

Local crews make a difference fighting wildfires

Clatsop County firefighters respond to fires across the state

By Brenna Visser
Seaside Signal

Cannon Beach volunteer firefighter Jordan Spencer remembers watching the Eagle Creek Fire on TV last year, feeling frustrated as he watched the blaze ravage the Columbia River Gorge.

All he wanted to do is help. So when Spencer got the call to respond to the South Valley fire earlier this month, he was excited.

"It was my chance to do something," he said.

Spencer was one of dozens of Clatsop County firefighters to be deployed to fires around the state so far this summer. This summer alone, four task forces have been sent to help combat the Substation, South Valley and Memaloose 2 fires.

Before 2017, it was uncommon for a local firefighter to get called out to a fire outside the county. Last year was a record-setting year, with more than 50 firefighters being sent to fight multiple fires in Oregon and California. Now, with three conflagration calls already under their belts before mid-August, this year is on pace to be just as busy.

The South Valley fire in Dufur was Max Savage's first fire outside of the county. When his name was called out at a drill practice that he was slated to go and had a half hour to get ready, Savage wasn't sure what to expect.

But when he showed up to the scene at about 1 a.m., he didn't have to wonder long.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH COMO

Josh Como, James Hutchinson and Lindsey Wolfe take a break while fighting the Memaloose 2 Fire.

The task force was immediately sent out to patrol, where Savage encountered a large spot fire and got his first chance engage a wildfire directly.

Over the course of four days, the main task for the task force was to patrol for spot fires and protect homes before the fire would approach them by clearing out surrounding brush and wetting down yards and rooftops.

But during the night of Aug. 2, the taskforce was sent out to a road that turned out to be one of the main fronts of the now contained 20,000-acre fire. Spencer remembers all of the task forces falling silent, as everyone started to pull line and prepare for the flames creeping forward 200 yards away. Eventually, the

wind shifted in their favor. "We don't normally end up right in front of the flame front," Spencer said. "It's a very surreal experience to have flames shooting up over the tree line at you."

One of the most rewarding aspects of the job is getting to meet the community you're serving Savage said. In Dufur, much of what was being protected was farmland, and task force members were working often working side by side with ranchers.

"Getting to work with the ranchers was such a rewarding experience. They don't have a bunch of rules and standards to follow like we do. They are just kind of winging it with their own equipment, Savage said. "It

was amazing to see them risk their own work trucks and lives to help out their neighbors."

Though the days and nights are long, often ending only in a few hours of sleep in a tent, what makes going on trips difficult is rarely the firefighting itself.

For James Hutchinson of Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department, watching someone's cash crop singe into black dust was often a humbling and somber experience.

"I remember on one fire someone came up to me and asked to use my phone to call home. Their phone wasn't working and they needed to let someone know the farm was gone," Hutchinson said. "In those moments you take a step into their shoes, and it can be

Seaside Fire hosts fundraiser, barbecue

Seaside Signal

The annual Seaside Fire and Rescue barbecue fundraiser takes place Saturday, Sept. 8, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All proceeds go towards tools, equipment and training to help Seaside Fire and Rescue Volunteers better serve the community. Last year the department responded to 1,495 calls and participated in 84 drills. Along with the barbecue, the fundraiser features a bounce house and prizes.

The fundraiser takes place at the firehouse, 150 S. Lincoln, Seaside.



EVE MARX

Water rescue equipment on display at the Seaside Safety Fair. Trucks, prizes and more will be highlighted at the fundraiser.

hard. But you have to make it a motivation and remember you are there to help."

Gearhart Fire Lt. Josh Como, who has been deployed three times and in three weeks, said often what is more difficult is what is left behind at home. Finding employers who are flexible enough to allow unplanned deployments, as well as balancing family dynamics, can be a challenge.

"Life goes on while you are out there," Como said. "Everything is going on at home, plus the people you love are worrying about whether you're OK. That's why it's important to take lots of photos to let them know you're safe."

But any challenges are overshadowed by what every-

one agreed was the best part of the job: gratitude.

