

Maryland EMS News

Vol. 25, No. 5 For All Emergency Medical Care Providers June 1999

MIEMSS Honors 27 with Awards on May 18

Maryland Star of Life Awards:

- Emmitsburg Ambulance Company 26
- Vigilant Hose Company 6
- Frederick County Advanced Life Support
- Frederick County Emergency Communications
- Trooper 3 of the Frederick Section of the Maryland State Police Aviation Division
- Frederick County Sheriff's Department
- Adams County (Pennsylvania) Advanced Life Support Medic 28

The story of this save focuses on Kathy Messner. It is a story of incredible courage and dedication on Kathy's part and on the part of the prehospital EMS providers who fought to save her life.

Another unusual part of the story is that the chief of Emmitsburg



Chief Ann Marie Messner and sister Kathy Messner.

Ambulance Company, one of the first to arrive at the scene of the terrible crash that Kathy was involved in, was Ann Marie Messner, Kathy's sister. Chief Messner later said that in her 15 years of service as a volunteer EMS provider in Emmitsburg, she had never seen a personal injury accident of such magnitude that was not fatal and had never seen a patient with such severe injuries—including a broken neck and spinal injury—that had such a positive outcome. And now the details of the story . . .

Almost a year ago on Friday, June 26, 1998, Kathy stopped on Route 140, waiting to make a left turn. At that time she was 17, a national high jump champion from Catocin High School, who also had won 12 state track titles and had recently received a full athletic scholarship (for track) to Penn State University. Before she could even realize

what was happening, her Ford Escort was rear-ended by a pick-up truck. The impact propelled her into the path of a tractor-trailer that hit her broadside.

When the emergency care providers arrived at the scene, they saw the Ford Escort on its side, in a ditch, and under the tractor-trailer. Kathy, who had been driving, was pinned in the car, between the seats and facing the floor. Only her head, left arm, and shoulder were visible. But she was conscious. Her passenger had been ejected onto the grass and was conscious and alert.

Because access to Kathy was very limited, the emergency care providers were obviously hampered. Basic life support personnel maintained cervical spine immobilization, controlled bleeding, and tried to keep Kathy calm. Frederick County ALS

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(L-R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Paramedic Scott Gordon (Frederick County Advanced Life Support), Lt. Bob Rosensteel (Vigilant Hose Company 6), Bob Hower (Adams County ALS Medic 28), Chief Frank Davis (Vigilant Hose Company 6), Annette Sanders (Adams County ALS Medic 28), Chief Ann Marie Messner (Emmitsburg Ambulance Company), Kathy Messner, Chief John Frazier (EMS Board), Sgt. Dan Cornwall (representing Trooper 3), Sgt. Tim Clark (Frederick County Sheriff's Office), DFC Mike Ratliff (Frederick County Sheriff's Office).

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initiated advanced life support measures. Kathy remained conscious and alert throughout the extrication which exceeded an hour.

One after the other, conventional methods of extrication had been tried but failed. As a last resort, the possibility was discussed of removing the truck in order to roll the car (with Kathy still inside) in order to cut from the other side. At the last possible minute, the firefighters devised a plan as a last ditch effort to avoid rolling the vehicle. Firefighter/EMTs Bob Rosensteel, Jr., Hugh Boyle, and Ron Face created a harness out of webbing. Kathy was secured in the webbing, and with several other firefighters lifting and supporting her, she was removed from the vehicle. She was then fully immobilized and flown to Shock Trauma.

During the extrication, the rescuers were faced with many challenges. There was virtually no access to the patient. The Ford Escort was mangled beyond recognition. In addition, it was on its side, in a ditch, under a truck, and leaking gas. The scene of the accident was at a very busy intersection and at the height of the "rush hour" with no easy detour routes available. Numerous bystanders made scene control difficult. The heat index on that day was 103 degrees, and the rescuers were in full gear, doing strenuous labor. There was a relatively brief but powerful thunderstorm directly over the scene at the height of the extrication process. Trooper 3 had to skirt several other thunderstorms while en route to the Shock Trauma Center. And through it all, the volunteer rescuers remained calm and professional, and accomplished their mission.

After being evaluated by the Shock Trauma team, Kathy was rushed into emergency surgery. Her most severe injuries were a broken neck and spinal injury, in addition to extensive lacerations and bruises and a ruptured spleen. After 16 hours of surgery, Dr. Amiel Bethel, a Shock Trauma neurosurgeon, advised the family that not only had Kathy survived the surgery, but she had func-

tion in all extremities. Dr. Bethel further advised the family to seek out the personnel who had responded to her accident, stating: "Our prehospital providers deserve a medal. There is no doubt they saved her life." Ten days after the accident, Kathy was walking. Today she is at Penn State University on her scholarship, still pursuing track.

Maryland Star of Life Awards:

- **Paramedic/Lt. Mike Schulze, Medic 5**
- **Paramedic II Anthony Morris, Medic 5**
- **Firefighter Tommy Gordon, Station 32**
- **Firefighter Chris Talbert, Station 21**
- **Firefighter Raymond Lomax, Station 21**
- **Volunteer Firefighter/EMT Patrick Howard, Station 32**
- **Volunteer EMT-B Christopher Breedlove, Waldorf Station 12**

The life-saving actions of these Prince George's County emergency care providers were responsible for saving the life of Victor Wheeler, who suffered cardiac arrest and severe injuries when he was crushed by a car.

When Schulze, Morris, Gordon, Talbert, and Lomax arrived at the scene, they found Mr. Wheeler trapped under a car in the garage and in cardiac arrest. While an additional squad was being dispatched, Howard and Breedlove, who were with a private ambulance from A-One Ambulance Company, arrived. With their assis-

tance, the other emergency providers physically lifted the car off of Mr. Wheeler and pulled him out. They had no mechanical assistance. They then began CPR, initiated IV therapy, and intubated Mr. Wheeler to successfully resuscitate him.

