

Current Staff News



HUNTER SMITH

Hunter Smith was born on May 1st. 7lbs 4oz and 20 inches long. Its amazing how much you can open your heart when your child is born. Within seconds of holding this little guy in our arms and him entering this world, he became the most important person in our world. It was instant. Every day he grows a little bit more and exponentially in our hearts.



Venus and I have a very fortunate situation, we were able to buy the place next door for her mother and in turn, Hunter will have his grandma as a nanny. We also have my mother nearby and her being able to see her grandson has clearly extended years on her life and has given her an added optimism she deserves being bedridden at such a young age.

(Captain's Note: Those of us who know Wes' Mom know how very proud she is of all Wes has accomplished but what many do not know is that Wes is one of the most dedicated sons I have ever met. That is why in recent years Wes has needed to alter his availability to be close to his mom where as in the past she was healthy enough for him to move her to OC for the summer. Remember her tent on the beach watching Veteran recert day after day and loving the interaction she had with many of you. So as you think of her say a prayer for her health).

Having Hunter enter my life has made me think of how big an impact the beach patrol really makes. When the Captain says we make a difference, that difference has a tremendous rippling effect. When we save a life, the consequences go far beyond that person. He or she is a son or daughter, or may be a parent who may have a son or daughter. The rescue which we have been trained to handle as merely routine, reverberates significantly in the lives of those affiliated with the victim, to an extent few of us realize. If every year you're on the beach patrol you perform 50 rescues, and 10% of those are life or death, by conservative estimation, you've altered the future of 5 families. If you guard for 10 years, it's safe to say that you've made a tremendous difference in the lives of at least 50 families. Being a father has put that into a new perspective that I never quite understood until now. Perhaps that's why President Ronald Reagan said that among all his accomplishments, he was most proud of the lives he saved while working as a lifeguard.

OCBP Fantasy Football

Submitted by: Lt. Mike Stone

There is a small group of mostly Beach Patrol members involved in a fantasy football pick-em each week. Unit 3 happens to be a big football fan and has created an OCBP group for the Peter King Challenge at Sports Illustrated.com. This is the second year he has done the group and all you have to do is register, enter the group name (ocbp), and then enter the password (beach) to join. As of last Tuesday, November 3, 2009, there had been eight weeks of NFL games. Some notable names on the leader board include Mike Stone in first place with 81 wins, Ryan Cowder in second place with 80 wins, Brendon Lee (Skip's Oldest Son) in fourth place with 76 wins, Debbie Tyler in fifth with 75 wins, & Skip Lee in sixth place with 72 wins. Secretary Tyler is definitely the dark horse and has begun closing the gap between the leaders and her very respectable score of 75! There are still many more weeks to go and it is not too late to join. Just go to the website listed below and sign up. It is a lot of fun and there is no limit to the number of people who can join.

http://www.fannation.com/peter_king_challenge

Brabitz Wedding

On October 3, Jeff Brabitz and Aly Hammond got married at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club. It turned out to be a beautiful day and we were blessed to have so many family and friends there with us to celebrate the "big day." Now we have a Sergeant and Crew Chief Brabitz!



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contrary, an SRT who may not have been the fastest swimmer or runner at a test but who is sitting a stand the Wednesday before Labor Day is far more valuable to the mission of the Patrol. Of course both of these individuals will have successfully completed a test and have met all of our requirements and have completed Surf Rescue Academy, but the one separating factor is, "How long can you work"?

With this concept in mind, you can see that the determination between being placed on a waiting list or being offered an appointment to a Surf Rescue Academy must be based on the person's availability. Since we have no problem filling our stands in July or early August it does not benefit the Patrol to give one of our limited positions to a new recruit who cannot help us when we need personnel the most.

The same is going to hold true for returning personnel. This year when employment agreements are mailed out you will notice that for the first time you will be asked to accurately identify your final day of full-time work and to support it with official documentation. Failure to provide that documentation may result in not being re-employed for the summer of 2010.

Therefore, whether you are a returning veteran or a rookie, each additional day that you are available helps in securing a position on the 2010 roster. Start planning now!



Seaside 10 Miler

On October 31, a group of beach patrol members did the Ocean City Seaside 10 mile run. Brenda Hummel (former OCBP), Connor Braniff, Ryan Cowder, Rick Cawthern, Jeff Brabitz and Aly Brabitz. Everyone finished with great times!

New Maryland Text Messaging Laws went into effect OCTOBER 1ST 2009

Submitted by: Captain Arbin

Maryland's **House Bill 72** and **Senate Bill 98** prohibits an individual from writing, sending or reading a text message while operating a motor vehicle or in the travel portion of the roadway (even stopped at a red light). If you are convicted of a misdemeanor of the new text messaging law you will receive a fine of up to \$500.

