



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **June 30, 2023**

This Edition:

The Chief's DeskPage 2
7 habits of successful firefighters: A humorist's
viewPage 3
Crisis communications: Building the public trust
before, during and after an incidentPage 3

**"Nothing that grieves us can be called
little; by the external laws of proportion a
child's loss of a doll and a king's loss of a
crown are events of the same size."**

Mark Twain

[The CAFMA Connect YouTube Channel](#) – Like, Subscribe, Watch, and Learn



The Chief's Desk

It's hard to find the words this morning. I hate to use the word "anniversary" because that's normally associated with a celebration of happy times. I'll go with the term the families use – it's the tenth-year remembrance.

There are a lot of events scheduled today starting with a private ceremony for the family and local fire service this morning. This afternoon will be the public commemoration starting at 1500 at the courthouse. The goal of the day is to honor, and celebrate, the memory of the 19 as well as honor their families, the Prescott Fire Department, and the community.

This evening is an event at Founding Fathers Collective. The evening event is more of a union focused gathering with live music and an opportunity to fellowship with our local folks and those who came in from around the state and country.

There are people among us who struggle with the memory of the events that day as well as the weeks and months that followed. Please don't struggle silently or alone. Debbie Ritterbush and her team are in place along with our local peer support teams to assist. Additionally, the union has asked Kerry Ramella to come up with some of the valley support teams to add additional capacity to our mental and behavioral health coverage.

I was not here during the Yarnell Fire. My first interview with Chino Valley was two weeks after the tragedy, and I started with Chino almost two months to the day after the event. To that end, I didn't have personal relationships with the Granite Mountain Hotshot members, nor did I have to participate in burying 19 of my fellow firefighters. Those relationships, and the unfortunate task of coordinating family needs and funerals fell to many of you. I can only imagine the tremendous strength and courage each of you had to muster to make it through an unimaginable situation.

My first introduction to the aftermath was when I met then Captain Danny Parker. Talk about things that you don't learn in chief's school. I've always appreciated that Danny trusted me enough to share his story and allow me to grieve with him as he tried to find his way after losing Wade. At the same time, he was trying to navigate what his career in the Fire Service may look like going forward. Ultimately, he came to the conclusion that retiring was his best option.

Many of the newer folks may not know that our standard retirement procedures started as a surprise for Danny. I remember pulling up to Station 63 with him and seeing the Honor Guard as well as our personnel standing at attention for our first retirement flag raise. He was, in a word, moved by what he saw. **Cont. Page 4**

Upcoming Events:

July 3 – Office is open
July 4 – Office is closed in observance of July 4th
July 5 – Meet with Town and Prevention Regarding an enforcement issue, FRI Program Planning, Prep for AFCA Presentation
July 6 – AFDA Meeting, Ambulance Prep

Board Meeting:

Board Meeting: July 24
CAFMA – 1700-1830

7 habits of successful firefighters: A humorist's view

By: Will Wyatt

That headline sounds like it could pass for a book title. Nah, no one would ever go for it.

Naming rights aside, I've come up with a list of seven habits to emulate for those hoping to be successful firefighters, even if my list is from a slightly skewed angle.

7. BE A PART OF THE TEAM

Be there when the chow bell rings and not only when the chow bell rings. Confusing? I'll elaborate.

Even if you are eating something other than what the group is, you can still eat with everybody else. I've worked with lots of people who go through diet phases, but they still eat their caveman, African Serengeti grazing or moon rock meal with us.

And if you are eating an ancient grain and squid ink soup or slopping seconds from the group lasagna dish, clean up after yourself and help with the clean up tasks. Nobody has any use for the "Oh I didn't know we were cleaning up" guy. This guy can always magically show up just as we put up the truck washing brushes and wet towels.

A lot of places clean up at 9 p.m., you know, the kitchen and dayroom. Our hero will mysteriously show up as we finish and ask, "Are we cleaning up early tonight?"

