



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **July 1, 2022**

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*"As we express our gratitude, we must  
never forget that the highest appreciation  
is not to utter words, but to live by them."*

John F. Kennedy

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## The Chief's Desk

I'm drafting this on Wednesday, June 29. In one respect, I've been trying to get to this all day, but have been sidetracked by other pressing matters. On the other hand, I've been avoiding writing this because there's a lot of emotion involved, especially this week.

I will be sending the draft to Kathy tomorrow, Thursday, for editing – she makes me look smart. As she is reworking my work, I'll be with Prescott Fire commemorating the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew. Nineteen men who got up in the morning, kissed their family's goodbye, and never made it home. We all know the hazards of our profession, but never think it will happen to us, or someone we know. Yet, here we are nine years later, commemorating one of the largest losses of life in United States Fire Service history.

As I write, I'm in communication with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office (YCSO), Prescott Valley Police Department (PVPD), and Prescott Fire regarding the honor procession escorting YCSO Sergeant Rick Lopez home to Prescott Valley. Sergeant Lopez was shot and killed on Tuesday, June 28, in Cordes Lakes. The route from I-17 to the Sunrise Funeral Home will be lined with well-wishers from our amazing community as well as fellow law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel. Our communities have never wavered in their support for our law enforcement partners. Living in the quad cities is clearly different than living in the big city in regards the support our offices have every day, not just when tragedy strikes.

I knew that Sergeant Lopez's son-in-law, Jace, works for CAFMA, but I did not know until I arrived at the hospital Tuesday, that his dad is a retiree from CYFD. His wife, Kym, is an active member of our community through the Prescott Valley Chamber of Commerce and Arizona's Hometown Radio Group. I met Kym at the Prescott Valley Days parade last year when she drove me in her convertible VW. She and Rick both share a love of classic cars.

During my visit with Jace and his family Tuesday night, they asked each other about the last call or text each had received from Rick. The conversation caused me to stop and think about the last text I sent to Jen, or the last conversation I had with Andy. What did I say? If those were the last words I was ever able to share with them, what memory did I leave?

We get out of bed every morning and head into work, never thinking that it could be our last day. Sometimes we leave a thought unsaid, or we say something flippant because that's just the mood we are in at the time. I mean really, we'll have a chance to clean it up later... right?

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### Upcoming Events:

July 4: Office Closed in Observance of Independence Day

July 5: Office open in observance of "it's a workday." Labor/Management - maybe

July 6: PT, FRI Program Planning, Western Fire Chiefs Association Legislative Committee meeting

July 7: AFDA Meeting, New Chiefs Seminar Meeting, Citizens Committee meeting

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### Board Meeting:

June 25: Administration  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## **How your brain copes with grief, and why it takes time to heal**

By: Berly McCoy

Holidays are never quite the same after someone we love dies. Even small aspects of a birthday or a Christmas celebration — an empty seat at the dinner table, one less gift to buy or make — can serve as jarring reminders of how our lives have been forever changed. Although these realizations are hard to face, clinical psychologist Mary-Frances O'Connor says we shouldn't avoid them or try to hide our feelings.

"Grief is a universal experience," she notes, "and when we can connect, it is better."

O'Connor, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Arizona, studies what happens in our brains when we experience grief. She says grieving is a form of learning — one that teaches us how to be in the world without someone we love in it. "The background is running all the time for people who are grieving, thinking about new habits and how they interact now."

Adjusting to the fact that we'll never again spend time with our loved ones can be painful. It takes time — and involves changes in the brain. "What we see in science is, if you have a grief experience and you have support so that you have a little bit of time to learn, and confidence from the people around you, that you will in fact adapt."

O'Connor's upcoming book, *The Grieving Brain*, explores what scientists know about how our minds grapple with the loss of a loved one.

[npr.org](http://npr.org)

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## **Lack of repairs forces Reedy Creek FD to answer EMS calls in SUVs**

By: Leila Merrill

SANFORD, Fla. — The president of the Reedy Creek Professional Firefighters Union says that the fire department whose future is in doubt because of a Florida law that would dissolve it has several vehicles out of service, WESH reported.

Jon Shirey said the vehicles' problems are affecting response times and crews' capabilities.

"On a normal day, we would have four fire engines and eight ambulances running all of the calls that serve the entire Disney property. Right now, we have only two of our fire engines actually in service, one tower truck, and then we have another crew that's running out of our heavy rescue which does not have firefighting equipment on there," Shirey said.