Additionally, Beach Patrol policy states that no device that allows two-way communication (transmitter) will be allowed to be used (**or powered on**) during the hours that you are working, unless issued to you by the Beach Patrol. This includes but is not limited to: walkie-talkies, cellular phones, wireless headsets, cordless phones, etc. Receiving devices such as AM/FM radios, pagers, etc are not prohibited, but must not interfere with the performance of your duties. **NO HEAD PHONES or EAR PHONES! THIS ABSOLUTLY INCLUDES ANY FORM OF TEXT MESSAGING!** VIOLATIONS OF THIS NEW LAW, THE TOWN'S CELL POLICY OR BEACH PATROL POLICY, WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

Local News

4th Annual Visit to Prince Street Elementary

Submitted by Sgt. Nick Thompson

This is my fifth year teaching Physical Education at Prince Street Elementary. This is the fourth year that I have incorporated beach safety awareness into our water safety curriculum. Education is a main component of our 3-part mission of the beach patrol and Lt. Kovacs spends a good portion of his fall and winter work educating the public through his beach safety presentations. Lt. Kovacs visited Prince Street Elementary November 19th to share his knowledge and his 28 years of experience at the beach. He packed his Beach Patrol vehicle with various lifeguard artifacts and the typical beach giveaways (pencils, suntan lotion, safety brochures, semaphore code). There were 3 classes of 4th graders totaling about 75 students. I introduced him to my 4th graders and they were very excited to learn about water and beach safety and some of the rescues. The students had a lot of questions and with Lt. Kovacs' experience with the Beach Patrol he was able to answer all of them. The students are well aware that I am a lifeguard and I have shared many stories with them but to have another Beach Patrol lifeguard visit was exciting. He shared experiences that happened to him and about many rescues that he has responded to. I want to thank Ward for coming out to my school and doing such an excellent job.

The Beach Patrol offers activities, programs, speakers and seminars to various groups other than schools, such as scouts, church groups, camps, and civic organizations. We conduct these water safety seminars both in Ocean City and throughout the region. The safety training focuses primarily on drowning prevention and safety around the water. We also provide many helpful tips on how to keep children safe at the beach. These presentations and hands-on activities are critical in allowing the Beach Patrol to fulfill our 3-part mission of education, prevention, and intervention. If you have a group that is interested in a beach safety program or a speaker, contact the Beach Patrol. We would be glad to assist with a presentation.

Captain's note: With all the educators that we have in our organization it is a goal of mine to develop lessons that could be taught as part of the curriculum in both Science and Physical Education/Health classes throughout the state. In the early 80's I participated on a state committee that wrote a *Boating and Water Safety* course for middle school, but it is time to focus more on beach and surf safety. I know that some of what we specialize in is being taught in elementary schools throughout the state but that the teachers are lacking in first hand knowledge and materials to supplement the lessons. I saw this first hand a few years ago while I was working in Charles County Public Schools (my winter job). I was at an open space (no walls) elementary school working in one room and I heard the teacher in the room next store teaching a lesson on rip currents. Knowing the teacher, I looked into her class and upon seeing me she announced to the class that I was a beach lifeguard at Ocean City and did they have any questions. Wow! After a half hour of answering some interesting questions, I was convinced that we could provide cur-

riculum support and further our mission. If anyone is interested in being a part of this task, Please let me know.

Get Your SCUBA Certification this Summer with the OCBP Dive Team

Contact: Sgt. Jamie Falcon

The 2010 season holds a relatively new and exciting opportunity for the Beach Patrol community. Instructor John Kiser has agreed to come to Ocean City and run a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Open Water AND a simultaneous Advanced Certification course. This means, if you have never been certified to SCUBA dive, you can get certified next summer. If you are already certified, then you can earn your advanced along side of those getting their initial certification.

John Kiser has taught the Open Water Certification course for the Beach Patrol in the past. His shop is located in Severna Park (www.seacolony.net). He is also the SCUBA instructor at Salisbury University. Each course is worth 3 college credits transferable to most colleges or universities.

The Open Water Certification costs \$285 plus a \$100 check-



SRT Kevin Reed and Sgt. Falcon after Oyster Diving in Eastern Bay, Fall 2009.

out fee. The Advanced Certification costs \$150 plus a \$100 checkout fee. The checkout fee covers the open water dive observation at the end of the course, and the certification card fee. All air and gear is included except mask, fins and snorkel. These can be purchased at Sea Colony Aqua Sports with a 20-25% discount (\$150-250 before discount). I expect the boat, for the open water diving, to be free of charge except for sharing fuel costs. Certification is life long.

The instruction time for the Open Water Certification is a total of 16 hours, 8 of which are in the classroom and 8 are in the pool. Advanced instruction all takes place in the pool.

