Volume 11, Issue 2

February, 2018

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2018 STATISTICS

Jan. 1 — Jan. 31

District Average Response Time:
8 min. 40 sec.

Responses by Type:

Fire: 5
EMS: 237

Other: 116

Total: 358

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Proudly serving the communities of Blaine, Birch Bay, Custer, Laurel and the unincorporated areas of Lynden & Bellingham

"Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community"

NWFR Honors Members

Members of the district were honored at a NWFR Fire Commissioner meeting held on Thursday, January 18 at Blaine Station 61.

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

John Geleynse

"John has displayed a very strong work ethic and passion for his position."

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Paul VanDyken

"

Paul has been providing consistent response with Tender 12 for years and this past year has been no exception."

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

John Swobody

"John has put his heart and soul into his job as firefighter."

Congratulations to All!

CHIEF AWARD

Jon Ahrenholz, Jeff Haley and Zak Balonick (*not pictured)*

Reflections by Captain Mark VonAppen

Mark has been a member of the Palo Alto (CA) Fire Department since 1998 and is assigned to the suppression division where he holds the rank of captain. He is a committee member for California State Fire Training and has contributed to the development of Firefighter Survival and Rapid Intervention curriculums. Mark has been published in Fire Engineering Magazine, Fire Service Warrior, and is the creator of the fire service leadership blog Fully Involved. He is an instructor for the Santa Clara County Joint Fire Academy, a recruit Instructor for Palo Alto Fire, an academy instructor at Evergreen Community College, and a member of the "Nobody Gets Left Behind" training group.

This is a correspondence I had with a friend of the blog from some time ago.

He asked, "Are you really all-in-all-the-time?"

This is what I wrote back: No.

Unfortunately, this is some thing I wrestle with mightily.

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Please remember to keep the district up to date with any changes including your contact information.

All changes should be directed to Jennie. These changes may include:

Phone

Address

Email

Banking

Family Additions

Name changes

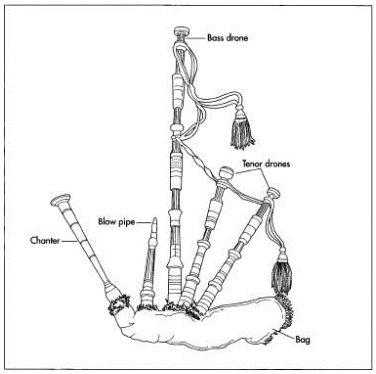
History of Pipes and Drums

by Lieutenant Tony Esser

It is after a performance or a parade as a member of the Bellingham Firefighters Pipes and Drums that I am often asked the question, "how did bagpipes become part of the culture of firefighters?" The history of this tradition dates back approximately 150 years to Irish and Scottish immigrants who came to the U.S. bringing many of their traditions with them. One of these was the bagpipe, played at weddings, funerals and other social functions.

When the Irish potato famine occurred in the 1800's, there was a massive immigration to the East Coast and the tradition of bagpipes in the fire service took hold. Irish immigrants faced discrimination and seeing signs on factories or shops with "No Irish Need Apply" was commonplace. The only jobs they could get were jobs that no one else wanted, jobs that were dirty, dangerous or both—firefighters and police officers. When a firefighter or police officer was killed in the line of duty, the pipes were brought out as the deceased was most likely Irish or Scottish. The sounds of bagpipes at funerals imbues a certain soulfulness that was unmistakable and soon non-Irish families were asking for bagpipes to be played for their fallen heroes.

As time went on cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago started what are called "Emerald Societies" with traditional Scottish or Irish dress. Bands wear a kilt, a tunic for formal events and oftentimes a uniform shirt for less formal occasions. The shirts or jackets have a patch denoting the band's favored symbol, sometimes a Scottish lion, a department or union



symbol as well. There are four main instruments played in a Firefighter pipe band. The Pipes first and foremost (it wouldn't be a pipe band without them!) which are actually "highland' pipes because of their more Scottish influence. There are "Irish pipes" but they have a softer sound and are played a bit differently. Then there's the Snare drum. The loud staccato sound adds a military feel to accompany the pipes. Then there is the bass drum which is large and provides the rhythm and tempo for the band to follow along. The "skin" of the bass drum usually has the band's symbol or logo on it making the bass drum the band's stamp or signature. The smaller and lighter tenor drum is the fourth instrument and rounds out the rhythm section.

The Bellingham Firefighters Pipes and Drums was formed in 2009 and can be seen in the St. Patrick's Day parade, Ski-2-Sea during the parade and in Fairhaven on race day and many other events public and private. It is composed of career firefighters representing several different fire departments in Whatcom County.

Reflections cont.

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I try to wrap my head around the who- are-you-and-just-what-is-it-you-think-you're-doing-thing every day. I grapple with the question of what I'm willing to give up to answer the calling. A health scare a few years ago and the loss of some friends brought the reality that this can be taken away at any second into laser focus.

Sometimes something has to give.

Reality is this. Our drive and passion for the craft are extremely important when we are at work. Sure, it's cool to be edgy for the craft, but it's not cool to bring it home. Family is more important than anything we do at the firehouse.

We all know it, but we hate to admit that it's easier to slink off to work and be the superheroes that we pretend to be when we cross the threshold of the firehouse. People tell us that we are so often, we even start to believe it. It's easier to be that somebody else and claim that the magnitude of what we do supersedes who we really are and somehow gives us permission to give less than our best to those who we *say* we love most.

