Previews of Coming Attractions

By Ronny J. Coleman

If you arrive at the movie theater a few minutes early you are going to be forced to endure a process called “previews of coming attractions”. The movie industry, taking some of the best parts out of the movie, puts together a real short clip in which they hope to entice you to spend your money as soon as it is up for release. Then, they sit back and wait to determine whether or not you vote with your dollars as to whether or not their movie is worthwhile seeing.

Unfortunately many of these trailers promise more than they often deliver. I am not a movie critic but I make it a habit of reading movie critic columns and comparing them to what I am interested in. I remember one such individual critic stating that you didn’t need to see the movie because there were only three exciting things in it and all three were shown during the trailer. When I saw the movie I enjoyed it anyway.

Nonetheless the concept of a premiere does serve a purpose. If you have an interest in the genre then you can start thinking about putting it on your schedule. If you like that particular actor then you might start thinking about doing some reading of the movie critics. If it is part of a series or a serial that you have seen before you might go back and refresh your memory on the previous movies anticipating what the new movie is going to be all about. On the other hand you may totally ignore the premiere and just wait until it comes out.

For real movie buffs the anticipation is often more of a thrill than the movie itself. And the reason why is that you have the opportunity to put your own interpretation of what you think is going to happen. What most people fail to realize, is that there are premieres of coming attractions that surround us on a daily basis about things much more relative to our lives. Specifically I am talking about the fact that there are previews of coming attractions in our profession also.
The common practice in the fire service is to talk about master planning and strategic planning and accompany it with some kind of an indication of a time frame. Generally it is more than one or two years, at least five and seldom is any kind of a planning effort worth much beyond a ten or twenty year horizon sometime in the future. Part of the process of doing effective master planning and strategic planning is to be watching out for those things that are going on in modern society that are eventually going to have an impact on the fire service.

This has been going on for hundreds of years. Unfortunately it has not been looked at in a very systematic way and we have spent some portion of our professional lives playing a game of catch-up in society. One of the best examples that I can project is a simple technology. Without telling you the time frame of this occurrence, I will tell you a story of rejection. I put a fax machine in the headquarters fire station where I worked. I was literally laughed at by my own staff and somewhat ridiculed by my peer fire chiefs because “who the heck is going to communicate with you by fax machine?” In the process of discussing the adaptation of fax technology I wasn’t basing it on the fire service I was basing it on society. The thing that prompted my idea of buying a fax machine was an article that I had read in business week about the significant increase in the use of fax machines to hasten communications between business ventures.

Going one-step further I suggested to a couple of professional organizations that they install a fax machine and faced a severe amount of resistance. The initial statement was “why put in the machine when nobody out there has one?” My answer was, “well I had one and I wanted to use it to communicate.” In a matter of months my fax machine was ringing everyday and the professional association had finally put one in and found that the fax became an instrumental source of communications in a very short period of time.

One of the hallmarks of an organizations ability to survive in the future is that it has some degree of respect for trends and patterns that are coming towards the organization. Contrary to predicting the future, organizations that are paying attention to “coming attraction” are doing nothing more than extrapolating the real world with the potential down the road somewhere.

The story I just reflected on about faxes has been duplicated in other forms of technology over the last twenty years. Seldom has the fire service ever found itself on the leading edge of change. As a profession we tend to be very conservative and subsequently are a late adopter in many cases for technology that has already been proven elsewhere. That doesn’t diminish the fact that we should be paying close attention to things that are going through our society because they will eventually impact the fire service.

You might already be familiar with the concept of the wave of change. That wave as it goes through society has a leading edge, a high point and a trailing edge. For purposes of this article I am only going to focus on the leading edge. It makes no difference whether or not we get to excited about any trend or pattern once it becomes a mainstream because that means that it has already found wide spread acceptance and is not going to have much of an impact on us other than just going along with the crowd.
If you are paying attention to trends and patterns know that there are opportunities in which we can see this event horizon looming up in front of us. One of the ways that I use to monitor it is by going to annual conferences and walking through the exhibit floor. I often classify almost every booth as falling into what we refer to as SSDD or WIWIT. The first acronym stands for “same stuff different design” and the second acronym stands for “what in the world is that!”

The ratio in many cases is about 99% - 1. I will let you chose which of the two is probably the more common. The vast majority of people at conferences spend most of their time looking at the SSDD’s – when in fact the organization that is plotting to change its future ought to be looking at the WIWIT’s.

And then there is actually the idea that there are three determined ways of change in the fire service that are driving technological adaptation in our industry. I would submit that the cycle that is used to change modern fire and building codes and the cycle that is used to change technical standards such as the NFPA and ASTM and other standards making organization is a form of very subtle pressure for crafting future conditions. If you actually plotted out these various wave changes in our profession they would look like a multiple sine wave. Sometimes codes precede standards and in other cases standards push codes. I once got into a very extensive debate with a manufacturer who wanted me to adopt a standard for something that did not exist. His rationale was that if we created the standard it would force the technology to move in a specific direction. While that might be true the more logical thing would be for standards and codes to be based upon technology that is proven itself.

The greatest wave that impacts the fire service that we have done a fairly good job of ignoring is the wave of society. There has been a lot of ink spilled over the concept of generation x and generation y. There has been a lot of dissention over generational issues yet the reality is that society has always been a driving force behind what the fire service is or was going to turn out to be. We derive our members from our society. We take a significant number of our values from our society. Granted we tend to be somewhat self-selective in that we do choose people with specific values that in the past have created a certain culture. But even that is changing.

I don’t want to give the idea that I think that everything that is happening means that is going to happen to us. Instead what I am saying is that everything that is happening has the possibility of having to be dealt with by us. We have to start thinking in terms of anticipated responses to trends and patterns that are going on in society. Some people are good at this. Others haven’t got a clue. I am raising up the context of this type of a column because I think it is a professional skill that anybody who wants to talk about the future needs to hone to a more specific level. If you accept the idea that we need to develop future plans then you should simultaneously accept the idea that everybody is really good about talking about future events.
Chief’s Clipboard

After facilitating lots of meetings with firefighters I can tell you that many people feel that the future is nothing more than a duplication of today. There is ample evidence in the premieres of coming attractions that is simply not going to be true.

The crystal ball is not so crystal clear. I always cringe when I hear someone use the word prediction in a sentence. The world has seen a significant number of predictions by very intelligent and well-celebrated thinkers go completely awry. Instead I think what we ought to be adding to our vocabulary is I wonder if? And applying that to things that we observe going on around us.

