



Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS



www.tnfd.org

Week of 8/16/07

Phone: 286-4781

Vision

SAFETY

PROFESSIONALISM

**CUSTOMER
SERVICE**

Mission

DELIVER:

EFFICIENT,

PROFESSIONAL,

HIGH QUALITY,

COST EFFECTIVE,

AND TIMELY

**FIRE
SUPPRESSION,**

RESCUE,

**EMERGENCY
MEDICAL
SERVICES,**

FIRE PREVENTION,

**PUBLIC SAFETY
EDUCATION, AND**

**CODE
ENFORCEMENT.**

Chief Carrier's e-mail:
21C1@metrocast.net

Look Familiar?

Early last Saturday morning Franklin and Tilton-Northfield units responded to a reported building fire at the New Franklin Apartments on Damy Drive. Units arrived to find smoke showing and eventually found a fire that originated in the basement and traveled up the 1st floor walls filling the void spaces and the apartment with smoke. The fire was quickly controlled and there was minimal damage—although the apartment will require a complete overhaul.



Alan MacRae/for The Citizen

So... Does anything look familiar here? You bet. Same building as 380 West Main Street. If you haven't already, it is worth going to Damy Drive to get a look at the building construction. The "mansard" is one, big open space. It was good to see that the fire did not easily and rapidly extend into this space, but it did travel across the first floor ceiling for a few feet and filled the void with a good amount of smoke (as is evident in the photo). Also, something that was somewhat of a surprise to me was that the roofs are flat and there is no parapet. I guess it has just been my experience that this type of decorative construction usually extends up and beyond the level of the roof. But, I have never been on these roofs, either. Another good plug for pre-planning.

Take advantage of the opportunity and please go down and see the construction while it is opened up. You will only have a small window of opportunity to do so.

Chief's Message

Who Do We Work For?

There was an interesting editorial in the Citizen this morning. It praised the Town Manager of Durham for publicizing the annual compensation of all town employees. It went on to make some comparisons to other communities and touched on the public's right to know, but the most interesting statement made was that "Sometimes it seems there are officials who think the people are working for them rather than the other way around — that it's the people who are the servants." Wow! Have you ever really thought about that.?

I don't think the majority of municipal employees even think about that statement, even remotely, day in and day out. They are "just doing their jobs." Usually, once a year, sometime around March, most every employee is reminded that they are truly a public servant. But why does it have to be once a year.

I would also go on record as stating that I do not believe that the majority of municipal employees look at the public as their "servants". I think that language is very strong and even demeaning toward the employees.

Often-times, I believe that this perception may grow from the role of the emergency responders—police and fire. We regularly are in positions of authority and direct the public to act in very specific ways. If that member of the public has just experienced "authority" and has never had any other contact with the service, you can possibly see where a negative perception can gain some roots. Still, though, we're usually just doing our jobs. Tact, skill, experience, and a sense of humor can go a long way, though!

As department heads, we are much more sensitive to who we work for. Always, it is the taxpayer first. They pay the bills. However, that becomes blurred many times in the delivery of emergency services, because we will take care of the emergency as it occurs without prejudice to who is involved (taxpayer, resident, visitor, elderly, child). Really, we keep the community safe—and that is not always "taxpayers only".

I have a very strong sense for who it is we serve and who pays our bills. Growing up the son and grandson of municipal employees it was easy to gain a healthy perspective of how to do your job well, the benefits of steady municipal employment, and the rewards involved. This may help to explain why we provide some of the non-emergency services that we do.

Many of you may have heard me say that I recall reading somewhere that the average person will require the use of the fire department once, on average, every twelve years. Well, if Mrs Smith has been paying taxes on her \$250,000 home for 12 years and has never called us, but today her basement is flooded, don't you think she deserves some consideration and assistance from us with her "emergency"? At the very least, we can assess the situation, see if there is anything we can do, and take advantage of an opportunity to interact with the public. This applies to the ever-controversial cat -in-the-tree calls, too! Yes, we will come out. No guarantees that we will rescue the cat, but we will assess your situation at the very least!

The tables can be completely flipped here, too. It is quite possible to have politicians, or even plain tax-paying citizens who are intent on reminding municipal employees that they are, in fact, servants to the taxpayer. Well, as a

leader of people, I know that isn't always the best approach. Could you imagine taking that stand within your own family? I have said before that we cannot treat our employees as mere numbers on a piece of paper. They are the heart and soul of what we do. Well-trained, good employees. We can have the best buildings, apparatus, and tools, but without good people, we have no ability to extinguish fires, resolve medical emergencies, or educate the public.

One thing we all know about people is that they make mistakes once in a while. So, every now and then they need to be brought back into line. That is the checks and balances system that is in place in most municipalities and that is the way it is supposed to work—checks and balances. Constant negativity and accusatory statements backed up by only opinions tainted by negative personal experience can quite possibly destroy organizations.

The answer is open, honest, and respectful communication. Respect being at the forefront. Sometimes respect requires work—work focused on where someone's head is—where they've been and how they've gotten here. Their reality may not be your reality. But, with open minds, respect, the willingness to be educated, and a true understanding of what it means to serve the public, positive outcomes can be experienced.

