

Lights & Sirens

SPRING 2017



40 YEARS
1977 - 2017

San Juan Island EMS celebrates 40 years



San Juan Island EMS has come a long way since the days of this low-slung, 1959 Cadillac ambulance, parked under a shed roof. It was donated by convalescent center owners Gale and Doreen Carter.

Helping neighbors in crisis has always been an essential part of life on San Juan Island. Emergency care began in the 1860s with the midnight canoe journeys of island pioneer Lucinda Boyce; continued in the 1950s and 1960s with firefighters and physicians such as the legendary flying doctor, Mac Heath; and in the 1970s with the first group of trained EMTs. Today the San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services (SJIEMS) has five paramedics and 31 EMTs, and sets a nationwide standard for emergency care.

Forty years ago, a growing population and rising number of emergencies spurred Dr. Clarice Dorpat to conduct training for the island's first EMTs, including Chris DeStaffany, Dan Paulson, Paula Paulson, Joyce Hammond, Dave Irving, and Jay Hurlburt. The purpose was to create a cadre of first responders who could maintain airways and stop bleeding.

The first EMTs were alerted via a paging system through the fire district phone tree, according to Hurlburt, who retired in 2015 following 40 years as a paramedic in San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom counties. The first to answer would evaluate the call, and, if emergency services were needed, push a button on the side of the phone set. This would remotely activate a siren.

"It wasn't as advanced as the radio dispatch we have today, but it worked pretty darn well,"

says Hurlburt. "Besides ringing at a bunch of houses, it also rang at Herb's Tavern until 2 in the morning. And there was *always* bound to be someone there."

In 1978, Dan Paulson became the island's first paramedic. A few more islanders soon joined the ranks of paramedics and EMTs, and the small team performed two or more resuscitations a week. "If I had a heart attack, I'd want to have them around," Dr. Paul Chiles of Friday Harbor told the Journal of the San Juan Islands in 1979. The article stated that the team had answered five coronary calls within two weeks, "and in two instances restored breathing and pulses to patients who were clinically dead."

In the early 1980s, protocols for quick response and advanced, life-saving techniques were compiled by Dr. Burk Gossom. In the mid 1980s, Chief Frank Wilson established SJIEMS as a separate entity, and the organization grew along with the community. By 2004, SJIEMS rated among the top in the nation for cardiac event recovery rates. That still holds true today.

We've come a long way from a canoe, a Cadillac, and a phone chiming out at a historical tavern in the wee hours. Currently housed in a new building near the medical center, SJIEMS now has four ambulances, as well as a sophisticated radio dispatch alert system and peerless rapid response that includes air and water evacuation partnerships.

Notes from THE CHIEF



Dear fellow islanders, I am delighted to introduce the first edition of the San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services (SJIEMS) newsletter, *Lights and Sirens*. Our goal in producing this newsletter is to keep partners and the public informed and involved. Since we want this information to be as relevant as possible to your health care needs, we look forward to hearing any comments or suggestions you may have.

After 39 years in the fire service, I was honored to be appointed as chief of SJIEMS on January 1, 2016. This past year was full of challenges, including changes in leadership and development of new goals. Like the rest of the country, we faced some difficult financial hurdles in 2016. With the trust of the community, we passed the much-needed EMS levy with a 77 percent approval.

Our agency advocates for public safety, and is dedicated to the well-being of our community and our members. Our commitment is to provide this service by showing care and compassion to all those

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LOOKING AHEAD...

Future plans for SJIEMS include mobile health care through community paramedicine; expanded community education, training, and injury prevention programs; and acquisition of state-of-the-art medical equipment."

INSIDE ...

- Classes & events
- Air insurance
- Heart attacks



SAN JUAN ISLAND
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES

1079 Spring Street
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

ECRWSS
Postal Customer

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Friday Harbor, WA
Permit #9

San Juan County Public Hospital District #1

Board Commissioners

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Superintendent

Pam Hutchins

San Juan Island EMS Staff

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Jerry Martin, *Paramedic*

Administration

Tina Lynch-Teilmann, *Administrative Assistant*

Operations

Kaitlyn Johnson
Logistics Coordinator, Senior EMT
Karl Kuetzing
Director of Operations, EMT
Lainey Volk
Community Paramedicine, Senior EMT

