



Instructor's Dispatch

A Newsletter of the Commission on Fire Prevention & Control

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2009 June Fire School 2

DDS Launches New 3
Fire Prevention and
Safety Awareness
Training

Self Care-Staying in 4-7
Your Job

Introduction to the Fire Service Graduation Class 24



Introduction to the Fire Service Cadet 24

Picture taken by Program Manager Jim Carroll

On June 28th, the Connecticut Fire Academy held a graduation ceremony for the Introduction to the Fire Service Summer Cadet Camp. There were thirty-five Cadets from 26 Fire Departments that graduated. Mara S. Fischer, of the Lyme Fire Department Cadet, who served as the Cadet Class Public Information Officer spoke on behalf of the Cadets.

The Connecticut Fire Academy holds a Cadet Firefighter program every summer for Junior Firefighters from across Connecticut. This summer is no different as the Cadet program got underway on June 24th. The program is run at the Academy training grounds in Windsor Locks, and the Cadets lodge in the dormitory rooms and are treated no different than the Recruit Firefighters who attend class there. The program was open to youth ages 16-17 and introduces them to the fire service. Topics included: Introduction to the CT Fire Academy and Site Orientation; Fire Department Organization and Structure; Fire Science; Ropes & Knots; Hazardous Materials Awareness; Fire Streams; Ladders; and Search and Rescue and Wildland Firefighting.

A special thanks goes out to Program Manager Bill Trisler and to all instructors for a job well done with the Cadet program.



2009 June Fire School



*“Good leadership
requires you to
surround yourself
with people of
diverse perspectives
who can disagree
with you without
fear of retaliation”.*

**Doris Kearns
Goodwin**

The staff of the Connecticut Fire Academy were pleased to offer the 2009 June Fire School. On different days, the students were able to select a track of classes that focus upon engine company or truck company operations. As well as some new companion classes that have not been offered in previous June Fire Schools. Those classes included: Advanced Elevator Emergencies for students; Engine Company Operations Advancing the Initial Handline; Engine Company Operations Alternative Hoseline Stretches and Engine Company Operations Emergency Action Drills. A representative of the National Fire Protection Association delivered a half-day program entitled “What is New in Fire Service Standards”.

The June Fire School was a chance to learn something new and for the students to compare their fire department with those of their peers. Such comparisons help firefighters realize their personal situations are not much different than their neighbors. This year we had a total of 938 students that attended the 2009 June Fire School.

A special thanks goes out to Mark Salafia, Program Manager, staff in the Training Division and to all our instructors for their outstanding work with the June Fire School.



DDS Launches New Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness Training

(Hartford) - The Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) recently unveiled its new Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness Video Training Program. The first of its kind in the country, the training is designed to standardize the education of 15,000 public and private employees as well as assist over 20,000 families and consumers in the state with fire prevention and safety procedures.

The Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness program was made possible through an Assistance to Firefighters “Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program” administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This was developed in cooperation with the Connecticut Fire Academy and the University of Connecticut Health Center. The video training was designed to train DDS Staff through an on-line video course that is accessible on the DDS website at www.ct.gov/dds and through the department’s on-line College of Direct Support Training Curriculum.

“This program is designed to advance awareness and educate all of the stakeholders whose health and safety depend on a practical understanding of the dangers of fire and other hazardous emergencies,” said DDS Commissioner Peter H. O’Meara. “The program enhances our consumers’, families’, staffs’ and first responder’ awareness of assisting individuals with disabilities during emergencies. We are extremely grateful to have the support of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program through FEMA.”

Over the past nine months, DDS Director of Quality Management Daniel Micari, DDS Fire Chief Timothy Baldwin and Ct. Fire Academy Public Education Coordinator Alan Zygmunt developed the six-part course from the department’s newly revised Fire Safety Guidelines. The training focuses on Fire Prevention, Utilizing Local Resources and Fire Emergencies, Other Emergencies such as hurricanes, development of Site Specific Plans and Evacuation Drills and Practical Skills which provide examples of assisting individuals with a disability during an emergency.

In addition to the employee training videos, DDS unveiled a Fire Safety Training for individuals and families served by the department. Also available on the DDS website is a video that assists consumers in basic fire prevention, preparing for an emergency and using R.A.C.E., (Remove, Alert, Confine and Extinguish). As part of the program for families, over 10,000 DDS consumers will be receiving a “File of Life” magnet for their refrigerators. The “File of Life” is a voluntary program designed to help local first responders to quickly obtain in an emergency, necessary medical history, support needs, and emergency contact information about the occupants in a family home or individual apartment. Included in the file, is a medical form that can be updated every six months with the most important information.