"You see these things happen on TV, but until you're actually there, meeting the people you're helping face to face... that kind of gratitude you can't understand or see unless you're there." While there may be some inconvenience, Cannon Beach Fire Chief Matt Benedict thinks the connections and skills volunteers bring back from these trips make Clatsop County more prepared overall.

"A lot of the citizens are thanking us for helping out, and offering to be there for us if we ever need help," Benedict said. "I love getting to send people out. You don't get to use all those skills you spend training for until you're out there."

Robert Allan Coate

Seaside

July 24, 1941 — Aug. 17, 2018

Robert Allan Coate was born to Walter Augustus and Velma Devone Dick Coate in Portland, Oregon.

He graduated from Madison High School, received his bachelor of arts degree in health science from Ottawa University, and a master's degree in health administration from Alameda University. Robert continually sought learning opportunities, and also attended Portland Community College, Multnomah School of the Bible and the Mayo Clinic School of Anesthesia.

During an illustrious 30-year career as a certified registered nurse anesthetist, primarily in small rural hospitals, Robert was also in the Army Reserves, from which he retired as a lieutenant colonel. At one point, he was the commander of a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit in Wisconsin which was comprised of over 100 individual soldiers. Of all of Robert's career accomplishments, he was especially proud of the three times that he was able to deliver a baby.

Robert served as a deacon in the Presbyterian Church of Hereford, Texas, as well as

in the Cannon Beach Community Church. Robert loved children, the outdoors, learning and teaching, but above all else he loved life, and he loved people.



Robert Coate

He was preceded in death by his parents and a niece, Cindy.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley; daughters Susan (Richard) Greller and Sheryl (Katherine) Coate; grandchildren Judd (Ruth) Jones, Jacob (Cori) Jones, Haley Coate and Shawn Harrington; great-grandson Jasper James Wells; sister Jacie (Jerry) McQuinn; niece Kristen Vogeli; brother Walter "Butch" (Cherri) Coate; nephews Robert Coate and Christopher Coate; niece Summer Coate; and sister-in-law and brother-in-law Jon and Ruth Ann Newton and their children Christi, Andrea, Matthew and Tim.

A celebration of life will be held at the Cannon Beach Community Church at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Lewy Body research, Cannon Beach Community Church or Lower Columbia Hospice.

Please visit hughes-ransom.com to sign the online guest book.

Elizabeth Gail Gazewood

Warrenton

Dec. 2, 1937 — Aug. 19, 2018

Elizabeth Gazewood passed away peacefully at her home in Surf Pines, at the age of 80, on Aug. 19, 2018, with her husband and daughter present. Elizabeth was afflicted with advancing Alzheimer's, but a CT scan taken on July 13, 2018, revealed that Elizabeth had colon cancer that had spread to her liver, which resulted in her death.

Elizabeth was born to Thomas Earl and Callie Hazel Cornelius in Sanger, California, on Dec. 2, 1937, being the third of six children. Preceded in death by her brother, Thomas Cornelius Jr., Elizabeth is survived by her husband of 58-plus years, Robert; son Bob Jr.; daughter Kathleen Leader; granddaughter Molly Gazewood; sister Helen Marquardt; and brothers Kenneth, James and John.

Following her graduation from Sanger High School in June 1954, Elizabeth enrolled in the pre-nursing program at Reedley College in Reedley, California. Elizabeth completed her nursing studies and training at the Highland School of Nursing in Oakland, California, in January 1959, and moved to Seattle, Washington, to practice as a registered nurse at Virginia Mason Hospital. Elizabeth's love for children caused her to specialize in pediatrics.

Elizabeth and Robert met in May 1959 at an Arthur Murray dance party for ballroom dancing students, and were married on Nov. 21, 1959, at the Shrine of St. Therese Catholic Church in Fresno, California, and throughout their marriage they exhibited their love of dancing together.

In 1960, they moved to Santa Monica, California, and Elizabeth practiced at St. John's Hospital, the hospital frequented by Hollywood stars. Before moving to Olympia, Washington, in July 1966, and practicing at St. Peter's Hospital, Elizabeth and Robert lived in Fresno, California, and Elizabeth practiced at Valley Children's Hospital

while Robert finished college at Fresno State. In November 1980, Elizabeth and Robert moved to Clatsop County, where they built their home in the Surf Pines community in 1982.