Not unlike the movies that we are disappointed in after watching the preview some things that we get excited about never materialize. On the other hand sometimes the trailer in the movie does entice us to watch something that we wouldn’t have watched ordinarily and we are delighted by that experience. If you are going to think strategically start looking for an opportunity to do that kind of preview of your life in general.

About the Author: Ronny J. Coleman is the former California State Fire Marshal, Past President of the IAFC and Chairman Emeritus of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He has won numerous awards in his lifetime career devoted to writing about fire and life safety. You can read more of Chief Coleman’s columns at http://www.cafsti.org/tabletalk/

Stop, Drop, and Roll

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Last Alarms

The USFA reported 84 deaths to date in 2014. The following line of duty deaths were reported since we published our last issue:

- **James Foote** ♥ Summit, NY
- **Samir Ashmar** ♥ Allenton, PA
- **Arthur Treon** ♥ Cape May Court House, NJ
- **Tom Rhamey** ♥ Lakeville, OH
- **John Burns** ♥ Myrtle Beach, SC
- **Joyce Craig-Lewis** Philadelphia, PA
- **Gus Losleben** Savanna, TN

2014 Totals

♥ 56 (66%) ➙ 9 (10%)

♥ Indicates cardiac related death
 Printed indicates vehicle accident related

Taking Care of Our Own

Check with your Fire Chief if you wish to make a leave donation.

There are currently 28 DoD firefighters in the Taking Care of Our Own program.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Reynard Black</td>
<td>NWS Yorktown, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil">Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Booren</td>
<td>MCB Quantico, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Raymond.Loving@usmc.mil">Raymond.Loving@usmc.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Burke</td>
<td>Fort Wainwright, AK</td>
<td><a href="mailto:David.Halbrooks@us.army.mil">David.Halbrooks@us.army.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Campbell</td>
<td>NAVBASE Ventura County, CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Paula.Hays@navy.mil">Paula.Hays@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Cerulli</td>
<td>DLA San Joaquin, CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dewey.Rose@dla.mil">Dewey.Rose@dla.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billie Edwards</td>
<td>March ARB, CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Melinda.Miller.2@us.af.mil">Melinda.Miller.2@us.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Fines</td>
<td>Fort Belvoir, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Erika.M.Nieves.civ@mail.mil">Erika.M.Nieves.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Garman</td>
<td>Fort Detrick, MD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Katherine.M.Szamier-Bennett.civ@mail.mil">Katherine.M.Szamier-Bennett.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Giles</td>
<td>Kirtland AFB, NM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil">Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gill</td>
<td>NAS JRB Fort Worth, TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil">Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Humphries</td>
<td>USAG Camp Parks, CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Alexis.A.Rivera8.civ@mail.mil">Alexis.A.Rivera8.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Jefferson</td>
<td>Kirtland AFB, NM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil">Curtis2.Ray@kirtland.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derwin Jones</td>
<td>Pine Bluff Arsenal, AR</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Paul.A.Jarrell2.civ@mail.mil">Paul.A.Jarrell2.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Klouzal</td>
<td>Norfolk Naval Shipyard, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil">Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Lumpkin</td>
<td>Fort Belvoir, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joyce.R.Peck.civ@mail.mil">Joyce.R.Peck.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael McClure</td>
<td>Niagara Falls, NY</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Peter.Stein@us.af.mil">Peter.Stein@us.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Noel</td>
<td>Ft Campbell, KY</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Charlotte.M.Epps.civ@mail.mil">Charlotte.M.Epps.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Picard</td>
<td>Westover ARB, MA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Diane.Lessard@us.af.mil">Diane.Lessard@us.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Reynolds</td>
<td>Niagara Falls, NY</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Peter.Stein@us.af.mil">Peter.Stein@us.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Sands</td>
<td>Altus AFB, OK</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Nils.Brobjorg@altus.af.mil">Nils.Brobjorg@altus.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey Tajalle</td>
<td>NAVBASE Guam</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Julie.Quinene@fe.navy.mil">Julie.Quinene@fe.navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Teno</td>
<td>NAS Oceana, VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil">Marc.J.Smith@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Trost</td>
<td>Wright Patterson AFB, OH</td>
<td><a href="mailto:David.Warner@wpafb.af.mil">David.Warner@wpafb.af.mil</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Melvin Wilson</td>
<td>NAS JRB Fort Worth, TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil">Allen.Almodovar@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeannine LaFranchise</td>
<td>DLA San Joaquin, CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Gregory.Watkins@dla.mil">Gregory.Watkins@dla.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Paul</td>
<td>Fort Carson, CO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Steven.R.Conner12.civ@mail.mil">Steven.R.Conner12.civ@mail.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Bertrand</td>
<td>NAS JRB New Orleans, LA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kathleen.McQuire1@navy.mil">Kathleen.McQuire1@navy.mil</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Garcia</td>
<td>Dyess AFB, TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Floyd.Jones@us.af.mil">Floyd.Jones@us.af.mil</a></td>
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Contact your Fire Chief for details about enrolling in the Taking Care of Our Own program.
William Baldwin

Retired Area Fire Marshal Passes

William "Bill" Lance Baldwin, "Bill" to his many friends and family, passed away at his home on 7 November 2014 with his family present. He had bravely confronted and fought cancer. He is survived by his wife of 26 years and was preceded in death by his parents; brother, and twin nephews.

Bill was born and raised in Southern California. He served in the United States Army and fought in Vietnam. He became a Federal Firefighter with the Navy and worked his way up the ranks to become the Fire Chief at Navy fire departments in Spain and Guantanamo Bay. He also served as Area Fire Marshal for the Pacific Region. He had a love for classic cars and owned many throughout his lifetime.

Below is something Bill wrote about a year ago when he was asked what was his first car and how did he purchase it? These are his words and you can hear him telling the story as you read it. He was such a great story teller and had so many to tell.

