



# HOUGHTY'S HEROES



*Bi-Monthly News from the Wayland Fire Department*

Volume Nine

November 2017

**We Opened the Doors:** Every year during the opening weekend of Fire Prevention Week, the department takes pride in opening its doors to invite the public to visit the fire station. This year the weather was great, and we had the LARGEST crowd of visitors we have ever had. People of all ages came to see and touch the fire equipment and visit with the staff. Many of the firefighters volunteered their time to set up, clean up and spend time with the community answering questions and posing for photos with the children. As in past years, many thanks to Papa Gino's for their donation of 40 pizzas for the event.



**SAFE Conference:** Each year the Department of Fire Services hosts a conference for public educators. This year Firefighter Todd Winner was one of the guest lecturers at the event. Todd was asked to give a presentation on the programs that Wayland provides to residents of all ages from pre-school to the WAYSECURE program for our older residents. Since his presentation, we have received many inquiries looking for additional information on what Wayland provides as we are one of a few communities that provides this wide range of programs. We see this as a true testament to our SAFE team and the programs they created.



Pictured are Firefighter/Paramedic Pat Walkinshaw and Firefighter/SAFE Coordinator Todd Winner.

**Helping the Commonwealth’s Human Resources:** In October several members of the department volunteered to assist the Commonwealth’s Human Resource Division by taking a lengthy (many hours to complete) survey to assist them with developing more relevant assessment centers and testing for entry level and promotional firefighter positions in the Commonwealth. Although Wayland does not use the Commonwealth for any entry level or promotional process, we were glad to be selected to give input to the future of firefighting.

**Nice Job:** On a regular basis we receive letters from community members about the services we have been able to provide. Every now and then an unusual one comes across my desk that acknowledges people for going above and beyond the call of duty. As a Chief I usually never find out about the things like this that staff members do until these letters come in. These letters go to show the pride that we all have in our firefighters for the things that they do. To give you an idea, below are two of the letters I received recently.

<p><i>Chief Houghton,</i></p> <p><i>I wish to express my appreciation to the Department for Inspector Dan Spurling’s prompt and cheerful consultation regarding placement of new smoke/CO detectors and his clarification of the underground storage removal permit certificate I have on file. It’s such a pleasure to work with skilled and dedicated professionals.</i></p> <p><i>Don Davis</i></p>	<p><i>Dear Sir:</i></p> <p><i>At approximately 5:30 PM this evening, while enroute to a local restaurant for supper with my brother, we noticed Assistant Fire Chief Neil McPherson’s vehicle parked at the corner of Millbrook Road and Route 27.</i></p> <p><i>My brother pulled his vehicle behind Assistant Chief McPherson’s unit and activated his emergency flashers in order to provide further protection for his unit as traffic on Millbrook Road was coming to a stop behind it and backing up.</i></p> <p><i>We both walked to the corner and found the Assistant Chief assisting a female party by changing the tire on her vehicle which had gone flat due to a hole in its sidewall.</i></p> <p><i>It is safe to say that the young lady was most grateful for Chief McPherson’s help, and thanked him for his assistance prior to continuing on her way.</i></p> <p><i>In an era when Firefighters, Police Officers, and other Public Safety personnel are not always recognized for their efforts, I felt that this incident was worth mentioning to you.</i></p> <p><i>Thomas Turner</i></p>
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**A Fire in the Fire Station!** This is not what you want to hear while on vacation, but that is exactly what happened on October 16th. On that day the Public Safety Building received a “power surge” into the electrical system powerful enough to melt power strips at some work stations, blow out battery backup units at others, and create a fire in the electrical room. The fire was found due to the internal fire alarm system sounding and indicating smoke detector activation in that room. Crews quickly found the room filled with smoke and heat, and extinguished the fire, preventing catastrophic damage to the system. This once again proves the value of working smoke detectors! The damage was confined to local

devices and the backup generator. Arrangements were made for a trailer mounted unit to be brought in and wired to the building before any future storm could knock out power allowing the public safety building to remain fully functional 24/7. Although the damage is still being addressed, we are working with the Town's insurance company on filing a claim.