However, since his breath sounds were still weak, the Medic crew had to perform the advanced technique of chest decompression. After this, Mr. Wheeler's condition improved and he was transported by helicopter to the trauma center at Prince George's Hospital. He was there for several weeks, and is now back in the community.

Maryland EMS Citizen Awards:

Eighth graders Samuel Guy and Jason Ferguson

Last year, on May 8 to be exact, Samuel and Jason, then in the seventh grade at Northern Middle School in Hagerstown, were eating lunch when they noticed that their classmate John Titus was red in the face, in obvious distress, unable to talk, and pointing to his throat.

Samuel tried hitting John on the back to dislodge whatever food he was choking on. Nevertheless, nothing happened. Luckily both Samuel and Jason then remembered learning

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(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Lt. Col. Maureen Hennessy, Paramedic II Anthony Morris, Paramedic/Lt. Mike Schulze, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Nadine Stauffer (health teacher who taught Samuel and Guy CPR), John Titus (saved by Samuel and Jason), Samuel Guy, Jason Ferguson, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Chief Michael J. Browne, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

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the Heimlich Maneuver at the beginning of the school year and immediately went to action. Samuel put his arms around John's mid-section and thrust his fist into John's abdomen. After a couple of tries, Samuel had almost dislodged the food. Then Jason tried, and after a few thrusts, the brownie that John was choking on dislodged.

Samuel and Jason were heroes that day, and in many ways, so was their health teacher Nadine Stauffer who had taught them CPR during the fall semester.

Outstanding EMS Program Award: Cecil County EMS Program

Cecil County Emergency Medical Services has worked diligently over the past year to increase the level of emergency medical care provided and to implement and ensure widespread compliance with its quality assurance program.

The following paragraphs touch on only a few of the many accomplishments of Cecil County EMS this year and indicate their impact on patient care.

Cecil County EMS has incorporated the Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System into its 9-1-1 Com-

munications Center and completes quality reviews on 70% of the 9-1-1 calls. Because the emergency medical dispatchers ask the callers standardized key questions, they can prioritize calls and dispatch the most appropriate type of emergency response unit. They can also help determine whether the call is an emergency requiring lights and siren or a non-emergency. This promotes the safety of both EMS providers and other people on the roads. Cecil County was able to document that lights and sirens were used on only 21.5% of its calls last year. In addition, the emergency medical dispatcher can provide simple instructions to the caller on the line while EMS transport is en route.

Cecil County EMS has also worked with the Maryland State Police Aviation Division to develop an automatic dispatch policy. When automatic dispatch is used, Cecil County EMS has been able to document a 10 to 15 minute decrease in the time it takes to transport the patient to the hospital.

Over the past year, Cecil County EMS career units were challenged to decrease response times despite a 17% increase in calls and no increase in resources or funding. Meeting the challenge, they initiated system status management. What this means is that they begin moving EMS units to pre-set areas while the adjacent unit is on another call. Much like a "zone defense" in basketball, the EMS units

slide from area to area to ensure the shortest possible response time to the busiest areas of the county. This has resulted in a decrease of advanced life support response time—the time from dispatch to arrival on location now averages 7.9 minutes.

EMS Media Award: The Cumberland Times-News

This is the first year that an EMS Media Award has been given. For many years the *Cumberland Times-News* has enthusiastically supported Maryland's Emergency Medical Services System through public education. Over the past year, the paper has been dedicated to informing the public about the EMS System, the need for volunteer providers, and training opportunities. They have partnered with the Region I EMS Advisory Council to promote volunteerism and class announcements. With the Region I Council, the paper has developed an EMS Volunteer of the Month Series that promotes interest in and recognizes dedicated volunteers. A photograph and article are positioned on the front page of the "Region" section each month.

In addition, the *Cumberland Times-News* did a three-page series on volunteerism that included a variety of articles relating to firefighting

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and EMS activities. For their efforts on this project, the paper was awarded a Maryland/Delaware/DC Press Association First Place Award for Public Service.



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Debbie Meyer (City Editor, Cumberland Times-News), and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

EMS Provider of the Year Award: Battalion Chief Dan Merson

EMS Program Manager of the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services for the past three years, Battalion Chief Dan Merson has implemented many improvements in the EMS system in Howard County.

He was instrumental in getting



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Chief James E. Heller, Battalion Chief Dan Merson, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

12-lead EKG equipment for the department, making it possible for every Howard County paramedic unit to perform 12-lead EKGs and transmit them to the local hospital. He further improved cardiac care by placing automatic external defibrillators on the EMS units.

The number of paramedics has tripled during his tenure. When the current trainee class graduates this month, there will be enough paramedics that each ambulance will be staffed with a paramedic. Most ALS units will be staffed with two paramedics. Under Dan's command, the paramedic engine concept was also put into place. Extra ALS equipment was purchased so that a paramedic who was assigned to fire apparatus for the shift could function as an ALS provider on the scene independent of an ambulance.

Dan also initiated a quality assurance program in which every medical incident report is reviewed by the field Medical Duty Officer to ensure compliance with the standard of care, protocols, and proper documentation of the EMS call.

In addition, Dan was a leader in establishing "ready reserve" ambulances for the county. Several reserve ambulances were fully supplied and ready to respond. This minimizes the time that a station's ambulance is out of service, due to the changing over of equipment. Despite all these activities, Dan still finds time to teach both ALS and BLS programs.

EMS Provider of the Year Award: Jeffrey Schaffer

In 1972, Jeffrey Schaffer began volunteering in the Maryland EMS System. Since that time, he has worn many hats in EMS and continues to add new ones.