WRITTEN BY BILL

Due to my finally getting my learner's permit at age 15 ½, my dad gave me driving lessons in the family's 1954 Chevy pickup with a granny four speed, and a mighty six cylinder. Fortunately, we lived in a high desert town with an abundance of desert dirt roads to practice and learn to drive on. I eventually mastered shifting without grinding gears, stopping without launching us through the windshield and accelerating from a dead stop without stalling the engine. All of these new skills paid off when my friends and I would then drive the old Chevy deluxe up and down the alley behind my folk's house. Luckily it was a long alley and I could get the old Chevy up to almost 15 miles an hour. Fast forward about six months; I finally acquired my driver's license, got a raise in pay and hours at the grocery store and fell in love with a 1955 Chevy Bel-Air that was a trade in at the local Ford dealer. It was a low rider, with New Mexico plates, dual cherry bomb equipped exhaust (great sounding system), shaved door handles (foot switch under the car open the doors), decked hood, and full finned wheel covers. It had charisma and I really turned on the charm with the folks to let me buy it. The price! 400 bucks, I put down $70.00 and financed the rest with my dad's co-signature. Meanwhile a friend (actually my sister's boyfriend) asked me to sell him the transmission out of the old Chevy deluxe, he agreed on $35.00 for the gearbox and I threw in the rest of the car to seal the deal. So that was how I bought and sold my first car. Never did drive the old Deluxe on a paved road but did put a few miles on it during the alley drives, even picked up the neighborhood beauty by offering to drive her up and down the alley (it truly was a much simpler time then).

The beginning of a life time love affair with all things automotive and the spending of a lot of money on cars and car stuff, like my dad once said to my wife "well at least it keeps him out of the bars!"

Rest in Peace Chief Baldwin.
**DoD Volunteers for LAST Program**

The Local Assistance State Team (LAST) Program is a collaborative effort between the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). The foundation realized that to best assist families and departments who had lost a firefighter in the line of duty – they needed to have trained personnel on the ground and available to help when requested within six hours of death. This could only be accomplished by developing a team of trained responders in each state who could be deployed immediately upon notification of a line-of-duty death. The NFFF began training personnel in these functions in October 2006 at the United States Fire Administration campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and has continued this training across the country wherever potential team members are available. Funds from the Department of Defense, Bureau of Justice Assistance grant make this vital program possible. No NFFF donation funds are used to perform any of the LAST functions.

When a line-of-duty death is reported to the NFFF, the Coordinator of the LAST in that state, is notified and they immediately make contact with the chief of the effected department or his/her designee and offer the assistance of the LAST. That assistance can include operational support to ensure the continuance of service to the community, any and all needed support to the family of the fallen firefighter, planning and coordination of funeral activities, assistance in obtaining behavioral health counseling for family and department members, and the preparation of local, state and federal benefit claims. While these teams may perform many important functions their primary responsibility, when requested, is to assist with the preparation and submission of the Public Safety Officers Benefit claim. The LAST will only assist after being requested and then will operate in a transparent manner behind the scenes to accomplish their tasks.

These LASTs are made up of members who come from all areas of public safety, as well as survivors of line-of-duty deaths, and volunteers from all lines of work. They are all passionate about helping those who have suffered the loss of a family member or department member in the line of duty. Whenever possible, the team coordinator is a Fire Chief who has experienced a line of duty death and has in-depth knowledge of his state and its fire service activities. The coordinator will designate one or two backup positions to his position to ensure that there is someone available should there be a line of duty death in their state. There are many specialty members on each team such as honor guard commander, chaplain, survivor, logistics specialist and benefit specialist just to mention a few. In large states, teams will try to duplicate these specialties in different areas of the state in order to shorten response times to all areas of the state. Team deployment can be as few as one member to a complete activation of the team depending on what assistance is requested by the department that has lost a member.

If you are from a state where a team does not exist, please contact John Proels at jproels@firehero.org for more information.
Over the years the Marine Corps Fire and Emergency Services have operated with a unique combination of commercial and military based fire apparatus to protect the vast range of hazards at their installations. During 1949 the Marine Corps acquired seventeen custom chassis pumpers from Ward LaFrance Truck Corporation located in Elmira Heights, NY.

These model 75-TS pumpers were among the first to be built with the canopy style cab with a rear facing bench seat for the crew with a cross body walkway. The pumpers were built on a 175 inch wheelbase and were equipped with a Waterous 750 gpm two stage pump with a 250 gallon water tank. Powered by a Waukesha gasoline engine rated at 150 horsepower these pumpers carried a powder foam system with hoppers prominently mounted over the front of the hose bed. These pumpers were assigned Ward LaFrance serial numbers 2433 through 2449 and unfortunately none of these unique rigs are known to have survived after they were retired from service.

After the outbreak of World War II many fire apparatus manufacturers including, Mack, Maxim and Seagrave devoted their entire production to support the war effort including building hundreds of commercial and custom chassis fire apparatus. Vehicles were frequently transferred between military installations which made for some appearances when viewing the apparatus fleet.

The photo shows the lineup of nine pieces of Camp Pendleton apparatus from some point during the 1950’s. The apparatus are posed in front of Camp Pendleton Fire Station 1 which still serves as the headquarters station at Camp Pendleton and houses a truck company, attack and brush units as well as the department’s hazardous materials unit.
Apparatus depicted in the photo include an early 1940’s Mack L model 750 gpm pumper that was originally acquired by the U.S. Navy, two of the 1949 Ward LaFrance 750 gpm pumpers with the third unit from the left being a 1939 GMC commercial chassis built by Howe Fire Apparatus. The forth unit from the right is a Chevrolet chassis with unknown bodywork.

The two military rigs are 1940’s vintage International model M-5H-6 2.5 ton 6x6 chassis with a John Bean fire pump package. The open cab unit appears to have a 300 gallon water tank with twin booster reels mounted on top of the body. The unit equipped with a canvas top over the cab was equipped with a larger 800 gallon water tank with two booster reels. These were go anywhere vehicles used to combat the wild land fires on the installation and no doubt saw heavy use during their time. These heavy brush trucks were the forerunner to the military chassis apparatus that were designed and built on Camp Pendleton in later years. These M-813-A1 trucks were rated at five tons and could safely operate on twenty percent grade.

The last two units were an early 1950’s International pickup along with a Jeep which was pressed into service as a utility and command vehicle. When compared to municipal fire apparatus of this era these units were somewhat austere in appearance with no chrome or polished brass and minimal warning lights. Other than the Ward LaFrance pumpers the crews rode on the rear step or tailboard and were exposed to the elements. That’s the way it was Back in the Day!

This new ARFF unit is early in its production run. It should be completed in January and delivered to Naval Base Ventura County shortly thereafter. Belated Merry Christmas NBVC!!
Naval Air Station Lemoore’s Rescue Task Force (RTF) is among the first of its kind to operate within the U.S. Navy.

