



## Chief's Corner

### Dancing For A Cause

Hello everyone and welcome to the Christmas edition of the Chief's Corner. I hope you are ready for the holiday season and planning to spend some time with friends and family. I always enjoy this time of the year: everyone is in a great mood and the spirit of giving is in the air. Speaking of "giving," I want to talk about a recent event where the Fire Department gave back to the community in a different fashion. This event was called "Dancing With The Lynchburg Stars" and took place in November. Here are just a few of the high points.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the Second Annual Dancing With The Lynchburg Stars was held at the Academy Theater in downtown Lynchburg. The event was sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia and is one of their major fund raisers of the year. The evening featured a number of area "stars" (aka suckers) who performed in a fashion similar the the popular television show. Voting for the performers consisted of donating money to the organization; for \$10 you could cast a vote for the "dancers" of your choice. This event was a huge success and raised over \$30,000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

I was invited to participate as one of the "stars" and dance in the event. Now, anyone who knows me understands that "dancing" is not something that I do on a regular basis. When I was in high school and college I used to attend school dances and enjoyed myself, but the thought of "performing" with a partner in front of a crowd was not my idea of fun. However, after giving it some thought and considering the worthy cause, I decided to give it a go. I explained that I would need a partner/instructor to help me prepare for the big evening. With that in mind, I was introduced to Samantha Turner, part owner and operator of Lynchburg Elite Dance Studio. Now, I want to explain right up front that Samantha dances for a living and is very good at what she does. I, on the other hand, am no Fred Astaire. When we got together and started to practice it became evident that this was going to take some time and a lot of work to pull off.

I need to say right here that Samantha was very professional and patient with me as I learned the basics and practiced the steps that would comprise our routine. I also have to say that I gained a whole new respect for the "stars" on the television show who have to learn a new dance every week. It's hard work and takes time.

We practiced for several months and finally felt like we were ready to perform. On the big night everything went well and Samantha and I performed our dance to much applause and shouting. I didn't embarrass myself or the department (I don't think) and it was a lot of fun. I was also very appreciative of the support from department members. There were a lot of fire department personnel in attendance to support Samantha and I, as well as the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. The Fire Department was very well represented. It was a fun evening and everyone in attendance had a good time. We were also successful in raising a great deal of money for Big Brothers Big Sisters. This is what giving back to the community is all about and I was very proud of the Fire Department and how we "turned out."



Before I close the last Chief's Corner of 2015, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to a number of people and organizations who helped to make the dancing such a great success. First, I would like to say a special thanks to my fellow Fire Department dancers, Captain Matt Millner and Firefighter Sam Young (pictured below). They helped put the final touch on the dance routine and make it special. (As I said all along, this might not be great but it will surely be memorable. And it definitely was.) I would also like to thank the Fire Foundation and

IAFF Local 1146 for their sponsorship. These organizations donated money to sponsor a table for this event and helped to make it such a success. (Table sponsorships were \$1,000 each.) The money raised by this event will go a long ways towards helping Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia carry on the vital work and programs in our community. Being involved in "our community" is what the Fire Department is all about!



Well, that wraps it up for this year's Chief's Corners and I am happy to say it has been a great year. The Lynchburg Fire Department has enjoyed much success in 2015 and I think we can look forward to another great year in 2016. I hope you and yours have a wonderful holiday season and get to spend time with family and friends. It's a special time of year and meant to be shared. Keep up the good work and I will chat with you again in 2016. Until then, take care of yourself and the citizens we serve, but never forget the most important rule: "Everyone goes home safe at the end of the shift."

Chief

## Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following members who celebrate anniversaries with the department in December:

### 20 Years

Wayne Casto

The following employees celebrated anniversaries in November and were inadvertently left out of last month's newsletter:

### 5 Years

Ann Jenkins

### 3 Years

Steve Schrader

## Certifications

### Fire Investigator – NFPA 1033-09

Scott Hudson                      John Norman  
Danny Williams

### NFA – Juvenile Fire Setter II

Jimmy Seay

### NFA – Shaping the Future

Matt Millner

### NFA – Youth Firesetter Prevention & Intervention Level II

Jennie Mayberry

### Public Fire & Life Safety Educator I – NFPA 1035

Candace Brown

### Structural Collapse Technician

Toby Bouyea                      Tucker Driskill

## Retirements

Congratulations to the following members who are retiring. We wish them well and thank them for their service to the department and citizens of Lynchburg.

- Maurice Braxton retires effective January 1, 2016, with 27 years, 10 months of service.
- Peggy Coleman retires effective January 1, 2016, with 27 years, 4 months of service.

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## Check Presented to CentraFoundation – M.A.A.M. Fund

On December 8, 2015, Fire Chief Brad Ferguson presented a check for \$13,000 to Centra CEO, E. W. Tibbs and Centra Foundation's Executive Vice President, Dr. Kathryn Pumphrey (pictured right). The check represented proceeds from the Lynchburg Fire Department's 2015 "Live • Fight • Dream" Breast Cancer Awareness T-Shirt Campaign.



