



# BELLS AND WHISTLES

Algonquin Lake in the Hills Fire Protection District Newsletter

November 2008



## TURKEY RAFFLE ON THE 21ST!

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### Chief's Corner

By Chief Guetschow

Although I don't normally look forward to winter, I am looking forward to the month of November. There are going to be many important training activities throughout the month. Live burns, traffic safety and automatic aid training will all be addressed this month. These events will be an opportunity for all of us to practice some skills that we may not use on a daily basis.

I would like to thank everyone that assisted with our Open House. Lt. Didier and black shift did a great job of setting up and cleaning up. There were many more that assisted and so I don't miss anyone let me simply say THANKS!

The administrative staff along with a consultant have been reviewing new phone systems. We hope to have our choice nailed down shortly with implementation expected early 2009. All employees will need to attend a training session since this system will have a few more "options" than the current one.

Be Safe!

### Congratulations!

Our congratulations go to Scott and Lisa Burkemper on the birth of their son, Jason Edward, born October 16<sup>th</sup> weighing in at 3 lbs 10 oz., 17 1/2 inches. Jason was not due until December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**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

## Turkey Raffle

The turkeys are ready to hatch and the Annual Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Fire Department Turkey Raffle will be held on Friday, November 21st at 7 pm MARK Your CALENDARS!!! We look forward to seeing everyone!

## We Can Make a Difference

*By Battalion Chief Joe Teson*

I would like to take a moment to thank those who helped with the Bear Run .The run made \$18,000! Also, District 300 adopted Bear Necessities as their annual project and raised \$32,000!

Together we can make a difference. THANK YOU!

## Personnel Status

### New Hire

Justin Dusek, FF/PM part time (rehire)  
Chris Mika, FF/EMT full time

### Work Comp Leave

Kim Matz

### Resigned

Jim Piersol, FF/EMT, part time (7 years)

**EMPLOYEE TOTAL** 80

Officials 6

### **Full time 51**

Firefighter/paramedics - 30

Firefighter/EMT - 12

Firefighter - 3

Salary - 4

Civilian - 2

### **Part time 23**

Firefighter/Paramedic - 6

Firefighter/EMT - 11

Firefighter - 0

Paramedic - 3

Civilians - 3

## Birthdays

November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Marjean Diercks
November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Laurel Warren
November 13 <sup>th</sup>	Justin Dusek
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Matt Berg
November 21 <sup>st</sup>	Tim Monahan
November 29 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Bremner
November 30 <sup>th</sup>	Scott Olsen

Happy Birthday to all!

## Statistics

### October 1-31, 2008

Fire calls 111

EMS calls 202

0130 48

#### Station One

0151 99

0141 103

0181 29

0154 1

#### Station Two

0152 100

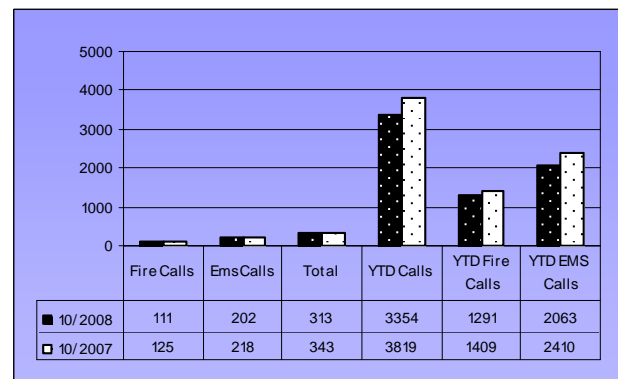
0142 87

#### Station Three

0153 43

0143 58

**Grand Total 313**



## Anniversaries

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

Rick Kempe	32 years FT and PT
Dave Glodowski	19 years PT
Keith Mohr	8 years PT
Scott Burkemper	7 years PT
Michele Bauer	6 years FT

## Reflections

### *A Matter of Life and Death From Chicken Soup for the Soul: Older and Wiser*

BY: Mickey Mann Johnson

My mother's wedding ring and some of her other personal valuables were in my purse. Happy and grateful that my mother had come through heart surgery successfully, I was going to the hospital to pick her up. Carey, my happy-go-lucky two-year-old son, was with me in the car as I maneuvered through Houston's busiest freeway exchange. Then something happened that marked 1976 as the year that changed my life—a terrifying explosion. I remember it with every breath I take—literally.

