

THE SECOND ALARM

BRINGING VALUABLE RESOURCES & NEWS
ONE ALARM AT A TIME

NOVEMBER 2015

THE SECOND ALARM



VALDOSTA FIRE
DEPARTMENT

A Department Without Limits

Editor:
Sgt. S A Miller



BIRTHDAYS:

LT JOHN HERPIN	11/10
FF JIMMIE BACON	11/11
FF CHRIS SCOTT	11/13
LT JUSTIN WARREN	11/15
FF TREV COTHRON	11/22
FF JEFF KRAUSHAAR	11/23
LT MICHAEL CRUMP	11/28

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Each month, it is always challenging to find that "right" topic. I try to find ways to motivate, encourage, inspire, support, and show love. This month I decided to talk about being a Champion. I know of a few employees that personally need a few words of encouragement. I recently read a quote by Apoorve Dubey, "To get up when you are down, to fight more intensely when you are struggling; to put in the extra effort when you are in sheer pain, to comeback when nobody expects you to, and to stand tall when everyone is pulling you down are what makes a champion." When reading the quote, I could only think about the famous hit song by the British rock band Queen – "We are The Champions." The song was written by Freddie Mercury and I wanted to share one of the verses.

*I've paid my dues
Time after time
I've done my sentence
But committed no crime
And bad mistakes
I've made a few*

*I've had my share of sand
Kicked in my face
But I've come through*

*And we mean to go on and on
and on and on*

*We are the champions - my
friends
And we'll keep on fighting
Till the end
We are the champions
We are the champions
No time for losers
'Cause, we are the champions
of the World - Freddie Mercury.*

For those that are going through some struggles in your personal or professional lives, remember you are not alone. You have your Fire Department family and community here for you. We all make mistakes, we all doubt ourselves and often question our faith but in the end, "We keep fighting till the end" because "We are the Champions of the World." Our community believes in you, our city believes in you and I be-



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief

lieve in you. Always remember that "Arrows goes forward only after pulling in backwards, every human being will get happy only after facing the difficulties in their life path. So don't be afraid to face our difficulties, they will push you forward"—unknown. Thank you for your support and dedication.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Submissions to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month
- Feel free to submit photos with your submissions
- Have a strong opinion about a topic of concern to our fire department? Feel free to submit a piece for review and possible publication in the newsletter

HAPPENINGS AND GOINGS-ON

The Valdosta Fire Department's Shop with a Firefighter Program is looking for volunteers to help out in making Christmas great for the children of Valdosta. Contact Captain Clinkscales for more information or to volunteer. This event is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th at 1830hrs.

Continuing education is important to our profession. If you haven't yet, look into the Managing Officer Program (MOP) or the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP). Contact Lt. Kennedy for insight into MOP, or contact AC Boutwell for insight into EFOP.

Information is important. Correct information is even more important. Quell your doubts and submit your rumors or hearsay via the anonymous suggestion box. Or submit them to Sgt. Miller who will pass them up the chain at: smiller@valdostacity.com

ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Congratulations to former Lieutenant and now newly promoted Battalion Chief John Henry. Chief Henry will work in the Administration Division. We all wish you the best in your new position, Chief Henry.



Though not technically a promotion, congratulations go also to Lieutenant Jeff Thibodeau for his lateral move into Inspections. Lt. Thibodeau will still work in Operations until a full move into Inspections in a couple of months. While it was hard for him to leave the operational side of the Fire Department, he looks forward to being able to spend each night at home with the family. But what about the gaming, Lt. Thibodeau, the gaming?

Sgt. Keith Niehanke sends his thanks and appreciation for a job well done to firefighters Jimmy Bacon and Vince Houston. Sgt. Niehanke noted their positive attitudes and their teamwork, saying "These two men were a pleasure to work with."



A big hurrah to October Employees of the month to Lt. Justin Ply, Sgt. Caron Wright, Sgt. Doug Bennett, and FF Lamar Berrian. These gentlemen were integral in the pursuit and capture of the individuals responsible for breaking into the pump house in an attempt to steal bikes for the Give a Child a Bike Program. "Because of the observant skills and excellent teamwork of these VFD members, the bicycles were saved and will be given to children in our community in time for the Christmas holidays." Thanks guys.



