



FULLY INVOLVED

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF TAMPA FIRE RESCUE

April 2014

Issue 8

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From the Chief:

Thank you for a job well done!

And so it has begun. Since the start of this year, Tampa Fire Rescue has witnessed several key personnel

changes as a result of the retirements of some fine staff members. As we move further into this spring season and closer toward the coming summer months, we anticipate the departure of other key members as well.

It is with an immense sense of gratitude and somberness that I say goodbye to some of the most critically important members of our organization: Operations Chief, Asst. Chief **Scott Ehlers**, Personnel Chief **Joseph Provenzano**, and Special Operations Chief **Emilio Salabarría**. From our Budget Office Ms. **Ginny Cook**; and soon to be departing within a few weeks; Division Chief **Tracy Walker**, D/V-1C; Training Chief **Russell Spicola**; Supply Division Manager **Brian Gummoe**; and Fire Prevention Bureau Office Support Specialist-IV Ms. **Marguerite Brennan**.

Every single member of this department, at one time or another, has been assisted, guided, directed, counseled, comforted, and/or otherwise influenced by many of these professionals. Although we hold a luncheon or open house in honor of each of these members' service to this department and to this community, we will never truly be able to repay them for everything each of them has done to make this a better department and a better place to work and enjoy a great career.

Rarely in my career have I met folks who worked as hard and as relentlessly as these members have to get the job done every moment, every day. The results weren't always what we hoped for, but it was never due to a lack of effort or an unwillingness to follow up and follow through on the task at hand. I can only say I am thankful I was able to

work beside these fine folks over the many years and while we will definitely carry on and continue to be successful in all of our endeavors, the influence that these individuals have exacted on this department will remain for a long, long time—and I, for one, feel that is a good thing.

Many of you over the years have heard me say that the job we do here is not merely a job, but a *calling*. With the type of incidents that each of us faces daily in the discharge of our duties, I firmly believe that the average person would not be able to do what we do with any type of longevity. Yet we do it. It's even more striking that many of us can have a fulfilling career while dealing with the hurt, harm, and danger that we are subjected to over the course of our careers. But we do. Because I believe each of us were uniquely chosen or called to perform this mission—a mission of service to our fellow citizens.

In closing, I am reminded of the declaration the Apostle Paul stated in the New Testament of the Bible, in the Second Epistle to Timothy in the fourth chapter beginning at the fifth verse when he instructed him saying: *"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is a righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."*

Unfortunately, this is simply the first transition of critical staff members of the department, over the next few months we will be addressing other transitions as more of our "bravest" bid us their fond farewells. To each of these, our departing members, on behalf of the men and women of Tampa Fire Rescue: Thanks for your service and job well done! In the meantime for those of us still "making it happen," stay safe out there and I'll see you soon.

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Clowning Around for Fire Safety



TFR Public Education Officer Patty Dempsey, as *Clangin' Belle*, paints a young girl's face during the Mayor's River O' Green event Mar. 15. Dempsey attends numerous events throughout the year to promote fire safety and prevention. Photo by Jason A. Penny

By Jason A. Penny

Patty Dempsey, TFR's Public Education Officer, is a familiar face to many people in the

department and to the youth around Tampa. She has been educating the public about fire safety and prevention for more than a decade. But now there's a new personality who helps her spread the word in a more memorable way.

Her name is Clangin' Belle and she's a friendly clown who enjoys face painting and talking to children and parents about fire safety. "It's amazing. Children will remember the character, and they associate the character with the message. That has proved to be effective," said Dempsey.

Patty attends numerous events throughout the year both in and out of character. Many times she will set up a booth and offer free face painting as a way to deliver her message. While she has a child's attention during the time it takes to paint his or her face, Clangin' Belle can engage the child in a friendly discussion about fire safety and what actions to take in an emergency. "You get to know them a little bit, ask them what grade they're in and then I'll ask, 'What would you do if you found some matches or a lighter?'" Dempsey says the children feel more comfortable talking to the

character than they would to an unfamiliar adult. "Sometimes it's a whole lot more effective, the one on one, just a few moments with a child to talk about 'stop, drop and roll' or whatever the message is that we're trying to give them."

