



Bells and Whistles

Algonquin Lake in the Hills Fire Rescue Newsletter

January 2009

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



INSIDE

Chief's Corner.....	1
Fire Prevention.....	2
Personnel Status-December.....	2
Statistics.....	2
Birthdays.....	3
Correction.....	3
Anniversaries.....	3
Reflections.....	3
The Cab Ride.....	4

Chief's Corner

By Chief Guetschow

Happy New Year!

I want to wish you and your families a prosperous, healthy and safe New Year!

By now you have probably heard that A/C Rynders will be filling the Chief's position beginning May 1, 2009. This announcement was made so that a smooth transition will take place upon my retirement. I will be working with both Assistant Chief's and the Board of Trustee's to ensure that this occurs.

A meeting of the senior staff is scheduled for January 8, 2009 with the goal to refine plans for the upcoming year. Information will be provided after the meeting.

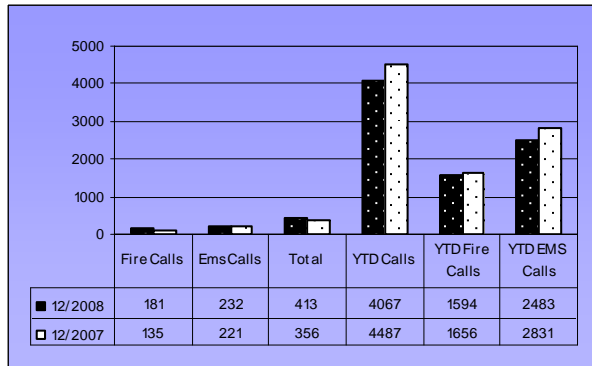
As with everything else these days the District is concerned about the financial issues facing each of us personally and the District as a unit of government. With the majority of our revenue (85%) coming from property taxes we are keeping a close eye on our assessed value. Budget work has already begun so that we can be as productive as possible yet staying within our means. More information will also be provided on this topic as we finalize the budget.

Bells and Whistles
Algonquin Lake in the Hills Fire
Department

Station 1
1020 W. Algonquin Rd
Lake in the Hills, IL 60156
(847) 658-8233
fax (847)854-2609

Station 2
2440 Harnish Dr
Algonquin, IL 60102
(847) 658-8224

Station 3
1691 Cumberland Pkwy
Algonquin, IL 60102
(847) 658-0930



Birthdays

January 13 th	Bob Glodowski
January 18 th	Robert Nieman
January 22 nd	Dan Teson
January 23 rd	Julie Didier
January 25 th	Frank Pelanek

Correction

In November's anniversary section we had Dave Glodowski listed as having his 19th anniversary. After further investigation, Dave is actually having his 20th anniversary in January.

Anniversaries

Ralph Peterson	PT	25 years
Bryan Diercks	PT	24 years
Fred Schau	PT	24 years
Fred Schau	FT	22 years
Dave Glodowski	PT	20 years
Bob Haughey	PT	20 years
Bill Hough	PT	20 years
Tim Littlefield	PT	19 years
Mike Kern	PT	17 years
Gail Kloepper	PT	17 years
Charlie Teson	FT	14 years
Kevin Goers	PT	13 years
John Greene	PT	13 years
Dave Kimpel	PT	13 years
John Skillman	PT	12 years
Steve Guetschow	PT	12 years
Dan Teson	PT	10 years
Pat Caskey	PT	9 years
Tom Stubbs	PT	7 years
Kristy Seymour	FT	6 years
Erick Kennedy	FT	6 years
Brian Kimpel	FT	6 years
John Gaughan	FT	5 years
Mike Saenz	FT	5 years
Laurel Warren	pt	2 years

Reflections

Simpler Resolutions

From Chicken Soup for the Soul: My Resolution

I have always kept my New Year's resolutions in a file. They're fun to look back on, to chart my accomplishments or to see where I need to work harder.

But looking back at my resolutions from two years ago, I barely recognize my goals against the backdrop of the life I live now.