So, back to the editorial... Would I want my salary publicized. Sure. It really doesn't bother me. It truly is public knowledge. I knew what I was getting into when I signed up for this job. It is the right of the people—they pay it, they should know. I can also see why some would see it as unfair. For example, why should my salary get publicized and the sales manager next door not have his publicized. *(continued on page 4)*

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

August 20, 2007	0900 hrs	Roof Fire in Balloon Dwelling Chief Carrier Center Street
August 20, 2007 (All Fire & EMS Personnel)	1800 hrs	Driver Training Deputy Robinson + Lt Greene Center Street
August 21, 2007	0900 hrs	Roof Fire in Balloon Dwelling Chief Carrier Center Street
August 22, 2007	0900 hrs	Roof Fire in Balloon Dwelling Captain Hall Center Street
August 27, 2007	0900 hrs	Gable Fire Chief Carrier Center Street
August 27, 2007	1800 hrs	Cerebral Vascular Emergencies David Rivers Center Street
August 28, 2007	0900 hrs	Gable Fire Chief Carrier Center Street
August 29, 2007	0900 hrs	Gable Fire Chief Carrier Center Street
September 3, 2007	0900 hrs	3-Story Wood Frames Captain Hall Center Street
September 4, 2007	0900 hrs	3-Story Wood Frames Chief Carrier Center Street

Anyone Wishing to Supply Pictures or Write Articles for Future Newsletters Please forward your materials to Chief Carrier by Wednesday of each week!

(continued from page 2)

The answer has already been stated. We work for the public and it is their right to know.

What's that word? Empathy. Put yourself in their shoes. Everyone could benefit from a little more empathy for the other person (notice I didn't write "side" - we shouldn't be on opposite sides!).

Being municipal employees naturally opens us up for more public scrutiny than almost any other business there is. I say bring it on. We will answer questions openly and honestly. We will continue to provide services as efficiently and effectively as possible with the resources we have available. We will request additional resources if we don't have them and if we need them. We will be professional. We will always operate with our safety and the safety of all others as our highest priority and we will only risk a lot when there is a life at stake. We know better than anybody that video cameras, curious public, cell phones, reporters, relatives, neighbors, others in the profession, and even our families are watching us and listening to us 24 hours-a-day, 365 days a year. We rarely are able to let our guards down. But, why do we have to? If we are doing our best and providing quality services, we should be proud to be under the microscope.

So... Bring it on (and I say that in the most non-confrontational way possible!). The only thing I would ask is for the same respect that we give you. We are all working for the public and for the greater good. We will be open and honest with you and strive to give you all of the public information we can. We are proud of what we do and how we do it. We hope the public can see that as well!

Chief Carrier



WHAT FIRE?
PHOENIX ART GROUP

Artist—Karen Dupre as seen on www.allposters.com/-sp/What-Fire-Posters_i382...

A Historical Perspective For Us New Guys and Gals! Captain Robert Bousquet

In light of some of the conversations lately, I was thinking that maybe it would be a good idea to discuss how the department has changed over the last several years.

I need to start in December of 1994 because that is when I first became involved. The department had one full time employee. That employee was a mechanic, Retired Capt. Michael Summersett and all other members were call staff broken up into four groups. Each group then called engine companies or rescue companies were staffed with a couple of officers and several members. Some of the interesting facets were that these groups all had their own financial accounts and a clerk for each that took care of all of the bookkeeping. They each had assigned apparatus operators usually two for each group and no one else was supposed to operate the vehicles. This seems a little non-conducive but for some reason it worked and worked well.

The only time there was anyone expected to be available for calls was on weekends and that was only EMS personnel that were assigned weekend shifts at least once a month for an entire weekend. All others were expected to come when available. This eventually led to some strained staffing and creative solutions needed to be found, such as shortening the time commitments or reducing the size of the crew from three or four to just two. Although there was a myriad of solutions they all only worked for a short while and the day time was a never ending battle to provide service to the community. These are the real beginnings of what we are today.

In the summer of 1996 a full time secretary was hired that was also an EMT, with the understanding that she would be required to work in business attire and respond to all medical calls with a call member during the day. You can just imagine that this led to some uncomfortable times for her to have to go to car accidents and the such. Fortunately it didn't take long for people to realize that this was not safe and provided a Jumpsuit for this purpose. This worked out well for the time, but retired Chief Harbour had a vision in mind although not shared with very many people at the time.

Chief Harbour wanted full time coverage and knew that it would take a long time to turn the tide so this is how he started. In December of 1997 I was hired full time and there was another myriad of changes as to how to staff the week and cover the nights and weekends with call EMS personnel. Just like with the EMS coverage even the full time staffing had some challenges. One of the options tried was to have the three people work a staggered shift to fill the voids. These various staffing issues all only worked for a little while and eventually failed. Chief Harbour retired and the commissioners hired a full time Chief with this vision known. Staffing started to increase and a full time Fire prevention officer was hired. That original Secretary was moved to the floor as a FF\EMT and a new secretary was hired.

Capt. Summersett retired and additional staff needed to be hired to meet the needs. The firefighters proposed covering 12 hour day shifts, four days on and four days off. This also worked for a while and then the new Chief (Chief Petrin) also retired. We spent the next few months in a transitional phase awaiting a new Chief. In the interim the Deputies, Dep. Robinson and Dep. Huckins were in charge. The funny part of this and I am not sure that they all were aware of this, is that we saw both deputies and all three commissioners every morning for a while.

Well that leads us pretty much to where we are today. Chief Carrier was hired and staff continued to increase to the point that we were able to make adjustments to the station and begin 24 hour 7 day a week coverage. The organizations name was changed from Tilton-Northfield Fire Department to Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS to better reflect what we do.

The point to all of this is. We are still being molded for the future and every day it gets a little different and hopefully we are meeting our mission and becoming better servants to the public we serve. There will always be trying times but try to look at what we have accomplished by sticking together.

Thanks, Cap. Good stuff.