He said that EMS providers are responding to medical emergencies in SUVs, not ambulances.

"We've had multiple situations because of how poorly maintained our fleet of vehicles is, where an ambulance will break down en route to critical calls. We had a cardiac arrest call where the responding rescue broke down and then we had to send a separate rescue to go in and fill in for him. We had an incident where one of our own firefighters got injured on the job and had to be transported and the vehicle broke down en route to the hospital with him in it, so it's a major safety concern for us," Shirey said.

[firerescue1.com](http://firerescue1.com)

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## **Chief's Desk Continued**

On the way down that night, I was speaking with one of our company officers about getting to know our significant others all over again after becoming empty nesters. He said something during the conversation that became more and more relevant as the night wore on. I commented that his wife may get to know him again and decide he's just a pain in the ass to deal with – which is how we know him 😊 He replied that that was possible, but for now she still says she loves him when he leaves for work in the morning, and still says she loves him when he gets home.

Think about that for a moment. What do you say to your significant other or children when one of you leaves for work, school, sports, the store, or whatever? What do you say to them when you see them again? Any messages during the day via text or phone?

We've talked before about legacy in big picture terms, e.g. what legacy do you believe you're leaving when you separate from CAFMA. That's big picture, 30,000' view type stuff. When we zoom in and focus on right now, what message have you relayed to your loved ones? As we discuss in the Career Survival program, there is the body of work you did previously, and then there is what you're doing currently. It's that "right now" that becomes important when a loved one loses their life unexpectedly. It's true, family will have time to remember the good as the days pass, but on that day, at that time, when they look at their phone to read your last text message, or listen to your last voicemail one more time – what impression did you leave? Your words matter.

I hugged Jen a little tighter when I arrived home from the Valley Tuesday night, and I looked at the last message I'd sent her on my phone prior to Tuesday – fortunately it just said "a package should be arriving from PolyPerformance." Just kidding, I don't hide the purchases, but I certainly do not text about them. The message I had sent to Jen was "Hey sweetie, in the car headed home now, see you soon, I love you."

When a tragedy occurs, I remember to be more attentive for a while, and then I fall back into my same old routine. I know for me, I'm capable of better and need to be more deliberate in being better. Where are you? Now is a good time to reflect for a moment. Life is fleeting, so enjoy the ride and make sure your family and friends know how you feel. Avoid angry texts or voicemails; that's not what you want them to refer back to should the unthinkable happen.

As I said in my email Wednesday morning, words alone cannot express my gratitude for the efforts of the Phoenix Fire Department and IAFF Local 493. Their actions truly capture what it means to be an emergency services family. They were at the hospital to support Sergeant Lopez and his family before they ever knew that there was a Fire Service connection. To the Phoenix support group, emergency services means across the board, not just fire. I would also like to thank the Phoenix Police Department, and their Employee Assistance Unit. Absolutely awe inspiring!

This incident also highlights the importance of connecting with people. Phoenix Fire Chief Mike Duran sent me a text from his vacation to share information he received from his North Deputy regarding the shooting, and to let me know that they had people on the ground at the hospital. He followed up with who to contact for more information or to coordinate things for/with YCSO. Once I let them know that Jace was on his way and that he was family, they rallied to ensure he and his family had whatever they needed in the way of support. That included a Phoenix Captain going to Costco to pick up diapers for Jace's little one.

I've been in funeral processions before, but I've never witnessed what I saw as we left the hospital heading to the Medical Examiner's office, or what I saw as we neared the office downtown. It was moving to see so many uniformed law enforcement and fire personnel lining the streets, standing at attention. It was hard not to tear up as we drove through.

As I write this, I do not have any information regarding memorial plans. Clearly, the first line of business is to bring Sergeant Lopez back home to Prescott Valley. As more information becomes available in the coming days, I will ensure that it's shared with all of you. I know Shaun Jones is on top of this as well, so look for information either from me, or from Local 3066.

For now, our thoughts and prayers are with the Lopez family, as well as the YCSO family.

Every year, our thoughts and prayers this week in June are with the families of the 19 and the Prescott Fire Department. Though the family and friends of the 19 are *never* far from our thoughts, it is nice to share our remembrances with the world during this time. This year as we honor their memory, we will also grieve with YCSO and our entire emergency services family.

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