EMS Supervising Physician

Sean Stone, *MD*

SJC Medical Program Director

Michael Sullivan, *MD*

Paramedics

Weyshawn Koons, *Emergency Response - 911*
Kyle Davies
Ryan Nelson
Noah Waldron

San Juan Island EMS Volunteers

Senior EMTs

Steve Alluise
Dan Bacon
Deanna Banry
Brad Creesy
Tom Eades
Tad Lean
Margaret Longley
Herb Mason
Francis Smith

EMTs

Jeff Asher
Steve Brumsickle
Karen Chadwick
Gabrielle Conway
Isla Cropper
Robin DeLazerda
Kati English
Devon Foss
John Gossom
Erin Graham
Doug Harmon
Maddy Harmon
Michael Hartzell
Michael Henderson
Jesse James
Cheyenne Mauldin
Humberto Orozco
Arna Robins
Dave Stanford

Support Officer

Debbie Grimes

Lights & Sirens Newsletter

Julia Vouri, Editor
Alice Shull, Designer

CLASSES & EVENTS

For more information, contact Lainey Volk
at lvolk@sanjuanems.org or 360-298-3378.

Wilderness First Responder Course

Orcas Island
April 8-17, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
(times may vary)

Cost: Tuition: \$600
Room & board at
Camp Orkila: \$500

Contact: Haley Winchell at
hwinchell@seattlemca.org

Camp Orkila
484 Camp Orkila Road, Eastsound

First Aid/CPR/AED

San Juan Island
April 23, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Cost: \$30
San Juan Island EMS Building
1079 Spring Street, Friday Harbor

Boating First Aid & CPR

San Juan Island
April 27, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Cost: \$50
Selene Owners' Rendezvous
Roche Harbor Resort
Party Barge at Roche Harbor

Wilderness First Aid

Cost: \$175
Orcas Island
June 9-10, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Johns Island
June 12-13, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Camp Orkila
484 Camp Orkila Road
Orcas Island
Camp Nor'Wester
Johns Island

First Aid

San Juan Island
June 20, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Cost: \$30
San Juan Island EMS Building
1079 Spring Street, Friday Harbor

CPR/AED

San Juan Island
June 22, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Cost: \$30
San Juan Island EMS Building
1079 Spring Street, Friday Harbor

Safe Sitter

San Juan Island
July 5-6, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Cost: \$75
San Juan Island EMS Building
1079 Spring Street, Friday Harbor

Help your neighbors!

Sign up for First Aid and CPR courses now.

We're looking for people living in remote island communities to help provide emergency care before EMTs and medics arrive. If you live at *Cape San Juan* or *Cattle Point*, and want to be part of a team that saves lives, contact Francis Smith at 360-378-6865 or fsmith@sanjuanems.org.

If you live in another community, and would like to form your own neighborhood team, contact Lainey Volk at 360-298-3378 or lvolk@sanjuanems.org.

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in need. One new priority is to expand our injury prevention program by utilizing Mobile Integrated Healthcare, which delivers care using mobile resources outside the hospital environment. This includes home visits as part of the Community Paramedicine program (*see article on page 4*).

We will continue to improve citizen outreach in 2017 through ongoing public education and training. Our focus is on injury prevention and safety through CPR and First-Aid classes, which will be offered on a regular basis. We also have a new group of 2017 Emergency Medical Technicians, who were trained over the winter to help us serve you.

I am excited about the future of SJIEMS, and proud of the 36 members who serve this community. I consider it an honor to be the leader of this progressive and dynamic department, and to contribute to its growth and development as we move forward.

Jerry Martin
Chief, San Juan Island EMS

Lights & Sirens is published three times a year by the San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services. It is delivered to all the residents in Hospital District #1, which includes the islands of San Juan, Henry, Johns, Spieden, Shaw, Brown, Pearl, and Stuart. We welcome any feedback or questions. Please e-mail us at info@sanjuanems.org.

... Quick treatment is critical after a heart attack ...



Marc and Denece Forlenza

One spring morning, San Juan Islander Denece Forlenza prepared to step into the shower when she heard a thump from the other room. She found her husband, Marc, on the floor, his face “a beautiful shade of blue.” He was not breathing.

