
Washington Operation Lifesaver

July 2023

Issue #2023-2

Quarterly Volunteer Newsletter

From the State Coordinator

By Kathy Hunter

Summer is here and our event calendar is full! This is a big change from the last few years and it's great to be back to a full schedule of in-person events. Participating in these events would not be possible without support from each of you, our volunteers! Thank you for giving up time with your families, and enduring the traffic, heat, and crowds to share our important rail safety message.



Kathy at Huntamer Park, Lacey

Volunteer Events

Please mark your calendar for our two big

events of the summer: the SW Washington Fair in Chehalis is Aug. 15-20, and the Spokane Interstate Fair is Sept. 8-17. Both are long, heavily attended events. Our event booth at the Spokane Interstate Fair must be staffed during the entire event, so if you can help with even one shift it's appreciated!

Updated OLAV Materials

By now everyone should have received the new Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteer (OLAV) Manual from Operation Lifesaver, Inc., as well as an invitation to attend an online orientation session. As of July 1, 2023, this is the approved presentation curriculum, and the previous material is obsolete. PLEASE, only use the current, approved manual to avoid any potential issues or litigation.

Quarterly Meetings

Finally, I'd like to invite you to participate virtually at our quarterly board meetings via Teams. The meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month from 9 am to 10:30 am. [The link for the meetings is here.](#) Our next meeting is Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

Keep up the great work! We appreciate you!

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OL Trailer Gets Facelift

By **Kathy Hunter**

In 2020 our exhibit trailer received an updated graphics wrap to provide a fresh look, consistent with the messaging used in elsewhere in our program.

In contrast, the front of the trailer was beginning to look a little shabby with surface rust appearing in places, even though the trailer has been stored under cover for most of its life.



Trailer ready for abrasive-blasting

Washington Operation Lifesaver (WAOL) volunteer and treasurer Mike Turcott spent a weekend in June refurbishing the front of the trailer. The spare tire and battery box were removed, the front of the trailer was masked off, and the exposed metal was media-blasted, primed, and repainted.



Pretty in Primer

The battery box was cleaned and painted and re-installed with a new break-away device for the trailer brakes, new backup battery, and new safety chain hooks.



All done!

We think it looks a lot better. Remaining work includes repainting the spare tire rim and polishing the metal fenders and wheels. The trailer will look pretty snazzy at its next public appearance! Thank you, Mike, for your hard work sprucing up the trailer!

Volunteers Hit Home Run at Rail Safety Night

By Mike Turcott

Every year WAOL receives funds from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to focus on rail safety education within the Amtrak Cascades corridor. In the past, we have purchased the usual educational items for distribution at western Washington events and last year we purchased billboard advertising.

This year we wanted to do something totally different. In a brainstorming session, State Coordinator Kathy Hunter suggested the idea of a rail safety event at a Tacoma Rainiers game. The idea was to make rail safety the theme for the evening, distribute educational items, run Operation Lifesaver PSA videos on the big screen, and recognize our volunteers.

We reached out to the Rainiers and connected with Caitlin Calnan, Director of Group Sales and Event Marketing. The Rainiers have a “non-profit partnership” package which provides exactly what we were looking for, and Caitlin helped us put together an event for the May 27 home game against the Las Vegas Aviators.



Our non-profit partnership included a full-page ad inside the free game program booklet, “The Dirt”, PSAs throughout the game, opportunities for volunteers to interact with guests, and the opportunity for an OL volunteer to throw out the first pitch!

On the afternoon of the game, WAOL volunteers were stationed at each of the stadium entrances to hand out the popular “See Tracks? Think Train!” yellow water bottle to game attendees.



The bottles were customized for the event with “Rail Safety Night, Tacoma Rainiers, May 27, 2023.”



Volunteers staffed a display table behind the first base gate with the usual setup of the rail safety wheel and handouts. While some game attendees were in a hurry to get a hot dog and find their seats, many stopped at the OL table and engaged with the volunteers.

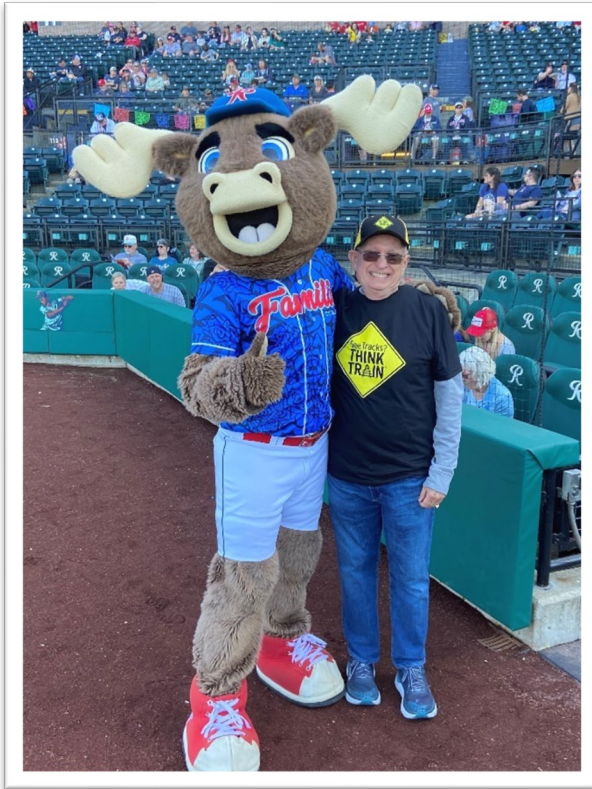


Dan Amaya, our long-time volunteer from Kennewick, agreed to throw out the first pitch of the game. The announcer gave Dan a nice introduction, mentioning that he is a BNSF engineer and our area coordinator for the Tri-Cities and southeast Washington.



Dan on the mound and big screen

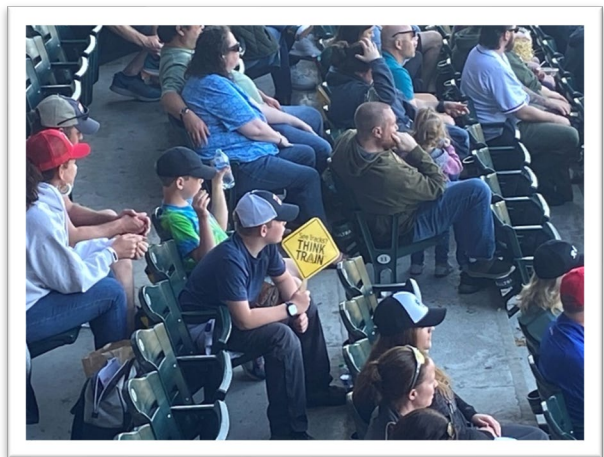
A small group of volunteers was allowed onto the field with Dan. This group included Gary Emmons, a longtime WAOL volunteer and life-long resident of Tacoma who attended opening night at Cheney Stadium in 1963.



Gary and Rhubarb the Reindeer



The educational portion of the event was funded by WSDOT and the hospitality suite was funded by WAOL as a volunteer appreciation event.



A fan with a fan

Feedback was positive all the way around. 4,692 people received WAOL's message throughout the evening in one form or another, and the Rainiers beat the Aviators 11 to 3! Twelve WAOL volunteers attended the event along with several volunteers' family members. It was a fun event to work, and it was great to spend time together watching the game and enjoying the goodies.



Dan, Dominique, and Devine

When the game began we retired from our positions at the gates and gathered in a suite with a beautiful view of the field and a nice selection of snacks and soft drinks.