

THE SECOND ALARM

BRINGING VALUABLE RESOURCES & NEWS
ONE ALARM AT A TIME

APRIL 2015

THE SECOND ALARM



VALDOSTA FIRE
DEPARTMENT

A Department Without Limits

Editor:
Sgt. S A Miller



BIRTHDAYS:

CHIEF FREDDIE BROOME 04/01

LT BENNIE KENNEDY 04/03

SGT CHRIS STAPLES 04/08

FF BRANDON MATHENY 04/08

REC STEPHEN FRIEND 04/14

SGT CHUCK JONES 04/20

REC VINCENT HOUSTON 04/23

LT RICKY WEEKS 04/27

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

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Last weekend, I attended the street naming ceremony for Mrs. Minnie Martin. Mrs. Martin sang one of her favorite songs titled "It's Not Easy Being Me." While singing the song Mrs. Martin asked everyone to listen to the words. While listening to the song, I started to think the exact same thing, "It's not easy being me, no one knows my struggles, no one knows what it's like being me." This month I decided to talk about struggles.

"We must never laugh at the struggle of another, even when it is something that we find to be easy and that we have not struggled with. Because we all have our own individual battles that we all need to work as hard at. Another's struggle might be easy for you, but stop to think about yours. Is your battle easy? Or was it? No, it was not. Well the other person's was not easy, either.

And I think this alone means we all need to give one another a beautiful kind of respect."
-C. Joy Bell

Upon accepting this job, I understood that my every move would be scrutinized. It is completely understandable. However, if you have not been through my struggles, dealing with our struggles is it fair to scrutinize? If you were the Chief of our department, do you honestly feel you wouldn't have any struggles? As I said from day one, "I'm a firefighter and will always be a firefighter," therefore, I'm familiar with the "Firehouse Lawyers" and "Station Chiefs." Trust me... I used to be one myself until I had to sit on the other side of the table. Now, I realize that it was easy for me to scrutinize my Chief, our Administration Staff, our department, our City Manager and even the Mayor, because I had no idea of their



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief struggles. You may not agree with every decision I make or those made by our City Leaders but at the end of the day, "we all need to give one another a beautiful kind of respect." Today, what might be my decision and struggles could easily be yours tomorrow.

HAPPENINGS AND GOINGS-ON

03Apr-1830-2130hrs, First Friday, downtown Valdosta

11Apr-0900-1300hrs, E-Cycling Event at Mathis City Auditorium
Bring your old, unused electronics to be disposed of properly

11Apr-1830-2030hrs, Dancing with the Valdosta Stars, VSU Stu-

dent Union Grand Ballroom Come out and support your Chief as he dances up donations for the Music Scholarship Alliance at Valdosta State University

21Apr-1000-1500hrs, Blood Drive at Station 1

24Apr-Recruit Class 012015

graduates from rookie school

If your church, club, or organization has a special event that they want the Valdosta Fire Department members to know about, please send that information to the editor by the 18th of each month.

ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Monica Haynes, Landscape and Grounds Supervisor with VSU Plant Operations, sends a big thank you to the Valdosta Fire Department for helping to clean pigeon excrement from the Sustella

Parking Deck. Our Training Division utilized this opportunity to help train the new recruits of class 012015 in parking deck and standpipe operations. So not only did our recruits have a chance to practice what could potentially be a very difficult scenario, they also helped VSU to remove pigeon poop without the use of harsh, possibly environmentally unfriendly chemicals.

Henry Hicks of Valdosta's Utilities Department sends a hearty thanks to Sgt. Marcus Haynes, FF Matt Courson, and FF Carlton Couch for waiting with his secretary, Debbie White, while she waited for OnStar to remotely unlock her vehicle. They also assisted her in identifying her

VIN number so that OnStar could verify her information.

A big thank you to the Valdosta Fire Department from H. Aaron Strickland, Executive Director of the Azalea Festival. He appreciates that we filled up the pools and provided the Fire Safety House and fire engine display. He also looks forward to working with us in the future.



Former Valdosta firefighter, Theotis Johnson, Jr., sends his thanks and appreciation to Lt. John Herpin, Sgt. Keith Neihanke, Sgt. Doug Bennett, and FF Matthew Davis (along with the rest of the Valdosta Fire Department) for helping him "grow from a hard head rookie to a pretty good firefighter" as well as "passing FLAMES".

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY



On 15 March, 2015, FF Chris and Eden Stevick, mother of Kylie Moore, were married at the Lodge in Moultrie, GA. Congratulations to Chris on his wedding and a hearty welcome to Eden and Kylie in joining the Valdosta Fire Department Family.

Welcome to FF/Recruit LaVal Harris, late to join Recruit Class 012015. (not pictured)

OP/ED -BC BRIAN BOUTWELL

How Do I Grow From Here?

As we continue to mature in our profession it is human nature to drift toward the things we consider our strengths. After all, it is the things that we excel in that make us the most comfortable. In a profession that has historical roots of bravado, it is difficult to break the cultural chain and venture into the things that challenge us the most. Fire Chief Moe Baxter once stated, "We must get out of the ruts we are most comfortable in to truly grow".

