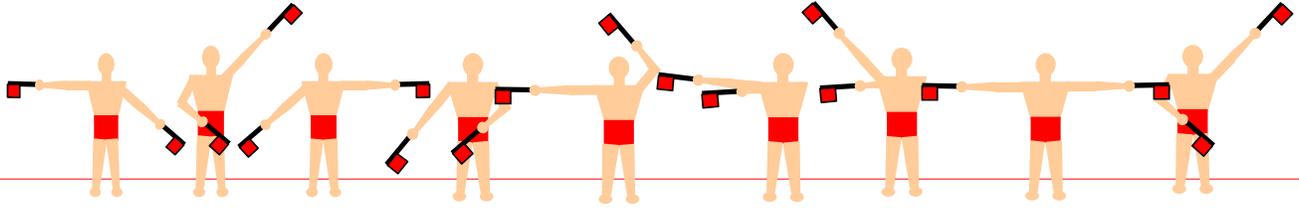


Ocean City Beach Patrol



Edition 51



Over Seventy-five Years of Saving Lives.

Maintain Your Role in this Fantastic Tradition!

Inside this issue:

Messages from the Captain	1-4
Testing and Recruiting	4
Information/Statistics	5
OCBP News	13
Town/Local News	15
Off- Season Activities /Work	16
Training/Competitions	18
Announcements	23
History/Alumni	24
Classified	25
USLA	26

Newsletter

Spring 2011

Message From the Captain

A Value Added role for each Beach Patrol Employee

Both the mission and the purpose of the Beach Patrol are very clear. The Town of Ocean City provides us a 2.3 million dollar budget with which they expect us to ensure the safety and well being of Ocean City's residents and the millions of visitors who use our beaches. Our own mission statement emphasizes what we must do as an organization to carry out our public safety role. Every time I am asked to speak to a group or when I am working with a member of the press, I articulate that we have a three part mission; Education, Prevention and Intervention. Our mission guides our organization and I am constantly reminding our command staff that if an activity doesn't support our mission, then we need to look at why we are doing it. However, our biggest role, though not our most important role, is to be ambassadors for the Town to every person we come in contact with, anywhere we are identified as members of the Ocean City Beach Patrol. As the most visible Town of Ocean City employees and the ones who come in personal contact with more visitors than anyone else in Ocean City, our unofficial role as an Ocean City ambassador becomes paramount. This is the "Value Added" component of our division. Members of the Beach Patrol are highly educated, motivated, competent, professional, and are great assets to the Town of Ocean City. While each of us brings a great deal of positive attributes to the City, being a part of this great organization allows each of us to receive even more in return.

The Town is doing their part by attracting major events as a draw to get people to make Ocean City their vacation destination. In recent years the Recreation Department has provided free public family entertainment on 6 days per week to allow a family to have a fun evening while not having to spend a lot of

extra money. Springfest and Sunfest have become nationally ranked events and they continue to thrive even when the economy has caused similar events to suffer. Private events are also bringing people to our town, such as this weekend's event "Impact 2011" which will bring thousands of high school students from around our region to Ocean City for a 3-day conference (16 of which are staying with my family). The most recent addition to Ocean City events is the securing of the 2011 Dew Tour kick off event. This world famous extreme sporting event will not only bring an economic boom to all the Ocean City businesses, but will attract many people who have never before been to our town. Pre-event advertising and "teasers" will showcase Ocean City as a destination and will also give us a level of positive exposure never before experienced by this town.

What these efforts have in common is that they attract people to Ocean City. However, what people experience once they are here will likely determine if they return for another event or a vacation. This is why every person who works in Ocean City has a chance to make a difference in every visitor's experience. Workers at the hotel, waitresses, shop owners, taxi cab and bus drivers, beach stand operators and yes, even the telescope picture guy will become a part of an "Ocean City Memory". Although these and others will be part of a visitor's overall experience, we have no influence in how they carry out their respective jobs. What we do have control over is how we as Beach Patrol members conduct ourselves when we interact with those we



serve.

A few years ago I stayed at the Embassy Suites International Drive while attending a technology conference in Orlando, Florida. Although the hotel was fantastic, what made me take notice was the staff. Whenever I came in contact with or walked near an employee of the hotel they greeted me and spoke to me. If I happened to be on an elevator with a staff member they asked how I was, where I was from, and they made conversation rather than just staring at the closed door waiting to get off. If I walked past a member of housekeeping they made eye contact and spoke to me. Maintenance did the same, and management was always walking around and asking if they could do anything for me. I saw a top management person pick up trash and clear a table because he saw the need, never once acting like it wasn't his job. It didn't matter what position they held; they were all there to serve and showed a genuine attitude of service. What made it even more impressive was that it seemed genuine... not forced, but natural.