Jeffrey Schaffer serves as the EMS Captain of the Pleasant Valley Community Fire Company Incorporated, which is in Carroll County. This, in itself, is a challenge considering that Carroll County EMS is an all-volunteer system. Last year, Jeff responded to 163 EMS calls. He also takes great pride in mentoring the new EMTs, teaching them what the "streets are really like."

This year Jeff is president of the Carroll County Volunteer Ambulance Association, which runs all EMS within the county. He also works part-time for the Manchester Volunteer Fire Company and the Westminster Fire Company. He has been a member of the Pikesville Volunteer Fire Company for 26 years and, in his spare time, works as an EMT with the Alpha Fire Company in Littlestown, Pennsylvania.

In addition, Jeff is vice-chairman of the Carroll County Medical Advisory Board, where he focuses on quality assurance on EMS reports and complaints.

Jeff has taught many classes. Currently he is one of eight instructors in Carroll County who train EMS providers to use the automated external defibrillators. He also functions as the CPR Training Center Manager at his "real job" at the Social Security Administration. When the Carroll County Ambulance Association wanted to start their own training center, Jeff agreed to volunteer his own time to help them. Each year he teaches CPR to approximately 500 people. As a CPR instructor trainer, he is also responsible for the re-certification of approximately 45 CPR instructors.

If all of this were not enough, Jeff is also the Carroll County Critical Incident Stress Management Coordi-

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(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Paramedic Jeffrey Schaffer, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

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nator. When contacted, he responds or coordinates a response to the scene for a stress defusing and, when necessary, coordinates a stress debriefing as well.

Quality in EMS Award: Liz Uhlman-Berg

Over the past year, Liz Uhlman-Berg, a pediatric intensive care nurse and EMT, has provided quality management expertise to MIEMSS and Maryland EMS. As chairperson of the Regional/Jurisdictional Quality Improvement Committee, she has provided leadership, organization, and direction to an area with diverse, and often political, interests.

As a key member of Team EMS, she has taken quality management



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Liz Uhlman-Berg, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

theory that is often only quoted, and has demonstrated how it applies to real world situations. She knows and understands both the successes and shortcomings of new management approaches when applied in the hospital and prehospital settings. This real life experience with quality management is something

that the EMS community is eager to hear and learn from.

Ms. Uhlman-Berg has done several workshops on quality management throughout the state, from Frostburg to Berwyn Heights to Point Lookout. All of her hours are voluntary.

Liz Uhlman-Berg dedicates her time and energy to quality management because she truly believes EMS makes a difference, and she is committed to showing through concrete data and a thorough understanding of people and issues that EMS does make a difference and can be improved.

Special EMS Response Award:

- Garrett County Emergency Management Agency
- Allegany County Emergency Management Center
- Garrett County Firemen's Association
- Allegany County Fire/Rescue Board

On May 31, 1998, a series of class-4 tornadoes devastated the small town of Salisbury, Pennsylvania, and cleared a path of destruction 11 miles long and 300 yards wide. The tornadoes crossed the Pennsylvania border and traveled through the small community of Finzel, Maryland. Homes, farms, churches, and businesses were devastated. In all, 800 residences were damaged or destroyed. Tragically, a 13-year-old girl died and 15 other people sustained serious injuries.

Two days later, on June 2, 1998, at approximately 8:00 p.m., another series of tornadoes struck the area. This time the storms were more ferocious and traveled further into Maryland, hitting Frostburg, Maryland with 210 mile per hour winds.

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(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Ron Dugan, Frostburg Volunteer Fire & Rescue (accepting for Allegany County Emergency Operations Center), Bob Shimer (Allegany County Fire/Rescue Board), Barry Beal, Northern Garrett County Rescue Squad (accepting for Garrett County Fireman's Assoc.), Brad Frantz (Garrett County Emergency Management), and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

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Homes were demolished, utilities lost, and trees uprooted. The scene was one of utter devastation.

In both instances, the responses of the fire and rescue services and of the emergency operations/communications centers were outstanding. Early warning notifications to the public from the 9-1-1 centers saved lives and reduced injuries. These same centers then provided alerts to EMS and fire units and coordinated communications between the hundreds of volunteers who responded to the disaster.

Fire/rescue personnel first responded by doing house to house searches and by providing care and transport where necessary. Medical staging areas and first-aid stations were then established in the affected communities. For the series of class-4 tornadoes that struck the Salisbury, Pennsylvania area, the Northern Garrett County Rescue Squad was designated the medical command area for the southern sector of the disaster area; they maintained that role until the critical nature of the disaster had passed.

In addition to providing first response to the disaster situation, the fire departments and rescue services served as the central staging areas for disaster relief and clean-up. These operations continued for over two weeks, as the affected communities fought to bring their communities back to a sense of normalcy following the devastating storms.

Leon W. Hayes Award for Excellence in EMS: Assistant Chief Charles Edward Bickham

This year on February 1, MIEMSS and Maryland EMS lost a long-time EMS provider, supporter, and friend. Leon Hayes died on February 1. Leon, a life member of the Waldorf Volunteer Fire Department and past president of the Charles County Association of EMS, was well known throughout the state. He had served on regional and state EMS

committees, including SEMSAC, which is the Statewide EMS Advisory Council. Leon was instrumental in bringing advanced life support to Charles County in 1978. Medic 1 became a model for rural EMS systems and is the first known all-volunteer system using a chase vehicle concept in the United States. Leon was extremely active in EMS education and injury prevention. An example of one of his educational activities is the alcohol, drug, and seat belt program that he developed for high-school students with the help of his family. The program is now used in many parts of the state.

Leon dedicated his life to EMS. As a tribute to his memory and to his achievements, MIEMSS established a new award this year—the Leon W. Hayes Award for Excellence in EMS.

This award will be given each year to an individual “who demonstrates through his professional and personal life, dedication to excellence in patient care, compassion and respect for each patient, and commitment to continuous improvement of the Maryland EMS system in education and in prevention.”