Commander, Navy Installations Command validated Navy Region Southwest installations to continue beta-testing the RTFs during active shooter and mass casualty incidents. The concept of the RTF is to integrate emergency medical technicians into law enforcement’s response to an active shooter. The goal of the RTF is to save lives. “We want to inject life-saving personnel into the scene more quickly to provide emergency care for the injured,” explained Fire Chief Gary Alvidrez. “The mission of saving lives remains the same. The manner of saving lives during an active shooter or mass manner needed to change.”

Traditionally, law enforcement and fire services operated independently within their own lanes of expertise as if they would never intersect during a criminal mass casualty event like an active shooter.

In the initial moments of an active shooter or mass casualty incident, law enforcement is focused on locating, containing and eliminating the threat. Meanwhile, fire and emergency medical technician resources are planning for rapid triage, treatment and extrication of the wounded.

“It enables the police to interdict the suspect's killing spree while ensuring fire can treat and transport all immediate critical victims within 45 minutes of the initial 9-1-1 call,” Alvidrez said. “This coordinated response assures the early interdiction of the shooter and the advanced medical treatment well-within the ‘golden hour’ of trauma care. This is how lives are saved.”

NAS Lemoore’s Fire and Emergency Services and Security forces have been training together since May, and will continue to train together during regularly scheduled active shooter training exercises.
Imagining the Accreditation Process

Twenty years ago, a group of thought leaders imagined a new system for fire departments to tell their stories. The system would introduce such terms as standard of cover and self-assessment to the industry. For 200 agencies across the world, strategic planning, risk assessment, and continuous improvement are now part of their everyday operations and the way they choose to run their organizations.

In 2012, efforts to reimagine the CFAI Accreditation Model began. Rather than a simple update, the ambitious goal of the Reimagining Project was to consider every facet of the self-assessment model and process and to ensure it continued to push for excellence in the industry.

The CPSE Board of Directors appointed a Steering Committee led by Chief Steve Westermann to oversee the project. Mr. Max Baker, Chief Derek Bergsten, Mr. Rick Brockman, Chief Allan Cain, and Ms. Sarah McEntee also serve on the Steering Committee. CPSE staff is serving as the project management team with four dedicated project leads considering changes to:

- The model
- The process by which accreditation is accomplished and maintained
- The technology used during the accreditation process
- The community risk/standards of cover publication

By looking at the accreditation program holistically, CPSE is putting itself through a self-assessment activity…so far we have learned some interesting things.

Mr. Jerry Nulliner is heading up the model group and has engaged over 150 subject matter experts to review each category, criteria, and performance indicator. The next step for the model group is to release their current proposed version for public comment. The proposed model will be posted on the CPSE website on December 1, 2014 for a 45-day public comment period. An announcement with instructions for where to find the model and how to submit comments will be forwarded by email on December 1.

The process group is being led by Mr. Brian Dean, Senior Technical Advisor. He and a committed group of volunteers have reviewed 86 pages of survey feedback from over 180 respondents. They are using this feedback to formulate recommended changes to the peer assessment, annual compliance report review, and mentoring processes among other areas. Some of the recommended changes will go into effect quickly as fixes to identified issues. The remaining recommended changes will be long-term initiatives to improve the experience of agencies going through accreditation.
Accreditation
(Cont.)

Working closely with Brian and his group, Ms. Rebecca Desch, is looking at technology solutions to facilitate agencies submitting their information to CPSE and review of that information. She is currently reviewing four solutions and is vetting them with members of the process group. CPSE is excited about enhancing its information technology not only for accreditation, but also for credentialing, technical advising, and workshops.

Rick Fagan, Director of the Technical Advisor Program, will take the lead on revising the Community Risk/Standards of Cover publication. His group's work will kick into high gear when the new model is approved. In the interim, his group is conducting literature review of the current trends and teachings on concentration and distribution of resources.

CPSE is looking forward to an overwhelming response to the public comment period closing on 15 January 2015. The Steering Committee is meeting monthly with the project management team and project leads. The goal is to present the reimagined model to the Commission on Fire Accreditation International in March 2015 and publish the 9th edition of Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual in summer, 2015. Agencies that convert to candidate status within six months of the publications of the 9th edition will be permitted to seek accreditation under the current (8th) edition. CPSE will be offering webinars following the model approval to educate agencies on the significant changes. Look for updates on the reimagining project in the CPSE monthly newsletters.

Reimagining is an excellent opportunity for CPSE to engage the community, enhance acceptance of the self-assessment model, improve process efficiency, and identify new business opportunities. If you have any questions about reimagining, please contact Preet Bassi, CEO, at pbassi@publicsafetyexcellence.org or Karl Ristow, CFAI Program Director, at kristow@publicsafetyexcellence.org.

Personal Security

NCIS MTAC Issues Guidance

The NCIS Multiple Threat Alert Center will continue to monitor recent threats to U.S. military and civilian employees, and will provide updates as new information becomes available. In the meantime, please utilize best security practices;

- Review social media postings for any information which could draw the attention of ISIL and its supporters. Delete any information that could be used to identify your residence, place of work, or family members.
- Be aware of your surroundings when discussing professional matters outside of your work environment.
- Outside of work, avoid wearing clothing and accessories which signal your professional affiliations.
- Review social media privacy settings and activities to avoid revealing professional affiliations.
Anchoring Bias as a Barrier to SA

By Rich Gasaway

There are over 100 cognitive biases that can impact situational awareness, and subsequently, decision making. Many of these biases are discussed during the Mental Management of Emergencies and Flawed Situational Awareness programs because it is important for responders to understand that we may possess a bias without knowing it and without knowing the impact of it. One such bias is the anchoring bias.

Anchoring Bias

Anchoring describes our potential to rely too heavily on the first piece of information that is offered to us (i.e., the “anchor”) when making a decision. This can impact situational awareness and decision making several ways. For example, once we lock on to something that we think is right… that first piece of information… it can be very difficult for the brain to let go of it.

I demonstrate this during the Mental Management of Emergencies class when I provide the class with a word problem and then “trick” them by telling them what the “right” answer is. Once all of them “see” the right answer in their mind, I then tell them I made a mistake and the “right” answer is… which is actually incorrect.

The students are then provided an index card and tasked with coming up with (and writing down on the index card) the correct answer and turn it in to me. I provide the students with some additional information about the problem, defining some terms and giving them some guidance to help them solve the problem. Some of the students are able to decipher the correct answer right away.

It’s what some of the other students – ok, most of the students – do that is completely astounding. Most of the students write down the one answer that I said was incorrect and turn it in. During this exercise I don’t reveal the actual correct answer (until the exercise is over and the point it made). But I do clearly tell the students the one incorrect answer.

