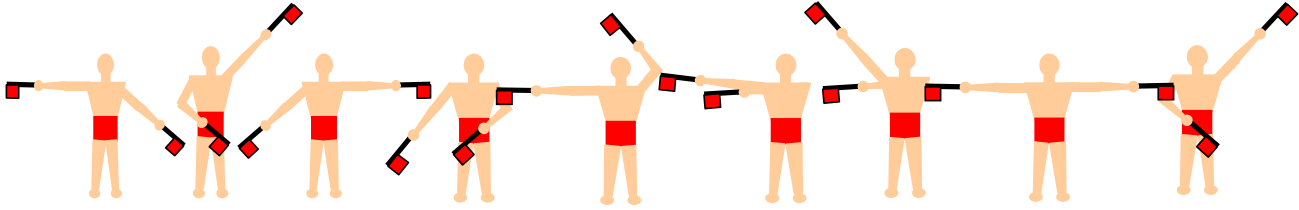


Ocean City Beach Patrol



Edition 48

Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2009-10



Over Eighty Years
of Saving Lives.

Maintain Your Role
in this Fantastic
Tradition!

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Message From the Captain

You Make the Difference

I have been interviewed more times and by more reporters than I could even begin to count. Each reporter is looking for a slightly different angle to their story but more often than not there are some basic questions that are repeated in some similar form. One question that has come up more often in recent years as I have moved closer to 40 years of service with the Patrol is some form of “Why do you keep doing it, what keeps you coming back?” The answer is very simple; I take great pride and pleasure in the people who make up the patrol and the services they perform on a daily basis. This is a change from what kept me coming back when I sat a stand.

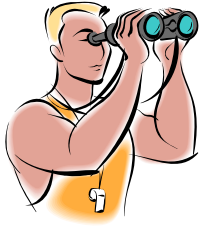
For those of you who have sat the stand and saved lives, you will clearly understand. While sitting a stand I liked the sense of significance and the feeling of accomplishment knowing I had saved a life or made a difference for someone or their family. It felt great! However, in my current role, I do not get involved very often with direct victim intervention. What I do get to experience is watching the organization work. From recruiting and testing to training and finally to the day-to-day operations on the beach, it is like watching a great symphony with each person playing their individual part perfectly.

Like a proud parent I get to hear how professional you are everyday and I often get to observe great teamwork. Like a parent, I also am excited by what our family members accomplish away from the Patrol such as awards, honors, special recognition, careers that give back, marriages and families. All of which, are to be celebrated. I also have the pleasure of receiving about a hundred 'atta boys (thank you messages) each season. But what it all comes down to, is that you are doing your job professionally and constantly going beyond expectations. Joe Kroart, owner of Ocean Gallery at 2nd street, took the time not only to notice the actions of Lucas Kationa picking up trash on his beach on his time off, but Joe also took the time to write and tell me how impressed he was. When Debi, the mother of Reno the little boy who was saved from a sand collapse this summer, called to update me on how wonderfully he was doing, it gave me goose bumps. These, and all the many others, make me so proud to be a part of an incredible organization that has such significance in the lives of so many.

Not only do I realize how extraordinary each of you are, but I also realize the incredible impact that each of us has on the thousands of people we come in contact with each week. As you walk out of your house each morning, wearing the uniform that you have earned the right to wear, people you are not even aware of notice you.

What it all comes down to is this: you never know the lasting impact you may have on another person whose path you intersect, whether for a moment or for a lifetime. Therefore, no matter what you do, do it as though someone whom you care about is watching and you want to make them proud. It's never the wrong time to do the “Right Thing”, and since you only have one chance to make a “First Impression”, always find a way to exceed expectations!





Ocean City Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Association

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

This past summer was a very successful year for the high numbers of participants in the various components of the OCBPSRA. The certifications that are obtained through completion of the OCBPSRA requirements are required in order to be eligible for a training position or promotion. All training, practice and skills demonstrations are done during an SRT's scheduled time off. Additionally it is your responsibility to notify the Beach Patrol of any requirements that you complete that are not sponsored by the Beach Patrol (Boating Safety, EMT, ARC lifeguard, Instructor certificates, etc) and give the secretary a copy of your proof of certification. Remember to check your training record for accuracy and let Captain Arbin know if you feel that your OCBPSRA records are not reflective of the items you have completed.