As I admired the way the hotel staff went about their jobs, I was reminded of the feelings expressed by beach patrons in many of the letters received by the Beach Patrol each summer. I realized that I was experiencing, first hand, the same respect and appreciation that our Ocean City visitors experience when one of our employees takes the time to talk with them about ocean conditions, teach their children a little semaphore, explain how to safely body surf a wave.

While we exist to provide a public safety service, when we take the extra steps to make someone feel welcomed, we become more than just employees of the Beach Patrol and the Town of Ocean City, we become a lasting part of their Ocean City experience.

When you are wearing our uniform, there is never a time when you are NOT representing the Town. If you ride the bus, you are not just another person on the bus, but you are someone's lifeguard. As you park your car and walk along the sidewalk on the way to your beach, people on their balconies are saying, "There goes our lifeguard." As you cross the dune and pass people returning from their morning walk, smile and say good morning, maybe even engage them in a brief, casual conversation about how their morning is going. At the end of the day, as you are leaving and passing people heading to the beach, a quick reminder that you are off duty and that it's dangerous to swim, sends a strong message that you care about their welfare. Introduce yourself to families that return to your beach for several days. Learn the names of a few children on your beach. Make yourself a positive part of the beach experience. Doing these things, will prompt people to talk about you, and the rest of the Beach Patrol in a positive way.

I have told numerous people about the genuine hospitality I experienced while staying at Embassy Suites International Drive. If someone asked for a recommendation I would not hesitate to send him or her there. What would people from your beach say about the time they spent there?

Captain Schoepf had a saying (for those of you who knew him you would say he had 100's of sayings), that our guards have "hours of boredom and moments of trauma", pointing to the fact that most of the time we are just watching and waiting to be called into action. During this time (over 90% of most days) we can make conscious efforts to be ambassadors and let every person who we meet know that, "We are glad that you are here".

Ocean City is a vacation destination and we are in

competition for the continued loyalty of our visitors. They are not an inconvenience. They are the reason that the Beach Patrol exists. And, if we are going to do our part as ambassadors for the Town of Ocean City, we must create an atmosphere where people cannot wait to tell others of their wonderful experiences in Ocean City, Maryland.

Make someone's vacation memorable..... every day!

Ocean City Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Association

One factor that contributed to this past summer's success was the additional opportunities to complete OCBPSRA certification requirements. Looking ahead to this summer we plan to hold each certification event twice, once in the morning and another in the evening. We also plan to schedule one in the north and one in the south. This will only be possible with the dedication of the OCBPSRA instructors who are responsible to facilitate these certifications. Beginning with the 2011 season, any OCBPSRA Instructor (usually Sergeants and Crew Chiefs) who wishes to become involved can be scheduled to assist. The certifications that are obtained through completion of the OCBPSRA requirements are required to accept a training position or promotion. All training, practice and skill demonstrations are done during an SRT's scheduled time off. Additionally, it is every SRT's 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. Although we have made a concerted effort to research each person's OCBPSRA history, including past certifications for those with a break in service and an update in days, it is your responsibility to check your training record for accuracy and let Captain Arbin know if you feel that your OCBPSRA records are not reflective of what items you have completed. One major change that has taken place for SRTs starting after the 2009 season is the calculation of days for the various levels of certification. The days that are calculated for the 100, 200 and 300 required days worked do not include any days on probation. This is an important change that will give us a more qualified candidate pool, since under the old system a person could have 97 days on probation, an indication of some weakness, and then after working only 3 additional days would receive their OCBPSRA Basic certification and be eligible for a training position as an Assistant Crew Chief. Another change is the designation of the certification levels, which was prompted several years ago by Lt Wes Smith. His point was that anyone we assign to sit the stand should already be considered to have "basic" skills and should not have to do additional events or wait 100 days. He was absolutely correct and we used this as an opportunity to update not only the designations but to also redesign the patches that are awarded. What we have moved toward is a step system (not to be confused with pay steps). Once out of Surf Rescue Academy each rookie is a PSRT (Probation-SRT). When they complete probation they will receive the SRT patch and be considered an SRT I, after completing all aspects of the old "BASIC" and having worked 100 days after probation they will be an SRT II. After completing the requirements of the old "ADVANCED" and having worked 200 days after probation they will be considered SRT III. The rest of the certification levels and the requirements for the ACC training position or promotion to Crew Chief remain unchanged.

