

# Friday Night [under the] Lights... 2015



*Happy Friday.*

More importantly, Happy start-of-Labor-Day-weekend Day. Pre-Labor Day.

The Friday before Labor Day has relatively little labor associated with it as you're probably experiencing... It's the gradual ease into a holiday weekend... Kinda work. Kinda not.

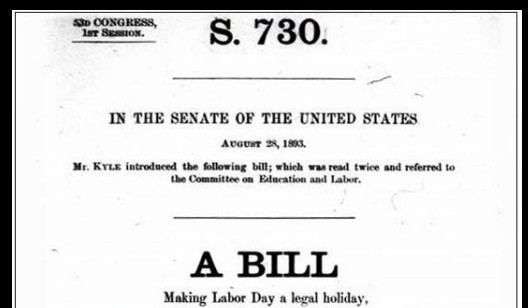
But that's not so bad. It's healthy to wind down a bit if you can. However, for some, it's the beginning of winding up for what is usually a busy EMS / Emergency Medicine holiday. When people have time off from their jobs, recreational injury & illness increase. For those who are working this weekend, thanks for keeping everyone as safe and healthy as we can.

While a long Labor Day weekend is a nice restful (again, caveat above) transition from summer to fall, it's important to remember the reason we celebrate the holiday. The U.S. Department of Labor reminds us that Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

It's a recognition of *work* that's rewarded with a few days of *play*.

Enjoy the weekend and if you're working, make sure to enjoy your time off when everybody else is back in the grind.

A little side note – The Department of labor always uses Labor Day as a good opportunity to remind all workers to pay attention to safety. Know what the #1 work related injury is in the U.S.?

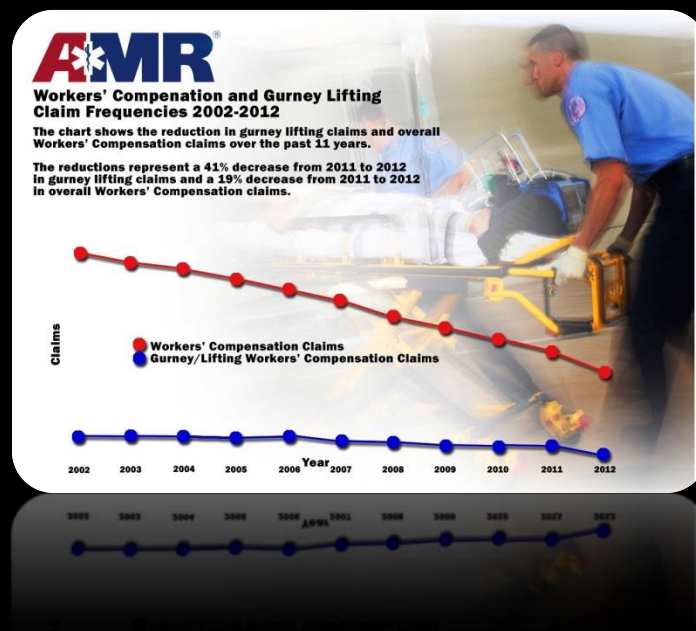


Back injury – *By far.*

That’s why so many employers spend time talking about appropriate ways to lift (which I’ve always believed is to see if you can ask someone else to do it...) and implementing targeted protocols, techniques and equipment to help prevent injury. It’s truly preventable. Long term chronic back injury is a tough problem to have. Much better to not get injured in the first place.

This always reminds me of the tremendous effort by Ron Thackery [AMR SVP of Professional Services] and his colleagues to reduce the rates of back injury in our own organization. The impact of adding the Stryker Power Pro stretchers is a tremendous example of the impact of technology on back injury. Our best way to measure on-the-job injury is through claims data.

Using that data, look at the huge difference we made in back / lift-related injuries in our organization...



And remember – Lift with your knees (and wear your seat belt after getting your flu shot immediately after you flossed and remembered not to cross your eyes or they will stick).

**You ready?**



September is National Preparedness Month – Something we should all be very familiar with, right (I'm embarrassed to say I didn't know it...)?

Every year, National Preparedness Month activities remind us that being ready sure beats being surprised. In our world, preparedness is a critical element of our community response. We are the Masters of Preparedness.