Congratulations to FF Ken Taylor for being selected Hahira Fire Departments 2015 Firefighter of the Year. Go, Ken!



Congratulations to the October 27th graduates of the Valdosta Fire Department's second Citizens Fire Academy. Graduates of the program are: Ricky Stewart, Carl Horst, David Hanna, April Stokes, Stanley and Bonnie Rumphol, Edward Mobley, Tefe Stone, DeShonda Jenkins, Juan Chow Kai, Roy Hall, James and Shirley Garland, Vivian Miller-Cody, Mikki Hudson, Gerald Martin, Marge Williams, Tina Riggins, Janice Hancock and Mickey Williamson.

Open Bible Christian School sends their thanks to the Valdosta Fire Department for speaking to their kindergarten and elementary classes. "The Fire Safety House always makes such a big impression... We appreciate not only your willingness to come to the school, but also your service to our city."

The Horizon Academy also send their thanks to the Valdosta Fire Department, "You impacted our students in a such a positive way!"



"Many thanks to these VFD firefighters for helping with the lights for the WCTV live interviews," writes Sementha Mathews. "Thanks also to Capt. Gallagher who was not in the picture. I so appreciate the VFD's help on countless events and activities. You are truly awesome!"

Vanassa Flucas of the Neighborhood Development Division sends her thanks to Lt. Derek Willis for his assistance with acquiring a grill for the first City-Wide Bulk Trash Amnesty Day. "As always, we can depend on our fellow employees...to assist in making all of the events presented by the City a huge success!!"

EMPOWERING BUGLES—NOTES ON LEADERSHIP

You Don't Need Charisma to Be an Inspiring Leader

by Nick Tasler

Virtually every leader wishes they had the power to inspire people to change. That's because every leader has experienced times when they have identified a change that had to be made, devised a great strategy for making it happen, but then struggled to get people moving in the new direction.

The problem is that most leaders believe that in order to inspire other people, they must exude the uncommon charisma of someone like Steve Jobs, Martin Luther King, Jr., or John F. Kennedy. Those inspiring examples don't feel especially relevant or attainable to leaders who are not trying to build the first iPhone, end racial segregation, or send someone to the moon. What if you're just trying to change the way your people handle loans, manage a supply chain, or interact with customers?

There is a simpler way to inspire change. In recent years, social scientists led by Todd Thrash have demystified the phenomenon of inspiration. At its core, inspiration is what happens when a person feels stimulated to bring some new idea to life after becoming spontaneously aware of new possibilities. Bold visions of greatness and charismatic speeches are certainly one way to elicit that feeling. But a few years ago, we stumbled onto another way.

In a series of field experiments, my colleagues and I at Decision Pulse asked groups of managers across four different companies to anonymously submit changes they had decided to make in response to a larger change initiative. We then asked the managers in each group to view the list of decisions made by their colleagues, and to vote for the decision that had the biggest impact at their respective companies. After our experiments, a clear pattern emerged among the winning decisions. See if you can spot the winner in this set of choices below from managers at a health insurance company.

Decision A: "I dealt with an employee relations issue through direct coaching and performance management vs. letting that customer service manager ignore the issue."

Decision B: "I cut out layers of security for the new customer portal because it would make it slower for customers to access."

Decision C: "I chose to market the company as the leader of good health not just for the current member, but for everyone."

All three decisions exemplify sound management and logical thinking. But decision B overwhelmingly received the most votes from other managers. In fact, not one of the 19 peer raters in this experiment voted for Decision A or Decision C. What made Decision B so special?

"...it makes us more skilled at seeing new connections and possibilities."

Decision B contained what I call a "missing puzzle piece." In order to make sense of the world around us, our brains treat every situation like it's a puzzle that must be assembled. When we piece together a puzzle for "how a microwave works" or "what techie guys do," our brains store that puzzle in long-term memory. But these puzzles are fragile. When something unexpected happens, say,

if a microwave suddenly makes food colder instead of hotter, or a tech geek intentionally removes layers of data security just to enhance the customer experience, our brain senses that something isn't right. The microwave puzzle or the techie guy puzzle is suddenly missing a corner piece.