No, we clean up at 21:00 every night. Are you on Rocky Mountain time or something? Did we set the clocks back this weekend?

6. KNOW THE JOB

[firechief](#)

Crisis communications: Building the public trust before, during and after an incident

By: Mark Brady

The ability to effectively manage the crisis is key to not only a successful conclusion but also bolstering the public's trust.

While such trust-building is key, a public safety agency's ability to communicate with their community starts well before a crisis occurs. Building trust and credibility is vital during our blue-sky days so that when a crisis happens, we become the community's credible and go-to source for important information. To quote Joe Farago, a fellow public information instructor, "The time to start building a house is not in the middle of a hurricane."

Public safety agencies share articles, images and safety messages daily, mostly commonly via social media, to engage members of our community and increase trust with our agency. The more trust and credibility you can build daily, the better your crisis communications will be in reaching more people in less time when it counts.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Most agencies have a public information officer (PIO) or designee responsible for, among other tasks, communicating with the public and media every day and during times of crisis. Some agencies will designate the PIO role as a secondary responsibility of another department officer or staff member. This dual role can be very effective except when a crisis or major incident occurs, and the PIO function becomes neglected or delayed for a period of time.

We have many tools available to accomplish this massive responsibility of getting the right information to the right people at the right time so the people can make informed decisions.

Social media plays a much larger role than it did 15 years ago, and is still usually our quickest and most efficient way of alerting followers, the community, of important information.

Many agencies have a **system** (e.g., Everbridge or similar) that members of the community can opt into in order to receive emails, text messages, phone calls with important messaging from public safety or elected officials.

[firechief](#)

The Chief's Desk Cont.

One of my first interactions at Central Yavapai after we started the Joint Management Agreement was with our attorney. Once I was officially the fire chief, he advised me of the lawsuits, gave me the background, and told me I couldn't speak with anyone about the legal proceedings other than counsel, Chief Todd Abel, and our Board. Again, not something you learn in chief's school.

For the next couple of years, I had the distinct honor to get to know Todd very well as a fire officer, and more importantly as a person. We spent countless hours talking about life, loss, and next chapters. While a challenging time, I learned a lot from Todd's strength of mind and character. I'm a better person today for having spent that time with him.

Since then, Todd has channeled what he learned that day, as well as the months and years that followed, into a tremendous presentation he titles *Leading Beyond the Slide Show*. He's been able to share his message at the AFCA Battalion Chiefs Academy and several other training programs around the state. He'll be one of our panelists at the Chief Executive Office Program in October discussing the challenges of leading through loss.

For whatever reason, the ten-year mark feels different than other years for many people. Some find it a more difficult time, while some have been able to turn tragedy into service, e.g., research regarding safety equipment, policies, etc.

Maybe this is a good time for you to take stock of where you've been since June 30, 2013, where you are today, and where you want to be on June 30, 2024. If you're struggling, we have resources available to help. If you've been able to turn the corner and convert tragedy into something productive, that's awesome! Please be there to support your brothers and sisters.

Tonight, Friday, June 30, 2023, is going to be an amazing event at Founding Fathers and a good time to support one another, have some fun, reflect, and just chill. Please do me, you, your family, and our organizations a favor – make good decisions. Use Uber, Lyft, a taxi, or have a designated driver. Don't add to the trauma of the day by getting yourself in trouble. Please watch out for one another. Laugh, hug, cry, talk, whatever it is, but be present.

This is a somewhat long weekend with thousands of people in town for today's events, the rodeo, the rodeo parade, hose cart races, and July 4th. Traffic will likely be horrible, and call volume will likely increase. Be on your game, stay situationally aware, and stay safe.

Senior Staff will be at the different events throughout the weekend, and we look forward to hanging out with you and your families. I know several of us will be at the hose cart races and picnic on Sunday. I'll be stopping by Founding Fathers Friday night for a bit to say hi and visit – I also need to thank my friend Grant Quezada for all he's done to support our fire family and community this weekend!

Stay strong, stay together, stay united.
