



Cowlitz Chaplaincy

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*A non-profit organization serving Emergency Service Responders
and Citizens since 1983*

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TRAGEDY STRIKES

Our summer finally got here in the month of June and, boy, our beaches and playgrounds were filled with folks who had been dodging rain drops during our long winter and spring. It was good to welcome the warmth of summer and anticipate BBQ's, lazy days and evenings just enjoying the sun and the stars and moon in clear skies.

Summer time is a time when we are forced to care for our lawns as something called grass that grows at a rate that defies the speed of normal growth. I swear I just get the lawn mowed and it is time to do it again.

Like all of us residents of Washington State, especially those who live west of the Cascades, a young family was doing lawn maintenance while their three year old son was riding his little vehicle around. For a moment he was out of the family's sight. The next few minutes changed their lives forever. Their little guy fell in the family swimming pool and drowned.

Six days later another family would experience the same horror when their little two year old son would

climb the steps of the family pool and slip under the water.

He didn't respond to the efforts to revive him.

A week later two men were enjoying canoeing in the Lewis River when in rough water the canoe capsized and one of the partners didn't surface. He was found the next day a little ways downstream.

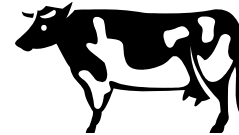
Three tragedies in a period of three weeks did, in fact, change the lives of family members and friends. Steve, Larry, and I experienced the pain and sorrow as we did our best to bring help through debriefings and comfort to family members, firemen, deputies, communications personnel, and police officers. I can reveal a truth, (we) all walked through these events with emotions.

The Lord revealed his grace, comfort, and mercies into all our lives. I want to offer praise to his wonderful Name. Thank you Jesus.

Summer time, a time of refreshing from the clouds of winter, a time of BBQ's, picnics and this year because of our economy short trips for pleasure. It is also a time when we must be ever vigilant for our care and the welfare of others.

WHERE'S THE BEEF

We, at the chaplaincy, are trying to meet our budget for this year 2009/2010. We have come up with a plan to raffle off half of a beef this October. So we are selling tickets for \$5.00 each or five tickets for \$20.00. We are selling during the months of August, and September with the drawing being held on October 7th.



The beef will be available around the 12th of

October. You could greatly help us out by calling the Chaplaincy at 360-425-7222 or coming by the office at 208 Fisher's Lane in West Kelso to purchase your raffle tickets. Just think ----- mmmm! Steaks, or hamburgers on the grill, roast in the oven on cold winter days. Boy!! My taste buds are already watering. How about yours? Your purchase will be helping us out and you have a great chance to stock your freezer.

**TICKET COST IS
\$5.00 EACH OR 5 FOR
\$20.00.**

**THE DRAWING IS ON
OCTOBER 7, 2009**

OUR MAILER

Again we are asking you to help us out with the future of our News Letter. We deeply desire to keep you informed on what Steve and I are doing to warrant your support. It seems like so many other things our postage cost are rising because of postal increases along with ink and paper costs. We post our News letter on our WEB SITE:

www.cowlitzchaplaincy.org, or we can e-mail each of you your personal copy. In order for this to happen we need your e-mail addresses. These are options that we are considering to be more frugal with your generous donations to the Chaplaincy.

REMEMBER US

Summer time brings challenges to us all with vacations, picnics, small weekend trips, and with our need for refreshing moments. Sometimes we forget that bills still need to be paid. This month of July our donations are way down.

Please remember us at the Chaplaincy as you can read in this letter we have been very busy being called out to render hope and help in times of extreme stress. Your continued support is so vital for us to be able to respond to the calls.

She is HOME!!!!

Miriam went back to be with her sister for three weeks to do fun things like painting their home in Cleveland, Ohio and going to hen parties,

whoops! I mean ladies' parties. She was overcome with delight when her beloved Indians won four games in a row two being against the Mariners.

It was nice that she and her sister had a great time and I sure did miss her. Just think August 19th she and I will be celebrating our 2nd wedding anniversary. God has been so gracious to me. she is such a delight to me. And guess what? She says she loves me. Hmmm! I wonder where could we go to celebrate???? Any ideas? Let me know at chaplainlyle@comcast.net, that's my e-mail address.



