

# 'He wasn't breathing ...'

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Critical seconds were rapidly ticking off when Mark Dougherty learned someone had collapsed in the dining room downstairs.

Dougherty, manager of Chef Bill's Supper Club in Appleton, virtually flew down the steps to come to the aid of the man who was being watched but not helped, by others in the restaurant.

They were stunned, shocked and feeling so helpless — they didn't know what to do, or weren't sure they'd do it right.

Dougherty, 23, who had had a "mini" cardio-pulmonary resuscitation course in high school seven years earlier, jarred enough information from his memory bank to know what to do until the paramedics arrived.

William Sell, 62, had suffered a heart attack. He became Dougherty's "patient."

"He wasn't breathing, and there was no pulse when I got to him," Dougherty said. "He was turning gray — grayblue. I had never seen anybody that color before.

Dougherty had been talking on the telephone when his sister, Linda, came up to get him.

"She said there was a man downstairs having a heart attack, and when I got to him, he was lying on the carpeting, and people seemed to be in a kind of confused state," Dougherty said.

"I asked if he was breathing and nobody knew anything," Dougherty said with despair still hanging heavy in his voice.

Dougherty had another man prop Sell up. Sell's wife, Lucille, took off her husband's tie and loosened his shirt collar as Dougherty began to administer CPR.

While the CPR course seemed to have been taught a millenium ago, the procedures only took a second's worth of recall.

"I checked. He wasn't breathing. I checked his passageway to see if he had anything lodged in his throat. I was told he hadn't eaten anything and hadn't even had anything to drink," Dougherty said.

Methodically, he began the life-sustaining procedures to keep the blood enriched with oxygen and mechanically pump the fluid to the brain.

"Somebody downstairs had already called the ambulance, so I didn't have to worry about that," Dougherty said.

Totally immersed in the task at hand, Dougherty lost track of how long he worked on Sell, but estimated it was only "four or five minutes" before the Appleton Fire Department paramedics arrived. "They shocked him to get a pulse, and then they had me continue to give him heart massage while they worked on him, too," Dougherty said.

Paramedics from the Fire Department and Gold Cross worked on Sell for about 20 minutes before stabilizing him enough so he could be transported.

Sell is now recuperating in the intensive care unit at St. Elizabeth Hospital, and is "making progress" according to his wife.

Dougherty is glad he was there to help, and now plans to take a refresher course.

"At the time I had it, it was one of those courses you think you'll never use, but I really think a lot of it now."

Sandy Munt, executive director of the American Red Cross, Outagamie County Chapter, said she was very impressed with Dougherty's actions.

"What surprised me in talking to Mark was that he remembered the techniques," Munt said. "Enough came back to him."

Munt said the CPR certification is for just one year, and after that time, people must be recertified to maintain their proficiency level in administering CPR.

"We have found that retention is not very high," she said. "It's really marvelous that after seven years, it really did come back to him."

Too often, there's nobody around who knows CPR when a person has a heart attack, is overcome with smoke, or is knocked down by a high voltage shock and the heart and lungs stop working.

"Last year, a man collapsed in a bank, and was not revived," Munt said. "A lot of people who saw that happen came in to take the course."

Munt said that reaction often takes place after people see a fellow human being suffering, in the throes of death, and they feel helpless to assist.

"We practically get deluged with calls every time that happens," Munt

said. "I guess we're glad they're interested, but we're not glad that someone has to have an accident or come close to death first. We prefer to have them come in before the accident happens."

In addition to the Red Cross, Munt said the Fox Valley Technical Institute and the Outagamie County Heart Association offer CPR courses for the public.

In 1981, the county chapter of the Red Cross offered 85 CPR courses and issued 917 certificates to those who became proficient in the life-saving techniques.

Dougherty's knowledge of CPR, however, was imparted by Alan Stoner, a social problems teacher at Appleton East High School who tries to have as many students as possible leave his classes knowing the technique. Some 60-70 students each year leave East knowing CPR.

"I was quite pleased to hear that (Dougherty) had put his knowledge to good use," Stoner said. "That's the third incident that I've had feedback on, and there probably are three people alive who wouldn't have been otherwise," he said.

Lucille Sell is certainly happy that Dougherty was one of those who signed up for Stoner's CPR course.

Doctors told her Bill would not be alive today if Dougherty hadn't been there and administered CPR as quickly as he did.

"If he hadn't been there, we wouldn't have known what to do, and probably all would have been lost," she said.

She said she's afraid of what would have happened if they had been at their home, out in the county, when he was stricken.

"Living out here, I don't know if they (paramedics) would have gotten there in time," she said.

"We sure owe a lot to Mark."

Bill's son Greg Sell, is planning on becoming CPR certified because of the incident.

"I should have taken the CPR course a long time ago," Greg said. "And now, when this happens to a loved one — well, I'm going to get off my butt and take the course too."

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