What happened next is the interesting part. A part of our brain called the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) notifies us of the error. Not surprisingly, this error makes us uncomfortable. To protect us from that icky feeling that part of our world no longer makes sense, our brains have developed an instinctive defense mechanism. Instead of trying to replace the missing piece in the "techie guy" puzzle, our brains compensate by reassembling new, unrelated puzzles.

Researchers Travis Proulx and Stephen Heine have shown repeatedly that even tiny disruptions to a relatively unimportant puzzle like "how a microwave works," can stimulate our brain's ability to spot new patterns and see new possibilities in other areas. For example, when your microwave unexpectedly chills food instead of heating it, it can inspire a revelation about your marriage or your job or even your political views.

What Proulx and Heine discovered is that a missing puzzle piece not only makes us more motivated to see new possibilities, it makes us more skilled at seeing new connections and possibilities. (Perhaps that's why periods of intense creativity occur so often during the most tumultuous periods of an artist's life?)

"There is a simpler way to inspire change..."

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EMPOWERING BUGLES—CONTINUED

This phenomenon is exactly what we saw in our field studies. Prior to the first round of voting on their peers' decisions, many managers said something like "I don't really see anything I can change. I'm just in finance," or "I'm out in the field, and that's more of a corporate change so..." In other words "I'm just going to keep doing what I've been doing."

But then after seeing the techie guy reduce data security or discovering that a plant manager deprioritized plant productivity improvements just to increase supply chain efficiency, the other managers in the group suddenly became aware of new possibilities for change in their own areas of work.

Over the next two rounds of experiments, almost all of the other managers in each group began making legitimate and creative change decisions. They saw new possibilities and started acting on them. Put simply, they were inspired to change.

That inspiration didn't come from big, hairy, audacious goals, lofty visions of the future, charismatic speeches, or demonstrations of their leaders' innate genius or passion. All that it required was an awareness of someone else's unexpected decision to cut back on an old thing in order to do a new

"Put simply, they were inspired to change."

"...something every manager in every situation is capable of doing."

thing. That is something every manager in every situation is capable of doing.

A decision to cancel football for a year is how one high school principal inspired a Texas town to get creative about saving its school. The decision to temporarily remove breakfast sandwiches from Starbucks stores is how Howard Schultz inspired employees to refocus on

coffee. A decision to kill the cutting edge "Newton" PDA in 1996 is how Steve Jobs inspired Apple's engineers to begin thinking differently on their way to one of the most innovative product development runs in history.

What this all means is that change agents don't have to be brilliant or charismatic in order to inspire change. If you can make a decision, you can inspire change.

Nick Tasler is CEO of Decision Pulse and the author of [Domino: The Simplest Way to Inspire Change](#) (Wiley, 2015).

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OP/ED—ASSISTANT CHIEF BOUTWELL

What Gives Our Goals Meaning?

After taking an oath to serve and protect the citizens of Valdosta, we set career goals. Our first goal was to become a firefighter. After accomplishing that goal we checked that off the list of many of the other goals that formulated in our minds. A common question that all supervisors should ask or plan to ask their personnel is, where do you want to be in five years? Whether or not the person is aware they are laying out their personal five year plan by identifying the steps or objectives to reach this goal they are developing their "Strategic Plan".

After identifying our goal, we need to ask ourselves more important questions. Why do we need to identify this goal? What is the meaning behind reaching this goal? For example, if your goal is to become a Company Officer, ask yourself why? First, you must know and understand the difference between the role and the position. Ensure yourself that it is the role and not just solely the position you set as your goal.

I sat on an interview panel years ago and listened to a firefighter candidate from another department explain how they wanted to learn to be a good firefighter so that they can help teach others. In my opinion, this candidate demonstrated the heart of a servant. There were many other acceptable reasons he could have given, but that was by far the most humble. So often, we hear so many times how people want to make a difference. But, do we truly know how to make a difference?

The fire service has evolved over the years. We now recognize internal customers, external customers and learn how to serve both interests. We develop elaborate plans for taking care of our mission. Do we remember the simple things? We touch someone's life every day we are on the job. It is our actions and attitude that determine if it will result into a positive or a negative experience. In the book, "When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough", Harold Kushner explains that knowing we have made a difference allows us to say that we have lived our life and it mattered.