“Sorry Ma'am, thanks for calling 911 – we had no idea you may have significant breathing problems or we would have brought some additional stuff to help – No worries though – let's see if we can coach you through this, OK?” ...

Right.

Preparedness means we are ready for whatever we may face – even if it's unlikely.

It means Gerber Tools are useful to have in your glove compartment.

It means having a drug reference guide on your Smart Phone is key.

It means the pair of gloves under your seat ... Just in case.

This year, the National Preparedness Month will focus on a specific problem each week. Specifically:

- Flood
- Wildfire
- Hurricane
- Power Outage
- Too much paperwork to do

(I made the last one up)...

While this seems like motherhood and apple pie, let me ask you some tough questions:

- If you are flagged down in your personal vehicle at a nasty wreck, you know you have the skills to manage patients. Are you protected from BBF?
- If you find yourself engaged in a sudden large scale event without communications, do you have a plan to let your family know where to go or where to meet?
- Do you have “the kit”? Small snacks, gloves, Gerber, change of clothes, Motrin, flashlight, etc. that has everything you might need for a longer event readily available?
- Do you have agreed upon code words for family members?

Think about it. Take one hour sometime this month and make sure you're ready. Because YOU have to take care of those that aren't... Don't wind up being a great story for your colleagues.

(And change your Smoke Detector Batteries on Daylight Savings Time Day (Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup>))

## The passing of two EMS legends...

I know everyone knows by now, but the EMS profession lost two pioneers in the past few weeks – Dr. Norm McSwain in New Orleans and Dr. James “Red” Duke in Houston.

Dr. McSwain, an accomplished and charismatic trauma surgeon, helped build the foundation of early EMS Systems at the national level. He developed and promulgated the principles for managing acute trauma in the streets. He is probably best known for being the brainchild behind the development of the PreHospital Trauma Life Support Curriculum (PHTLS).



When he would greet you and shake your hand, he’d often start the discussion with “What have you done good for Mankind today?” His southern charm was always engaging and warm.

Dr. McSwain was 78.

Dr. Red Duke, a Texas legend, talented surgeon, gifted communicator and all-around great *rancher*, died on August 25<sup>th</sup>. He, too, was one of the early visionaries of what out-of-hospital care could be and what a difference those first few minutes could make.



He was instrumental in introducing Memorial Hermann’s Life Flight program and was the first surgeon to attend to President John F. Kennedy when he was shot in Dallas. One of his trademark questions for new students, interns and residents in the operating room was to look around and ask everyone who the most important person in the room was.

You’d better get it right – *It is the patient.*

I had the privilege several years ago of introducing Dr. Duke as the Keynote speaker at the Texas EMS Conference. I vividly recall sitting off to the side of the stage as the Commissioner of Health was doing an introduction. Duke was asking me where I was from, what I did – He had a serious interest in the conversation. I remember feeling so honored that this icon would even talk to me. I also remember watching his HUGE moustache (I don’t know if anyone ever confirmed he had an upper lip) bounce up and down as he spoke. I also noticed that he was in scrubs, a labcoat and cowboy boots.

*With stuff on them.*

I was mesmerized. I was chatting with THE legendary Red Duke.

As I went up to the podium and began to introduce him from his two page bio, he walked up behind me, said “That’s enough of that stuff, Ed – They don’t want to hear that – Let’s get on with our day”. I probably got six words out.

He received a standing ovation and spent the next hour telling riveting stories without notes, slides or prompts. It was like he was sitting across the kitchen table from you.

He had the attention of everyone in that room. His pearls of wisdom were spot on.

What a gift. A talented practitioner wrapped in a captivating personality.

Dr. Duke was 86.

We owe a significant amount of gratitude to folks like this that are driven by their passion to make the world a better place in their own powerful & unique way. Not to mention how fascinating it is to watch them work their magic.

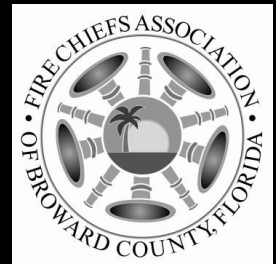
I think they're both sitting up in Heaven making sure we always do what's right.

And now they control the lightning. If anyone can figure out how to direct it where it needs to go on earth, they will... Better stay on your toes.

### **Well-deserved recognition...**

Speaking of Physician Superstars, I want to recognize a few of our own – who were recognized by a few of their own recently...