In cases when a child doesn't know much—or anything about fire dangers, Dempsey said the character helps to facilitate a discussion with the parents in a non-threatening way. "I'll say something like, 'Mom, we need to practice this. We need to know 9-1-1.' And they'll take it from a clown."

Based on the reaction from children and parents, the program has been a success. She learned to develop the characters from a class she attended in February which is sponsored by the Florida Fire College. In addition to learning ways to enhance messaging and outreach, she also became certified to teach the class to others. Teaching is nothing new for her, however. Patty holds a master's degree in Education and was a school teacher for 14 years prior to joining TFR. She taught every grade with the exceptions of kindergarten and 1st grade, and taught subjects including English, Algebra and World History.

Dempsey says she takes her job seriously and always finds an opportunity to educate the public even in venues where you wouldn't normally expect to see the fire department represented. On one particular Saturday in March she attended a brain cancer awareness event, a health fair, and the Bark in the Park event which supports the American Humane Society. At the latter event she unveiled a new character that would seem appropriate for the venue. The character is 'Sparky' the fire dog. Patty painted on the face of a dog in clown style and used the canine theme of the event to further promote her message.

Patty makes clear that she doesn't perform her duties exclusively in character but she recognizes the great response she gets those times when she does put on the make-up. "The department has embraced it and the public has embraced it with enthusiasm." Her goal for the program is to keep finding ways to educate the public and she says that for her to do that she must continue her learning path. "I'm a teacher and I'm a student," Dempsey said. "As long as I'm learning I can be excited about teaching."

To reach Patty and find out more about her program and schedule of events you can call her at (813) 274-8241 or email her at patricia.dempsey@tampagov.net.

Fully Involved

Tampa Fire Rescue Chief: Chief Tom Forward
Public Information Officer: Jason A. Penny

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On the Air

Since April is tax month we asked:

If you receive a tax refund how will you spend the money?



What I've been spending it on for the last 20 years, my kids!

**- D/E Vince Jackson
Engine 10B**

Pay off debt and do some home improvements on my house.

**- Paramedic Hector Rivera
Rescue 13B**



Buy new tires for my truck.

**- Capt. Wayne Tolzman
Engine 3C**

Half on college tuition loans and half on home improvements.

**- Rafael Perez
Emergency Planner**



I plan on paying off some bills and maybe make some improvements around the house.

**- Ramona Williams
Admin/Accounts Payable,
OSS III**

I'll put it toward a vacation to Italy this summer.

**- Capt. James Gilligan
Engine 4B**



From the Personnel Office

By Capt. Luanna Baughman, Personnel Officer

Tampa Fire Rescue has been undergoing many changes in recent weeks. There have been retirements, promotions, transfers and re-structuring. One of the offices affected is the Personnel Division. Personnel Chief Joseph Provenzano, Jr. retired after 30 years of service and Chief David J. Solorzano was promoted to Personnel Chief. Captain Jimmie F. Thomas, Jr. transferred back into Combat to Engine 16-B shift, and I, Captain Luanna M. Baughman, transferred to the Personnel Officer's position. For those of you who do not know us, I would like to give you a little history about our staff and some information about our office with ways we may be of some help to you in your careers.

Chief Solorzano was hired in 1989. He rose through the ranks as a Firefighter/Paramedic/Driver Engineer/Captain, and District Chief. He holds certifications for Paramedic, HAZMAT, Marine, and an A.S. in Fire Science Technology. Chief Solorzano is married and has 5 children and 1 grandson.

I was hired in 1994 and went into rescue in 1998. I was a Firefighter/F-4 Paramedic/Lieutenant and Captain. I am a Paramedic of Record, Critical Care trained and a Paramedic Field Training Officer. I am also a Registered Nurse and have my Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Florida in Fire and Emergency Services. I am married with four children and one granddaughter.

Lastly, one person who has not changed in our office is OSS IV, Sharon Walker. She has been with Tampa Fire Rescue since 1986. She worked in Payroll as Personnel Assistant 2 and was reclassi-

fied as an OSS IV in 2011. Sharon is married with two children and three grandchildren. Sharon has been an integral part of our new transition and has helped us make the transition smoothly.

