The Responder

Volume 10, Issue 1
January, 2017

Feature Stories

- Member Profile
- Assistant Chief
- Recognition
- District Potluck

2016 STATISTICS
Dec. 1 — Dec. 31

District Average Response Time:
8 min. 56 sec.

Responses by Type:

Fire: 13
EMS: 229
Other: 120

Total: 362

Like Us On facebook

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 Member Profile

by FF John Hollstein

Opening the old wooden barn door, entering the depths of my Grandfather's shop, the smell of oil, grease and dust lingers in the air. Massive diesel tractors, spare parts and wrenches the size of a baseball bat fill the vast space. The shops temperature is refreshingly cool, however Eastern Oregon in July present's with a sweltering dry heat...It's said that of all senses it is the sense of smell that is most strongly linked to our memories. The fragrance created through the combination of oil, grease and dust triggers some of my fondest childhood memories & brings an immediate smile to my face when I enter one of our apparatus bays on a hot summer day. I am taken right back to being a kid playing on farm implements at my grandparent's homestead.

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, the only child of a Federal Law Enforcement Official and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, I was destined to have a sense of service and a caring personality. Following graduation from Blaine High School in

continued on pg. 4

Assistant Chief of Operations Announced

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue's recently completed a comprehensive recruitment and selection process for the position of Assistant Chief of Operations. The competitive process consisted of an application period and review, panel interview, assessment center, and chief's interview.

Based on the results of the process NWFR is happy to announce that Chief Pernett has recommended and the Board of Fire Commissioners has approved the promotion of Captain Joe Noonchester to Assistant Chief of Operations effective January 2, 2017. Joe has been with the district since 2009.

Chief Noonchester was also recognized for his completion of the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy "Executive Fire Officer Program" during a recent NWFR Fire Commissioner meeting held on Thursday, December 15, 2016.

Please join NWFR in congratulating Assistant Chief Noonchester on his success.

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

WCRA Gradates Two NWFR Volunteers

Daisy Frearson and Steven Latham graduated from the Whatcom County Recruit Academy with their Firefighter I certification on Wednesday, December 14, 2016. The ceremony was held at Ferndale High School.

Daisy also received the "Chiefs' Company" award. NWFR volunteer firefighter

Jacob Onouye, who assisted during the academy, received the "Spirit" award.

Steven will begin EMT school in February while Daisy will begin her probationary year as a NWFR volunteer firefighter.

Congratulations to all!

NWFR Snowman District Potluck

On Saturday, December 10, NWFR hosted a department snowman themed holiday party at Britton Loop Station 12. Members and their families were given the opportunity to visit while children participated in crafts, cookie decorating; not to mention a visit from Santa.

The cost of the event was split between Local 106 NW and the Whatcom County Firefighters Association.

A special thanks to Jerilyn Klix and Leslee Smith for all their hard work.

Thanks to Halee we have some wonderful family photos.

NWFR and District 4 Santa Run

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue and District 4 collaborated with local law enforcement officers and firefighters on Saturday, December 3 to gather and distribute food, toys, clothing and other necessities to families who are truly in need.

The district escorted Santa throughout various parts of the district to pick up donated items and visit with children. In total, the event collected over 275 pounds of food donated to the food bank, $255 in cash and $1,000 worth of gifts.

Hearing Loss, what's that you say?

by Captain Ray Davidson

I have spent my entire career trying to stay in shape to perform the functions of a firefighter. I workout both on duty and off duty to maintain a balance between cardio and muscle strength. When my vision started to decline I knew it was just an age-related condition that would eventually catch up to me as both of my parents wore glasses.

But hearing loss was a condition that I thought would never be a factor during my career or life.

NFPA 1582 (Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments) has a standard for hearing, so when I fell below the standard, I was sent to a specialist and another specialist and low and behold, I have hearing loss of 25% in my left ear and 12.5% in my right ear; enough for me to get hearing aids. So why should you care? Because your hearing could be affected like mine was, even though I thought I was taking precautions to prevent hearing loss.

Here's what I've learned:
On or off duty make sure you protect your ears. Whether you are using a shop vac, skill saw or other power tool at home, use hearing protection. And not just sometimes, all the time. If you ride a motorcycle or riding lawnmower more than a few minutes use hearing protection. If you are using a push lawn mower, weed blower, or gas edger, use hearing protection.