Both the employee and family Fire Prevention and Safety Awareness Videos are available to view through all public libraries and fire departments in Connecticut as well as through the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) regional offices. For more information or to view the video training, please visit the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) website at www.ct.gov/dds or for any questions, please e-mail the DDS at dds.firesafety@ct.gov.



“The IC should be the first person that thinks the fire is burning and the last to believe it is out”.

By Alan V. Brunacini



Self Care—Staying in Your Job

Frederick J. (Fred) Cowie, Ph.D.

Along with my keynote talk *Stress Management in Stressful Time* and my longer course *Stress Management and Problem Solving*, for a conference on child protection sponsored by the Supreme Court in Montana I have developed a plenary session presentation entitled *Self Care—Staying in Your Job*. For this talk I assembled in one presentation the key principles and concepts that have allowed me to keep my centered sense of self and my sense of humor for the last three decades which my friends have variously called chaotic, crazy, heartbreaking, and a parental nightmare. I hope this newsletter article helps others to take care of themselves and parents to hang in there and stay on the job.

Lose some, win some: Once a while back, a response unit that I had trained did some unthinkable things after the Safety Officer told them not to, and I decided to quit. With that another trainer sat me down for “a talk.” He told the story of his first response, one at which the victim died in his arms. He went to the commander and said he had decided to quit. He and the commander sat down for “a talk.” He was taught this simple concept that allowed him to stay on the job, allowed me to stay on the job, and which I have passed on to countless others and now pass on to you. “You lose some, but they would have died no matter what anyone could have done. Some would have made it if you had showed up or not. But some, some you win, those are the ones who would have died had you not showed up. Those are why we all stay on the job.” Amen to that!

Kuka Principles: King Kuka was the Blackfeet artist who inspired my art career. When I asked him to teach me to paint watercolors he said, “I can’t, I can only teach you how I paint watercolors.” He reminded me, pointedly, that there is no single way to do anything. And when I asked him to teach me how to paint a tree, he replied, “If you want to paint a tree, be a tree.” So I learned that self-teaching was truly the way to learn. By the way, I did learn to paint watercolors “my way” and I paint a mean tree!

Continued on page 5

Self Care—Staying in Your Job

Frederick J. (Fred) Cowie, Ph.D.

Continued from page 4

Maslow's Third Force: Abraham Maslow, the man who brought us the famous “Maslow Pyramid,” realized that previous psychiatrists and psychologists had for the most part concentrated on clients with severe problems and that they practiced, for the most part, abnormal psychology. Maslow's key principle, in my mind, was very Kafkaesque, in that he sorta said, “If you want to be a happy and healthy person, imitate and emulate healthy and happy people.” Made and makes sense to me!

Pareto Principle: Often called the 80-20 rule, the law of the vital few or the principle of factor sparseness, the Pareto Principle is the brilliant insight of Italian economist Wilfredo Pareto. Simply put, twenty percent (of clients, employees, landowners, voters, parents, etc.) account for eighty percent of results (sales, lawsuits, crimes, profits, etc.) and a smart person should concentrate on upping the good twenty percent and lowering the bad twenty percent. The odds of him being right seem to be about 80:20!

Potato Principle: One of my favorite professors, Ed Maguire, taught me this principle some thirty five years ago. He said he was a swabby during WWII and the Chief told him to peel potatoes and put the big ones in one pot and the small ones in the other. “Most of my time was spent trying to decide where to put the medium sized potatoes.” From him I learned that we waste an incredible amount of time, energy and effort trying to make decisions on stuff it really doesn't matter what we decide to do. Thanks, Ed!

Bitter—Sweet Principle: Science teaches us there are four basic distinct receptors on the tongue, for molecules we call sweet, sour, bitter and salty. So you can really have sweet and sour pork and candy called bittersweet. Life teaches us that life is bitter—sweet, and that these molecules of life alternate, repeated, throughout one's life. Keeping that concept in minds allows us to get through the hard parts, and to laugh at them in the sweet parts. In fact, we rarely laugh later at the sweet parts, so the bitter parts must be important!

Judas Factor and Simon Peter Factor: Occasionally—okay, far too often—someone at a conference complains about my presentation. I used to take that personally, but conference managers (I used to be one) reminded me that some folks just like to complain. I now call that the Judas Factor and tell myself that regardless of who you are or what you preach, one twelfth of the people will turn you in to “the man.” Since coming up with that gem I have added the Simon Peter Factor, which says that no matter who you are or what you say, one twelfth of the people will deny having anything to do with you. So relax, they're not out to get you, personally, you just happen to be next on their list!