Denece snatched the phone from the counter, dialed 911, put it on speakerphone, and started CPR. “I was stark naked,” she says, “but I knew I had to start CPR right away.” That decision, plus the life-saving procedures performed by the paramedic and EMTs after they arrived, saved Marc’s life.

Marc had suffered a massive heart attack, known as a “Widow Maker.” The rate of survival for this critical blockage of the heart’s main artery is low. If not for the immediate administration of CPR, he could have suffered permanent damage to both his brain and heart.

“I am so fortunate,” says Marc. “Because of my wife’s quick actions, and the speedy response and expertise of the EMS team from home to airplane to hospital, I survived. Now I get to make dinner and wash windows and do the laundry.” Denece has a ready response: “Don’t listen to him!”

If you, or someone you’re with, may be having a heart attack, call 911 immediately. Don’t wait, and don’t drive yourself to the hospital. Early treatment can save a life, and limit the amount of damage to the heart muscle. It begins with CPR by you or the emergency response team, and continues in the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

CLASSIC SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and returns.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulder, neck or arm, and sometimes the jaws or teeth.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath.
- Chest pain (angina) without other symptoms.
- Shortness of breath, especially during or after stress or exercise.
- Severe indigestion or heartburn that doesn’t go away with antacids, or is accompanied by weakness, nausea, or sweating.

A WOMAN’S SIGNS CAN BE MORE SUBTLE

In addition to those above, women may also experience symptoms that are milder and less specific. This is why many women delay seeking treatment, or wrongly attribute the warning signs to arthritis, heartburn, or anxiety. Symptoms may include heart palpitations, vomiting, loss of appetite, nausea, anxiety, a general feeling of malaise, or fatigue.

*Take heart:
San Juan Island EMS
consistently ranks in
the top 10 nationally
for cardiac arrest
survival rates.*

Be prepared with air transport membership



San Juan Island EMTs prepare a patient for transport.

Ferries are a way of life here. From city sprees to weekend outings, they take us safely where we need to go. But for medical emergencies, the best chance for survival is going by helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft. To protect yourself from a hefty flight bill of thousands of dollars, you need insurance in the form of air transport membership. Residents of San Juan County have two options. How to choose? “The best choice is to become a member of both the helicopter and fixed-wing plane programs,” recommends Jerry Martin, chief of San Juan Island EMS. “That way, you are fully protected for any medical flight emergency.”

Airlift Northwest AirCare membership program (Helicopter service)

Call toll-free at 1-888-835-1599, e-mail membership@airliftnw.org, or visit the website at www.airliftnw.org.

Island Air Ambulance membership program (Fixed-wing plane service)

Call 360-378-2376, e-mail membership@islandairambulance.com, or visit the website at www.islandairambulance.com.

Commissioner’s UPDATE

In the summer of 2016, San Juan Island Emergency Medical Services (SJIEMS) faced possible closure after two failed attempts to pass a levy to guarantee operations and capital equipment revenue. A third defeat would have resulted in the loss of SJIEMS.

To save our invaluable emergency services, the Public Hospital District and new SJIEMS chief, Jerry Martin, collaborated to reorganize the organization. We developed a 2017 budget with a group of citizen advisors. Community members formed a levy committee, and provided information through newspaper articles, town hall meetings, and door-to-door efforts. Thanks to this extensive campaign, a six-year levy was passed on August 16 with a 77 percent approval.

Through judicious management, SJIEMS finished last year ahead of the 2016 budget. Our goal now is to proactively manage finances, staffing, training, and equipment and operational needs. This will ensure that we can continue to deliver high-quality emergency services now, and into the future.

Bill Williams

Chair, SJC Public Hospital District #1

DID YOU KNOW ...

Emergency response time here on the island is equal to or better than that in a large city.



**Peace of mind through
EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS**

**Post your medical data
conspicuously**

Consider this scenario. You have a medical emergency, and you call 911. When the paramedics and EMTs arrive, they ask for an accurate medical history, existing conditions or allergies, and a list of medications. Could you supply this information off the top of your head? Probably not. That's why it's crucial to prepare ahead of time, and have these facts handy. Here are a few ideas:

- Create your own document by using the list below. Use a magnet to stick a folded copy onto the side of your refrigerator, and tuck another into your purse or wallet.
- Stop by San Juan Island EMS for a "File of Life" package. This includes ready-made forms for a wallet-sized packet and refrigerator magnet. A donation of \$5 is suggested.
- Use your cell phone to carry your medical data wherever you go. Most contact lists include "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) for emergency phone numbers. You can include medical information with either Apple Health, a built-in app for iPhones, or the emergency contact feature located in Android settings. There are also many free or inexpensive app options available.