The first to receive the Leon Hayes award is Assistant Chief Charles Edward Bickham, of the Montgomery County Department of Fire & Rescue Services. Unfortunately, Chief Bickham was out of the state due to a long-standing commitment. Marie Warner-Crosson, the MIEMSS Administrator in Region V, who has worked closely with both Leon and Chief Bickham, accepted the award for him.

Assistant Chief Charles Edward Bickham has indeed demonstrated his commitment to excellence in Emergency Medical Services. Beginning his EMS career as a volunteer with Glen Echo Fire Department in the 1960s, he became the first

in Maryland to take the Cardiac Rescue Technician Course. In 1974 he was selected as one of the first four paramedics hired by Montgomery County to staff their Medic Units.

Since his first class, Ed has been extremely involved in all aspects of Emergency Medical Services. Beginning as a field provider he was quickly promoted to field supervisor rising to the position of Chief in charge of EMS. He has always been committed to EMS education and has served as an instructor for EMT, Rescue, CRT, Paramedic, ACLS, Nuclear/Biologic/Chemical Warfare, and CPR classes.

Ed's belief in the importance of EMS training was reflected in his willingness to volunteer his own time to teach Cardiac Rescue Technician classes in Charles County where, in fact, he taught Leon Hayes. He assisted in the development and expansion of EMS in Region V and throughout Maryland. He has taught at virtually every EMS conference in Maryland and many at the national level.

As a state, regional, and national leader of EMS, he served on a variety of committees and organizations dedicated to the improvement of emergency services. He has served with distinction as chair of the Region V EMS Advisory Council and Team Leader for the Metropolitan Medical Strike Force, a group he helped develop.

His dedication to prevention is demonstrated in his Chairmanship of

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(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Stacey Hayes Lucia, Sherry Hayes Santana, Mrs. Patricia Hayes, MIEMSS Region V Administrator Marie Warner-Crosson (accepting for Chief Bickham), and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

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the CPR Committee of the American Heart Association and his strong support for citizen education in CPR Child Passenger Safety, and other community prevention activities.

EMS Lifetime Achievement Award: John M. Murphy

Most of the people in the Maryland EMS System already know the Administrative Director of MIEMSS—John M. Murphy. However, they may not know that he is soon to retire. He has been working with and for the Maryland EMS System almost from its beginning. In 1983, he became the Chief Operating Officer of the Shock Trauma Center and trusted advisor to the late Dr. R Adams Cowley, founder of the Center and the innovator behind Maryland's EMS System.

Mr. Murphy has worked tirelessly with Annapolis to encumber funding for various projects. When the pre-hospital division of MIEMSS was threatened by severe budget cuts in the early 1990s that would have rendered the agency ineffective, Mr. Murphy worked to secure special funding for MIEMSS and other EMS agencies.

When MIEMSS was re-organized by Governor William Donald Schaefer in 1993, Mr. Murphy was responsible for its implementation that moved the agency from the University of Maryland System into the state bureaucracy. He served as administrative head



(L to R) MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, John M. Murphy, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

of the agency and the newly formed Governor's Emergency Medical Services Board. Since then, he has continued to serve as the agency's main contact in Annapolis, and has been successful in gaining support for upgraded EMS communication, training, and Med-Evac coverage, as well as the new building where the MIEMSS Central Office is located.

This building is very special to the MIEMSS staff, especially in light of the fact that the agency never had a permanent home. During the 1980s and 1990s, MIEMSS moved through six buildings on the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus. It seems especially fitting then that this building is named after Mr. Murphy; it was dedicated to him in January in recognition of his hard work and support of EMS.

His constant belief in Maryland's EMS providers has made him an extremely good ambassador for the state's EMS System. He will be greatly missed.

At the end of the MIEMSS EMS Awards Ceremony, the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services presented two plaques to MIEMSS Executive Director Robert R. Bass, MD, and to John M. Murphy, MIEMSS Administrative Director.

Dr. Bass was recognized "for his wisdom and leadership as Executive Director of the MIEMSS by developing and executing a method to support the local prehospital Paramedic Education programs in Cecil County and the State of Maryland."

Mr. Murphy was cited for his outstanding and dedicated service to the citizens of Cecil County and the State of Maryland by his support of the Cecil County Emergency Medical Service System through the wisdom and leadership shown during his celebrated career with the State of Maryland.



(L to R) MIEMSS Administrative Director John M. Murphy and Director of Cecil County Emergency Management Frank Muller.



(L to R) Chief of Cecil County EMS Michael J. Browne, MIEMSS Executive Director Dr. Robert Bass, Director of Cecil County Emergency Management Frank Muller, and Chief John Frazier (EMS Board).

EMS Week Activities Across Maryland

- **The Allegany County and Garrett County Commissioners** both did EMS Week Proclamations.
- At the **EMS Day at the County Club Mall**, in LaVale, Maryland, on May 22, various fire and EMS companies displayed their equipment and/or vehicles. Demonstrations of auto extrication were also scheduled throughout the day.
- Various articles about EMS were published in the **Cumberland Times-News** throughout the week.
- The month of May marked the **kick-off for the Volunteer Recruitment Campaign** sponsored by the Region I EMS Advisory Council Public Education Committee. The campaign included billboards, posters, press releases, theater slides, etc.
- Many individual companies in Region I held various events during EMS Week:
 - **Southern Rescue Squad** spoke to several schools on EMS topics.
 - **Southern Rescue Squad, Oakland** held an open house on May 15, including a child

safety seat check.