**“Manage
procedures—
lead people”.**

**By Alan V.
Brunacini**



Continued on page 6



“The only stuff
that doesn’t burn
is the bricks”.

By Alan V.
Brunacini



Self Care—Staying in Your Job

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Continued from page 5

Buddha Basics: Buddhism is not a religion, but a way of life, a set of principles for success. Zen Buddhism is a particularly appealing subset, which asks for behavior that reminds me of the first principle of medicine, “Do no harm.” As I read Buddha, he simply said pain is a part of life, minimize the pain in your life, and deal with the pain that is left in your life, without whining. We have a society addicted to physiological and psychological pain killers instead of a culture of pain management. Pain is natural, unavoidable, so sometimes you just have to “suck it up, buttercup!”

Ex Post Factor: This one’s pretty simple. You are not responsible for the creation of the problem, for you came into the mess after the fact (*ex post facto*), so why have you taken on the responsibility, the guilt? Guilt management class, anyone?

Problem “Problem”: We have to redefine problem, for a problem is simply something for which we have no solution. If we have a solution, it’s not a problem, it’s work. “Houston, we have some work to do!”

Decision “Problem”: Decision making is easy, make one, if it turns out not to be the right one, make another one. Some people can’t make decisions, so they keep asking for more data. Some people don’t like data but like making decisions, so they do so before the necessary data is in. All of us tend to jump off the step we don’t like far too early, and stay on the step we do like far too long. Do due diligence, collect good data, make a decision!

Washington Principle: Not D.C., but George. George was a plodder, a doer, not a thinker, not a writer. Definitely not the sharpest tool in the shed. But, you have to give it to the man, for he did run the revolution, the convention designing the constitution, and the new institution. Then he went home—no presidential library, no speaking tours. Not a genius, but one who had a few in his entourage: Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin just to name a few. Some very smart people are ready to help each of us, if we just take the time to find them!

Continued on page 7

Self Care—Staying in Your Job

Frederick J. (Fred) Cowie, Ph.D.

Continued from page 6

Ruolfo Principle: My son will tell you that we became “over-bonded,” and that I was suffering from “caregiver burnout.” He knew that he needed to move on, so he got a new caregiver, by the name of Rudolfo. Rudolfo was much closer (by over thirty years) in age to Christian than I was, and he was a budding musician. Within a rather short period of time, Christian had gone to five rock concerts and had had a lap dance. Obviously, we are not the best caregivers for those we care for so much. We care too much for them and not enough for ourselves. We must do what the flight attendant says, and give ourselves the oxygen first!

Frankly Frankl: Viktor Frankl was a Viennese psychotherapist who lost all of his loved ones, including his new wife, in the Nazi concentration camps of WWII. In his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Frankl talks frankly about what one must do when one is in the midst of hell: suffer well and don’t let them destroy your humanity. If your goal, one day at a time, is to suffer well when all is lost, then your goal can be reached that day. If your goal is always happiness, it may be out reach. There is meaning in suffering well!

Worst Case Scenario: Think about it, your in the middle of a bad deal, what’s the worse that could go wrong if you acted how you think you should act? Can you live with that, the worst case scenario? If yes, then do it and move on. Think, decide, act!

Failure Factor: Sometimes we are captured by a catch phrase, entangled in a clever thought, or ensnared in a cultural barbed wire entanglement. One such false truism is a favorite of my military and ex-military friends: Failure is not an option! There are two very big landmines with this saying, as it were. First, an option involves a choice and it is true we should not willingly with aforethought choose failure. Second, most of the horrible things that happen to us we did not choose or are unintended secondary effects we did not foresee when making some choice. So, failure may not be an option, but sometimes it is a distinct possibility or a given fact. Hope for the best, plan for the best and the worst, but plan for all contingencies. You can fail, just don’t quit!

“ The IC must always be able to separate what is a hope from what is a plan”.

By Alan V. Brunacini



**State of Connecticut
Commission on Fire Prevention &
Control
Connecticut Fire Academy
34 Perimeter Road
Windsor Locks, CT 06096**

**Phone: 860-627-6363
Fax: 860-654-1889**



We're on the web at: www.ct.gov/cfpc

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or manmade, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by fire service personnel, public educators and other first responders.