



Volume 13 Issue 11

November, 2020



### Feature Stories

- RFA
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### 2020 STATISTICS

Oct. 1 — Oct. 31

#### District Average Response Time:

9 min. 04 sec.

#### Responses by Type:

Fire: 9

EMS: 288

Other: 159

**Total: 456**



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

*“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”*

## Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) and Whatcom County Fire District #4 (WCFD4) have agreed to explore the potential of creating a Regional Fire Authority encompassing both jurisdictions. A Planning Committee, composed of three Fire Commissioners from each agency, has been created to lead discussions.

WCFD4 Commissioner Mark Chamberlain has been elected Chair of the Planning Committee; Scott Fischer with NWFR has been elected Vice-Chair.

The **mission of the Planning Committee** is to create and propose to the elected leadership of NWFR and WCFD4 a plan for a regional fire authority

encompassing the entire territory within the jurisdictional boundaries of the NWFR and the WCFD4, including the proposed governance, design, financing and development of fire protection and emergency service facilities and operations, including maintenance and preservation of facilities or system. The Committee’s responsibilities are set forth in Ch. 52.26 RCW. The Planning Committee is advisory to the Board of Commissioners of NWFR and the Board of Commissioners of the District.

The Planning Committee held its first meeting on August 26, 2020. All Planning Committee Meetings are being conducted

via [Zoom](#) and are open to the public. Meetings are streamed live at [www.nwfrs.com](http://www.nwfrs.com) under District Meetings.

All agendas and materials for the Planning Committee can be accessed here: <https://www.nwfrs.net/regional-fire-authority-planning-committee/>

Questions or comments? Please email [info@nwfrs.com](mailto:info@nwfrs.com).

Your questions and comments will be shared with the Planning Committee. Staff will respond to your email.

## So You Want to Be a Company Officer...

[ISFSI Members Blog - The Buzz](#)

As with most firefighters, it is in our DNA to aspire to have more impact. In the fire service that often translates into promoting within the ranks. Many are fortunate enough to promote and are successful as company officers. Others for whatever reason may choose not to or may never be successful in promoting and remain a firefighter for their entire career. Regardless of which category you may end up in, there are some essential ques-

tions and self-reflection that are necessary before you decide to take the next step.

I will preface what is about to be covered with this statement. If you have the pleasure of working with a great company officer, you will already have the right answers for what I'm about to say. If not, then we may have some work to do.

First, you need to ask yourself WHY... Why do you want to promote? There are right answers and wrong ones. When you come up with an answer share it with someone that will

give you honest feedback. If you get the answer you need and it's telling you that you are seeking promotion for the right reasons, then move on to the next step. If not, stop here and be the best firefighter you can be. There is no shame in not promoting. In fact, it is more honorable to recognize that it may not be for you. It is not for everyone and not everyone should be an officer.

Second, take time to reflect on your career to this point. *continued on pg. 2*

# Simple Ways to Practice Gratitude

By Ciara Conlon

Gratitude is such a powerful emotion, one that can make your life better in so many ways. It's quite difficult to feel depressed or sorry for yourself when you are feeling gratitude.

In a study carried out by Emmons & McCullough in 2003, there were a multitude of benefits from keeping a gratitude journal.<sup>[1]</sup> A simple notebook where you write down daily what you are grateful for. The study showed that the people who kept a journal exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic. It also showed that people who kept the journal were more likely to make progress towards their goals.

Overall, there was a greater sense of feeling connected to others, a more optimistic view towards life and better sleep quality, relative to a control group.

If you would like to experience some of these great benefits, why not try some of these simple ways to make gratitude a part of everyday.

Here are 40 simple ways to make gratitude a part of everyday.

- Keep a gratitude journal and add to it everyday.
- Tell someone you love them and how much you appreciate them.
- Notice the beauty in nature each day.
- Nurture the friendships you have, good friends don't come along every day.
- Smile more often.
- Watch inspiring videos that will remind you of the good in the world.
- Include an act of kindness in your life each day.
- Avoid negative media and movies with destructive content.
- Call your mom or dad more often.
- Cook meals with love, think of the people you will feed.
- Volunteer for organizations that help others.
- Don't gossip or speak badly about anyone.
- Spend quality time with your kids, or your lover.
- Remember to compliment your friends and family when they look good.
- Write a card to someone you haven't seen in a while and tell them something nice.
- Add to your gratitude list daily, at least one more thing each day.
- When you think a negative thought, try to see the positive side in the situation.
- Commit to one day a week when you won't complain about anything.