An Experienced and Dedicated OCBP Staff

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

This past summer several people reached a milestone in their employment with the Beach Patrol. It is a true testament to the quality of our organization and those who have dedicated themselves to our mission that we have more than a third of our employees with 5 or more years experience continuing to return year after year to a seasonal job. When you also consider the fact that 90% of our employees must relocate each summer to work for us, this makes the statistics even more impressive. The following is a list of employees with 10 or more years of experience. Congratulations and thanks for your service!

Jeff Brabitz 10	Dave Haight 15
Jason Konyar 10	Colby Kauffman 16
Ryan Cowder 11	Ed Fisher 18
Jake Foy 11	Marc Bouloucon 19
Paul Mullan 11	Rick Cawthern 20
Mark Muller 11	Brent Weingard 20
Dustin Stokes 11	Wes Smith 21
Debi Tyler 11	Mike Stone 25
Nick Thompson 12	Tim Uebel 26
Jamie Falcon 13	Ward Kovacs 27
Mat Postell 13	Skip Lee 27
Kevin Reed 13	Dave Griffith 30
Josh Wasilewski 13	Butch Arbin 37
Mike Bangert 14	

Maintaining a Quality Organization Begins with You

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

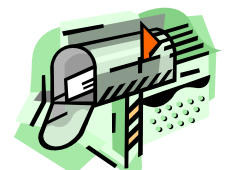
I believe that the most important asset of a superior and healthy organization is its personnel. Therefore, the most important function of any organization should be the ongoing

development of its employees. In keeping with this belief we use supervision and ongoing formative evaluation to monitor the progress of our personnel. Formative evaluation is used to inform and provide feedback and action steps to become a more effective employee and to assist the employee with advancing within the organization. Following the conclusion of each season and after all formative evaluations have been completed a summative evaluation is compiled. This is, as the name implies, a summary of the employee's performance over the time of employment for the current season. It pulls together all available information including evaluations, employee incident reports, employee commendations, starting and ending dates, time off and reliability data. Once this information has been assembled, a review panel made up of all the current sergeants (this year all 12 met on October 17th in OC) reviews individual performance and, as a group, recommends a future status for the employee. The lieutenants review all sergeant recommendations and a final recommendation is forwarded to the Captain. The final disposition of each employee's status for future employment and promotion within the Beach Patrol organization rests firmly with the Captain. All employees who are determined to be re-employable will receive an official letter of invitation for re-employment from the Captain shortly after April 1st along with the spring edition of the Semaphore Newsletter. Prior to the official hard copy of a job offer, I will be sending a preliminary E-mail during February, with specific instructions to be returned so that we can begin planning. With the quality of the individuals we continually attract this accounts for approximately 95% of all employees who completed the previous season.

However, if you do not receive notice that you are being recommended for re-hire, it remains solely your responsibility to contact Captain Arbin ASAP. Although, I know everyone works hard to get the Beach Patrol job, it is even more important to perform in a manner that shows you want to keep your position. Even seemingly minor infractions such as missing a meeting, being 3 minutes late, not shaving, forgetting equipment, when repeated, have resulted in some of our best SRTs not getting their positions back.

At a time when individual accountability seems to be a thing of the past and employee performance is not held to a high standard, I can assure you that your job and the service you provide are far too important to allow us to compromise our mission by hiring anything less than stellar employees. This is why the Beach Patrol takes the evaluation process so seriously and strives for greatness as an organization by holding every employee to the highest standards of the Beach Patrol.

Note: Remember to keep the Beach Patrol informed of any changes in address, both E-Mail and mailing. It would be unfortunate to have your position given to someone else because we do not know you are planning to return!



Budget Update

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

Although you may be seeing in the news that there have been some encouraging trends in the economy to indicate that things are improving, this trend is not immediately reflected in the finances of the Town of Ocean City. With such a great portion of the revenue that the Town of Ocean City uses to operate coming from real-estate assessments that are only updated every three years, it will be a few more years before there will be any increase in individual department budgets. As a result, as I am preparing the Beach Patrol portion of the budget (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011) I will be attempting to contain the future budget to current levels. The impact to you is that you will be returning for the 2010 season earning the same salary that you earned in 2009, unless you have a change in position (ACC, CC, etc). However, I can assure you that as soon as it looks like it is appropriate to ask for an increase in salary or the reinstatement of steps, I will pursue both of these for our employees. Until the time comes when revenues begin to increase we just need to maintain the highest level of professionalism and do everything in our power to win every tourist dollar for Ocean City, Maryland. Just keep doing what you always have!