- **Northern Rescue Squad** held an open house on May 15. In addition, it held a bicycle rodeo in Friendsville on May 22.
- **Western Maryland Health Systems** held an open house May 16, for their trauma center. The Maryland State Police med-evac helicopter was also present.
- **Bowman's Addition Volunteer Fire Dept.** sponsored a simulated structural collapse drill, along with medical treatment of victims May 17. They were assisted by the Cumberland Fire Dept., Bedford Road, Baltimore Pike, District 16, Bowling Green and Allegany Co. Air unit, Allegany Co. Office of Emergency Management, and 4-H groups.
- **Cresaptown Volunteer Fire Department** demonstrated patient care during a simulated vehicle rescue on May 18 in Bel Air.
- A Child Safety Seat Check was held May 20 at the **Cumberland Fire Department**. Free CPR training was also offered.
- **Tri-Towns EMS** did EMS presentations at Westmar High

School on May 20.

- Blood pressure screenings were held at Bel Air McDonald's on May 22 by **Cresaptown Volunteer Fire Department**.

- A Child Safety Seat Check was held May 23 at the **Potomac Fire Company #2** in Westernport.

- An Open House and Building Dedication was held May 23, at **Tri-Towns EMS in Westernport**.

- **Frederick Memorial Hospital** provided special recognition and refreshments to prehospital EMS providers arriving at the Emergency Department.
 - **New Midway Volunteer Fire Department** hosted an Open House at their station and provided blood pressure screenings, medical equipment displays, various equipment displays from other organizations (New Midway's special unit, Carroll County squad, and ambulance from Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Department), auto extrication demonstrations, a search and rescue demonstration, fire preven-
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Marsh Smith, of the Eastern Garrett Volunteer Fire Dept. and head of mall security, is flanked by members of the Tri Townes Rescue Squad who participated in EMS Week activities at the Country Club Mall in LaVale on May 22.



New Midway Volunteer Fire Department blood pressure screenings.



Thurmont Community Ambulance Company Open House.

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tion information, Smokey the Bear, and free refreshments.

- **Thurmont Community Ambulance Company** teamed up with their neighboring Guardian Hose Company, which is adjacent to the ambulance company for a combined open house. Apparatus, including ambulances, fire apparatus, rescue squads, and an ALS chase car, were on display. The Thurmont Police Department and Mid-Atlantic Search and Rescue (including a search dog) also participated. Fire and EMS prevention and safety information, displays regarding automated external defibrillation, and blood pressure screenings were included.
- **New Market District Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company** held an Open House at their station. Demonstrations included a kitchen stove fire, automobile fire, and extrication of a patient from a mock auto crash. Apparatus on display included their station ambulances, fire apparatus, and

an air unit from Citizens Truck Company. The Frederick County Sheriff's Department also participated. "Medic 6" from the Frederick County Advanced Life Support demonstrated their equipment. First aid and CPR demonstrations were set up and free blood pressure screenings were given. More than 250 children from approximately 20 Brownie troops spent the afternoon learning first aid and CPR, including building a first-aid kit, which earned them their first-aid badge. State Delegate David Brinkley visited the station and participated in the events with his children.

- **A public service night** was held at the Harry Grove Stadium in Frederick prior to the Frederick Keys baseball game. Events included the Frederick County Sheriff's Traveling Posse Band. The Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association displayed ambulances, rescue squads, fire apparatus, etc. Police agencies, including the Maryland State Police, Frederick County Sheriff's Department, and the Frederick City Police, had various displays and equipment on hand, such as a mobile command center, special weapons and tactic teams and equipment, a police rescue boat, and other law enforcement equipment and materials. The National Anthem was sung by Corporal Yingling of the Frederick City Police standing on the home base area with a backdrop of flags presented by a combined color guard



Judy White, President of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, and the Keyote mascot of the Frederick Keys baseball team.

of the multi-agency police color guard and the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association color guard. A moment of silence was also observed for those who had given their lives in the line of duty in service to the citizens of Frederick County. The President of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, Judy White, threw the first pitch for the game to start. Inside the concourse, displays included fire prevention and safety materials provided by the Frederick

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At the Open House held by New Market District Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company, more than 20 Brownie troops learned first aid and CPR and viewed EMS equipment.



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County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association Fire Prevention Committee; a recruitment and retention booth staffed by members of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association; blood pressure screenings conducted by the members of the Urbana Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company; and information provided by members from the Frederick County Department of Fire and Rescue Services.

- EMS Week was kicked off with an EMS Reception sponsored by the **Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (WCVFRA)** held at the **Volun-**

teer Fire Department of Halfway, MD, Inc. Both the public and the EMS Fire and Rescue community members were invited. Senator Donald Munson and Delegate Bob McKee presented an EMS Week Proclamation from the Maryland State Legislature and Commissioner. John Schnebly presented an EMS Week Proclamation issued by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners. The WCVFRA Safety Trailer was present and conducted safety training for children.

- **The Washington County Health Systems, Inc. (Washington County Hospital)** published a salute to the EMS prehos-

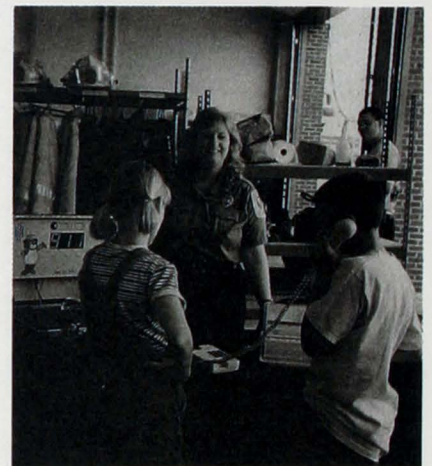
pital providers in the *Herald-Mail* newspaper. The staff of the Emergency Department of the Washington County Hospital provided a food buffet, door prizes, and special recognition to the EMS providers.