It is true that within a diverse organization with many different talents that we capitalize on the members' strengths. In fact, it makes us successful as an organization. But how much better can an organization be if members step out of their comfort zones and challenge themselves in other areas?

I am speaking from a training aspect. I challenge all members as individuals to evaluate yourselves in your profession. What are your strengths? Many members have strengths in Strategy and Tactics, Technical Res-

cue, Hazardous Materials, or Emergency Medical Incidents? This will be easy to identify because you obviously show signs of interested. You may find yourself casually reading articles or texts in specific areas of operation or looking for opportunities to obtain more training in a specific area.

After identifying your strengths, figure out what area within emergency services makes you uncomfortable. One of the subjects I previously mentioned may be the professional nemesis you avoid at all costs. This is the one we need to focus on. Seek an opportunity to attend training in this area. Approach it with an open mind and stay focused take advantage of this opportunity to grow. Seek assistance from a mentor or coworker that may have an interest in the thing that makes you the most uncomfortable. "Try to look at your weakness and convert it into your strength. That's success" (Zig Ziglar). Please let me know if I can be of any assistance and lets all continue to challenge ourselves.

EMPOWERING BUGLES—NOTES ON LEADERSHIP

What It's Like To Go Without Complaining For A Month

By Jessica Hullinger

For the month of February, Leah Shapiro had one goal: no complaining.

"I think I just wanted to be more self-aware and mindful of what I was putting out there," she says. Shapiro and more than 1,000 other people signed up for the Complaint Restraint project, established by Thierry Blancpain and Pieter Pelgrims. The goal? Creating a more positive life by eliminating negative statements.

"There's no secret sauce," the website says. "Simply stop complaining." But is it that easy? What's so bad about complaining, anyway?

Gripping comes naturally for us. During an average conversation, we lob complaints at each other about once a minute, according to research. There's a social reason for that. "Nothing unites people more strongly than a common dislike," says Trevor Blake, author of *Three Simple Steps*. "The easiest way to build friendship and communicate is through something negative."

Also, evolution primes us to focus on the negative for self-defense, says Jon Gordon, author of *The No Complaining Rule*. "The more we look at something that can hurt us and kill us, we are programmed to be on guard against that."

But all of that whining comes with a cost. When we complain, our brains release stress hormones that harm neural connections in areas used for problem solving and other cognitive functions. This also happens when we listen to someone else moan and groan. "It's as bad as secondhand smoke," Gordon says. "It's secondhand complaining." Just as smoking is banned in most offices, Blake says he's banned complaining among his team members. "I give them one chance, and if I catch them a second time, that's it for them."

That seems a little harsh, doesn't it? Swearing off something that comes naturally to us seems like a setup for failure. Indeed, Blancpain and Pelgrims, creators of Complaint Restraint, admit they fail their mission miserably every year. "Things you do habitually are really hard to give up," says Joanna Wolfe, a professor of English at Carnegie-Mellon University. "Have you ever tried to eliminate the 'you knows' and 'uh-huhs' from your speech? It is extremely difficult."

And sometimes we absolutely need to vent. It feels good, doesn't it? One study showed that bottling emotions could shorten your life by an average of two years.

The good news is this: There can be middle ground between going cold turkey and being a Negative Nancy. If you're serious about

complaining less, here are some realistic tips for success.

1. Start By Defining What A Complaint Is: If you point out that it's cold outside, is that a complaint? "No, that's an observation," Blake explains. "A complaint is, 'It's cold outside and I hate living in this place.'" Shapiro says she defines a complaint by the way it makes her feel: "I feel myself slouching and not breathing."

2. Track How Often You Complain And What About: Change starts with awareness. "You're absolutely shocked," says Blake. "After two or three hours of observing, it's in the hundreds."

3. Separate Yourself From Chronic Complainers: If you must lend an ear, try to respond with something positive rather than joining in on the rant session. "You've really gotta be quite brave and confident and have the courage not to need the good opinion of another person," says Blake. "You find over a period of time those people who complain constantly start to leave you alone because their brains are not getting that stimulus they're looking for."

4. Turn Complaints Into Solutions: This is called "positive complaining" or "effective complaining. As Wolfe says, "Don't sit around and admire the problem." Do something about it.

5. Use The "But-Positive" Technique: This tip comes from Gordon: "If you find yourself griping, add a 'but' and say something positive," he says. For example, "I don't like driving to work, but I'm thankful at least I can drive and I even have a job."

6. Change "Have To" To "Get To": "I have to pick up the kids" becomes "I get to pick up the kids." "You change a complaining voice to an appreciative heart," Gordon says. "You're gonna feel so much better the more you focus on the positive over time. At first, it's gonna be a little awkward, but the more you get used to it, it becomes your natural state."