Welcome rookie class of 2010

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

I want to again welcome you into the Beach Patrol family and hope that this is just the beginning of a lifetime of wonderful Ocean City memories. Although you have taken the first and most important step toward a career with the Ocean City Beach Patrol when you successfully completed the pre-employment physical skills test, this is the beginning of the adventure and not the end. Passing the “test” is an accomplishment to be proud of, but now the real work begins for both you and the Patrol. Whether you were offered an appointment to Surf Rescue Academy or placed on a waiting list, your responsibility is to be fully prepared and ready for the rigors of academy. We have the responsibility of turning you into a Surf Rescue Technician and you have the responsibility of arriving in the spring ready to take on the challenges of Surf Rescue Academy. We will provide you with the most comprehensive open water surf rescue training being taught by the best instructors available anywhere. To be successful you must prepare both personally and physically. To prepare physically you must continue to work on maintaining and improving your physical conditioning and specific skills. Although we talked about where you needed to improve during your final interview you should take time to look at our training web resources www.ococean.com/ocbp and contact Lieutenant Wes Smith Phd, drw@email.com our director of training and professor at University of Miami. To prepare personally you need to finalize all of your living arrangements as soon as possible. You may contact current members of the patrol through Facebook or e-mail me ocbp@ococean.com and I will put you in contact with resources to find housing. Just remember... this is the beginning of the greatest adventure of your life.

Testing and Recruiting

Testing and Recruiting

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

Beginning in the early 1980's it became apparent that waiting until May and June of each season to begin recruiting and testing for that summer was no longer going to produce enough personnel to fill all of the positions for each summer. Our first response to this problem was to hold an off-site test during the winter, shortly followed by the addition of late summer testing for the following season. As the need indicated we eventually held up to 6 off-site tests and at one point were holding 12 tests in Ocean City. In addition to these additional testing opportunities Skip Lee and I developed a long-range recruiting and retention plan to fill all needed positions for each season. One of the primary goals of that plan was to have all positions filled prior to the start of our season and we saw continual progress toward meeting that goal. Preliminary results from this past summer's end-of-season testing seems to indicate that we will not need to conduct any off-site testing for the first time since we instituted the practice in the 1980s.

The 2009 end-of-season Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluations for the upcoming 2010 season attracted 73 candidates, with 41 of those having passed all aspects of the evaluation. Considering that this past season we only hired a total of 34 rookies, we do not feel the need to hold any additional testing at this time. Once we hear back from SRTs who receive an “A” rating we will have a more accurate assessment of our staffing needs. If we find that we need additional recruits we can hold the scheduled May or June testing, allowing those who are successful to enter a Surf Rescue Academy for the 2010 season.

Therefore, for the first time in over 30 years we may have already hired all the SRTs we need. Unfortunately, this means that those individuals who typically begin contacting us in the late winter and spring with hopes of securing a position as an SRT will not have an opportunity for the upcoming season. Which means that you will have to tell your recruits to keep checking our website and to stay in touch for any changes to our testing schedule. Thanks for all you have done in helping us to realize our recruiting goals!

Availability as Important as Ability

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

Yes, you read it correctly! Or I could have said “Availability – The final phase of the Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluation”. No matter how you say it the principle is the same. Once we make sure that all candidates are able to perform our physical skills requirements, then we need to determine how late into our season they are available on a full-time basis. Although it is great to have the best swimmers and runners on the Patrol, it really is of no use if when a rescue is needed, the person is sitting in a Calculus class in Ohio. On the

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Featured City Department: The Ocean City Police Department

Submitted by Lt. Ward Kovacs

The Ocean City Beach Patrol has been saving lives for a long time. 2009 marked our 80th season protecting those who visit our beaches. Yet, our group is relatively new compared to some of the other agencies in town. Those charged with protecting residents and visitors from fire and other hazards, the fire company, have been organized since 1905 and celebrated their 100th anniversary just a few years ago. Yet, even the fire department is a few years younger than another agency charged with protecting the public; the Ocean City Police Department. The first Ocean City police officer was hired in 1898. Two more officers were hired in 1900, forming a police force for the first time in Ocean City. From its humble beginnings, the Police Department has grown along with the population and size of Ocean City. The Department employs roughly 100 officers year-round, and swells its ranks to almost double that number for the summer season, making their numbers very close to those of the Beach Patrol. Mike Levy serves as the Public Information Officer with the department, and spent some time telling me about the OCPD and all of its different functions. (Mike also serves as father to OCBP SRT Dillon Levy). A few minutes with him made it clear that the Beach Patrol and the Police Department have a lot more in common than the numbers we employ in the summer.