- **The Community Rescue Service (CRS)** in Hagerstown conducted an Open House dedicated to safety. This included ALS ambulances on display, several pieces of fire apparatus from the Washington County companies, the Williamsport EMS dive team and equipment, and a display provided by Safe Kids of Washington County. The members of CRS also conducted a free CPR training program for the general public. Educational materials, bike helmet checks, and child safety seat checks and other demonstrations were also provided. In addition,

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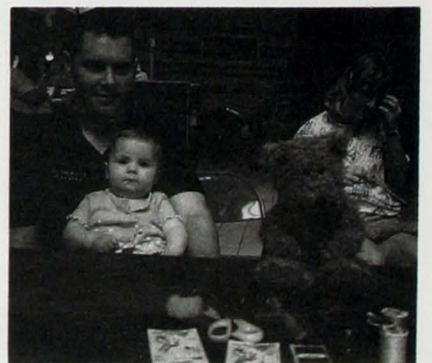
Learning CPR at the Community Rescue Service Open House.



Learning about 9-1-1 at the Community Rescue Service Open House.



Children received valuable safety tips at the Washington County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association Safety Trailer.

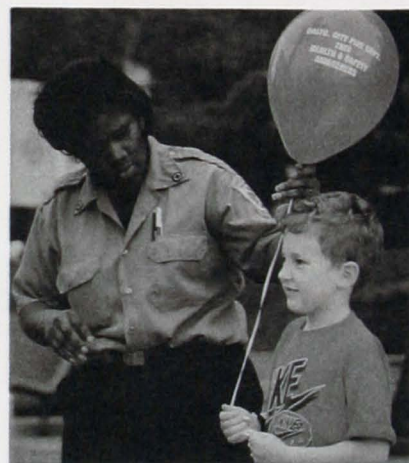


Teddy Bear Clinic at Valley Mall in Hagerstown.

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the Department of Natural Resources had displays, and a Med-Star med-evac helicopter was present.

- **EMS Week** was celebrated at the **Valley Mall Shopping Center** with participation by many of the EMS units from Washington County. The Washington County Health Systems, Inc., provided staff and a display for trauma prevention. The day-long event was sponsored by the **Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association EMS Committee** and included a teddy bear clinic and EMS, fire, and rescue apparatus and displays from various companies in the county, including the Sharpsburg EMS, Williamsport EMS, Volunteer Fire Dept. of Halfway, Clear Spring Ambulance Club, the Community Rescue Service, Safe Kids of Washington County, Washington County Health Systems (Washington County Hospital), the Maryland State Police Aviation Division, and the National Flight Paramedics Association. A Maryland State Police helicopter was in the Valley Mall parking lot. A free community CPR course was conducted.
- **EMS Awareness Day at the Annapolis City Dock** on May 23 included informational displays, blood pressure screenings, bike medic demos, and car seat checks.
- A **Safety Awareness Day** was held at Fort Detrick in Frederick on May 12. Included were an auto extrication demo and personal safety and self-defense sessions.
- **Baltimore City Fire Department EMS** sponsored three major events, celebrating EMS Week: a parade and health fair on May 16; an EMS demo at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore on May 19, including an auto extrication and rescue demo and a health fair; and the EMS Olympics on May 22. Presentations on "Stop the Violence, Stop the Tears" were also made at several city schools. (Another presentation was (Continued on page 12)



(Top & left photos) Baltimore City Fire Dept. (BCFD) EMS parade and health fair. (Photos by BCFD.)

Baltimore City Fire Dept. EMS demo at Baltimore's Inner Harbor.



EMS Awareness Day at the City Dock in Annapolis on May 23 included informational displays, blood pressure screenings, bike medic demos, and car seat checks. (Photo by Annapolis City Fire Dept.)

(Continued from page 11)

given to seniors at the Senior Citizen Building/Mt. Royal Recreation Center.

- **Cecil County EMS** hosted a banquet honoring EMS system personnel countywide.
- **Cambridge EMS** hosted a luncheon acknowledging the contributions of the various EMS provider organizations within Dorchester County. Expressions of appreciation went to the Cambridge City government, Dorchester County government, Dorchester General Hospital, and Dorchester 9-1-1. Later during EMS Week, members of Cambridge EMS conducted child safety seat checks.
- In honor of EMS Week, the **Memorial Hospital at Easton** provided light refreshments in their emergency department for prehospital providers from Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot, and Queen Anne counties.
- **Ocean City EMS and Ocean City government** held opening ceremonies at the Ocean City Public Service Building to kick off the beginning of their Red Light Running project. Representatives attending included local county and state law enforcement, town government, the Maryland Chapter of the National Trauma Society, the general public, and the news media.
- In **Caroline County**, EMS personnel demonstrated some of their work and distributed informational handouts at Food Lion stores. Federalsburg and Denton advanced life support personnel conducted blood pressure screenings and demonstrations. They also gave ambulance and chase unit tours. In addition, the Seniors and Law Enforcement Together handed out 9-1-1 sockets that replace ordinary sockets and are activated to signal an emergency. The light switch must be flipped twice to activate the socket, which signals the light to flash and makes it easier for EMS personnel to find the location of the emergency.



Baltimore City Fire Department EMS Olympics. (Photo by BCFD.)



During the Orioles game at Camden Yards on May 20, EMS providers were recognized during EMS Week.



(L to R) Dr. Richard Alcorta (MIEMSS State EMS Medical Director), Maj. Donald G. Lewis (Commander of the Maryland State Police Aviation Division), and Robert E. Knippenburg (then-president of the Maryland State Firemen's Association) participate in throwing out the first ball during the Oriole's game in which Maryland EMS providers were recognized.

