



# Bells and Whistles

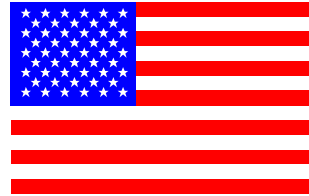
Algonquin Lake in the Hills Fire Rescue Newsletter

May 2009

## Happy Memorial Day!

### INSIDE

Congratulations! .....	1
Get Well .....	1
Birthdays.....	2
Personnel Status.....	2
Statistics .....	2
Anniversaries.....	2
Thoughts on the Fire Service.....	2
Reflections .....	5



### Congratulations!

*By Chief Rynders*

**Remember, Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.**

With the retirement of Chief Guetschow a number of promotions and re-assignments will be taking place.

It is my honor to announce that effective May 4, 2009 the following will occur:

Captain Littlefield will be promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations

Captain Knebl will be assigned as Training Captain.

Lieutenant Hough will be promoted to Captain.

FF Diercks will be promoted to Lieutenant.

A Special Board Meeting has been scheduled for May 6th at 7:30 p.m. to conduct a promotion ceremony for each of our officers. If you are available, please plan to attend and help celebrate this special occasion in each of their careers.

Congratulations Tim, John, Bill and Bryan!

### Get Well

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Scott Burkemper as he recovers at home from surgery for kidney cancer. 'Scott' buttons are still for sale at the front desk. All proceeds will go to the Burkemper family.

We look forward to having you back Scott!

**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

May 4<sup>th</sup> Steve Witkus  
 May 6<sup>th</sup> John Gaughan  
 May 9<sup>th</sup> Bryan Diercks  
 May 10<sup>th</sup> Mike Saenz  
 May 13<sup>th</sup> Corky Corless  
 May 30<sup>th</sup> Bob Haughey

## Personnel Status

### Workers Comp

Kim Matz

**Employee Total 80**  
 Officials 7  
**Full time 52**  
 Firefighter/paramedics – 34  
 Firefighter/EMT – 11  
 Firefighter – 1  
 Salary – 4  
 Civilian – 2  
**Part time 34**  
 Firefighter/Paramedic - 6  
 Firefighter/EMT – 10  
 Paramedic – 3  
 Civilian – 3

## Statistics

**April 1, 2009 – April 30, 2009(am)**

Fire calls 107  
 Ems calls 223

0130 63

Station One

0150 1

0151 121

0141 156

0181 9

Station Two

0162 2

0152 119

0142 138

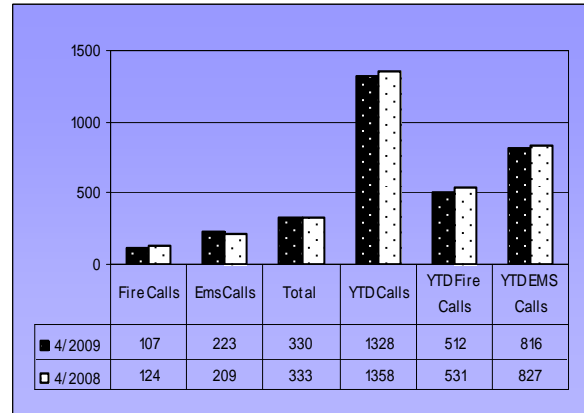
0154 2

Station Three

0153 28

0143 59

**Grand Total 330**



## Anniversaries

In May, the following people are celebrating an anniversary on the Algonquin/Lake in the Hills Fire Department.

Wendy Hoover 12 years ( FT and PT)  
 Bill Neuner 12 years (FT and PT)  
 Jon Escamilla 7 years FT  
 Pat Caskey 7 years FT  
 Steve Ciaccio 7 years FT  
 Dominick Vassos 4 years FT  
 Rob Nieman 2 year FT  
 Mike Kern 1 year as BC  
 John Greene 1 year as BC  
 Tim Littlefield 1 year Captain  
 John Knebl 1 year Captain  
 Julie Didier 1 year Lieutenant

## Thoughts on the Fire Service

By Dan Teson

Last week I attended the FDIC conference in Indianapolis. The first two days of the classroom sessions started off with a general session and keynote speakers. This year's speakers included Chief Bobby Halton, General President of the IAFF Herald Shaitberger, Chief Dave McGrail and LT. Ray McCormack. Each of these men brought a similar message about being a Firefighter, messages about core values and why this profession is the best in the world. Each of them also spoke about what FDIC stands for as an idea.