Elizabeth was a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother, and she is deeply missed. She loved animals and birds, flowers, gardening and was staunchly pro-life.

She was an avid reader of books of all subject matters, with many books related to her Irish heritage. Elizabeth was the consummate Irish lady with her wit, sense of humor, laughter, smiling eyes and mischievous smile.

Elizabeth was always giving to others, as she dedicated many long hours of volunteer work for charity groups, such as the Providence Seaside Hospital Auxiliary, serving as secretary, vice president, president and buyer for the gift shop. Elizabeth single-handedly organized, typed and edited a cook book for the auxiliary for fundraising purposes in 2007.

In 2004, Elizabeth joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, providing food and financial assistance to the poor and needy. Elizabeth volunteered at the St. Vincent de Paul Conference food pantry, and at St. Mary Star of the Sea in Astoria, also.

A funeral mass was held at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Seaside, Oregon. Graveside services took place at Evergreen Cemetery, south of Seaside, 33395 Beerman Creek Road.

Memorial donations may be made to Our Lady of Victory St. Vincent de Paul Conference, Seaside, Oregon, or to St. Mary, Star of the Sea St. Vincent de Paul Conference, Astoria, Oregon.

Funeral arrangements are in the care of Hughes-Ransom Mortuary and Crematory, Seaside, Oregon. Please visit hughes-ransom.com to sign the online guest book.



Elizabeth Gazewood

William 'Bill' Thomas Park

Vancouver, Washington

Dec. 9, 1935 — Aug. 12, 2018

After a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, William "Bill" Park passed away peacefully in his sleep on Aug. 12, 2018.

The fifth of seven children, Bill grew up off Rosemont Road in West Linn. A part of the original family homestead is now Marylhurst Heights Park.

He was part of a large, loving family who valued serving others. He graduated from Our Lady of the Lake Elementary School, and went on to high school at Mount Angel Seminary. After high school, Bill met the love of his life, Kathleen, while they were attending Monmouth College. He then went on to get his law degree at Lewis and Clark Law School. After law school, he worked in downtown Portland as a deputy district attorney.

In 1972, he moved his family to Gearhart, Oregon, where he served as the district attorney of Clatsop County. A decade later, he and his family returned to Portland, where he continued to practice law.

Bill's strength and love came from serving, which he continued to do later in life when was ordained a Catholic deacon. Bill was a caring, fun-loving husband, father, son, uncle and grandfather. Bill was a big, strong man, both in stature and in the way he loved and cared for his family — both imme-

diately and extended.

He adored his nieces and nephews, and was always the first to tell a corny joke.

He never missed an opportunity to throw a football with one of his grandchildren, he happily sang in the church choir with his wife, and he loved to travel with his family and friends. Bill and Kathy loved Hawaii and Mexico; some of their best adventures were their travels to Europe. Ireland, in particular, was a favorite. Sunday drives with all the children were always memorable. If the family passed a fruit tree or berry bush, Bill could never resist stopping the car and sampling. Life will never be the same without Bill



William Park

Park. Bill is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Kathleen Paque Park; his daughter, Lisa Mistell (husband Greg); his son, John (wife Kenna); his sister, Roseanne Kloft; his brother, John; and his grandchildren, Ryan, Jackie, Christian and Michael.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Morton and Odellia; his brothers, Mike, Jim, Morton and David; and his beautiful daughter, Patricia "Tricia" Park.

Funeral services were Aug. 25 at St Mary Magdalene Catholic Church (The Madeleine, 3123 N.E. 24th Ave., Portland, Oregon). Burial was Aug. 28 at Mount Calvary.



BUDGET BLINDS
Call now for your free In-Home Consultation!
Oregon Coast 503-738-5242 • Lincoln City 541-994-9954
SW Washington 503-738-5242 • www.budgetblinds.com
Blinds • Shutters • Shades Drapes • Home Automation
Style and service for every budget®
©2018 Budget Blinds, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Budget Blinds is a trademark of Budget Blinds, LLC and a Home Franchise Concepts Brand. Each franchise independently owned and operated.