As I finish writing this newsletter at the end of July we have experienced seven drowning in four weeks and a total of 11 drowning thus far for this year 2009. Historically our two hottest months are ahead of us, which means the waters ways of our county are going to have an abundance of activity.

Common sense, life jackets, and extreme attentiveness of little ones can make fun times near and in the water an enjoyable time instead of moments of terror, and the horror of having a loved one or friend drown.

Please be careful and enjoy the refreshing of our cool waters and have good fun memories to enjoy for days to come.



Severe pain of the loss of a child or loved one; the joy of the wonders that the Northwest has to offer for enjoyment; the warm days and clear evenings for a hotdog roast and making smores over an open fire in the cool of the evening; Remembering to support a great resource and loving the Lord and your family. Life is great to enjoy. These experiences make up the life of your Chaplains as they serve your community.

Chaplain Lyle

**PLEASE
REMEMBER TO
GIVE US YOUR
E-MAIL
ADDRESS SO
THAT WE MAY
E-MAIL THE
NEWSLETTER
AND SAVE
PAPER AND
POSTAGE
COSTS.
Thank you**

Just Some Thoughts...

WOW – the past four or five weeks has been a wild ride. Hard as I try, I can't get off my mind the fact that we have had 6 drownings in our county during this short time period. I think that's a record – and summer is really just getting started! More pertinent for me is the fact that I was called to help law enforcement work 4 of those 6 drownings. My work of course is with the families of the person who has died.

Any death brings with it pain and heartache, but when the deaths are that of young children it really tugs at your heart. We had 2 kids, ages 2 and 3 drown in backyard pools within 6 days of each other. The ripples of agony that these tragic events created affected our entire county. Fortunately I only worked one of these cases (my partner, Lyle, worked the other one). I worked closely with the family of the 3-year-old boy (including officiating at his memorial service) in the days following. I also spent time helping our emergency responders deal with this tragedy. These are the calls that tend to “stick inside” even us for a while.

Just a few days later I responded to what we thought was another backyard pool infant drowning – this one ended in a good way as the 2-year-old boy survived with no permanent damage. About 10 days later I heard

of another ‘near-drowning’ of a 3-year-old on one of our rivers. We all know how quickly little kids can get ‘out of our sight’ and that’s what happened in these cases. Still, as adults we need to do EVERYTHING we can to help prevent these kinds of accidents. **PLEASE**, moms and dads, help your kids have fun this summer, but do it safely!

The other drownings I worked involved young men in their early 20's – still a real heartache for family and friends. Each of these young men drowned in one of our rivers and each one has its own tragic story. In fact, as I write this, we still have not recovered the body of one of these young men. Our rivers are notoriously dangerous and can overpower even the best of swimmers in a heartbeat.

**REMEMBER:
LIFE JACKETS
SAVE LIFES!**



Perhaps the “silver lining” in all this is the reality that there is also a 9-year-old little girl alive today because of one of these young men. “Allen” lost his life saving the life of a little girl who accidentally stepped into a deep hole in the river. Had it not been for his courageous actions I would have been telling another set of parents that their precious little child had died. It was difficult enough to tell “Allen’s” family. God’s grace continues to amaze me as I’ve watched this family find strength to celebrate

“Greater love has no man than to lay his life down for a friend.”

their son’s heroism and minister

love and hope to the little girl whose life he saved. Jesus said, *“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”* {John 15:13/NIV}

On a brighter note, I was able to attend the National Social Norms Institute Conference in Milwaukie (WI) in July. This is another program I help with at Castle Rock HS each year. It is a campaign in the fight against destructive behaviors among young people (alcohol/drug use, violence, etc). A big difference is that this campaign recognizes the good choices students make as opposed to all the “*don’t do this – don’t do that*” campaigns. A phrase I picked up at one of the workshops is; *“Stop telling me to not do what I’m already not doing.”* I had to ‘chew on’ that statement a bit, but the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. The vast majority of our young people make really good choices every day and we need to let them know they are “in the majority” and it’s OK to celebrate making those good choices – to “give permission” if you will, to be different from the minority. For example, did you know that 85% of CRHS students DON’T SMOKE? Maybe if we bragged on the healthy choices most students make others would want to be in the majority too. (Studies reveal that’s exactly what happens!)

That’s a snapshot of my world these days. Please keep the families of our victims in your prayers. And **thanks again for all YOU do** to keep me “on the road...” Shalom!

Chap Steve