The Police Department stresses to their employees the same message that we hear from Captain Arbin all the time. "Ocean City is in competition for tourist dollars. It is our job to make sure that the visitors to our town are kept safe, and that they feel protected and welcomed here." This task falls largely on members of the Patrol Division. These are the officers that we see most in the course of our work, and that most often interact with residents and visitors. The officers in patrol vehicles and the Bike Patrol make up the biggest part of this division, and are the ones who respond to our calls for help with lost and found children, thefts on the beach and other matters. Members of the Patrol Division also make up the K-9 and Traffic Safety Units, Honor Guard, the Mounted Unit and the Quick Response Team. The QRT is the group with specialized training, equipment and tactics used in barricade situations, hostage incidents or other unusual events that require their specialized skills. This unit also has negotiators who are trained to defuse difficult situations. One of the divisions with which we most often interact, Animal Control, also falls under Patrol. I was surprised to hear about the number of raccoons, cats and possums they chase around town, in addition to all of the gulls, loons, oystercatchers, seals, bats, muskrats, snakes, dolphins, turtles and deer that we have called them to collect over the years.

The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is where you will find the detectives who handle major crimes, from homicides to narcotics. They monitor crime trends and work on the cases that cannot be solved quickly in the field. They have also made the time in recent years to recover stolen Beach Patrol equipment that was found for sale on Ebay, and to convince a photographer that it was not a good idea to keep money he collected from members of the Beach Patrol without delivering the pictures for which he had already been paid thousands of dollars.

The easiest way to describe the Services Division and the Administrative Division, is that they do all of the things that Beach Patrol officers and Crew Chiefs do off of the beach and behind the scenes. Services Division personnel work to make sure that vehicles are kept in good working order, proper uniforms are issued, and buildings are maintained. They also staff a Drug Lab, and a Property and Evidence Section.

The Administration Division performs tasks for the OCPD that are usually coordinated by Lieutenants and the Captain for the Beach Patrol. They oversee recruiting and training, handle Human Resources issues and budget preparation among other things. The Office of the Chief of Police provides the support services needed by the Chief as she fills her role representing the department to the city leaders and other agencies. Mike Levy's job as Public Information Officer also falls under Administration. In many ways he provides the equivalent of our Beach Safety Presentations for the Police Department. He often appears in local media delivering safety tips for every season, whether it involves pedestrian safety during the summer months, or tips to help people avoid becoming targets of criminals around the Christmas holidays.

As the Beach Patrol and Police Departments have shared similar growth in size over the years, the relationship between our agencies has also grown. In recent decades, there has been a concerted effort by both leadership staffs to make that relationship stronger than it has ever been. Chief DiPino and Captain Arbin understand how both agencies and the public benefit when that relationship is fostered on both sides. When someone disobeys our SBF's as they work to keep surfers and swimmers safe, the police respond quickly to restore order, and the beach patrons feel safe and protected. And, we have all seen the look on a parent's face when a Beach Patrol vehicle carrying a lost child approaches a police officer who is standing by with the child's parents. Through our cooperated efforts, we reunite thousands of separated family members every year. Those families feel protected and safe here. Those are families who will probably return to Ocean City. Working together, we accomplish the shared goals of the Beach Patrol and the Ocean City Police Department.

Captain's Note: Although the relationship between our departments is better than it has ever been, for me personally there have been relationships that have meant a lot to me and helped me in my roles with the Beach Patrol for many years. Always a good friend and someone who helped the Beach Patrol with communications as we began using a radio system and providing equipment and support for our vehicle fleet is Pep Pepper. Pep has actually retired from the OCPD but is still employed as a civilian because of his expertise in many support areas. Another individual who has taught me about public relations and how to deal with the press is Jay Hancock. Jay is probably the best known former police officer since he was elected as a City Councilman and attended many of our events in recent years. My friendship with these two men goes back to the late 1970's and their benefit to me and the Beach Patrol has been invaluable. Although, I have not known the next two individuals as long, their contributions over the last 15 years have strengthened and solidified the relationship between our departments. When Mike Levy was assigned as acting supervisor for the

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