The first is the Broward County Fire Chief's Association awarding **Dr. Joe Nelson** with the Ralph A. Marrinson 2015 Life Time Achievement Award. I've had the privilege of knowing Joe almost all of my EMS career. Not only is Joe a great emergency physician, he is the EMS Medical Director for all of our AMR Practices throughout Florida. He travels the state weekly and is engaged in education, medical oversight, program innovation and just about anything EMS in Florida.



On top of his clinical efforts, Joe also serves as the State Medical Director for Florida.

Joe most recently joined the Evolution Health Clinical Leadership team as part of the rapidly growing Population Health programs in the state.

Joe's kind and supportive style combined with his expansive knowledge is a true gift to our profession...

Moving just a tad north, the State of Georgia EMS Region III recently named Dr. Alex Isakov, executive director of Emory's Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response and associate professor & director of the Department of Emergency Medicine's Section of Prehospital and Disaster Medicine as Medical Director of the Year.

Dr. Isakov has been a true leader in EMS and most specifically in the area of transport of seriously communicable diseases.

Alex & his colleagues at Emory were tremendously helpful when AMR was called to transport two Ebola patients from Texas Presbyterian Hospital to Dallas Love Field. Alex provided an on line eGrand Rounds for our providers nationwide to help better prepare us for the evolving situation.

Both Joe & Alex have helped form contemporary EMS of today and continue to lead us into the future.

Hats off to both of them and a heartfelt thanks from the AMR 'hood for helping keep us sharp, prepared and clinically focused...

## WTH...

Tonight's What The Heck comes to us from Sabrena Collins [AMR Director of Business Development / Innovative Practices].

Anyone who's met Sabrena knows she is a talented business leader and a person who takes great pride in the way she interacts with others and how well prepared she is. If you know her, you also know that she is quite the professional dresser.

As a Public Service Announcement to all of her colleagues that travel with her, please be advised that she owns a stylish pair of pants that apparently uses a significant amount of metal thread.

That particular fashion approach can certainly grab the attention of our friends at TSA...



*Especially when John McCain is coming through security right behind her (I'm not kidding).*

I could never make this stuff up. Choose your travel partners wisely.

## Looking out for Blue...

An important personal note in support of our colleagues in Law Enforcement.

As you well know, these are tense times in many communities as we see an unfortunate increase in both Law Enforcement use of lethal force and efforts targeted directly at Law Enforcement.

I have no desire, nor do I think it's productive, to try and take a political position on either side of this national debate. It's tense, emotional and creating dramatic changes in all of our lives.

And it should.

We have to solve this problem together.

ALL loss of life, for whatever reason is catastrophic. *Every single one.*

I (like you, I imagine) have several friends in Law Enforcement who are feeling a new and alarming tension in their daily activities – A powerful effort to make absolutely sure that use of lethal force is appropriate and an increase in potential that someone may be purposefully trying to harm or kill them.

Unfortunately both are real, and both are critically important. Given the split second nature of all these decisions, it literally increases activities that may mean life or death for everyone involved.

This new level of challenge now exists as these men & women try and do what's right for ALL of us – keep us safe. There are bad apples on all sides. As much as we would like to, I doubt we will ever be able to change that. I wish we could.

What we can do is let our Law Enforcement colleagues know we support them. Just as we support the patients and communities we care for. These are hard times for everyone.



We want our public safety partners to make the right decisions to protect us, and we want them to be protected as they do what they do.

Today, the Governor of Texas asked Texans to support Law Enforcement by wearing and displaying blue.

A volunteer firefighter in Rogers Texas came up with an idea called Backing the Blue.

Her simple message – Place a strip of blue tape across your rear window. Let our colleagues know we care. It's not endorsing the bad. It's supporting the good.

I did.

## Epilogue...

*Tonight's Epilogue is courtesy of Jeff Boyd [AMR East Regional Clinical Director]...*

"I was at the bar last night and the waitress screamed "Anyone know CPR!?"

I yelled out "Hell – I know the whole darn alphabet!"

Everyone laughed.

Well... Except for that one guy...

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That's it from my world. *Happy Friday.*

As always, thanks for what you do and how you do it. Go put some blue tape on your car when you put a pair of gloves under your seat.

Enjoy the Labor Day Weekend.

*Ed*

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