*continued on pg. 4*

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

*All changes should be directed to Kelly.*

*These changes may include:*

*Phone*

*Address*

*Email*

*Family Additions*

*Name changes*



## Company Officer cont.

*continued from pg. 1*

This is a great time to discuss with a trusted mentor, whoever that may be. Some things to think about are:

How have you prepared yourself to become a company officer? Notice I didn't say, how has your department prepared you to become a company officer. Self-preparation is on you. I'm not just talking about tactics classes, being a company officer requires much more than that.

If you truly want to promote, you will do what it takes to get the training and experience to be prepared.

- How do your peers view you and do they support

your decision to promote? Remember, every decision or indecision you make during your career will be used to judge your ability as an officer. Years of poor performance cannot be undone by a few months of good performance, especially when that good performance is occurring just before an upcoming promotional process.

Third, you do not have to be an officer to add value and positive influence on your department and your peers. Some of the most impactful people I have known in the fire service were not officers, they were seasoned firefighters. Promotion is not a prerequisite to

making an impact.

Let's talk about the preparation it takes to be ready to promote. Preparation is an ongoing process. It is not meant to be a means to an end. The process itself may look different depending on what position you are promoting to. In this example, preparation starts the day you start in the fire service. The instant you step foot in the firehouse you are being watched by those around you. How you conduct yourself in everything you do will be scrutinized. How you do anything is how you do everything. In other words, if you get rattled easily in simple non-stressful situations, *continued on pg. 3*

# Company Officer cont.

*continued from pg. 2*

you will more than likely react the same way in stressful ones.

So, what are some steps to take in order to best prepare yourself for promotion to Company Officer?

1. Make sure you know what the department expects and achieve that training or certification. If your department doesn't have specific requirements, then find a progressive department that does and use them as a guide. The International Association of Fire Chiefs has a great document called the IAFC Officer Development Handbook that can provide a roadmap to promotional preparation.
2. Read often. Not just fire department articles. The corporate industry has great ideas on how to manage people, time and efficiency. Try to apply those ideas to the fire service.
3. Network and attend trainings from other people, learn how they do things.
4. Place yourself in uncomfortable situations on purpose. Identify the areas you are weak in and work to improve them.
5. Take classes on leadership, managing people, discipline, computers, Microsoft Office, time and project management.
6. Become an instructor and teach often.
7. Don't fear failure. Plan for it.

So, you have the right "WHY", you have prepared yourself and your peers support your decision. There are some things you still need to know.

Being a company officer, when done well, is a complicated and

challenging job. Making calls (the fun stuff) is only a portion of what you will be responsible for. Other more frequent and challenging responsibilities include:

1. Personnel issues. You are now responsible for the people that were once your peers. This means you may have to confront weaknesses, mentor them, discipline them, lead them, listen to their family issues and know them well enough to see little changes in behavior that may be subtle signs of bigger issues to come.
2. Being able to plan out your day ahead of time and know that that plan will change frequently without warning. Inspections, public education details, calls for service, training, house chores, facility maintenance, vehicle checks and eating meals are just a few of the tasks that are competing for your time. They all have importance. They all must get done and many of them have deadlines.
3. You are now even more responsible to implement and support the department's mission, vision and values. When your people are not meeting the departments expectations, it's your responsibility to reign them back in. Your crew's behaviors, good or bad, are a direct reflection of you and your ability or inability to hold them to the expectations that you and your department have set. Those expectations need to constantly be held up to the department's mission, vision and values. Remember, setting the example starts from day one as a firefighter, not

day one after promotion.

4. Be comfortable with being in the middle. You as a company officer now have to be able to gain consensus between your firefighters and the administration. We as firefighters are not great communicators, so much of your time can be taken up by gathering, understanding and facilitating that understanding to those you work with and for.
5. Take Responsibility. Everything that happens in your station, on your calls, with your crew... everything; own it, fix it and move on.

Too many times we see great firefighters promote simply because they are experienced, and it is the next likely step. This often results in frustration for the crews and the new officer because they were not prepared and their "WHY" missed the mark. The decision to promote is an important decision and should not be taken lightly or without thought.