1-800-FIRE LINE

"What if someone or even YOU called to report an emergency and no one responded to the call?" That is a question commonly asked around the country. Nationally, in thousands of communities, the majority of all emergency response services are provided by volunteers. In order to continue with the growth and stability of these necessary services, the Recruitment and Retention Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA) have become a part of this national effort. The National Volunteer Fire Council has implemented a toll-free number, 1-800-FIRE LINE (1-800-347-3546). A call to this number from within Maryland connects the individual to the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI). The MFRI person answering the phone takes information from the caller and refers the facts to a county coordinator. This coordinator then passes the name on to a local volunteer fire, rescue, or EMS company that will then contact the original caller.

Governor Parris N. Glendening kicked off the program at the MSFA Convention last June. This year the committee will be distributing bumper

stickers and posters at the convention to continue this effort. A poster was developed specifically for Maryland through the efforts of the Allegany and Garrett Counties Volunteer Associations. A poster contest was held among the students at Frostburg State University. Of the numerous designs submitted, one was chosen to represent the program in Western Maryland. The Allegany and Garrett Counties Volunteer Associations have graciously allowed the MSFA to use the same design for statewide distribution.

If you would like more information about the program or if you would like to request additional posters, please contact Bryan Ebling, Chair of the MSFA Recruitment and Retention Committee at 410-479-2622. Hopefully many more interested men and women will make the call to 1-800-FIRE LINE and realize that they can make a difference in their communities!

◆ Jim Brown

Preventing Infant Suffocation

Editor's Note: In April 1999, a Kent Island home day care provider was sentenced to 28-months in jail in the deaths of two infants who accidentally suffocated in her home. According to newspaper reports, the infants were placed in a full-sized bed with blankets piled around them to prevent them from falling off the bed. One blanket fell over the babies' faces causing them to suffocate. In light of this tragic incident, we feel that it is important to issue information on preventing infant suffocation.

Infants should never be put to sleep on top of soft bedding. Whether used on cribs or adult beds, soft bedding, such as comforters, pillows, and sheepskins, can mold itself around an infant's face. This hazard may contribute to as many as 900 infant deaths each year.

In addition to the dangers posed by soft bedding, infants placed on adult beds can become wedged between the mattress and bed frame or wall, and between the bed and an adjacent piece of furniture. Suffocation also can occur when infants sink into waterbed mattresses while sleeping on their stomachs.

"The only safe place for infants under 2 years of age is in a crib, whether putting them to sleep for the night or putting them down for a quick nap," said Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Chairman Ann Brown. "An infant should never be left on an adult bed."

CPSC recommends the following safety guidelines for preventing infant suffocation:

- Place infants to sleep on their backs on a firm, tight fitting mattress in cribs that meet federal safety standards and industry voluntary standards.
- Never place infants to sleep on sofas, adult beds, youth beds, waterbeds, day beds, or bunk beds.
- Do not place infants to sleep on top of soft, fluffy products, such as pillows, comforters, or sheepskins.

For more information, call the Maryland Center for Infant and Child Loss at 1-800-808-7437.



Gov. Parris N. Glendening tries out the 1-800-FIRE LINE while Carl Edelin, Jr., MSFA President, and Bryan Ebling, Chair of the MSFA Recruitment and Retention Committee look on.

EMS Applications Being Verified

In an effort to verify information on applications for prehospital EMS licensure or certification (including applications for renewals), MIEMSS is now registered with the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to conduct criminal background checks on applicants. Individuals should be aware that MIEMSS is able to verify application information using CJIS.

EMS provider application forms now require the disclosure of past acts, which may constitute prohibited conduct. (According to COMAR 30.02.03.02, prohibited conduct

includes "being convicted of or pleading guilty or nolo contendere with respect to a felony, a serious crime of violence against a person, a crime involving controlled dangerous substances, a serious crime against property, a crime involving sexual misconduct, a crime in which the victim is a patient or other person entrusted to the care or protection of the applicant or EMS provider, or a crime involving moral turpitude, whether any appeal or other proceeding is pending to have the conviction or plea set aside, provided, however, that the individual may apply for reinstatement upon any successful appeal

or upon the conviction being set aside.")

MIEMSS currently expects to use the CJIS to verify certain applications disclosing acts which may be prohibited conduct as well as to spot check other applications in order to be comfortable that reported information is accurate.

The EMS Board has the final decision as to whether under all of the circumstances an act of prohibited conduct should affect the right of a provider or applicant to render EMS care and, if so, to what extent. The first step in this process is obtaining accurate information, and MIEMSS is now better able to obtain that information.

Assisted Suicide-Prohibition Law

On October 1, 1999, the new Maryland law that prohibits assisted suicide will become effective. The law prohibits an individual from knowingly:

- Causing someone to commit or attempt suicide;
- Providing the physical means by which someone commits or attempts suicide with knowledge of the intended use; and
- Participating in an act by which a person commits or attempts suicide.

Violation of the law is a felony that carries a penalty of up to one year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$10,000.

Certain "licensed health care professionals" are exempted from the law when they:

- (1) Administer medications or procedures to relieve pain, even if the risk of death is hastened or increased unless knowingly administered to cause death; or
- (2) Withhold or withdraw a medically administered life-sustaining procedure under the Health Care Decisions Act.

At the present time, EMS providers are not included within the law's definition of "licensed health care professionals."

The Governor was very con-

cerned about this omission, and before signing the new law, he obtained the commitment of the Speaker of the House and the Senate President to craft a narrow amendment to extend the exemption to EMS personnel and firefighters at the next session of the legislature. Hopefully, the amendment can be retroactive to October 1, 1999.

Despite this omission, the law should not affect an EMS provider who is acting solely for the purpose of carrying out the Maryland Medical Protocols for Emergency Medical Services Providers or a valid EMS/DNR order under the Health Care Decisions Act.