Personnel Office Functions:

- Comply with and implement the procedures required by local, state and federal laws, rules, and regulations applicable to the operation of Tampa Fire Rescue.
- Facilitate the timely processing of the department's payroll with HR.
- Process hiring and fill promotional vacancies for both uniform and general employees.
- Process all retirements, resignations and dismissals.
- Assist Employment Services in the area of testing for the purpose of filling entrance level and promotional vacancies.
- Represent City of Tampa Fire Rescue in legal matters pertaining to the department's operation.
- Represent the department in all legal cases involving worker's compensation claims.
- Process and administer grievance and /or disciplinary action cases pertaining to all Fire Rescue employees.
- Represent the department in labor relations' issues regarding implementation and execution of I.A.F.F. and A. T. U. collective bargaining agreements.
- Process and maintain general records relative to the department's operation.
- Provide miscellaneous activities as required for the efficient operation of Tampa Fire Rescue.
- Administer the department's light duty program.
- Develop and maintain exceptional customer relations with both internal and external customers by responding to their needs in a courteous and respectful manner.

Mayor Buckhorn Makes National Telecommunications Week Proclamation



Mayor Bob Buckhorn recognized the Tampa Fire Rescue Communications Division after officially proclaiming the week of April 13 to 19 National Telecommunications Week at the Tampa Police & Fire Rescue Communications Center, April 14. Chief Tom Forward and Assistant Chiefs Nick Locicero and Michael Gonzalez attended the proclamation ceremony and expressed their appreciation to the team of professional communication specialists who dispatch more than 72,000 calls for service each year.

Your thoughts

Musings, opinions, and advice from around the department

Advice from a Retiring Division Chief

By Division Chief Terry Walker



I became a member of Tampa Fire Rescue on October 31, 1983 and have had a blessed and honorable, 30 year career. I wanted to take a few moments to share with you, my friends, associates and co-workers what those 30 years with Tampa Fire Rescue have taught me.

One thing that you should know is that back in 1983 if you'd asked me who the Division chief was I couldn't have told you, let alone the names of a number of other ranking chiefs of the department. I tell you this because while it may be important to move up the career path it just isn't worth sacrificing your family or your health to achieve that goal. My belief is that your faith and your family always come first.

Now, if your long-term plan is to move up the career path, what I found out through my service as the Union President and my years of service on the Pension Board is that many think that those activities gives you a promotional edge. In reality, people who are deeply involved in the outside fire department work are more aggressive with their career and therefore get noticed. I believe that your involvement in outside service should always be for the right reasons, for the betterment of yourself and the job and not for the purpose of getting promoted and should never be at the expense of your family.

Finally, I recommend that you act like what you are going to be

and not where you are. If your goal is to someday be a chief and you are currently a firefighter, then behave and demonstrate that you honor the department and its policies. Over the long run, you will be recognized for your work, skill, knowledge and attention to detail which will translate into acceptance. Acceptance first by your peers, then by your supervisor, then by your station, district, chief and so on. You succeed by winning members of the department one person at a time. Each person that realizes your abilities translates into positive influence at promotional time.

As different as we all like to think we are – we really all want the same thing - to have a good job, to be loved by someone, and to be happy and healthy. We really all have the same hopes, goals and dreams in general. Although it is true that being a firefighter is not just a job but a calling, it is important to understand that it is what you do, not who you are. In addition to being a firefighter, you are a husband or wife, a mother or father, a best friend or a sibling. Those roles are just as important, if not more so, as the job we do.

At the end of my career, as I look back 30 years I have been successful not because of my title but because I feel I was a contributing part of a great organization. My hope and prayer would be that all of you live long, happy, successful lives and can look back on your career and be as blessed with yours as I have been with mine.

Who's on Your List? Creating a Power Base

By Capt. Susan Tamme

In the business world, there are bosses, colleagues, senior management, and office staff members – and an employee who wants to be successful! Early in his or her career an employee identifies who is a dependable ally and begins to create a list of people who can assist the employee in reaching his or her goal. In the business world this is called a power base – *your* power base.

