

East Andover Fire Department

By Rene Lefebvre
EAFD Chief

The people of Andover have given your fire department a wonderful surprise. While we have always enjoyed your support, we have been overwhelmed by your concern. We have people call us at home or ask us on the street, "How are you guys doing? Is your team OK? Are any of your people having a problem dealing with this tragic fire? How do you people do this difficult job?"

[The chief is referring to the January fire that killed Roger and Mary Pellerin.]

I certainly don't have all the answers; coping with this kind of stress is very personal. It is because so many truly care that I will attempt to make some sense of our unique calling.

At the time the initial alert sounded, our captain, Jake Johnson, was reporting to work at Proctor Academy. He saw the flames from his location, ordered a first alarm, and responded. He gathered information upon arrival, requested a second alarm, and reported people still in the home.

One can only imagine his stress and feeling of helplessness as he attempted a rescue, only to be driven back by heat and fire. At this point a firefighter must shove panic and pain aside and do the job. A plan must be formulated, orders must be given. Grief will come, but not now.

As engines and additional help arrived, lines were deployed, and slowly, very slowly, order replaced chaos. Command passed from the captain to the chief; time for the captain to have some water and let his legs stop shaking.

Fresh, second-alarm companies replaced the worn-out fighters on the fire line, and we older officers who have been through this before start to worry. One by one, we talked to every firefighter and asked if they were doing OK. It became apparent that some were dealing with a lot of pain, for they had seen and done things beyond anything they had ever imagined. But deal with it, they did. After a brief rest, they gathered their tools and headed for the fire line.

The Very Best

I don't know why we do the job. That is beyond my understanding. What I do know is that when I am around these young, intelligent, brave, and driven people, my heart fills with pride. They are the very best that our town has to offer. Perhaps they do the job because they must. It is in their blood and for reasons beyond understanding, they absolutely love what they do.

The bond between firefighters is very strong, and tremendous strength comes from the team. When asked how we can do the job, I simply think, "We are a team. If a member falters, his team- See EAFD on page 23

Road Agent Report

By Jon Champagne
Road Agent

With spring comes new beginnings; as Road Agent, I hope to write a monthly article for the Beacon, to keep Andover residents up to date with the state of its roads and Highway Department.

By the time you are reading this in early March, maple sugar season should be in full swing. While we will probably have another month of winter still to go, the brightening sun and warming days should mean that winters' cold grasp will not last much longer. Mud season will be upon us.

In the past four years, the highway department has graded ledge pack into the road-beds replacing lost aggregates. This decreases the amount of mud and yields a harder surface that will stay smoother longer than a conventional dirt road. My plan is to continue this practice.

The road crew also begins to open ditch lines to handle spring run-off. We try to leave these ditch lines covered as long as possible, with water flowing free-

ly under an insulating blanket of snow. However, as spring approaches and water flow increases ditch lines, culverts and catch basins tend to plug with debris. Hopefully, homeowners will have cleaned driveway culverts in the fall so they will not be plugged now.

On another note, the Selectmen have informed me that the Town's current policy is not to pay for or replace any damaged mail boxes in the Town's right of way. My plow crew does their very best not to hit mailboxes and signs with the trucks, but despite their best attempts, accidents do happen. More often, though, the force of the heavy wet snow coming off the plows is the culprit.

Upcoming summer projects such as the bridge on Morrill Hill Road and some small summer drainage projects are in the active planning stage. I hope to be able to give you more details in the coming months.

As we look to Town Meeting, I encourage you all to come out and vote. I hope to serve you for the coming two years.

Andover Fourth of July Celebrates 70 Years

By Judy Perreault
Fourth of July Committee

This is a banner year for Andover's Fourth of July celebration: 70 consecutive years of activities marking our independence. We could have never pulled it off without the work of many dedicated townspeople. Some have been doing the same job for years. Irene Jewett has been making arrangements for the fireworks and donations for more years than I can remember. Bill Leber was a familiar face and voice in the bandstand for years too. We will miss him this year. Howard Wilson has been managing the green and cleanup for ages. Bob Ward has been chair of the committee for many years as has Sara Tracy with Children's Parade. This is only a few who have given years of service.

At the last meeting officers were elected and are as follows Jamie Thompson, Chair; Bob Ward; Vice Chair; Rose

Tilton, Secretary; and Shirley Currier, Treasurer. Jamie will be coordinating the parade with Irene Haley and Jim Danforth; Howard Wilson, green activities and cleanup; Wanda Smith and Irene Jewett (Fireworks), Donations; Children's parade, Sara Tracy; Publicity, Judy Perreault; Parking, Wood Sutton.

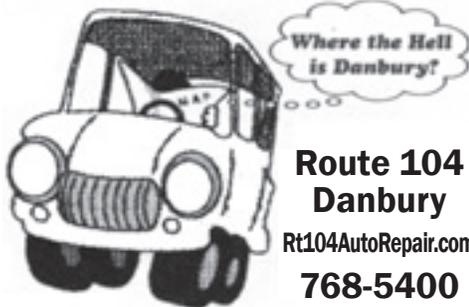
Plans for a bigger and better celebration are in the making with two bands already secured.

Once again we will be voting for the parade theme at the town meeting. The choices are Made in America, Classic Movies, Space, and New Hampshire Businesses. Voting will be by ballot with a different color paper for each category. Just pick your color and put it in the ballot box.

Financially, we have been running in the red for the last few years and other See Fourth on page 23

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