Have the following information on hand for each family member in your household:

- Name, address, phone #
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Doctor, contact info
- Emergency contact info for spouse, family, and friends
- List of allergies, OR mark NKA (no known allergies)
- List of medications, OR mark NONE. Include #/day, strength (mg), reason (blood pressure, cardiac, etc.)
- List of vitamins or herbal supplements. Include #/day, strength (mg)
- Past history, including dates of surgeries or procedures such as pneumonia, cardiac stents, etc.
- * Additional relevant information
- * Date this form was updated

Next issue: Are your advance care directives in order?

Community Paramedicine program offers home visits

Last winter, senior EMT Lainey Volk made a house call to an island resident, who had recently returned home from the hospital after a bad fall. She intended to assess his home for fall risks. Instead, she ended up counseling him on how to take his medication correctly. "He had been taking the wrong dosage, which caused dizziness," she says. "That led to loss of balance, and a fall that landed him in the hospital."



Senior EMT Lainey Volk heads up the new Community Paramedicine program for San Juan Island EMS.

Volk also checks in with patients who are recovering from surgery, or are dealing with a new diagnosis. "One woman just found out she had diabetes, but didn't know how to measure her blood sugar levels," says Volk. "People get this information from their doctor, but it may be too much to absorb in one visit. It often helps if I can walk them through some of these new procedures."

Such home visits are part of a new statewide Community Paramedicine program that became law in 2015. The legislation allows paramedics and EMTs to enter private homes to provide non-emergency health services. The goal is to allow people with chronic conditions to continue to live independently, and reduce the number of hospital visits through home health visits and preventive programs. This is especially beneficial in a rural community, where EMS personnel can collaborate with local doctors to be another set of eyes and ears in people's homes.

Community paramedicine is a top priority for Jerry Martin, chief of San Juan Island EMS. "This is a very important program for us," says Martin. "We will be meeting regularly to discuss goals, training, and funding. Stay tuned."

Assess your home for fall risks

One of the goals of the Community Paramedicine program (see article at left) is to reduce the number of falls through home risk assessments. Many of us are at a higher risk for falling as we age, which can lead to hospitalization, loss of independence, and long-term health problems. A fall may be caused by a medical condition, high-risk medication, lack of strength, flimsy shoes, or a slippery floor.

Take the following steps to protect yourself.

- Talk with your doctor. You may need to adjust your medication, get new glasses, or consider using a cane.
 - Keep your body strong. Eat healthy foods, watch your alcohol intake, and exercise regularly to improve your flexibility, balance, and strength.
 - Safeguard your home. For a few ideas, go to San Juan Island EMS at www.sanjuanems.org, click on "Education & Prevention," then on "Senior Safety," and finally on "Free Fall Prevention Website."
- If you have questions, or would like a free home assessment, call Lainey Volk at 360-298-3378, or e-mail her at lvolk@sanjuanems.org.

Congratulations on a job well done!



JANUARY

EMT of the month



Robin DeLazerda

Robin is well-known for her endless energy and enthusiasm for helping others. Not only does she work at San Juan County as a dispatcher, she also responds to as many 911 calls as she can, and volunteers on the EMT Association board. Her new hobby is running, and she is often seen on the move around town, training for half marathons and fun runs.

FEBRUARY

EMT of the month



Gabrielle Conway

Gabe has been an EMT for nearly three years. She grew up on a ranch in southern Oregon, has traveled the world through work exchange, and is currently pursuing goals as a personal coach and fitness expert. She is thorough in her patient care, always offers a smile, and is an inspiration to the EMT students she mentors.

MARCH

EMT of the month



Dave Stanford

Dave has been an EMT for nearly three years. He is always ready to respond to 911 calls, and helps prepare patients for transfer from the medical center to the ambulance and airport. Dave is committed to his role as an EMT, and continues to refine his patient and medical skills. After a brief stint living on his boat in the harbor, he is now an official land lover.