



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **October 28, 2022**

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“Gratitude and attitude are not challenges,  
they are choices.”

Robert Braathe

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DRAWN BY FIRE™

BY PAUL COMBS



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## The Chief's Desk

It's Friday morning, the day of my son's wedding. For those that don't know, Captain Eric Merrill will officiate – even though I still hold just a bit of resentment based on his officiating Kayleen and Nate's wedding. I mean, had he not done that, maybe Kayleen would still be here... We're at least allowing Nate back on CAFMA property now, so I'm softening a bit 😊 On a final note, congratulations to Nate and Kayleen on the birth of their daughter!

This will be the first time we've had someone other than my uncle, a pastor, officiate a wedding for someone in our family. No pressure, Eric... Personally, I think it's awesome that Eric will be officiating! Andy and Beca have been together for over six years now and are really focused on taking advantage of saving on car insurance as a married couple. Practical – I like it!

For those that know Sedona, they're getting married at the end of Broken Arrow Trail at a place called Chicken Point. Seems like a good name for a wedding venue – very redneck... This is why I was so focused on finishing my Jeep build, okay, almost finishing – it's drivable. Mostly.

It's hard to believe that my youngest is getting married. He has a great job, lives in the Valley, and seems to be doing very well with adulting.

It does make you, or at least me, think a bit. I've been in emergency services now for 29 years – which has flown by. After I started with the fire department in 1995, Jen and I decided it was time to have our second child. Our daughter, Ashley, was four so it seemed like good spacing.

The kids grew up coming to the fire station for visits and hanging out for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas dinner when I had to work. While neither ended up following in my footsteps, I think they enjoyed growing up with their dad working for the fire department. It certainly had its perks. They were able to climb around the engines and ambulances, I could occasionally grab the Sparky Costume and wear it for Halloween, and they had access to one of the best sledding hills in the area behind Station 3 where I was a Captain. Ask Jen about that sledding hill sometime and her fractured butt "tail bone" – it's not funny and I'm definitely not laughing 😊

It seems like the years have passed quickly. I've gone from being a brand-new firefighter to a Fire Chief. Andy is getting married, and Ashley has two beautiful daughters that are nine and seven. Fortunately, Jen was sitting not far from me as I drafted this, so she was able to provide the girls' ages. Honestly, I can't remember how old my own kids are half the time, or even how looooooong I've been married. In my defense, each of those numbers is over 20 which exceeds my ability to count using my fingers and toes. **Cont. Page 4**

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### Upcoming Events:

Oct 31: CEOP AAR, Conference  
Call with Strategic Planning  
Consultant, Meet with Chief  
Durre, Meet with Debbie  
Ritterbush  
Nov 1: Labor/Management  
Nov 2: Record Podcast, Article  
9 Rules Committee  
Nov 3: AFDA meeting, Joint  
prevention meeting with PFD

### Board Meeting:

Nov 28: Administration  
CVFD – 1600-1630  
CYFD – 1630-1700  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## **How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain**

By: Joshua Brown and Joel Wong

With the rise of managed health care, which emphasizes cost-efficiency and brevity, mental health professionals have had to confront this burning question: How can they help clients derive the greatest possible benefit from treatment in the shortest amount of time?

Recent evidence suggests that a promising approach is to complement psychological counseling with additional activities that are not too taxing for clients but yield high results. In our own research, we have zeroed in on one such activity: the practice of [gratitude](#). Indeed, [many studies](#) over the past decade have found that people who consciously count their blessings tend to be happier and less depressed.

The problem is that most research studies on gratitude have been conducted with well-functioning people. Is gratitude beneficial for people who struggle with mental health concerns? And, if so, how?

We set out to address these questions in a recent research study involving nearly 300 adults, mostly college students who were seeking mental health counseling at a university. We recruited these participants just before they began their first session of counseling, and, on average, they reported clinically low levels of mental health at the time. The majority of people seeking counseling services at this university in general struggled with issues related to depression and anxiety.

We randomly assigned our study participants into three groups. Although all three groups received counseling services, the first group was also instructed to write one letter of gratitude to another person each week for three weeks, whereas the second group was asked to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings about negative experiences. The third group did not do any writing activity.

[greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)

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## **Worcester firefighter diagnosed with cancer following free screening**

By: Kiernan Dunlop

WORCESTER, Mass. — Worcester firefighter Ryan Kelley had a scab on his temple for two years that never really healed.

He hadn't done anything about it, when his whole truck decided to attend a free cancer screening held by DetecTogether and UMass Memorial Health at Polar Park last year.

When doctors from UMass saw the scab, they told Kelley it looked like basal cell skin cancer. He worked with them to schedule a biopsy for the next morning.

The biopsy revealed it was a tumor and it was skin cancer.

They scheduled the surgery to remove the tumor a month later and now Kelly is cancer-free and goes for cancer screenings every six months.

Had they not had the free screening, Kelley said, he would probably still have a tumor.

Kelley was at Polar Park Tuesday for the second cancer screening event DetecTogether and UMass Memorial, along with UMass Chan Medical School, were putting on for firefighters.

In the US, people have a 40% chance of being diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, for firefighters that risk goes up 9%, according to Tricia Scannell Laursen, president and CEO of DetecTogether.

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## **Chief's Desk Continued**

While Andy is nearing his third full year in his career field, I'm looking at the last eight years of mine. Weird... How did this happen?? I'd say I don't feel old but given the aches and pains I live with every day, that'd be a lie; however, I'm certainly not mature enough to be old. After two years, it's nice to be able to get out of bed in the morning and stand up with only minor surgical site pain – win!

I ended up in Phoenix Tuesday and Wednesday this week to meet with Scottsdale FD, Mesa FD, and then present at the Battalion Chiefs Academy. It still seems surreal that I have the opportunity to present at a variety of venues and to a variety of audiences around the state and country. As I write this, I'm supposed to be preparing to leave for Andy's wedding, but rather than hitting the gym and packing, I'm drafting this while on a National Pediatric Symposium via Zoom. Somehow, I was recruited to present on the topic of Triage and Transport of Pediatric Patients after a massive earthquake in Southern California.

How am I presenting on this topic? I happen to sit on the Coyote Crisis Collaborative Board of Directors thanks to Chief Tom Shannon. We were discussing the Significant Event Readiness Forum (SERF), which will feature discussion regarding the potential for a massive earthquake hitting California, causing significant damage to infrastructure, including several pediatric hospitals. I asked several questions and pointed out some challenges that should be considered. Next thing I know, I'm researching and putting together a presentation regarding the evacuation of hundreds of pediatric patients from California to a variety of locales to the east.

There are days that I have to remind myself that my life and career is not a dream. How I was blessed with such an amazing family and so many opportunities within the Fire Service is beyond me. The only explanation I can come up with actually comes from a resident at Granite Gate Senior Living.

I was asked to present my life story to a group of residents at the facility several years ago. When I was done sharing how I've accidentally stumbled through life, one of the residents asked if I knew why I've been able to accomplish what I have to this point. I don't remember what I said exactly, but something along the lines of dumb luck. She responded that based on my story, I am where I am today because I'd never given up. No matter the challenges I've faced, even when the challenges were created for me by

me, I simply kept pushing forward. Her statement struck me because I had never thought of my life that way. Typically, when I look back on where I've been, I focus more on the stupid things that I've done – some of them were a lot of fun, others not so much.

So, as I sit here waiting for my turn to speak and contemplating Andy's wedding, I'm reminded of where I've been, where I am today, and the many blessings I have in my life. I know it's not Thanksgiving, but I'm thankful for my life, my family, my friends, my profession, and the many opportunities I've been afforded in my life. Quiet honestly, we could all spend a little more time being thankful each day.

Considering the loss of our friend and brother Zach, I think it's good to reflect on the many blessings in our lives. If we look around and find that we could do or be better, then we need to make the necessary changes. To be cliché, it's an attitude of gratitude. I'm feeling that gratitude today.

As an aside, based on the presenters and participants thus far in this Pediatric Symposium, it's clear that I'm only here to offer some level of comic relief – not expertise. Now that I understand my role, I feel a lot more comfortable going into my presentation. I mean, I think the idea of commandeering a Disney cruise ship for the non-critical ambulatory pediatric patients is brilliant 😊

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