Invitations to return included with Spring News-letter

Again this year, the spring newsletter mailing includes the “official” letters of Invitation for returning employees and letters of intent for those who have qualified for a 2011 Surf Rescue Academy. Although, I have sent several e-mails asking for information through Google Docs, such as change of address and dates of availability, **responding to this mailing in writing is critical** if you wish to be employed this season. Make sure that you read everything carefully, because, there are several requirements for being hired or re-hired. Again this year we are requiring “official” confirmation of your last day of full-time work to be returned with your Employment Agreement. Employment agreements, letters of intent and **proof of last day** must be returned to Captain Arbin at his La Plata, Maryland address using the enclosed, pre-addressed, stamped envelope by Friday, April 29, 2011. If your signed employment agreement is not received by the due date, you may not be given employment this season. We have a long list of candidates who are fully qualified and several “B” rated SRTs who are seeking a chance to return and I need to let these people know ASAP about whether they have a position or not. Additionally, well over 100 people are asking to test for a position, including several past employees who missed a year or two, and I need to determine whether or not we will be holding the June 11th testing. Don’t let them take your position because you didn’t bother to reply to this mailing. Please take the time to complete all paperwork accurately and be aware that your **availability will have an impact** on our ability to hire you this season. If you are interested in applying for a part-time position, in requesting a particular stand, or if you are seeking a promotion, you must indicate this on your employment agreement. Once your agreement is received, a second packet will be mailed to you including information based on your responses to the first mailing. Also included with the second mailing will be directions to access and complete employment forms that will be available on-line. These must be completed before reporting for registration and equipment issue.

Beach Patrol will hold Two Surf Rescue Academies

Again this season, there will only be two Surf Rescue Academies compared to the three that have been held for 8 years prior to 2009 when our personnel numbers were low. Canceling the second academy serves several purposes. First of all, it is the hardest to staff. Our first academy has the most staff in leadership roles available to assist, primarily because we have not started guarding the beach yet, and therefore are not pulled from other responsibilities. Although, the Patrol is in full swing by the scheduled dates of the third academy, the late starting date allows all of our personnel to be working full-time having just completed their other responsibilities (mostly full-time school system jobs, although this year’s snows have impacted school calendars). Maintaining a late academy is important for those individuals whose commitments do not end until mid June or they have not yet arrived in our country. The “old” sec-

REMINDER: Invitations are only sent to those employees who received an “A” summative rating. Employees who do not receive an invitation, but who wish to return to the Beach Patrol this season, must contact Captain Arbin by e-mail barbin@ococean.com to set up a meeting. This is not a change in policy and has been explained to every employee

New Pay scales for all New Employees

Over the past winter there has been a lot of discussion between The Mayor and City Council, City Manager and City Employees centered on pay and compensation for municipal employees in the Town of Ocean City. Following the Council elections there was an attempt to make major changes to the Town’s pay, compensation and benefits packages, in an attempt to save operating expenses. Most of the changes did not affect our 99.5% Temporary employees, however, one area was of particular concern. That area had to do with pay rates for temporary employees. One idea was to roll back pay levels to those were specified in a 2005 pay and benefits study referred to as the “Hendricks Plan”. I responded to this by writing a letter to both the City Manager and the Mayor that outlined specific concerns from the Beach Patrol perspective. Although the City Council had passed 11 ordinances that impacted employee pay and benefits, the Mayor vetoed 7 of those. Once these ordinances had been vetoed it forced additional discussion. After weeks of debate a final pay plan was passed and signed into law. The affect on Beach Patrol pay was that anyone new to the patrol will be brought on at a new Step 1, with anyone returning having the same pay rate as last season. Another recommendation that was defeated was that anyone receiving a change in position would start the new position at a new step 1 for that position rather than what it paid last season. That could have meant that being promoted to Crew Chief would leave employees earning less per hour. Again, this was defeated. So in the end, only our new hires are being affected and that affect is \$.25 per hour for Rookies. Although there are other changes that affect full-time employees of the Town, only Lieutenant Kovacs is affected by those changes in our division.

ond academy by contrast, occurs at the absolute worst time of our early season and is often the least effective. Even though the cancellation of the second academy was not done for economic reasons, it will generate a budget savings for the Beach Patrol. Based on responses from those rookies who have responded through Google Docs and are still planning on working for the Beach Patrol (Some may not be accepted based on late season availability), We have 28 in SRA I (starting on May 22nd) and 12 in SRA II (starting on June 19th). If we have the need to hold our scheduled test on June 11th these rookies will be added to SRA II.