Our stubborn brain

Anchoring bias is an example of how stubborn our brains can be, especially when we trust initial information being shared with us. The initial information forms the “frame” around which we can try to make all the other information make sense. If something doesn’t fit that frame, our brains can filter that information out (as if it never existed).

During the exercise I mention above, when I reveal the answer is incorrect, I put the incorrect answer on the screen and put a very large red circle with a red diagonal line running across the circle over the incorrect answer… while I am telling the students verbally the answer is wrong. Remarkably, some students will admit they never saw the visual prompt on the screen, nor did they hear me say the answer is wrong. Their brains filtered out that information and they didn’t even know it.
The impact of anchoring on decision making

During the decision making process, anchoring can impact the quality of decisions two ways. First, once a person locks on to the anchored information, new information coming in may not get processed (or understood). This is what I will often refer to as flawed Level 2 situational awareness (a breakdown in the comprehension phase of situational awareness development).

Stated another way, simply because you see something or hear something doesn’t mean you’ll understand what it means. This is especially true if your brain is anchored to a piece of information that runs contrary to what you are now seeing or hearing. If given the choice, the brain will most often give deference to the FIRST arriving information, which is the entire premise of the anchoring bias.

Second, once your brain locks on to what it believes to be correct, it can be very difficult to let go and embrace a new understanding. Think about how hard it can be to get someone to change an opinion or a belief. It can be extremely difficult for facts to change opinions. If the anchor is based on initial information that is incorrect, getting the brain to let go of that anchored belief (or opinion… or assumption) can be difficult.

During the exercise I discussed above, it finally comes to the point where I have to reveal the correct answer. When I do the big reveal I can see the students have their moment of clarity – they now understand – or comprehend they were wrong. And now, after the fact, it is so crystal clear that they were under the grips of a cognitive bias.

Chief Gasaway’s Advice

Keep in mind that you are vulnerable to having your situational awareness and decision making impacted by the anchoring bias. As the first pieces of information are processed, they may be wrong. Dispatchers gather and share the first pieces of information to responders. That information most often comes from citizens who called 9-1-1.

Keep in mind that everything you are being told prior to arrival is forming images in your “mind’s eye.” This is what I term the “pre-arrival lens.” The problem with the pre-arrival lens is that it is almost entirely fictional… until proven (or disproven) to be factual… with a properly conducted size-up. If you’re anchored to incorrect information, it may be hard for you to comprehend the facts that are in conflict with a flawed pre-arrival lens.

While much research has been conducted on the anchoring bias, there is no real consensus as to what causes it or how to prevent it from happening. In one study, participants were paid cash in an effort to keep them from displaying an anchoring bias. It didn’t work. They were still anchored to the first information.

Richard B. Gasaway is a scholar-practitioner with a passion for improving workplace safety. In addition to serving 33 years on the front lines as a firefighter, EMT-Paramedic and fire chief, he earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree while studying how individuals, teams and organizations develop and maintain situational awareness and make decisions in high stress, high consequence, time compressed environments. You can subscribe to SA Matters! at http://www.samatters.com.
Fed-Mil Section

Call for Assistance
By Fletcher Dahman, Chairman, IAFC Federal & Military Fire Services Section

The Federal & Military Fire Services Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) needs your help. Our federal and department of defense Section members are leaving, retiring, or being deployed for long periods. All of these, and other miscellaneous reasons, have resulted in our total membership falling below the required number to remain an active Section as written in the IAFC by-laws.

Over the last few years, many of our past Section members have not renewed their IAFC and Federal Military Section membership and that has only exasperated the decline in our total numbers. Many of our active duty members retire at an earlier age than our civilian counterparts. When they separate from military service, we do not always receive forwarding addresses, changes in phone numbers or their non-military email addresses.

Our Section members have suffered through sequestration, furloughs, and reductions in force in virtually every branch of the federal and military fire service. Now is not the time to close down our Section, any more so than closing down fire stations, which has affected many departments across the country over the last few years. Myself and the other officers of the Federal & Military Section still desire to continue working with our IAFC brothers and sisters to Lead, Educate, and Serve.

Major issues involving our members need to be addressed and fought for, that is what the IAFC has been doing since our inception. On 29 April Senator Tom Carper (D-DL), Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and co-chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), co-chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, introduced a bill that ensures that firefighters who were harmed in the line of duty or contracted certain diseases are covered by federal worker's compensation. The "Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2014," S.B. 2266, addresses the difficulties federal firefighters face when they attempt to prove that injuries were a result from serving in the line of duty.

In addition, bipartisan legislation introduced this week in the House would allow federal law enforcement officers and firefighters to access money in their Thrift Savings Plan accounts without penalty when they are eligible to retire. The bill, H.R. 4634, would reform the tax code so that federal law enforcement officers and firefighters, who are eligible to retire earlier than many other federal employees, aren't subject to the 10 percent tax penalty on TSP retirement funds and other 401(k)-type plans tapped before the age of 59 and a half. Federal law enforcement employees and firefighters are eligible to retire after 20 years of service at age 50; that group also is subject to mandatory retirement at age 57 because of the physical demands and hazardous nature of their jobs. Border protection and customs officers would also be exempt from the tax penalty under the bill.
Fed-Mil (Cont.)

State and local public safety officers have been exempt from the 10 percent tax penalty since 2006; H.R. 4634 would extend that exemption to qualified federal public safety employees.

"There is no reason that federal public safety officials must wait, in some cases, nine and a half years to access the full retirement benefits they have earned and are entitled to," said Rep. Dave Reichert, R-WA, a sponsor of the bill. "This is a straightforward measure to make an obvious fix to our tax code and treat our public safety officials with the respect they deserve." Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-NJ, is sponsoring the legislation with Reichert.

Our Section has been tracking and communicating with our IAFC legislation liaison on these and other congressional actions and we do not want to lose this and other opportunities to provide our specific knowledge to the discussions.

The Fed-Mil Section is also a voting member of the Department of Defense Fire & Emergency Services Working Group. The FESWG is comprised of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, each of the DoD component F&ES directors, labor organizations, the DoD Fire Academy, and the White House Services and is the body responsible for crafting DoD F&ES policy.