It's the idea of 29,000 men and women coming together to recharge their collective batteries and not only to learn new techniques but to solidify time tested ones.

I took this all in. At times tears welled up in my eyes. Not because I was sad when they spoke of the Brothers and Sisters we have all lost, or about how seventeen minutes of complacency by a nurse and a doctor during the delivery of Chief McGrail's son caused him to develop cerebral palsy, but because I was so moved by these men who were so passionate about their jobs, how they truly cared for the people around them, and how they cared for people in this profession they have never met. While attending classes over the following four days I found myself sitting next to and being instructed by people with this same passion.

A rather odd chain of events Friday night led me to a stool near the bar at Hooters. I was surrounded by Firefighters from every departmental walk of life, both professional and volunteer. Some were loud and obnoxious, while others like Matt and I talked about the week's events, the things we had learned, the friends we had made and the things we hoped we could take back to our Department.

It was then that four men walked in. The expression on their faces was one of tiredness. You could tell it had been a very busy day for these gentlemen. Three of them were wearing unique department t-shirts, while the fourth wore the familiar white pressed shirt and collar pins of a Chief. I walked over and introduced myself and inquired about their shirts. The biggest of the men said they were not for sale back home, but if I were to send him one of mine he would return the favor. We exchanged information and wished each other well with the raise of a glass.

As Matt and I continued to sit and discuss the week's events our conversation led back to the four gentlemen. After the four men finished eating their dinner, we approached them and they offered us a seat. Our conversation soon steered towards the *Job*. Martin was the one who did most of the talking. He told us how he was the Assistant

Chief back home until a different political party took over and he was returned to his previous rank of D Captain. He was quick to point out Roberto, his friend, was an E Captain, the highest rank a captain could hold. Roberto started a few years earlier than Martin on the *Job* and was promoted accordingly. Where these men come from, a person has to volunteer at a firehouse for at least a year possibly up to three before they are hired full time. As their years of service grow, their rank grows through the five levels of firefighter, Lieutenant and then finally Captain.

Soon Martin began to tell us about the EMS portion of their service, or more appropriately the lack of. He and all his men are trained to a first responder level. The ambulance service is provided by the Red Cross. On a good day an ambulance is only thirty minutes away. A bad day is a run at 0700 while the Red Cross changes shifts. Martin told several accounts of doing CPR on a victim, who was undoubtedly dead, for the entire ninety minutes while waiting for an ambulance. I asked him if they really performed CPR that long. At first he joked about how they would send one guy for coffee while the new guy did CPR. I again asked if they really did this for ninety minutes. With a very serious look on his face he answered "Of course we do, it's our job."

We then spoke of equipment. Martin told us how his station was very lucky. Their engine was only a few years old, and everyone had gear. He said he worked very hard to get his men the best equipment he could, so they could be safe.

We asked what kind of fires they fought and how big the houses were. Martin told us he worked at the slowest station and they only averaged three fires a day. He again was proud to point out that Roberto worked at the busy house in the center of town where they averaged ten fires a day, either houses, buildings, or cars.

I asked what the building construction was like. His answer was one I didn't expect. "The big houses are around 1000 square feet, but they go down from there. Most of them are smaller and made of pallets and maybe a used

garage door if the people are lucky. We don't have building codes."

When I asked if they fought interior attacks Martin was almost offended.

He answered "Of course we do, it's our job. The things in the house are the only things the people own."

Despite their best efforts they usually burn off an entire row of houses.

Martin spoke about their station life. They watch Morey and Springer at lunch like we do. Each shift has a refrigerator and a pantry. Martin said all his men eat together. If one of them can't eat, none of them eat. He spoke of how each day at shift change his men wear the 5.11 polo's they bought for themselves and usually by 10 they are in T-shirts, but on every call they wear their nice polo shirts. We asked why they bought the shirts? Martin said "We want to not only be professional but we want to look professional."

He said "How would you feel if someone showed up to help you and they looked like slob?"

Martin told of how this year the city had lost 600 policemen. Either they quit, went missing or were flat out murdered. Right away, I asked how many firemen had lost their lives. Three he said. In the twenty-seven years he had been there, they have only lost three.