Testing and Recruiting

Recruiting Goal Achieved for Second Year in a Row

No off – site testing! It has been a stated goal of mine for several years to recruit, test and appoint all the needed SRTs for the next season before we end our current season. Although our off – site testing has been a great predictor of a candidate’s ability to be successful in Surf Rescue Academy, another benefit of this year’s end-of-season testing success is that we were able to observe all of the candidates in the ocean environment, which is of course where we work and were they will have to perform. For only the second time since we initiated off – site testing in the 1980’s, we were able to suspend all scheduled tests. This is a major accomplishment and can be attributed to all of those who currently work for or have been connected to the patrol. Not only does this save budget dollars, but it also allows those of us who attended every off – site test to enjoy time with our families a few more weekends.



Again this year, we have had many candidates pass all phases of the Pre-Employment Physical Skills Evaluation (PEPSE) and not receive an automatic appointment to a Surf Rescue Academy. Instead they have been placed on a fully qualified list and many are still waiting to hear if they will receive an appointment to one of our Surf Rescue Academies for the 2011 season. Of the 79 candidates who registered for the end of season testing for 2011, 48 successfully completed all phases of the PEPSE. (The numbers were 73 and 41 respectively in 2010.) So far 20 will be offered appointments based on their availability as reported in Google Docs. These offers may be withdrawn if their availability changes. Another 28 are currently in “waiting list” status or were unable to accept an appointment for this season. To determine the rank order of the waiting list I assigned a point value to each of four criteria: swim time, run time, interviewer recommendations and availability. Because each of these candidates has successfully completed the entire test and would have been appointed to SRA without hesitation, I am fully confident in their ability to perform the job of SRT. Therefore, the criteria that carried the most weight was availability. A 6:53 swimmer who leaves August 18th is of no help on the 28th of August, whereas the 9:12 swimmer who is on the stand when a rescue is required, is far more valuable to the needs of the patrol. For this reason we are looking closely at our needs from the 3rd week of August through Sunfest Sunday. Several candidates who were originally on the waiting list have been offered appointments to an SRA based on a change in their availability to work through Labor Day or beyond. As I receive information from returning “A” rated personnel and from those who have been previously appointed to an SRA, I have a better sense of the needs of the patrol and if we will have any additional positions. With all of this information I want to remind everyone who receives an invitation to return to the OCBP for the 2011 summer season, that it is critical that you make sure all paperwork is received, including “last day” pa-

perwork, no later than Friday, April 29th or your position may be given away.

The unfortunate consequence of our success is that well over 100 potential candidates, some of whom are past SRTs or Division I athletes, have missed an opportunity to work for the Patrol. Although we always tell people to test early, we have never had the type of success we have experienced the past two years with end of season testing, and therefore have always had to hold our scheduled off – site testing. During some past years we have held as many as six off – site tests and still needed to hold early season testing. However, this year we have put all future testing for the 2011 season on hold pending the responses that we receive from our invitations to return or from our Surf Rescue Academy registrations. If we have any anticipated openings following the return of paperwork we will hold the scheduled June 11, 2011 testing for appointment to Surf Rescue Academy II (formerly SRA III), which begins on Sunday, June 19, 2011.



Applicants for Assistant Crew Chief are Being Sought

The Beach Patrol is seeking Surf Rescue Technicians with Ocean City Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Association (OCBPSRA) SRT II (Basic) certification to apply for leadership roles as Assistant Crew Chiefs. It is our intention to select Assistant Crew Chiefs prior to the start of the 2011 season, Saturday May 28, 2011.

The position requires the appointed Surf Rescue Technician to switch crews if necessary, and to assume all the responsibilities of the Assistant Crew Chief position. They will also be required to attend a training session, along with the Crew Chiefs, scheduled for the evening of Sunday, May 29, 2011.

Serving successfully as an Assistant Crew Chief for a season is a requirement of OCBPSRA SRT III (Advanced) certification, which itself is a prerequisite for the Crew Chief position. The Assistant position provides the candidate pool from which future Crew Chief promotions are made.

There are 17 positions each season, and it is my desire to fill those slots with 17 first-time Assistant Crew Chiefs, whenever possible. However, if we do not have 17 qualified first-time candidates, we will choose former assistants that have applied. Therefore if you are interested in being considered for a second appointment to Assistant Crew Chief, make sure that you note that on the “EMPLOYMENT INTENT and AGREEMENT” form included in this mailing.

Assistant Crew Chiefs will be compensated at the rate of \$15.69 per hour. Each position will be filled by appointing an SRT II to the rank of SRT II - Assistant Crew Chief with all the responsibility and accountability that the position carries. This is a training position and is designed to be a one-season appointment. In the following season, if a candidate is not promoted to Crew Chief, they will be returned to the position on the pay scale were they would have been, had they not been an Assistant Crew Chief with full credit for days worked at the Assistant Crew Chief position.

The first step in the process is to Circle “YES” on the “EMPLOYMENT INTENT and AGREEMENT” form included