Now I get to the point of how you can help. Many of our past members have moved on to work in local and DoD departments and may even be sitting next to you in your next staff meeting. Pass the word that we need them back to help us sustain our Section and that we value their expertise and insight. What would be just as helpful is for you to talk to your upcoming fire officers and Chiefs who may not already be part of our Section. There is an amazing amount of reference material and tools to make all of us better at what we do available to members of the IAFC and our Section. Consider it an opportunity to provide mentorship and let it be part of your succession planning. You can help us continue fighting for the federal and military firefighters and Chiefs providing fire and emergency services to installations around the world.

Thank you for what you do day in and day out in support of the fire service and those we have chosen to protect.

Out of Gas

In my early driving days, I had the bad habit of running out of gas frequently. Once, I was stranded at the mall and called my father for help.

When he arrived, I was under the hood, poking around. "I think there's something preventing the gas from reaching the carburetor," I said.

On the Job –
Kings Bay

Firefighters Test Metal Piercing Equipment
By Gordon Jackson, The Brunswick News, GA

There's one thing submariners fear as much as drowning when they are hundreds of feet below the surface in waters thousands of feet deep.

Even in the confined quarters of an Ohio-class submarine nearly the length of two football fields, fire and smoke can quickly spread, overcoming the crew in minutes.

That's why every crew member serving aboard a submarine learns firefighting skills as part of the mandatory training required to earn a dolphin pin, which designates them as qualified to serve aboard a submarine.

Now, Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is preparing to take firefighting a step farther.

Firefighters at the base have been training to use an innovative firefighting tool called PyroLance. The tool uses an ultra-high pressure stream of water capable of penetrating concrete, steel barriers and other shipboard obstacles to gain direct access to flames.

The tool gives sailors the ability to control the temperatures in a room to avoid "flashover," where it gets so hot everything ignites at once. Firefighters can turn the nozzle spray wide enough to protect themselves from the heat of the flames.

During a recent training session, firefighters entered an enclosed area with flames 8 feet high and burning at more than 1,150 degrees. After using the new equipment to douse the flames, the temperature dropped to 249 degrees, allowing access for first responders, Navy officials said.

Freddie Thompson Jr., Fire Chief at Kings Bay, said he was pleased with the results of the high temperature tests.

Yokosuka F&ES Open House II

Commander Navy Region Japan Regional (CNRJ) Deputy Fire Chief Gifton Lawrence and Chief Fire Inspector Mike Dionne organized and hosted CNRJ-Yokosuka' 2nd Annual Fire & Emergency Services Open House onboard CFA Yokosuka. Numerous training aids and activities were planned for this event to include an earthquake simulator, high angle rescue and fire safety house demonstrations, and a fire truck parade featuring 18 Navy and host nation vehicles from surrounding communities. Hundreds of onlookers visited Fire Station #1 culminating a very successful month-long fire prevention and public education campaign.
Mobile Training Device Simulates Aircraft Fires
Story and U.S. Navy photo by Donna Cipolloni, NAS Patuxent River Public Affairs Office

The Mobile Aircraft Firefighting Training Device (MAFTD) is a steel mockup enabling firefighters from Naval District Washington/NAS Patuxent River Fire and Emergency Services to realistically simulate an aircraft fire for training purposes.

“The MAFTD is built to mimic a number of different aircraft in one efficient package,” said Pax River firefighter, Capt. John Trossbach, lead instructor for the training device in the NDW region. “For engine fires, there’s a low-wing side simulating fighter jets and smaller aircraft, and a high-wing side for larger aircraft such as C-130s.” Other simulated exterior fires include the fuselage, auxiliary power unit, wheel/brake, fuel spills or a tail engine fire – even though there aren’t many aircraft at Pax River that have tail engines.

“Since we run mutual aid to St. Mary’s County in the event of a plane crash, we need to train for everything,” Trossbach added.

Fire Capt. Joseph Miedzinski participated in the training and even with 32 years of experience, still finds the exercise beneficial. “Being as we do not have many aircraft fire incidents, the MAFTD training allows us to maintain our firefighting skills,” he said. “It lets us [experience] real fire scenarios in a controlled environment.” During the exercise, Miedzinski and his training partner fought outside aircraft fuselage and engine fires, and then moved on to interior cockpit, galley, cabin and cargo fires. “We also gain training in attack hose line deployment and nozzle operation, as well as pumper and water supply operations,” he noted.

All fire scenarios are triggered and monitored from the “command box,” located inside a large semi-truck cab that also hauls the portable device throughout the region for training at other bases.

“The command box houses the main control panel and switches, and the fires are fueled by two large 250-gallon propane tanks onboard,” Trossbach said. “There are cameras so we can watch the live action; video recording so we can play it back later for evaluation; and a nitrogen-fed smoke line so we can add smoke in a search and rescue scenario.”

Trossbach explained that two operators are required during training – one in the command box, and one outside next to the fire crews. For safety purposes, either operator can shut down the prop at any time. There are also three emergency stops inside the MAFTD so the crews themselves can shut it down, as well as gas and heat detectors that prompt an automatic shutdown if unsafe levels are detected.
“In addition to fire department apparatus, an ambulance must be on standby as well,” Trossbach said. “That’s the standard for live-fire training, and this is considered live-fire training.”

Nine fire department members are certified to operate and maintain the MAFTD and every three years, recertification is required. Much of the upkeep to the device is done in-house. “It’s an electronic and mechanical device with a lot of moving parts behind metal panels,” Trossbach said. “We’ve been able to avoid downtime by having guys trained to handle a lot of the repairs.”

Pax River’s firefighters participate in required MAFTD live-fire training at least twice per year. “Aircraft fires are a serious situation because of an aircraft’s moving parts, special metals, composite materials – and the fuels burn hotter,” Trossbach said. “They can hurt you quicker than a building fire can. We train together and work together so in the event something happens, we’re ready to go.”

**TSP Plan News and Announcements**

**Active Military? Your Roth Contributions May Stop Unless You Act —**

(3 December 2014) If you are active duty Army, Air Force, or Navy (including Navy Reserve component who serve more than 30 days on active duty) making dollar-amount Roth contributions to your TSP account, these deductions will stop on 31 January 2015, if you don’t act.

**How your election requirements will change:**

Starting 1 January 2015, a change in myPay will require you to designate your Roth contributions as a percentage of your pay, not a dollar amount. If you don’t comply with this change, then the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will not be able to process your Roth contributions. This change affects your Roth contributions only; your traditional contributions are already designated as a percentage of pay.

**When the change will take place:**

The new requirement will take effect 1 January 2015. You will have 30 days to change your Roth election from a dollar amount to a percentage of your pay. If your new Roth election is not received by 31 January 2015, DFAS will not be able to process your Roth contributions until you update them.