**Assistant Chief Gets Credentials:** On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Massachusetts Fire Service Commission granted accreditation to the level of fire chief in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to Assistant Chief Neil McPherson for demonstrating the required fire service experience, education, and certification. This accreditation shows Neil's dedication to providing the highest level of professionalism and service to this community. Congratulations!

**What's New and Upcoming:** At the end of October, Lt. Halfpenny and I went to Walpole to meet the sales representative of our new ladder truck. We inspected the truck for compliance to our specifications, and I'm happy to report that the truck only had minor items that needed correction. The truck is being sent to the lettering shop before being delivered to Station 1. Training has been scheduled for the last week of November, and we hope to have the truck in service shortly after that.



**Breast Cancer Awareness:** October was Breast Cancer Awareness month, and for the past few years the fire department has been wearing pink shirts during the month to acknowledge and participate with this awareness program. Along with the pink shirts, firefighters have, for many years, participated in “Red Shirt Fridays” – a day when red golf shirts or sweatshirts are worn by firefighters on Fridays in honor of our Troops. This is something that we are proud to be a part of and will continue to be a tradition in our department.



**A Windy Day:** New England Weather has certainly brought more issues for the town to collectively battle. The wind storm on October 30th proved how well the inter-department relationships are with the Police, Fire and DPW. All of the resources mitigated the problems posed by trees, wires, and road closures quickly and smoothly. We know the traveling public was not happy with the needed road closures, but our ultimate goal of keeping everyone safe was achieved.



**We Do It All:** Sunrise of Wayland, the assisted living community, had a pumpkin carving contest and invited public safety to participate. As the picture shows, Assistant Chief Neil McPherson, who wanted to show off his master carving abilities, volunteered to take this on. After making the initial cuts and cleaning out the pumpkin, Firefighter Walkinshaw took over and showed off his talents. While a good effort was put forth, the Fire Department received an honorable mention. The Grand Prize was won by the Police Department. Congratulations WPD!



**Firefighter Burgett to Retire:** After more than 34 years of service consisting of four as a call firefighter and 30 as a permanent firefighter, Brian Burgett is retiring. Growing up in Wayland as a “Cochituate boy,” Brian lived in the community for more than 20 years before moving out of the Wayland and eventually ending up in Medway. We want to thank Brian for his dedication and commitment to our community, and wish him a relaxing retirement knowing his life’s work has made a difference.

**The New Guys:** Just as we say good-bye to a retiring firefighter, we welcome a new recruit. Nate Bachman, who filled a spot left vacant when a firefighter resigned in August, was sworn in as a Firefighter/Paramedic on October 2nd. Nate lives in Holliston and graduated from Holliston High School. He attended Anna Maria College earning his Bachelor of Science in Fire Science, and became a certified paramedic through Quinsigamond Community College. He will be attending the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy in the spring. We welcome Nate to the Department and wish him a safe and prosperous career. Our next new hire to replace FF Burgett is scheduled to start his orientation with the department in December.

**The Last Word:** With Thanksgiving upon us, it is a good time to remind everyone that home cooking fires peak on the Thanksgiving holiday. Please be careful. As much as we would enjoy spending the holiday with you, we would rather it be as a planned invitation and not as a result of an emergency call on Thanksgiving Day. We have a lot for which to be thankful, and not needing to call upon us is one of those things. Be safe!

The statistics below are provided by the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Analysis and Research Division:

- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.
- In 2015, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1,760 home cooking fires on Thanksgiving, the peak day for such fires.
- Unattended cooking was by far the leading contributing factor in cooking fires and fire deaths.
- Cooking equipment was involved in almost half (48%) of all reported home fires and tied with heating equipment for the second leading cause of home fire deaths.