The Maryland Attorney General, who also was very concerned with the omission of EMS providers from the exemption, has indicated that the law should not affect EMS providers carrying out their proper duties. When he issued his opinion on the constitutionality of the law, the Attorney General pointed out: "Of course an EMS provider could not be convicted under the substantive criminal provision of the statute unless the requisite criminal intent were proved, which would be impossible if an EMS provider were acting to provide comfort care in accordance with the

Health Care Decisions Act and applicable procedures. Nevertheless, equitable treatment of EMS providers suggests that this omission be rectified promptly at the next session."

The Health Care Decisions Act contains an immunity provision in § 5-609. That section states: "A health care provider [which does include EMS providers] is not subject to criminal prosecution or civil liability or deemed to have engaged in unprofessional conduct as determined by the appropriate licensing authority as a result of withholding or withdrawing any health care under authorization obtained in accordance with this subtitle."

The new law does not specifically provide for the repeal of this section so it is likely a court would continue to enforce this immunity provision.

Also, § 5-614 of the Health Care Decisions Act provides: "The withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures in accordance with the provisions of this subtitle shall not for any purpose, constitute a suicide."

Correction of the assisted suicide-prohibition law is a top priority for the next legislative session. In the meantime, while the omission of EMS providers from the exemption given other health care professionals is regrettable, it should not affect proper EMS care.

Maryland's Newest Med-Evac Helicopter

As part of Emergency Medical Services Week, on May 18, Governor Parris N. Glendening unveiled Maryland's newest helicopter, the twelfth in the fleet of high-tech med-evac, search and rescue, and law enforcement helicopters operated by the Maryland State Police Aviation Division. Standing atop the heliport at the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore, Governor Glendening joined State Comptroller William Donald Schaefer, State Treasurer Richard Dixon, and other state and emergency medical services officials to view the six million dollar rescue helicopter that will enhance the State's world renowned med-evac program.

"Today we dedicate an amazing machine that has two very simple, but very important goals: to save lives and to protect Maryland citizens," Governor Glendening said. "Thanks to a dedicated team of emergency care providers, medical personnel, and the State Police, Maryland's med-evac system daily saves the lives of citizens who sustain serious injuries. The addition of this helicopter will ensure that these life-saving services continue uninterrupted for many years



State Police Superintendent David B. Mitchell notes that the new helicopter will alleviate the potential service shortfalls while the oldest helicopters in the fleet undergo major required inspections.

to come."

The new American Eurocopter Dauphin N-3 boasts more powerful twin-engines that permit an increased payload, a larger fuel capacity, and the latest in on-board avionics and life-support technology. It is fully equipped to fulfill the Aviation Division's triple mission of med-evac, search and rescue, and law enforcement. The State Police helicopter also has a "new look" with a dramatic paint scheme similar to the Department's patrol cars.

"The men and women of the Aviation Division are committed to providing the people of Maryland with the best aviation services in the nation," State Police Superintendent Colonel David B. Mitchell said. "The new helicopter will alleviate potential service shortfalls while the oldest helicopters in the fleet undergo major required inspections. The addition of the twelfth helicopter will reduce the annual flight hours on the remaining fleet and extend the life of each aircraft."

The first Dauphin helicopters were acquired in 1989 and have since logged nearly 50,000 hours of

accident free service. The oldest helicopters are approaching 5,000 hours of flight time, when federal regulations require a major component inspection. The inspection takes about 90 days for each helicopter.

The vision of Dr. R Adams Cowley became a reality in 1970, when a State Police helicopter flew the first critically injured patient to Shock

(Continued on page 16)



The newest helicopter in the Maryland State Police Aviation fleet.



(L to R) Gov. Parris Glendening, Dr. Morton Rapoport (President and CEO, University of Maryland Medical System), John Ashworth (Shock Trauma Director), State Comptroller William Donald Schaefer, Dr. Robert Bass (Executive Director, MIEMSS).



The Maryland State Police crew for the new \$6 million rescue helicopter.



Governor Parris N. Glendening

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653 W. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21201-1536

Chairman, EMS Board: Donald L. DeVries, Jr., Esq.
Executive Director, MIEMSS: Robert R. Bass, MD
Managing Editor: Beverly Sopp (410-706-3248)

Address Correction Requested
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DATED MATERIAL

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Trauma from a car crash on the Baltimore beltway. Since then, more than 70,000 critically injured patients have been flown to life-saving care.

The success of the program has not been without cost. Six troopers have lost their lives in helicopter

crashes. However, no loss of life has occurred since 1986.

The purchase of the new helicopter was supported by Governor Glendening and the General Assembly during the 1998 Legislative Session. Funding for the \$6.06 million contract awarded to American Eurocopter of Grand Prairie, Texas, was approved by the Board of Public Works in September 1998. The

Maryland Department of Transportation managed the procurement of this helicopter, as it has for the entire fleet of State Police helicopters.

The helicopters are stationed at eight strategically located hangars. No one is more than 18 minutes from their life-saving capabilities. The program is predominately funded by an eight dollar fee assessed to motor vehicle registrations.

Mark Your Calendars!

- **Aug. 14-15**
Bridging the Gap
U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy
Emmitsburg, MD
INFO: MIEMSS Region II Office,
301-416-7249 or 301-791-2366
- **Sept. 10-12**
Pyramid '99
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Capt. Jim Olson, of the Littleton (CO) Fire Dept. and officer on the first arriving engine at the Columbine High School tragedy
Holiday Inn, Solomon's Island, MD
INFO: MIEMSS Region V Office,
301-474-1485
- **Sept. 30-Oct. 1**
10th Annual Peninsula Regional Medical Center Trauma Conference
Roland E. Powell Convention Center
Ocean City, MD
INFO: Chastity Landing or Lori Short, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, 410-543-7328



The Baltimore City Fire Dept. EMS demo at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore was one of many EMS Week activities held throughout Maryland. See page 8 for other EMS Week activities and page 1 for EMS Week Awards given by MIEMSS.