**How to make the change:**

Log into myPay starting 1 January 2015. You'll see a special TSP section called “Traditional TSP and Roth TSP”—click there. Then, in the “Contribution from Roth TSP” section, you can enter the percentage of your pay that you’d like to contribute (10%, for example). Finally, click “Save” at the bottom of the screen.

Money Matters

End of Year Tax Planning Ideas
By Saundra Harman, sharmaninc@aol.com

Review TSP Contributions
Check your TSP contribution to be sure that you are going to be contributing at least 5% of your base pay each pay period. If you contribute the TSP maximum amount of $17,500 (for 2014) before the last pay period of the year you will give up the employer match.

Further, if you are not contributing the maximum amount and have gotten a promotion or within-grade-increase, consider increasing your contribution.

Finally, if you have attained age 50 any day in 2014 and you are scheduled to contribute the IRS Elective Deferral Amount of $17,500 (for 2014), you can do any part of the catch-up amount of $5,500 (for 2014). You need to complete the electronic TSP-1-C to start the catch-up contribution. The TSP-1-C must be completed each year unlike the standard TSP-1 election which continues until you change it. The TSP contribution for 2015 will be $18,000 and the catch-up amount will be $6,000.

Review your TSP account. If you are managing your TSP (as opposed to utilizing the L Funds) review how much you have in the various funds. Ideally you have developed a formula which establishes the percent you should have in each of the five funds. Over time, some of the percentages have gone out of balance due to varying rates of return.

Evaluate Your FEHB Coverage
Until the 2nd Monday in December (December 8, 2014) you have an opportunity to change your FEHB plan. During this period review your plan, what it covers, what it doesn’t and what it costs. For some, research the High Deductible Health Plans with Health Savings Accounts. (Remember if you are funding a Health Savings Account you cannot fund a Flexible Spending Account in the same year.) Decide if an FSA Health Care is right for you. A positive enrollment is required each year (www.fsafed.com).

The above are the primary things that federal civilian employees can consider that are unique to the Federal benefit package; general ideas that could apply to everyone include:

Prepay Deductible Expenses
If you itemize deductions, accelerate any deductions that you can to increase the deductible amount for this year. The easiest expense to prepay is your mortgage that will give you 13 months’ worth of deductible interest for 2014. Other items that are easy to prepay include State and Local taxes, and property taxes that are due early in the year. This concept can work for you if you “Game the Standard Deduction.”
Money (Cont.)

Back to Table of Contents

Game the Standard Deduction

If the combination of your annual itemized deduction is close to the standard deduction, bunch your expenses for itemized deductions every other year. Itemize in the year in which you bunch your deductions then use the standard deduction in the next year.

Loser Stocks Held in a Taxable Account

Selling losing investments can lower your 2014 tax bill; you can deduct the resulting capital losses against this year’s capital gains. There is a limit of $3,000 of net loss against ordinary income. But any excess loss can be carried forward.

Donate Stocks to a Charity

If you sell stocks that are worth more than when you bought them, you can donate them to an IRS approved charity. You can claim an itemized deduction for the full market value at donation. (Check with your accountant there are certain situations where there are limits and/or restrictions.)

Consult your Financial Planner and/or tax preparer for specific recommendations for your personal situation.

E-Cigarettes

FEMA Reports on Electronic Cigarette Hazards

Twenty-five separate incidents of explosion and fire involving electronic cigarettes (e-cigs or e-cigarettes) were reported in the United States media between 2009 and 2014.

The e-cigarette, also called a personal vaporizer or electronic nicotine delivery system, is a battery-powered device that simulates tobacco smoking by producing a heated vapor, which resembles smoke. In general, the devices use a heating element known as an atomizer or cartomizer to vaporize a liquid solution.

Even with so many devices in use, fire-related incidents are very infrequent. These incidents are typically described in the media as small explosions.

Descriptions and photographs of e-cigarette failures are consistent with known failures of lithium-ion polymer batteries, and reports of lithium-ion battery failures in mobile phones, laptops and other electronic devices are readily found. The causes of catastrophic failure of a lithium-ion battery can include puncture, overcharge, overheating, short circuit, internal cell failure and manufacturing deficiencies.

The majority of incidents reported by the media occurred while the battery was charging.

Cold, Flu or Allergy? Know the Difference

You’re feeling pretty lousy. You’ve got sniffles, sneezing, and a sore throat. Is it a cold, flu, or allergies? It can be hard to tell them apart because they share so many symptoms. But understanding the differences will help you choose the best treatment.

“If you know what you have, you won’t take medications that you don’t need, that aren’t effective, or that might even make your symptoms worse,” says NIH’s Dr. Teresa Hauguel, an expert on infectious diseases that affect breathing.

Cold, flu, and allergy all affect your respiratory system, which can make it hard to breathe. Each condition has key symptoms that set them apart.

Colds and flu are caused by different viruses. “As a rule of thumb, the symptoms associated with the flu are more severe,” says Hauguel. Both illnesses can lead to a runny, stuffy nose; congestion; cough; and sore throat. But the flu can also cause high fever that lasts for 3 to 4 days, along with a headache, fatigue, and general aches and pain. These symptoms are less common when you have a cold.

“Allergies are a little different, because they aren’t caused by a virus,” Hauguel explains. “Instead, it’s your body’s immune system reacting to a trigger, or allergen, which is something you’re allergic to.” If you have allergies and breathe in things like pollen or pet dander, the immune cells in your nose and airways may overreact to these harmless substances. Your delicate respiratory tissues may then swell, and your nose may become stuffed up or runny.

Allergy symptoms usually last as long as you’re exposed to the allergen, which may be about 6 weeks during pollen seasons in the spring, summer, or fall. Colds and flu rarely last beyond two weeks.

Most people with a cold or flu recover on their own without medical care. But check with a health care provider if symptoms last beyond 10 days or if symptoms aren’t relieved by over-the-counter medicines.

To treat colds or flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. If you have the flu, pain relievers such as aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen can reduce fever or aches. Allergies can be treated with antihistamines or decongestants.

Be careful to avoid “drug overlap” when taking medicines that list two or more active ingredients on the label. For example, if you take two different drugs that contain acetaminophen – one for a stuffy nose and the other for headache – you may be getting too much acetaminophen.

“Read medicine labels carefully – the warnings, side effects, dosages. If you have questions, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, especially if you have children who are sick,” Hauguel says. “You don’t want to overmedicate, and you don’t want to risk taking a medication that may interact with another.”
### Wellness (Cont.)