He told of how the drug traffic through his city was so bad the police were even involved on the wrong side of the law, and how people were kidnapped and held for ransom. When asked if he was scared, he said, "No, I'm a fireman the people love us, all the people, even the bad ones. They know that we will come help them no matter who they are."

We continued to talk about different topics, like how he got to FDIC. He held up his name tag which said Mark.

"This is from a friend of mine. He paid for me to be here. We are all staying at another friend's house that lives near the city." He said the others were going home but he and Roberto were going on to Ohio to pick up a used engine in order to drive it back, and then drive it to another Fire Department

that needed it. He also told of how just three days prior he was delivering an engine to the city, where most of the country's drug problems start, and broke down on the side of the road. A tow truck driver picked him and the engine up, locked it up inside, and gave him a place to stay for the night, **all for free** because he was a fireman.

"At the parades" he said, "everyone boos the politicians and Police. But when we go by they stand up and cheer, because they know we will always help them."

I asked him what was a problem, right now, at his firehouse? He said that they want station logos on t-shirts so the men can be more proud about their fire house. Roberto then jumped in speaking a language I couldn't understand and they both laughed. Evidently, the joke was that the shirts should just have Martin's Fire Station written on them because everyone says that station twelve belongs to him. He laughs and says they make fun of him about it, but he likes it. He is proud of where he works and even more proud of the men he works with.

The point of all this is that at the beginning of the conference I heard men talk about the Fire Service. And on my last night in town, I shared a table at Hooters with a man that was the Fire Service. A man, that despite second hand equipment and used personal gear, loves this job. He wanted to be the best at what he did, make the Firemen around him better and provide the people they serve a level of professionalism that isn't found in many places. He had mentors, and he was proud of them. He is a senior man who leads by example. He gives himself unselfishly to a job that many who don't do this job will never understand. Martin embodies what many of us think the Fire Service is or should be.

If you ever find yourself in Tijuana, Mexico, stop by the number twelve Fire House and say hello to my friend Martin, the D Captain on B shift. If he's there, he will be easy to spot. He's pretty big and has a mustache. He will probably have a smile on his face and his men will be close by. Buy him a cheeseburger for lunch not a taco, he tells me he eats Mexican every day.

# Reflections

## How to Be New and Different

*From Chicken Soup for the Soul: Stories of Faith*

*Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.*

*~Eleanor Roosevelt*

The year 1993 wasn't shaping up to be the best year of my life. I was into my eighth year as a single parent, had three kids in college, my unmarried daughter had just given birth to my first grandchild and I was about to break up with a very nice man I'd dated for over two years. Faced with all this, I was spending lots of time feeling sorry for myself.

That April, I was asked to interview and write about a woman who lived in a small town in Minnesota. So during Easter vacation, Andrew, my thirteen-year-old, and I drove across two states to meet Jan Turner.

Andrew dozed most of the way during the long drive, but every once in a while I'd start a conversation.

"She's handicapped, you know."

"So what's wrong with her? Does she have a disease?"

"I don't think so. But for some reason, she had to have both arms and legs amputated."

"Wow. How does she get around?"

"I'm not sure. We'll see when we get there."

"Does she have any kids?"

"Two boys—Tyler and Cody—both adopted. She's a single parent, too. Only she's never been married."

"So what happened to her?"

"Four years ago Jan was just like me, a busy single mother. She was a full-time music teacher at a grade school and taught all sorts of musical instruments. She was also the music director at her church."

Andrew fell asleep again before I could finish telling him what little I did know about what had happened to Jan. As I drove across Minnesota, I began to wonder how the woman I was about to meet could cope with such devastating news that all four limbs had to be amputated. How did she learn to survive? Did she have live-in help?

When we arrived in Willmar, Minnesota, I called Jan from our hotel to tell her that I could come to her house and pick her and the boys up, so they could swim at our hotel while we talked.

"That's okay, Pat, I can drive. The boys and I will be there in ten minutes. Would you like to go out to eat first? There's a Ponderosa close to your hotel."

"Sure, that'll be fine," I said haltingly, wondering what it would be like to eat in a public restaurant with a woman who had no arms or legs. And how on earth would she drive? Ten minutes later, Jan pulled up in front of the hotel. She got out of the car, walked over to me with perfect posture on legs and feet that looked every bit as real as mine, and extended her right arm with its shiny hook on the end to shake my hand. "Hello, Pat, I'm sure glad to meet you. And this must be Andrew."