The money will benefit the Centra Foundation's Mammograms Annually A Must (M.A.A.M.) Fund. The money helps provide free mammograms, diagnostic testing services, awareness campaigns, and support services that remain in the Central Virginia area.

Dr. Pumphrey stated that M.A.A.M. has provided approximately 500 mammograms this year. She noted that these mammograms/screenings resulted in the early detection of one cancer diagnosis. Dr. Pumphrey said, "The Lynchburg Fire Department has played a huge role in helping us provide these mammograms and helping save lives."

Special thanks to the sponsors for providing the support needed to make this campaign a success.

## Reminders



### City Employee Holiday Gathering

The Annual City Employee Holiday Gathering will be held on Friday, December 11, 2015 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Information Technology Building. There will be music, fun and food (funded by City-wide vending machine proceeds). Once again there will be a "City's Got Holiday Talent" contest to showcase your talents: singing, dancing, musical instruments, dramatic readings, comedy, or your choice. A panel of "Celebrity" Judges will determine the winners!

### EMSAT

December 16, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

The topic for December is: High Tech Kids 2015

<http://podcasts.whro.org/oems/>

(For more information, contact Abbey Johnston at 455-6361)

### Recruit Graduation

Recruit graduation will be held on December 17, 2015 at the Centra School of Nursing at 6:30 p.m.

### Deadline for Open Enrollment - DECEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>

Open enrollment is that time of year when you can make changes to your medical, dental and vision coverage. You can also enroll or re-enroll in FSA accounts and AFLAC coverage.

If you have no changes to medical, dental or vision, no action is needed. However, remember that you must re-enroll in FSA accounts each year.

All coverage changes begin January 1, and deduction changes begin with the January 21, 2016 pay check.



### Upcoming City Holiday Observances

City offices will be closed on the following dates:

December 24-25, 2015 — Christmas Holiday

January 1, 2016 — New Year's Day

### 2016 Communications Meeting Schedule

January	January 7, 2016
February	February 4, 2016
March	NO MEETING
April	April 7, 2016
May	May 5, 2016
June	June 2, 2016
July	NO MEETING
August	August 4, 2016
September	September 1, 2016
October	NO MEETING
November	November 3, 2016
December	NO MEETING

## Shifting Focus From Employee Engagement to Workplace Excellence - Part 2

By: Deputy Chief Jason Campbell

Last month I began discussing the eight strategies to workplace excellence, based upon a report by the Peter Barron Stark Companies. The first two strategies were a compelling positive vision and clear goals and communicating the right information at the right time. This month I'll share with you two more strategies to assist us in achieving workplace excellence.

### Strategy 3: Hiring the Right Employees and Managers

Take just a minute and look around the room or the office and think about your co-workers. If you are a supervisor, think about those who you manage. Would you say that we hired excellent team members who are valuable assets to the organization? Hopefully, you answered yes! But I realize that may not be the case.

Before we go "throwing the baby out with the bath water," ask yourself about the relationship you have with these individuals. Do you really know them? Not just the small things that make it enjoyable or unpleasant to work with them for a shift, but do you really know them? Whether a co-worker goes home at the end of the day saying, "I love my job," or "I don't get paid enough to put up with this..." depends on the relationships that the member has with their immediate supervisor and their co-workers.

When the best of the best organizations realize that an employee or manager is not a good fit, they provide the needed coaching, counseling, training, and support. If this additional support does not work, organizations focused on workplace excellence quickly share this employee or manager with their best competitor – or "make them available to the job market!"

As we continue to build a reputation for workplace excellence, we will continue to attract a higher caliber of candidates to interview. And we are committed to seeking out the best of the best.

### Strategy 4: Making Accountability Count

You're probably thinking, "Uh oh. Here he goes!" Let me just say this and then I'll get off of my soapbox. Throughout our department, time and time again, we hear that someone needs to hold someone accountable. I've learned that everyone wants accountability, but most people don't like being held accountable! Why? It's uncomfortable – for you, for your supervisor, for me. But it's required. Don't do something that you don't want to be held accountable for.

According to the Peter Barron Starks Company, performance management is handled very differently by the Best of the Best organization in three distinct areas: (1) Clear expectations; (2) Constructive feedback; and (3) Performance standards accountability. "Many employees face a double whammy regarding expectations: They are not clear on their job responsibilities, and they are not clear on how performance standards are measured," the report states.

Employees need to see the target they are aiming for and have a clear understanding of defined job responsibilities. Otherwise, the employee ends up playing pin the tail on the organizational donkey. Once the expectations and performance standards have been defined, providing ongoing feedback regarding employee performance is imperative. To be useful, feedback must help people learn, grow, and improve, and it must be ongoing.

The Best of the Best organizations are better at holding all team members accountable for performance standards. Some argue that this is difficult. But, when accountability exists within an organization, the consistent application of policies and procedures increases by nearly 25 percent and the fair distribution of work in a department increases by an equal amount. These two noteworthy differences alone indicate that employees perceive great leaders as those who treat all members of the team fairly.