Two years ago, I aimed for a weight loss of ten to fifteen pounds and promised myself laser treatment for the bags under my eyes.

I vowed to travel more with my husband and to take a vacation or two with my mom, as I'd done in years past. I planned to visit a dear friend I hadn't seen in a couple of years. Work was also high on my list.

More writing was to be done and I was going to sell a book idea I'd had for a long time. At the end of my list was a brief mention about keeping my family, people and animals alike, healthy.

Little did I know the complete upheaval that lay ahead for me.

The first few months of the New Year went along as planned. Then in May, my ninety-three-year-old mother fell, fracturing a hip and wrist. At her delicate age, the fear was not just how she'd heal from the required surgery, but would she even survive it at all? She spent the next month in the hospital and rehab, while I spent each day at her bedside. When she went home, I stayed with her day and night, putting my husband and our two dogs on the back burner. Phone calls had to suffice for the time being.

Eventually, caregivers were found and a semi-normal routine was reached where I spent part of my time with Mom and part of my time at

home.

Without warning a few months later, my husband Kenny ended up in the hospital with blood pressure issues.

Soon after, one of our beloved dogs, David, was diagnosed with cancer. Since his age, too, is advanced, we feared he might not survive the surgery, let alone come through it tumor-free and healthy once again.

Those ten to fifteen pounds I wanted to lose? I still have them. The puffiness under my eyes that laser treatment was going to erase? Still there.

And travel: Does to and from vets, the hospital, doctors and grocery stores count?

My writing career? For a long time I was too tired to read, let alone write anything. And yet, I've come to see that there's a plan here. My appearance is less critical to me now. I'm looking in the mirror less because I have less time to do so. I'd rather be talking to my husband during the time we have together, or hugging our two dogs.

My satisfaction comes when the vet says David remains cancer-free. When I call my mom and she sounds stronger than the day before, my heart leaps.

Instead of resenting the turn my life has taken, I'm trying to appreciate the new experiences it has brought. From her chair, my mom has taught me how to make the cinnamon rolls she always made for me when I was a child.

She's re-introduced me to the fun of sewing as she supervises my completion of projects she'd begun before her fall.

I've realized that I've relieved Mom of some of the household responsibilities she so strongly performed for ninety-three years. She deserves it!

In the process of taking part-time care of her

cat I've found another pet to love—one that I used to just greet casually when I visited.

My writing career is now up and running again. I've found new locations to write that I never tried before—doctor's waiting rooms, a quiet moment before breakfast, while waiting for dinner to finish cooking.

Each night before I go to sleep, I say thank you for the gift of life we've all been given for another day. It's not a perfect life for any of us. It's not glamorous or worldly. But it's filled with what I now count as truly important things: love and health, small triumphs and simple joys.

My resolutions will reflect that from now on. And if I can accomplish those few, precious things, life will be complete.

The Cab Ride

So I walked to the door and knocked. 'Just a minute', answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor.

After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 90's stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie.

By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets.

There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

'Would you carry my bag out to the car?' she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman.

She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb.

She kept thanking me for my kindness. 'It's

nothing', I told her. 'I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated'.

'Oh, you're such a good boy', she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, and then asked, 'Could you drive through downtown?'

'It's not the shortest way,' I answered quickly.

'Oh, I don't mind,' she said. 'I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice'.

I looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening. 'I don't have any family left,' she continued. 'The doctor says I don't have very long.' I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

'What route would you like me to take?' I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator.

We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl.

Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, 'I'm tired. Let's go now'

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico.

Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her.

I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

'How much do I owe you?' she asked, reaching into her purse.

'Nothing,' I said.

'You have to make a living,' she answered.

'There are other passengers,' I responded.

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

'You gave an old woman a little moment of joy,' she said. 'Thank you.'

I squeezed her hand, and then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift?

What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments.

But great moments often catch us unaware-beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT YOU SAID, ~BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.