



# BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Chief Strachan's Weekly Update

You may have read a story last week about a man who jumped off the Manette Bridge just after being released from jail when he was charged with Criminal Maltreatment of his deceased elderly father. The man was subsequently rescued from the water and had only minor injuries, but is now facing charges related to jumping off the bridge, which is a crime in our city. That incident led a few people to ask me how frequently these types of incidents occur. They occur more frequently than you might think. Just last Friday, officers responded to the Warren Avenue Bridge for a report of a man preparing to jump off. Officer David Hughes arrived shortly after paramedic units, who had not been able to communicate with the man. Officer Hughes quickly established a rapport with the clearly distraught man, and spoke to him for about 30 minutes. Eventually the man agreed to come off the railing and he went with Officer Hughes to the hospital for an evaluation and follow up. This is the type of call you might see in a movie, but because of the private and emotional nature of these incidents, we don't talk much about it when it occurs in real life, right here in our community. This was an outstanding job by Officer Hughes, who took control of a very difficult situation and who may have saved a life. We always try to handle these incidents as we would expect them to be handled if it were a member of our own families. We get several incidents of people threatening to jump off one of our two bridges each year.

This year the legislature considered the issue of mental health, and the difficulty and expense of providing better treatment. They made some minor changes, but this past week we also had several reminders of the ongoing lack of legal authority and infrastructure to get people the help they need. Saturday, the Sheriff's Office found a man in their jurisdiction wandering around in peoples' back yards. He was cold so he took a set of coveralls from a shed, but was quickly located by deputies. The man did not, and still does not, have any idea who he is. He had no memory or recollection at all, but he did have a service dog. He was taken to the hospital here in Bremerton, where medical staff determined that nothing could be done for the man, and he was able to care for himself, which is the legal parameters in which they must operate. A designated mental health provider was called, who made the same determination. Adult Protective Services were called, and they could not do anything for him either. Hospital staff sent him out of the building, and into our city, where we dealt with him all night. This may seem crazy to you, but is a good example of the inappropriately high threshold in this state to involuntarily admit people, to be held for mental health issues, and the very tight legal restrictions required for social service and medical providers to offer services to anyone who does not readily agree to accept them. The result is that cities with social services, transit, and hospitals, like Bremerton, are adversely affected. It is going to take some real leadership from our state and federal elected officials to move the needle on this issue.

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### Contact



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**Chief Steven Strachan**  
(360) 473-5224  
[About](#) | [e-mail](#)

**Captain Tom Wolfe**  
[About](#) | [e-mail](#)

**Captain Jim Burchett**  
[About](#) | [e-mail](#)

**Lieutenant Luis Olan**  
[About](#) | [e-mail](#)

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### Headquarters

1025 Burwell Street  
Bremerton, WA 98337  
(360) 473-5220

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 Spencer Berntsen  
 John Bogen  
 Dana Clevenger  
 Joseph Corey  
 Kenny Davis  
 Cory Ditmer  
 Trevor Donnelly  
 Derek Ejde  
 Jordan Ejde  
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 John VanSantford  
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 Marixa Scott  
 Joseph Sexton  
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Luis Olan

**CAPTAINS**

James Burchett

Tom Wolfe

**CHIEF**

Here is an example of either "you can't make this up" or "ain't love grand?" depending on how you look at it. Tuesday night, officers were dispatched to a report of a man and woman apparently having "very loud relations" in a bathroom at one of our parks just before 11:00 PM. Officer Bryan Hall arrived and knocked very loudly on the door, telling both individuals to get themselves outside, now. The two came out and were both highly intoxicated. A records check showed that both had outstanding arrest warrants. The man was taken into custody at the scene, despite the woman screaming that "she could not live without him" and trying to hold onto his leg while officers placed him in the squad car. The woman was taken to the hospital due to her extreme intoxication. After she was checked out, she was also taken to jail for her arrest warrants. At the jail, she was taken into the booking area and the man could apparently hear her voice from another room, resulting in the man yelling "how much he loved her" from his holding cell.

Maybe it's the weather; maybe it's the moon, but people last week seemed to be focused on trees, and climbing up into them. In the first instance, Officer Phil Whatley stopped a car for a traffic violation. As soon as the car stopped, the passenger got out and ran the other direction as fast as he could. Officer Whatley watched while the man scaled an eight foot fence and ran into some nearby woods. The fence was obviously there to keep people out, so Officer Bryan Hall assisted and started checking around the area to see if he could locate the man, who was now trespassing. The officer heard some crunching in the woods and saw the man climbing up a 60 foot tree, as Bryan noted, "sort of like he was being chased by a bear". The man was looking out from the tree toward the last place he saw the "bear" (AKA Officer Whatley). He was surprised when the second "bear", Officer Hall, called out to him from below. Officer Hall determined that the man had a Dept. of Corrections arrest warrant. Officer Hall told the man to come on down and mentioned that he had his K-9 partner with him. The man declined to meet the K-9 and instead surrendered to the "bears". The woods were thus cleared of fugitives, returned to the real bears, and the man went to jail.

Later in the week, Officer Spencer Berntsen responded to a call of a man up in a tree in East Bremerton. Corporal Jon Meador arrived just in time to see Spencer talking the man out of the tree. The man was about 50 feet up, hanging at times by one foot off of branches. He eventually fell, hitting most of the branches on the way down, breaking his fall. He was not hurt, and explained to the officers that he "just wanted some beer and snacks". They explained that those items were generally not found in the higher branches of trees.

Below is a photo from Thursday's Special Olympics Torch Run as it came through our city. In the photo, Officer Phil Whatley is carrying the torch to the marina along with Special Olympians, cadets from the Washington Youth Academy, and runners from our department and the Kitsap Co. Sheriff's Office. We really appreciate being a part of this effort!



Steven Strachan

Finally this week, we offer our congratulations to Cathy Mattson, who is retiring this week from our department. Cathy has been a part of our Evidence Unit for many years, and her father was a Bremerton Officer, so she has been a part of the BPD family for decades. She has been doing quiet, but very important work for public safety in our community, and we wish Cathy and her husband all the best in their future endeavors!

***Work Hard - Have Fun - Stay Safe***

Steven D. Strachan, Chief of Police  
Bremerton Police Department  
1025 Burwell Street  
Bremerton, WA 98337  
[Steven.Strachan@ci.bremerton.wa.us](mailto:Steven.Strachan@ci.bremerton.wa.us)

360-473-5224  
Fax: 360-473-5890  
Assistant: Barbara Forbes  
[Barbara.Forbes@ci.bremerton.wa.us](mailto:Barbara.Forbes@ci.bremerton.wa.us)