

# East Andover Fire Department

By Rene Lefebvre  
Chief, East Andover Fire Department

As firemen, we can lose our edge if we don't fight fire for a long period of time. Well, for better or worse, we have been keeping a very sharp edge on our fire fighting skills lately.

We have been very busy helping our mutual aid neighbors as well as fighting some hot fires here in Andover. Recently, returning from the hospital after a medical call, we were toned to respond to a structure fire on Route 4. We had a good crew, three fire fighter / EMTs, but we were in the wrong rig. The ambulance is a handy machine, but we *really* needed a fire truck.

We returned to the station and fired up the engines. The big column of black smoke we could see rising in the direction of the call was a great motivator. The radio traffic indicated that Wilmot and New London were on their way, and everything Andover and East Andover has was on the road as well.

We all had high hopes that a quick, well coordinated attack would save the structure. Unfortunately, that was not to be. The barn attached to the house was well involved, and the fire was driving toward the house like a freight train.

An offensive attack was planned and carried out by the very well-trained Wilmot crew. The fire in the house had spread so rapidly that the crew was

driven out because the ceilings and walls were collapsing. All residents and fire fighters were safely outside, so there was no longer any value in risking a life. We turned our planning to a defensive attack and suppressed the fire from the outside.

As an incident commander, the decision to evacuate a structure by fire fighters and basically drown the fire from the outside is tough. We all want to save a home. This day we won the war: Everyone went home uninjured. As for the battle, well, the fire won that one.

## Plane Crash in Bristol

As a fire fighter with a lot of gray hair (okay, what hair I have is gray), I thought that new experiences were behind me. But I have never been to a plane crash, at least not one where my fire fighter or EMT skills were required.

That changed when a small airplane crashed near the building where I work. The Bristol Fire Department had responded, and after some quick searching the aircraft was located near the woods. Both passengers were badly injured but were very much alive.

My skills as an EMT were requested by command, and as I approached the craft it became very apparent that the plane was leaking fuel. A fire at this point would be catastrophic.

The Bristol chief and his team were  
See EAFD on page 8



On Saturday, August 23, the home of Tammy Sandville was completely destroyed by fire on Route 4 in West Andover. According to East Andover Fire Chief Rene Lefebvre, "The fire likely started in the barn. The home owners noticed the fire and called us. Wilmot was first on the scene and started the fire suppression. Andover and East Andover set up water supply and called a first alarm.

"The fire eventually went to three alarms for man power. It was very hot out that day, and we were exhausting crews very quickly.

"The fire quickly spread to the house, which is attached to the barn. We had to move the fire fighters to the outside, as the house became unsafe and was falling down. After the fire, the house was leaning toward the road and was a hazard. [Andover Fire Chief] John Landry called for an excavator [from Mark Thompson Excavating], which tore it down."

Fire departments from Andover, East Andover, Wilmot, Sutton, New London, Springfield, Franklin, Tilton-Northfield, Danbury, Bristol, Alexandria, Salisbury, Webster, Hill, and Boscawen were on the scene. The Andover Rescue Squad and the Bristol EMTs were also on the scene providing medical aid and water for the fire fighters.

For more on the fire, see Chief Lefebvre's column on this page.

Photo: Angela Sanborn Esslinger

# Bluewater Farm

## FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> ~ 4-8pm

*Come on up for a great afternoon!*

~Guest appearance by "THE LONG TAIL MONKEYS"

~SQUARE DANCE~OUTDOOR MOVIE~ ~

~FRESH PRESSED CIDER~HOMEMADE DONUTS~

*This event is free to the public, all are welcome!*