Your power base consists of those people with whom you have a positive reputation and who are willing to speak to you and help you. It is an individual who may have a certain expertise that you hope to attain who is willing to provide you assistance. It can be a person who has influence and authority and who is willing to foster your achievements and requests. These are some of the people who should have a place in your power base.

How can the fire service capitalize on this business “Power Base” concept? In the fire service you are asked to function in a higher position – to operate as an Acting Driver or an Acting Cap-

tain / Lieutenant / Chief. Just like in the business world – over time you have created a list of “go-to” people that you placed on your telephone speed dial. The people on your list are willing and available to answer and assist you with those sometimes-unfamiliar situations as you learn your assignment. It might be that you just needed help to complete paperwork. It may be to review tactical guidelines for car fires. Sometimes it's for technical information.

These fire department members that you consistently find accessible and helpful in your path – to becoming an Officer – is called your “power base”.

Regardless of the contact, it becomes unique to you; to your strengths and your weaknesses. It is the list that you create during the course of your employment/training that you find valuable. It is your personalized list of reliable contacts that are the lifeline to your development.

News of Note:

- All civilian employee blood draws for this year's open enrollment will have to be done at the City Wellness Clinic or at one of the blood draw sites designated by the city in order to qualify for premium insurance packages. Blood draws from your primary care physicals will no longer be accepted by the insurance company.
- TFR will hold a Blood Drive on Thurs., April 24, from 7:30 to 9:30 am. Donors will receive a T-shirt and a wellness checkup including temperature, blood pressure and cholesterol screening. Please make your lifesaving appointment by calling Sharon Walker at 274-7008.
- The Heroes Luncheon will be celebrating its 20th anniversary on May 28 at the Tampa Convention Center. If you would like to attend this wonderful event, please RSVP in an email to Training [Chief Russell Spicola](#). The sign-up deadline is 24 April.
- The [Tampa Firefighters Museum](#) holds a family cleaning day at the Museum on Saturday, June 28 from 8am-2pm. Lunch will be provided. Please show up if you can help with this worthy cause.
- Feld entertainment provides special pricing for Tampa Fire Rescue employees and families for [Disney On Ice: Let's Celebrate](#) May 16-18 at the Tampa Bay Times Forum. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Amanda Mersek at AMersek@feldinc.com (866) 248-8740 ext. 31428 or choose Option 2.

YOUR LIST, cont.

The image on the right shows my power base contact list that I've established on my path to Captain. My list contained these numbers because there are a variety of special circumstances during which I might need specialized guidance such as a HAZMAT incident or a personnel issue. All of these contacts gave me permission to speak to them during those "as needed" moments. Over time, I learned from each conversation and each contact in my power base. My list has morphed and I now have new numbers and passed on some of my old numbers to those officers just starting out. I am even on a few cell phone "Power Bases" as well.

Power bases are vital to your growth within the department and they sometimes begin as early as your first year on the job. There is no limit to your list and they are always a work in progress.

Who's on your list?



TFR's team of climbers pose with their medals after completing the American Lung Association's "Fight for Air Climb," Mar. 22. Photo By Henry Williams

Fighting for Air

A team of firefighters from Tampa fire Rescue participated in the American Lung Association's Fight for Air Climb March 22 at the Bank of America building. Firefighter John Cannon from truck company 1C came in with the best time for the 892 step, 41 story climb at seven minutes 58 seconds. Cannon said that not only is the event a great way to raise awareness and funds for the ALA but is also good training for firefighters. "Being a firefighter downtown, our first response area is high rises and there's opportunities for us in an emergency to possibly have to climb stairs," Cannon said.

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn was on hand to cheer on the TFR team and marvel at their teamwork. "Running these stairs is a tough, tough thing to do. I'd have to take the elevator. I couldn't do this and to know these men and women do it in bunker gear really is impressive."

According to their [website](#), the American Lung Association uses funds from events like the Fight for Air Climb to provide research awards and grants to help scientists discover new treatments and cures for lung diseases such as asthma and lung cancer.