I grabbed her hook, pumped it a bit and smiled sheepishly. "Uh, yes, this is Andrew." I looked in the back seat of her car and smiled at the two boys who grinned back. Cody, the younger one, was practically effervescent at the thought of going swimming in the hotel pool after dinner.

Jan bubbled as she slid back behind the driver's seat, "So hop in. Cody, move over and make room for Andrew."

We arrived at the restaurant, went through the line, paid for our food, and ate and talked amidst the chattering of our three sons. The only thing I had to do for Jan Turner that entire evening was unscrew the top on the ketchup bottle.

Later that night, as our three sons splashed in the pool, Jan and I sat on the side and she told me about life before her illness.

"We were a typical single-parent family. You know, busy all the time. Life was so good, in fact, that I was seriously thinking about adopting a third child."

My conscience stung. I had to face it—the woman next to me was better at single parenting than I ever thought about being.

Jan continued. "One Sunday in November of 1989, I was playing my trumpet at the front of my church when I suddenly felt weak, dizzy and nauseous. I struggled down the aisle, motioned for the boys to follow me and drove home. I crawled into bed, but by evening I knew I had to get help."

Jan then explained that by the time she arrived at the hospital, she was comatose. Her blood pressure had dropped so much that her body was already shutting down. She had pneumococcal pneumonia, the same bacterial infection that took

the life of Muppets creator Jim Henson. One of its disastrous side effects is an activation of the body's clotting system, which causes the blood vessels to plug up. Because there was suddenly no blood flow to her hands or feet, she quickly developed gangrene in all four extremities. Two weeks after being admitted to the hospital, Jan's arms had to be amputated at mid-forearm and her legs at mid-shin.

Just before the surgery, she said she cried out, "Oh God, no! How can I live without arms and legs, feet or hands? Never walk again? Never play the trumpet, guitar, piano or any of the instruments I teach? I'll never be able to hug my sons or take care of them. Oh God, don't let me depend on others for the rest of my life!"

Six weeks after the amputations, as her dangling limbs healed, a doctor talked to Jan about prosthetics. She said Jan could learn to walk, drive a car, go back to school, even go back to teaching.

Jan found that hard to believe so she picked up her Bible. It fell open to Romans, chapter twelve, verse two: "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you."

Jan thought about that—about being a new and different person—and she decided to give the prosthetics a try. With a walker strapped onto her forearms near the elbow and a therapist on either side, she could only wobble on her new legs for two to three minutes before she collapsed in exhaustion and pain.

Take it slowly, Jan said to herself. Be a new person in all that you do and think, but take it one step at a time.

The next day she tried on the prosthetic arms, a crude system of cables, rubber bands and hooks operated by a harness across the shoulders. By moving her shoulder muscles she was soon able to open and close the hooks to pick up and hold objects, and dress and feed herself.

Within a few months, Jan learned she could do almost everything she used to do—only in a new and different way.

"Still, when I finally got to go home after four months of physical and occupational therapy, I was so nervous about what life would be like with my boys and me alone in the house. But when I got there, I got out of the car, walked up the steps to our house, hugged my boys with all my might, and we haven't looked back since."

As Jan and I continued to talk, Cody, who'd climbed out of the hotel pool, stood close to his mom with his arm around her shoulders. As she told me about her newly improved cooking skills, Cody grinned. "Yup," he said, "She's a better mom now than before she got sick, because now she can even flip pancakes!" Jan laughed like a woman who is blessed with tremendous happiness, contentment and unswerving faith in God.

Since our visit, Jan has completed a second college degree, this one in communications, and she is now an announcer for the local radio station. She also studied theology and has been ordained as the children's pastor at her church, the Triumphant Life Church in Willmar. Simply put, Jan says, "I'm a new and different person, triumphant because of God's unending love and wisdom."

After meeting Jan, I was a new and different person as well. I learned to praise God for everything in my life that makes me new and different, whether it's struggling through one more part-time job to keep my kids in college, learning to be a grandmother for the first time or

having the courage to end a relationship with a wonderful friend who just wasn't the right one for me.

Jan may not have real flesh-and-blood arms, legs, hands or feet, but that woman has more heart and soul than anyone I've ever met before or since. She taught me to grab on to every "new and different" thing that comes into my life with all the gusto I can muster... to live my life triumphantly.