Truth be told, even on the job we show up and are just a temporary fix. A lot of times we show up and leave things just as messy as before we are summoned. It's easy to show up, be the short-term fix and leave, than it is to be accountable to the level that we are supposed to be at home. Sometimes we leave our personal lives looking worse than a head-on collision at freeway speed.

The job is an amazing gift, but what I've come to discover, contrary to what we all are lead to believe, is that this career will take from you continuously in terms of your time, your health, your relationships, and many other things that it will never give back. Never ever.

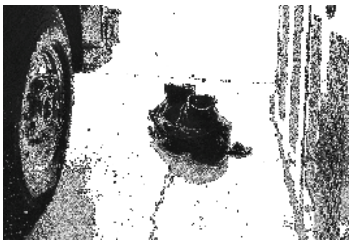
There will be periods of time in your career where you have to throttle back in order to find your equilibrium at home. You only get one shot to be with your family. You don't want to reflect on your life and say, "I wasn't there for the ones I said I love most."

That regret must be worse than any I can imagine.

You can't be everything all the time; it's impossible. Anyone who claims that they are is not being honest with themselves. All you can do is your best. You have to be accountable first to the person that you swore to stand beside and the children you chose to bring into the world. They deserve your best all the time.

Time has a way of making us a little less bold and it makes our hearts grow a little bit colder. When we see warm, bold hearts in our midst we must celebrate them and find that fearlessness and warmth in ourselves once again, if only for a short time.

"Work at being a solid human being first. If you do that, everything else will follow "



It's something I struggle with everyday.

Events to Celebrate February Birthdays

6—Zak Balonick
10—Harry Andrews
16—Burr McPhail
19—Rich Bosman
21—Craig Johnson
22—Jeff Hofstad
23—Darren Bruya
26—Danny Jensen

President's Day—19

Fire Commissioner Meetings
NWFR
Thurs. February 15
9408 Odell St 61 Blaine — 1:00 p.m.

District 4
Wed. February ***13***
4142 Britton Loop St 12
Bellingham —12:00 p.m.

4142 Britton Loop Rd.
Bellingham, WA 98226

Providing quality service for a safe community

Free Friends and Family CPR Classes

Class will be held from 6:30 p.m.—9:30 p.m. at various fire stations around the district. Check out www.nwfrs.com for more information and to reserve your spot.

January 31
February 17
March 28
April 25
May 30
June 27
July 25
August 22
September 26
October 24
November 28
December 19

Donations of nonperishable food items are encouraged but not mandatory. All food donations will be forwarded to local area food banks.

2017 CPR in Review

by Training Captain Kris Jorgensen

In 2017, approximately 480 people were certified in CPR/AED/Choking for an Adult, Child and Infant.

These classes were offered free to the public, once a month and throughout the district at stations, 12, 61, 62 & 63. Along with the community classes, additional classes were taught for the Whatcom County Recruit Fire Academies, Meridian Middle School, Meridian High School, Boy Scout of America and Northwood Casino.

The majority of the individuals, who attended the classes, attended for general knowledge, school, work and babysitting requirements.

In 2017, a suggested donation of a non-perishable food product was established as an entry into the class for the fall and winter months. North Whatcom Fire & Rescue received numerous donations which were donated to the local food banks.

We look forward to offering more classes next year, including First Aid Classes in the summer months.

Sesame-Ginger-/Chickpea-Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

Courtesy of Hannah Klinger

4 medium sweet potatoes
1 tsp canola oil
1 (15 oz.) can unsalted chickpeas, rinsed and drained
2 tsp toasted sesame oil
1 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp kosher salt, divided
1/2 tsp ground ginger
3 TBS tahini (*sesame seed paste*), well stirred
1 tsp grated peeled fresh ginger
1 tsp grated fresh garlic
1 tsp rice vinegar
3 TBS hot water
4 tsp Sriracha chili sauce
2 tsp water
1/4 c thinly sliced green onions
1 tsp white and black sesame seeds

Serves 4 (serving size: 2 halves)

Prep 40 min. Cook 1 hour

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Rub potatoes with canola oil; pierce liberally with a fork. Bake at 400 F for 1 hour or until tender. Cool. Split potatoes in half lengthwise. Gently score flesh with the tip of a knife.
3. Place chickpeas on a baking sheet; pat dry with paper towels. Add sesame oil; toss. Sprinkle with garlic power, 1/4 tsp salt and ground ginger; toss. Bake at 400 F for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes.
4. Combine tahini, fresh ginger, fresh garlic and vinegar in a bowl. Add 3 TBS hot water; stir until loose and smooth.
5. Combine Sriracha and 2 tsp water in a bowl. Drizzle about 2 tsp tahini mixture over each sweet potato half; top with remaining salt. Top with chickpea mixture, remaining tahini mixture, Sriracha mixture, green onion and sesame seeds.

Sesame, especially toasted sesame oil, is a key flavor in many Asian cuisines. It makes sense that tahini would fit here too, from satay sauces to the ginger dressing on your sushi restaurant salad. Here we spike tahini with fresh ginger, garlic, and rice vinegar and drizzle over roasted sweet potatoes (tahini rounds out sweet flavors beautifully). And because tahini and chickpeas can never be too far apart, we spice and roast chickpeas until crunchy for added texture and protein in the dish. If you don't have Sriracha, try a dash of hot sauce or a sprinkle of crushed red pepper.