, drink lots of liquid and take breaks to help stay cool. Be safe this summer in all your activities.

760's driver's side scene lights have been repaired. The wire must have gotten an internal break

and would touch sometimes and not others, as the lights would work intermittently. Because of the way the wiring is run inside walls and is inaccessible, I had to run a new wire from the switch to the lights. It now works consistently as it should. These types of problems are the ones that make you want to pull your hair out. Very time consuming with little progress.

I have started working on the new 6X6 and have the fiberglass hard top installed. We will be taking the flat bed off the truck and storing it at the training grounds for now. I have located a 24 volt to 12 volt isolated converter to run the radio and light bar. This will allow us to have 12 volt accessories on a 24 volt system. You may be thinking what's the big deal? But if you are Thornton and have had two radios burn out because of the 24 volt system trying to react with a 12 volt system on the same truck you would want something that works. The "isolated" converter is the key for both systems to work independently from each other on the same truck. New technology is sometimes a good thing. Stop by and see the progress on the truck, once we get further along we will need the volunteers to come and help sand the truck for painting. I will let you all know when your help is needed.

## FIRE PREVENTION

-Captain Wheeler

This month's topic is about station tours. I've had several people ask what they should do for the tours. I thought that if a few people asked, then more probably have the same questions. I have a guide in my office that explains what to do with the different age groups. A typical station tour should include the following:

1. Determine the number of people and age group
2. Select an appropriate outline for the age group
3. Choose some handouts
4. Ensure the adult chaperone knows what to do if we are called out on an emergency during the tour.

Examples of topics for the various age groups are as follows:

**Ages 3-5** (Stop Drop and Roll, smoke detectors, 911, exit drills, apparatus tours, and Elmo visits the Fire Station DVD)

**Ages 6-8** (Good Fire, bad fire, Stop Drop and Roll, stay low in smoke, Sparky the fire dog costume and apparatus tours)

**Ages 9-11** (Fire prevention, EDITH\*, smoke detectors and apparatus tours)

**Ages 12-15** (babysitting responsibilities, emergencies, cooking, security, home fire safety, EDITH\*)

**Adult** (General fire department information, basic fire prevention, smoke detector, EDITH\*, wildland fire safety) *\*Exit drills in the home.*



**Fifth Monday Barbecue & Softball Photos**  
Courtesy of Brett Miller!



## FIRE FITNESS

-Fire Medic Storton

First off, please forgive the repeat last month. Just a technical goof, but I hope you all enjoyed the review on plyometrics.

Although it occurred in May, I want to let everyone know that the “Sisters On Fire” Pole Pedal Paddle team represented the department and the volunteer association very well. Andrew “The Master of Gravity” Mustola started the team off with his downhill ski stylings while Stuart Honeyman dodged the flotsam of lesser cross-country skiers. Jeremy Storton fulfilled the need.....the need for speed and Nathan Arguien flashed his guns while making the Marines and the department proud of his 10K run. Ben brought us all home by paddling and suffering the teams only injury (a thumb blister) as well as suffering a soul-revealing 200 yard sprint through hundreds of adoring fans. The experience of having fun and building camaraderie like this, I hope, inspires others to do the same. We are already making plans for the PPP for next year. How about multiple Sisters Fire PPP teams? As a special note, the Sisters On Fire team dedicated the race to the memory of Chan Cathcart and toasted to his life during post race celebratory activities.

Now let’s talk about something more serious... drinking! While I may be a beer aficionado, that’s not what I meant. More specifically I want to talk about hydration. Some of the research I’ve done on the matter can get very, very technical. If you were to weigh yourself before and after exercise, take the difference, factor in heat and elevation, keep in mind 20% of fluid intake comes from your food, divide by 2, take the square root of pi and round to the nearest hundredth, you are close to Professional Competitor level. Since a good number of us are not professional athletes who weigh our food and count our drips of sweat, hydration will be simple: #1 Don’t let yourself get thirsty. #2 If

you become thirsty, then drink. #3 Remember rules 1 and 2. The hydration adage I’ve always heard is your pee should be copious and clear.

Yes, it is possible to consume too much water, but that is more common with extreme endurance athletes. It is also possible to consume too many sports drinks and not enough water, but if you alternate you shouldn’t have a problem. Please keep in mind the water you drink now will take time to enter your system (See rule #1) so plan ahead.

### How will I know if I am dehydrated?

Besides being thirsty, extreme dehydration can lead to some of the following: poor brain and muscle function, poor kidney function, poor temperature regulation, minimal or low urine output, constipation, hunger, dry itchy skin, etc. If you are thinking about avoiding all this, then ... I’ll drink to that!

### When should I drink water?

8 – 12 glasses of water is recommended daily. It’s not as tough as it sounds. Some of this comes from your food. A glass every hour works. Also an old friend of mine is as addicted to water as chapstick. As soon as his mouth feels dry, he wets it down.

The following are times when hydration is especially important: wildland season, when exercising, hot weather, cold weather, high fiber diet, trying to lose weight, high altitude, traveling, sick, thirsty.

The weather is perfect for a good trail run or bike, but don’t forget about your strength and power. The Fitness room is equipped, open and available for all department members. Using the fitness room requires a ten minute orientation with me. Please schedule time to come in on C shift and I’ll run you through so you can get going on your fitness plans.

It’s time to get fit and healthy; we are relying on you. Let me know how I can help.

Ready. Set. Drink!

## CHAPLAIN’S CHAT

-Chaplain Gerke

Remember all those news stories about houses sliding down hills in California when rains followed fires? Those images I saw in the news remind me that sometimes we build our figurative “houses” on poor foundations. We may base our lives and our actions on false beliefs about ourselves, for example. We may think we can’t do something that we really can, or the opposite. We may believe something is true and it turns out to be false, or is good

and is not in the long run. I did that for years, and it brought me nothing but turmoil and regrets. When (not if) a storm comes, we may find that our incorrect belief system lets us down. In other words, we have built our “house” on sand. When your belief system is built on solid rock, life’s storms will still cause you pain and suffering, but your “house” will remain strong and purposeful, and you will have joy and peace in the middle of the storm. May it be so with you! As always, my prayers are with each and every one of you.