At work, think about all the loud noises we encounter each shift, such as apparatus, chain saws, power fans, and that siren/air horn while driving.

Hearing protection is critically important because once someone has damaged their hearing from noise exposure, it is likely permanently damaged. As recently as the early 1990's, it was common for me to ride in the jump seat right next to the loud diesel engine with the siren speaker and air horn directly over my head. The fire service has redesigned its vehicles to place the siren speakers and air horns in the lower front area away from personnel, and firefighters now ride inside a cab that is required to have a certain level of soundproofing. Have you ever thought about firefighters who leave their windows down while driving with lights and sirens to a call? The average siren can emit around 110 decibels of noise. Add to the average 85 decibels of traffic noise, and even with the changes to the siren placement in the vehicles, you are still at risk of hearing loss. NFPA 1901 has made lots of changes to protect us and our hearing while responding. So when you are inside the cab of an engine take a few seconds to don hearing protection.

These realities are the primary reason I urge all of you to think about wearing the hearing protection provided by the department.

So the next time you are out completing your daily check on an engine or ladder truck and you think about starting a piece of power equipment, think safety first and protect your ears.

Events to Celebrate

January Birthdays

4—Keith Zylstra
5—John Hollstein
15—T.J. Holert
19—Sam Bowman
19—Jonathan Kirk
19—Jerilyn Klix
29—Rachel Davison

Food Bank Donations

#480

Fire Commissioner Meetings

NWFR

Thurs. January 19
9408 Odell St 61
Blaine —7:00 p.m.

District 4

Tues. January 11
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 17
February 27
March 28
April 18
May 23
June 17
June 27
July 26
August 22
September 25
October 23
November 15
December 20

Member Bio cont.

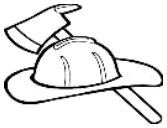
continued from pg. 1

June of 1999, I attended the University of Washington. At this point in my life I had two firm goals, the first was to graduate from the University of Washington and the second was to earn a position as a professional fireman; neither of which were easy to attain by any means. During my early twenties I thoroughly enjoyed attending UW, so much so that I continued attending classes into my Super-Senior year and finally graduated in the Spring of 2004 with a degree in Sociology.

My eyes were opened widely in February 2001, when I stepped into the fire department testing arena. Choosing to compete with over 6,000 other candidates for one of thirty positions was quite an initiation. In the years following and after numerous examinations my hard work and determination paid off. It was on March 30, 2006 that I received a call from Chief Tom Fields who offered me

employment with North Whatcom Fire & Rescue. Grinning from ear to ear and hardly able to contain myself, I obviously accepted the offer, and thus began my career as a professional fireman. Fast forward ten years to present day and I can be found at "the Brick" on D-Shift living the dream, still grinning from ear to ear.

Things always work out for a reason...it was during my Super-Senior year at UW that, through mutual friends, I met my beautiful wife Steph. Steph graduated from Washington State University earlier in the year and had moved back home to Kirkland, where she worked as a designer for a builder in Bellevue. Steph and I dated for a number of years before parting ways only to find each other again in 2011. We tied the knot in July of 2013 overlooking the rolling farmlands and distant Owyhee Mountains from my parents backyard and danced the night away with our closest friends. Steph & I are thrilled to call Lynden home and love the fact that it is usually a John Deere that causes traffic to slow. We enjoy home projects and tending to our gardens during our time off, as well as hosting summer BBQ's and spending time with friends. Although we do not have any human children, we do have two fur-kids, Tye & Harley. Tye is always good for a wagging tail and a wet nose while Harley keeps watch from high atop "his" couch.

In June of this year, Steph graduated from Whatcom Community College as a Registered Nurse and is currently caring for an elderly couple who live just down the road from our home. From time to time you may also run into her while she volunteers on the North Whatcom Rehab Unit. Adding to our adventures, Steph has recently opened a premium skin care business which we will be promoting in Australia early next year.

In the spirit of the season and as I sit here reminiscing about my past, there are countless reasons to be thankful: the people I am blessed to share this life with top the list. The future is bright and I am excited to see what is in store for the coming year. From the Hollstein household to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a blessed and joyful 2017!