At the end of February, Shapiro says the Complaint Restraint project was hard but worth it. "I slipped a lot," she says. "But I've had more examples this month of me being more positive and better things happening." She learned to deal with her negativity by going to hot yoga when she felt it rising inside her, and she kept a journal. She even saw improvements in productivity at work, finally tackling a project she'd been avoiding and whining about. "It was something I found so boring, and then I just cranked it out. And I just felt so good having accomplished it."

She's going to try to see the project through the rest of the year, hoping that, with time, "complaints will kinda melt away and won't be something I seek out for a security blanket."

Reprinted from:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3042951/how-to-be-a-success-at-everything/what-its-like-to-go-without-complaining-for-a-month>

RUMOR MILL—HAPPENINGS AND GOINGS-ON?

Matt Davis is receiving special treatment and will be promoted to a Lieutenant or Captain in the Training Division by the end of the year - False The department will continue to reiterate that our promotional process is a City Ordinance (No. 2014-18); therefore, the Fire Chief cannot change the promotional process without going before the Mayor/Council. Please review City Ordinance No. 2014-18 and Valdosta Fire Department SOG #104 for the promotional requirements for each rank.

Chief Boutwell is responsible for adding Matt Davis to the Training Division - False Chief Broome made the decision to temporarily assign Matt Davis to the Training Division. Chief Boutwell was notified on the same day as Captain Smith and Firefighter Davis.

Matt Davis is taking away a position from the Operations Division: kinda-sorta, depends on how you look at it. When the department was fully staffed A-shift had 32 personnel, B-shift had 31 personnel and C-shift

had 31 personnel. With the Battalion Chief promotions and temporarily assigning Matt Davis, each shift will have 30 personnel, which means all shifts are now equal and operating consistently.

Why was Matt Davis allowed to help out in training and no one else was allowed the opportunity? Matt Davis spent the last 2 years working as a Captain at Georgia Fire Academy training firefighters across the State of Georgia. In addition, with the exception of Chief Broome and

Boutwell, he is the only member in the department certified by the Fire Academy to teach the Fire Officer classes. After evaluating our training division and conducting a department's needs assessment, I made an executive decision that would address our current training needs. Although we have a succession matrix in place for anyone desiring to work in the Training Division, there is no one currently in the department that has the specialized training and certifications to meet the department's immediate training needs.

TRAINING CORNER

As the summer months approach our situational awareness towards heat related injuries and illnesses should rise just like the heat we are expected to operate and train in. Our body's natural ability to cool and regulate our core temperature will be hindered predominantly by two factors: PPE design characteristics and humidity.

In our line of business and our geographical location it is easily understood that each one of us will be affected by heat related issues. Good hydration, on and off, duty will help combat these occurrences. Guidelines for adequate intake of fluids suggest adult men intake 125 ounces of fluid per day and adult women intake 91 ounces of fluid per day. Water along with sport drinks tea and coffee can count towards these numbers. The unknown aspect of the job should encourage us to constantly hydrate. On days that you are off duty consider a higher intake of fluids to help prepare you for your shift day and the possible events.

As a quick refresher the three most common heat related medical issues have been listed to include signs and symptoms and a few treatment options.

Heat Cramps can be described as muscle spasms that usually occur during or after strenuous activity in a hot environment. Profuse sweating causes a loss of moisture and salt in the body. Low sodium levels in the muscle contribute to the cramping.

For the most part individuals that are experiencing heat cramps will be alert and sweaty, although some individuals may also show signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion. Treatment options for individuals with heat cramps are to relocate to a cool environment (passive cooling) and fluid replenishment with water or sport drink.

Heat Exhaustion occurs after being exposed to high tempera-

tures for a long period of time. The body's natural ability to cool itself is starting to fail due to the lack of fluids caused by heavy sweating. Signs that you or a member of your crew is experiencing heat exhaustion will be that you are no longer actively sweating. The skin will appear pale but still moist. At this point the body is barely able to keep up with the heat. Other signs can be a rapid, weak pulse with rapid breathing. Muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, weakness, and dizziness can also be symptoms of heat exhaustion. Individuals showing signs and symptoms should be moved to a cooler environment and should dress down as much as possible. Fluid replacement along with fanning to assist with passive cooling should begin. The individual should remain seated or lie down with their feet elevated. If available, consider providing oxygen and care by EMS. It is important to note that heat exhaustion can cause an altered mental status and is common in severe cases.

Heat Stroke is the most serious and life threatening of heat related illnesses. At this point the individual's body has lost the ability to cool itself and their core temperature rises to the point at which the body overheats. The skin will be slightly moist or dry and hot to the touch. The heart rate will be rapid. Individuals experiencing a heat stroke will most likely have an altered mental status and may even have convulsions. Aggressive cooling techniques should be used such as, ice packs and immersing in cool water to control the individual's body temperature. Oxygen and transport to the hospital should also be arranged for these individuals.

Reference

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>

Emergency Medical Responder / Christopher J. Baudour, J. David Bergeron; 9th Edition, 2012; Pearson Education, Inc.