So here's what you can do this month. Build true relationships with your co-workers or those within your workgroup. Truly understand who they are and what they bring to the workplace. And make it a point to understand the clear expectations of your supervisor and what performance standards you will be measured against. If you're a supervisor, take the time to clearly share your expectations with those who work for you. Ensure they clearly understand what is expected of them and earn their commitment to performance excellence.



## VOLUNTEER SALVATION ARMY'S RED KETTLE CAMPAIGN



Once again department members (and their families) are asked to volunteer their time to help "ring the bell" for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. Donations collected during the Christmas season are used to provide meals, clothing, and toys for the needy. Our location will once again be Sam's Club on Wards Road.

To sign up, go to citynotes and click on "Departments/FireDepartment/Salvation Army" and complete the on-line registration form. The volunteer dates are December 12, 16, and 21.

Please consider volunteering your time to help provide for those who are less fortunate this holiday season.

## 60 Second Safety

By: Captain Tom McCrickard

### Personal Accountability and Safety

What does personal accountability have to do with safety? According to Don Zimmerman, author of "Firefighter Safety and Survival," the simple answer is, plenty. If we make the individual decision to be personally accountable, that will lead to eliminating blame and ultimately improving safety. We can also be accountable by speaking up if we see something unsafe and taking responsibility for the outcome of calls. This applies to everyone, from a recruit all the way to the Chief.

A great example of this is the decision to be healthy. No one can mandate you to be healthy. It has to start with a personal decision to be accountable to you. You cannot change the lifestyle of others, but you can encourage others by deciding to eat healthier and exercise.

### Fire Scene Preservation

By: Captain John Norman

As firefighters, our job is to put out the fire and preserve the homes and belongings of the citizens we serve. It's hard during the fire scene operations to consider the cause and fire origin and ignition; to make our minds switch gears from containment, fight and extinguish mode to scene preservation mode. The Code of Virginia (Title 27) mandates that every fire in the commonwealth must be investigated.

Often, the on scene officer can determine the cause and origin. In these cases, the fire has been investigated and no further action is necessary, other than a well-documented report for the National Fire Incident Report System (NFIRS). As a department, especially the Fire Marshals Office (FMO), we would like to minimize the number of "undetermined" fire causes reported. We can accomplish this by utilizing our on-shift investigators, who have all been well-trained, and have a fair amount of experience investigating fires. Please utilize them anytime there is a fire on your shift. They want the exposure to investigations and enjoy the opportunity to assist with fire origins and causes. The investigator's knowledge of scene preservation assists the FMO immensely when there is an incendiary or arson fire.

When fires occur and the origin is unclear, scene integrity needs to be maintained until an investigator arrives and can begin their systematic approach to area of origin, point of origin and ultimately to the ignition source and cause of the fire. Sometimes this may necessitate overhaul operations being postponed for a period of time. Evidence can be discarded or destroyed during this phase of the operation. If it is possible to delay the overhaul phase without creating a more hazardous condition for the crews working in and around the fire scene, then it should be delayed until an investigator can arrive on scene. There will be fire scenes when this is not possible. This fact is understood and accepted by the investigators and the FMO; but when at all possible, especially if the cause and point of origin is "undetermined," delaying the overhaul phase is imperative until an investigator is on scene and can start documenting with notes and pictures as debris is removed.

The idea is that the department finds the people who intentionally set incendiary fires or set fires with malice. These acts are punishable by the law. Working together as a team, we will be able to create a safer city for the citizens and ultimately a safer working environment for the Lynchburg Fire Department.

**Guns and Hoses  
Appreciation Night**

Liberty University Hockey game  
Liberty University  
vs.  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

**December 12th at 7:00 p.m.  
Liberty University LaHaye Center**



**#ROCKTHERINK**

FREE tickets for  
Lynchburg Fire Department and  
Lynchburg Police Department  
members and their family.

Just show your department ID at the ticket  
booth to receive your FREE ticket.

## The Fire Fighter's Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the town,  
The fire siren echoed blaring its sound.  
The firefighters came running from far and from near,  
And raced to the trucks quickly donning their gear.

And I in my bunkers, my boots and my hat,  
Jumped to the engine to see where the fire's at.  
Down at the corner of Fifth and of Oak,  
The dispatcher informed us of a house filled with smoke.

Smoke poured from the sides, from up and from down,  
Yet up on the roof there was none to be found.  
So up to the rooftop we raised up a ladder,  
And climbed to the top to see what was the matter.

I came to the chimney and what did I see,  
But a fellow in red stuck past his knees.  
Well we tugged and we pulled until he came out,  
Then he winked with his eye and said with a shout.

"These darn newfangled chimneys they make them too small,  
For a fellow as I, not skinny at all."  
With a twitch of his nose he dashed to his sleigh,  
and called to his reindeer, "AWAY now, AWAY."

As we rolled up our hoses he flew out of sight,  
Saying "God bless our firefighters"  
and to all a good night!