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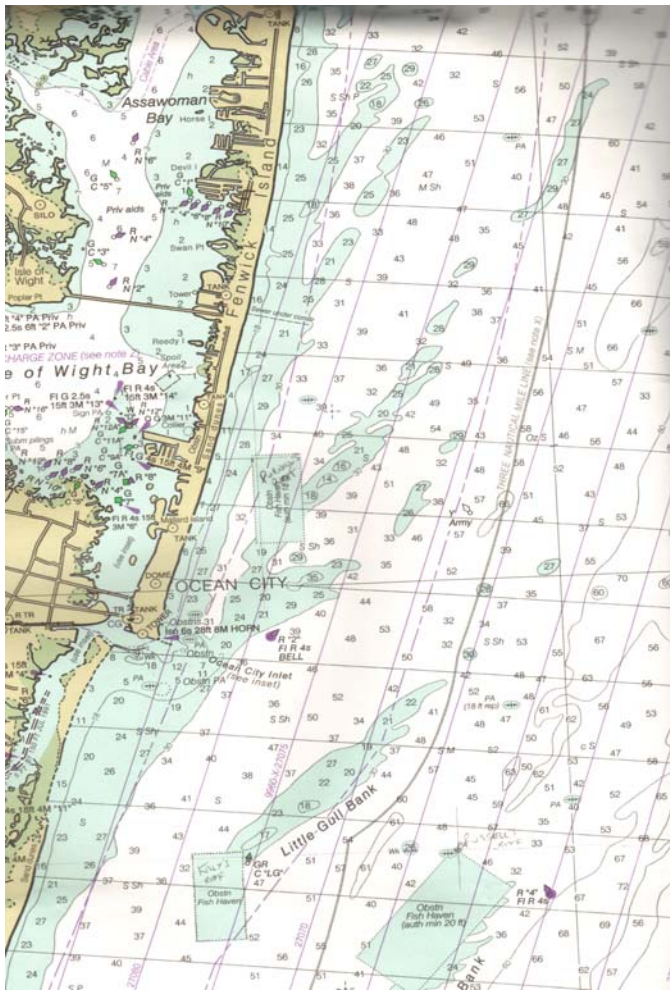
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Both groups do open water dives after instruction is complete. This will be an offshore boat trip to some of the reefs or wrecks off of Ocean City. Instruction will begin in mid to late June during several meetings after OCBP duty (tentatively, all instruction will begin on Monday, June 7 and be completed by Saturday, June 12; no other events are scheduled and Friday, June 11 is the payday from the second full pay period). The open water dives will take place in mid-July (tentatively the weekend of July 17, 18th; this is after all veteran recert. and there are no other events taking place). All participants will receive completed Special Day Off forms to sign at the beginning of instruction to ensure the group can complete the open water dives together.

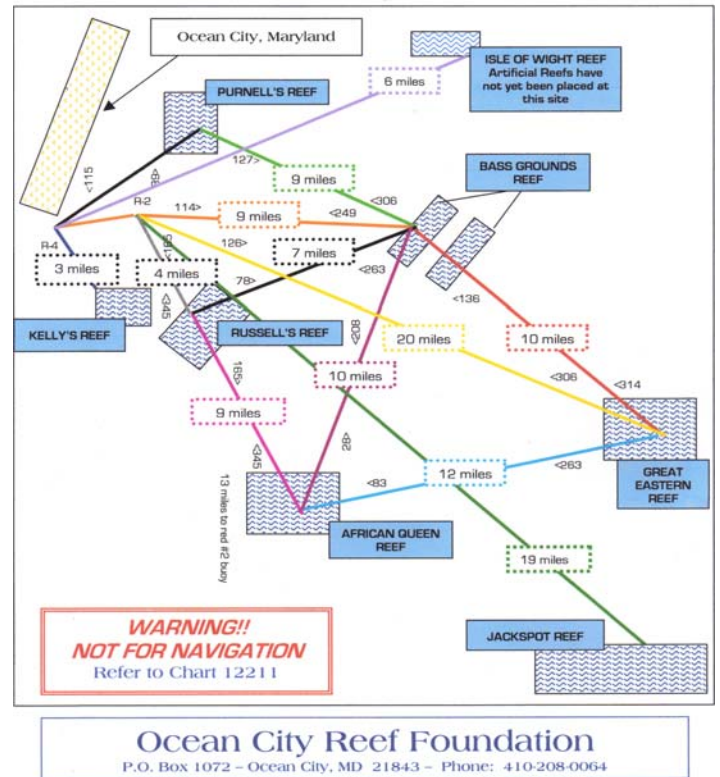
After the group is certified, local dives will be scheduled through August and throughout each summer. Spontaneous trips may also become available on evenings of high visibility.

I expect to be able to produce "OCBP Dive Team" long sleeve t-shirts free of charge to participants.

Please ask questions or indicate your interest by sending me an email: jfalcon465@yahoo.com. I strongly suggest asking parents for dive certification as a Christmas gift; my certification was my high-school graduation gift in 1991. If you are interested, please send an email by January 2, 2010. I need an initial head-count to proceed with organizing the courses and trips.



OCEAN CITY REEF FOUNDATION
2007 REEF NETWORK



I sure wish this wasn't Shark Week on Discovery TV