With that said, the company officer role is an essential part of the success of a department and can be the most rewarding decision you will make in your career in the fire service. The company officer not only provides company level leadership and development, but when done well they add value to the lives of their crews which will positively impact others in the fire service and our communities for years to come.



## ***Events to Celebrate November Birthdays***

- 1 — *Chuck Shipp*
- 7 — *Scott Wood*
- 9 — *Jon Abrenholz*
- 10 — *Gary Quintrall*
- 11 — *John Lovatt*
- 14 — *Jennie Sand*
- 18 — *Russ Briskin*
- 21 — *Lane Renskers*
- 22 — *Wayne Sanders*
- 22 — *Adam Smith*
- 27 — *Robert King*

## ***NWFR Board Meetings may be conducted via Zoom Meeting***

*Thurs. November 19  
9408 Odell St 61  
Blaine — 1:00 p.m.*





4142 Britton Loop Rd.  
Bellingham, WA 98226

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### CPR / AED Classes 2020

Class will be held at various fire stations around the district. Check out <https://www.nwfrs.net/resources/classes/> for more information and to reserve your spot.

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



FOR THE SAFETY OF  
EVERYONE IN OUR  
COMMUNITY, ALL CPR  
CLASSES HAVE BEEN  
CANCELLED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE.

WE APOLOGIZE FOR  
ANY INCONVENIENCE

## Gratitude cont.

*continued from pg. 2*

- Try to take note when people do a good job and give recognition when it's due at work.
- Reward effort, if someone does something nice for you, do something nice for them.
- Meditate with your gratitude list, giving thanks for all your good fortune.
- Live mindfully, not worrying about the past or future.
- Thank the people who serve you in the community — the shopkeeper, the bus drivers, etc.
- Say thank you for the little things your loved ones do for you, things you normally take for granted.
- Post quotes and images that remind you to be grateful around your house.
- Call into an elderly neighbor and say thank you for their presence in your life.
- Call your grandparents and tell them you love them.
- Embrace challenges and turn them into opportunities to grow.
- Send love to your enemies or people you dislike.
- Be thankful when you learn something new.
- See the growth opportunity in your mistakes.
- Help your friends see the positive side to life.
- When times are bad, focus on your friends who are at your side.
- When time is good, notice and help others.
- Make a gratitude collage, cut out pictures of all the things that you are grateful for.
- Make gratitude a part of family life, share it with each other during meal time.
- Practice gratitude at the same time every day to make it a habit.
- Focus on your strengths.
- Share the benefits of gratitude with family and friends.
- Share gratitude each day by posting a tweet, Facebook post or Pinterest.

Be the change you want to see in the world by making gratitude a part of each day. If we all practice gratitude



## Healthy Pumpkin Pie Thumbprint Cookies



*courtesy of Amy's Healthy Baking*

### for the cookies

- 1 cup (120g) white whole wheat flour or gluten-free\* flour
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tbsp unsalted butter or coconut oil, melted and cooled slightly
- 1 large egg white, room temperature
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup coconut sugar

### for the filling

- 1/4 cup (61g) pumpkin purée (not pumpkin pie mix!)
- 2 tsp nonfat milk
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp liquid stevia

1. To prepare the cookies, whisk together the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the butter, egg white, and vanilla. Stir in the coconut sugar. Add in the flour mixture, stirring until incorporated. Chill the cookie dough for 20 minutes.

2. While the cookie dough chills, prepare the filling. Stir together the pumpkin, milk, cinnamon, and stevia in a small bowl. Transfer to a zip-topped bag, and cut off one corner of the bag.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F, and line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper.

4. Roll the cookie dough into 24 small spheres, and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Using your index

finger or thumb, make an indentation in the center of each, and pipe in the filling. (If the dough cracks, gently pinch it back together with your fingers.) Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before carefully transferring to a wire rack. (If the cookies stick to the baking sheet, slide a knife underneath each cookie first!)

**Notes:** For the gluten-free flour, use as follows: 1/4 cup millet flour, 1/4 cup tapioca flour, 3 tablespoons coconut flour, and 3/4 teaspoon xanthan gum.

If you prefer not to use the liquid stevia, then substitute 1 tablespoon of pure maple syrup, honey, or agave for the liquid stevia. Omit the milk if using this substitution.