Traffic came to a riveting halt. Stunned by the sudden shock of it all, I jumped out of the car with Carey right behind me. A strange stench choked me and stung my eyes, and then a huge cloud of toxic fumes enveloped Carey and me. I grabbed Carey and darted back into the car and closed the door. All the while, Carey was screaming, "Help me, Mommy. I hurt!" Frantic, I wrapped Carey in my suit jacket and lay on top of him, trying to protect him from the deadly fumes. Between passing out and throwing up, I tried to honk the horn in desperate hopes that someone would hear it and rescue us. Finally, after I hit the windshield wipers, someone pointed rescuers our way.

Later we found out that the highway holocaust had been caused by a truck pulling a large tank of anhydrous ammonia. The hitch broke, causing the trailer and tank to fall off the upper freeway and onto the lower freeway where I was driving. Fourteen people were killed instantly, and more than two hundred hospitalized. Carey and I were the only two survivors in the area where the explosion had ripped the freeway apart.

After the accident, Carey spent two-and-a-half months in the hospital, and I was there for more than a year. After that, live-in nurses stayed in my home for about two-and-a-half years. Carey and I both received around-the-clock love and attention from my husband. Before the accident, we all enjoyed a wonderful life. We climbed mountains, we went on trips and family outings together, and we even enjoyed our routine workaday life. But in 1976, all that changed. I was an invalid, blind, unable to breathe on my own and certainly not able to care for my two-year-old, my other children, nor my husband.

After a couple of years, I began getting better even though I still took antibiotics every day and breathing treatments three or four times daily. Then I'd suffer setbacks so serious the doctors would call all my family in to be with me while I died. But each time I miraculously rallied.

Different parts of my body gave out at different times. For example, I was blind a great deal of the time until I had a two-cornea transplant. Coping with blindness when I had enjoyed such an active life before the accident was an agonizing struggle, but my lungs—damaged from breathing the toxic fumes—posed the most life-threatening challenges.

The time had come when there was no longer a choice. I simply could not breathe on my own anymore. I was in the hospital for two months on a ventilator, but the doctors said they couldn't consider me for a lung transplant because I was in such poor condition.

I refused to give up hope. Too many people were praying for me. God had already worked numerous

miracles in my life—just to be alive was the greatest one.

As I lay in the hospital teetering on a tightrope between life and death, I was told that a donor had been found.

I asked my husband Don to call our minister for me to talk to before I went into the operating room. My husband could not find our minister, so I asked him to find John Morgan, my brother's minister. When John came into my room, he said to me, "You are not going to believe this! Something has happened that I'm not going to tell you about until you wake up after your surgery." I was curious, of course, but I was simply too weak to interrogate him. John prayed with me that I would make it through surgery even though I was in critical condition.

After the surgery, when it looked like I was going to survive, my husband explained to me the miracle John had alluded to. "Last Sunday when we prayed in church for you, a young man and his family were there. His name was Jason. Later that day, Jason was shot and killed in a tragic act of violence. Jason is your donor."

Don filled in more details. "Jason's parents would not have even thought about Jason's being a donor if John had not prayed specifically for you that morning in church and mentioned your name." My husband continued, "Numerous people were on the waiting list—some for over a year. But Jason was the right size for you and the right blood type and had all the other technical compatibilities. Mickey, you were the only one right for Jason's lungs."

One day when I was still in the hospital recuperating from the transplant, a man came into my intensive care room and asked Don, "Is Mickey Johnson your wife?"

Of course, my husband responded, "Yes." The man explained, "My father is in the hospital here, too, and I have come to see him." He then said, slowly and deliberately, "I was also Jason's schoolteacher." He continued, "I brought all these letters Jason's classmates wrote to your wife."

I cried as I read each letter. They were the most beautiful testimony to a teenager—or anybody—I had ever read. They talked about what a fine young man Jason was and how thrilled he would be that he was able to give life to me if he had to die. My heart almost broke with sadness for Jason's family. How could I ever thank him and his family for the joy that my own life had been extended because of his priceless gift?

I later found out that Jason was born in 1976, the same year as that freeway explosion. The same year that changed my life gave me life.

As a grandmother, I still have aches and pains, but they are merely reminders of the privilege of growing older. Like George Burns once said, "Growing older is not always golden, but it sure beats the alternative."

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**