#### Back to Table of Contents

### Cold, flu, or allergy? Tips and treatments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
<th>Airborne Allergy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Usual, high (100-102 °F), sometimes higher, especially in young children; lasts 3-4 days</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Uncommon</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Uncommon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General aches, pains</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Usual; often severe</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue, weakness</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usual, can last up to 3 weeks</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme exhaustion</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Usual, at the beginning of the illness</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffy, runny nose</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Common, can become severe</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest discomfort</td>
<td>Mild to moderate</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Rare, except for those with allergic asthma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Treatment

- **Cold:** Get plenty of rest. Stay hydrated. (Drink plenty of fluids.) Decongestants Aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for aches and pains
- **Flu:** Get plenty of rest. Stay hydrated. Aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for aches, pains, and fever. Antiviral medicines (see your doctor)
- **Airborne Allergy:** Avoid allergens (things that you’re allergic to) Antihistamines Nasal steroids Decongestants

#### Prevention

- **Cold:** Wash your hands often. Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold.
- **Flu:** Get the flu vaccine each year. Wash your hands often. Avoid close contact with anyone who has the flu.
- **Airborne Allergy:** Avoid allergens, such as pollen, house dust mites, mold, pet dander, cockroaches.

#### Complications

- **Cold:** Sinus infection middle ear infection, asthma
- **Flu:** Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
- **Airborne Allergy:** Sinus infection, middle ear infection, asthma

Reprinted courtesy of NIH News in Health. For more information, please visit [newinhealth.nih.gov](http://newinhealth.nih.gov).

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### Friary Humor

#### Back to Table of Contents

**Monastic Holiday Banter**

At a monastery high in the mountains, the monks have a rigid vow of silence. Only at Christmas, and only by one monk, and only with one sentence, is the vow allowed to be broken.

One Christmas, Brother Thomas is allowed to speak and he says, "I like the mashed potatoes we have with the Christmas turkey!" and he sits down.

Silence ensues for 365 days.

The next Christmas, Brother Michael gets his turn, and he says "I think the mashed potatoes are lumpy and I hate them!"

Once again, silence for 366 days (it's leap year). The following Christmas, Brother Paul rises and says, "I am fed up with this constant bickering!"
**Healthy Recipe**

**Singapore Noodles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 oz. thin brown rice noodles</td>
<td>1/4 cup scallions, green part only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth</td>
<td>1 1/2 cups napa cabbage cut into thin strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Tbsp. curry powder*</td>
<td>1 cup sliced red onion, cut into thin crescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 tsp. ground turmeric</td>
<td>1 small red bell pepper cut into thin strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 tsp. salt</td>
<td>1/2 green bell pepper, cut into thin strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 tsp. sugar</td>
<td>2 large eggs, well beaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. peanut oil, divided</td>
<td>1/4 lb. small, frozen shrimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 garlic clove, finely chopped</td>
<td>1 cup (4 oz.) roasted chicken or turkey breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. finely chopped ginger</td>
<td>2 tsp. roasted sesame oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Break noodles in half and soak according to package instructions. Drain noodles in colander, run cold water over them and drain well. Transfer noodles back to bowl.

While noodles are soaking, in small bowl, combine chicken broth, curry powder, turmeric, salt and sugar. Set aside.

In medium skillet over high heat, add 1 tablespoon peanut oil. When oil is hot, add garlic, ginger, scallions and stir-fry until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add cabbage, onion, red and green peppers and stir-fry until vegetables are barely crisp-tender, 2 minutes. Add contents of pan to bowl with drained noodles.

Return pan to heat, reducing it to medium-high heat. Add remaining 1 teaspoon peanut oil to skillet. Add egg and scramble loosely. Add egg to bowl with vegetables and noodles, scraping up any egg sticking to pan.

Pour broth mixture into skillet, scraping out bowl. Add contents of vegetable and noodle bowl, plus shrimp and chicken to skillet. Stir, lift and chop until all vegetables, shrimp, chicken and egg are distributed through the noodles, 1 to 2 minutes. Drizzle with sesame oil and season with salt to taste. Serve immediately.

* Good choices for curry powder are Madras curry powder, the curry powder sold in the Caribbean section at supermarkets or curry powder sold in Asian food markets. These have a balance of flavors better for this dish than Indian curry powder.

**Makes 4 servings.**

Nutritional values per serving: 326 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 34 g carbohydrate, 22 g protein, 2.5 g dietary fiber, 474 mg sodium.

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Reprinted courtesy of the American Institute for Cancer Research, for more information visit aicr.org.

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I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.

-Ebenezer Scrooge
Firefighter’s Night Before Christmas
(with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the town,
the fire siren echoed blaring its sound.
The firefighters came running from far and from near,
and raced to the trucks quickly donning their gear.

And I in my bunkers my boots and my hat,
jumped to the engine to see where the fire's at.
Down at the corner of Fifth and of Oak,
the dispatcher informed us of a house filled with smoke.

Smoke poured from the sides, from up and from down,
yet up on the roof there was none to be found.
So up to the rooftop we raised up a ladder,
and climbed to the top to see what was the matter.

I came to the chimney and what did I see,
but a fellow in red stuck past his knees.
Well we tugged and we pulled until he came out,
then he winked with his eye and said with a shout.

"These darn newfangled chimneys they make them too small,
for a fellow as I, not skinny at all."
With a twitch of his nose he dashed to his sleigh,
and called to his reindeer, "AWAY now, AWAY."

As we rolled up our hoses he flew out of sight, saying
"God bless our firefighters"
... and to all a good night!
**Navy Fire & Emergency Services (N30)**
Commander, Navy Installations Command
716 Sicard Street, SE, Suite 305
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5140
DSN 288

Carl Glover, 202-433-4775, carl.glover@navy.mil

Ricky Brockman, 202-433-4781, ricky.brockman@navy.mil

Gene Rausch, 202-433-4753, gene.rausch@navy.mil

ABHCS Leonard Starr, 202-685-0651, leonard.starr@navy.mil

Lewis Moore, 202-433-7743, lewis.moore@navy.mil

Chris Handley, 202-433-7744, christopher.handley@navy.mil

Dan Gaumont, 202-685-0882, dan.gaumont@navy.mil

Eric Rhode, 202-433-6525, eric.rhode@navy.mil

Adam Farb, 202-685-0712, adam.farb@navy.mil

Dr. Michael Melia, 202-384-9815, michael.melia@med.navy.mil

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