



WATCH LAKE - NORTH GREEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

5771 Green Lake North Road
70 Mile House, BC, V0K 2K1

www.wlnlfiredept.org



2016 Annual General Meeting
Saturday, July 8th, 2017

Newsletter - Fall / Winter 2016

A Quiet Summer

We have had one of the most unusual summers that many long-time residents can remember. There were a few hot days in late spring and a few more in August, but that was pretty well it. Summer just really never happened. The forest areas stayed moist enough that there was not a great wildfire threat and some residents were still mowing their lawns in September. While some of our summer activities may have been dampened, our firefighters had a fairly quiet season. If we can all get our chimneys cleaned, take care using woodstoves and be cautious with the seasonal decorating, the winter may be equally as peaceful. There was one major fire at the end of March that was written about in the previous newsletter. Other callouts were serious enough but did not result in major structural damage. Generally, the firefighters have been able to put some time into apparatus and building maintenance as well as training. In addition to regular practice, they have participated in a training program mandated by the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Chief Andy will cover more of the firefighters' activities in his report.

This year members of the department have had a bit more time to be involved in community activities. In March many of the firefighters, auxiliary and board joined other members of the community gathered at Wind in the Pillows, the bed and breakfast owned by Brad and Gail Potter to honour Les Hewitt's 90th birthday. Les had also decided that it was time for him to resign from the department after 25 years of very dedicated service. Les brought a lifetime of experience to the department at an age when most people are about to enter retirement. We will all miss his eagerness to help out in any situation and his ability to patch-up worn or broken equipment.



Chief Andy Palaniak, Les Hewitt, Deputy Chief Mark Bulman

Earlier in the year at the department's Annual General Meeting Les was given the statue shown in the photo above. The inscription reads: "Presented to Les Hewitt on your 90th birthday in recognition of many years of service."



The July 1st holiday weekend brought another short-lived promise of some summer weather. The department was invited to join the Canada Day celebration at the Flying U Ranch. The available members took a tender, engine and portable pond and during the afternoon put on a “waterworks” display complete with a rainbow. A few of the crew got in some horseback riding and in the evening everyone enjoyed a great meal in the Ranch dining room.

At the end of August the caboose at the Save-On mall, for several years the office of Kathy Firth’s 1% Realty, became available and was obtained by the Lone Butte Historical Association. They wanted to add it to their rail history exhibit in Lone Butte. Director Alan Boyd got involved with the project and with traffic control assistance from some of our members the move began at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 21 and the structure was sitting in its new location by 10:00 a.m.



In return for our assistance with the move of the caboose, Steve Brown of Interlakes Rona kindly provided the lift and transport of a 40 ft. container from Lone Butte to Hall #1. This container will be a great help in storing seasonal and seldom used equipment such as the snow plough and building materials that clutter the training area of the hall. It will also be the receiving and sorting area for the recycling of cans and bottles to be taken into the depot in town. Volunteers are needed to help with recycling which has already paid for the purchase of the container.

With the arrival of our newest truck in April of this year, the search began for a buyer for the old Engine 11. The old truck is still in good shape. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, our vehicles don't really wear out, they "age out", meaning they get beyond the twenty-five year age limit set by the Insurance Underwriters. This unit is really only useful to an independent department going through the same formative years we experienced a decade ago. Despite advertising in several sources, there was only one party to show any interest. Steve Condon of First Touch Auto Centre in 100 Mile House told us he was starting a fund raising campaign to try to purchase the engine for the Psalm 23 Transition Society at 59 Mile. That group's buildings are out of range for the 70 Mile House VFD to respond to fires and they did lose their large workshop and tools in a fire in 2010.

Having a truck such as this on site will give them the much needed fire protection and it will provide a source of training for the resident students that could lead to careers in the future. The Board decided to donate this engine to the Transition Society. We were pleased to be able to make this donation to such a worthwhile cause. We were given a truck by the City of Coquitlam 10 years ago and it started the rebuilding of this department to the level we enjoy today. Perhaps this truck will help the Psalm 23 attendees in their own rebuilding attempt.



Last year the Board Secretary, Sandy Wilson, suggested that we ask permission to set up donation boxes at strategic locations to collect non-perishable food and household items for Christmas hampers. The community response was excellent and we ended up with enough groceries to fill 3 hampers complete with a turkey to accompany each one. The hampers were distributed to needy families in the area during the holiday season. Sandy has volunteered to repeat the project this year so please watch for the collection boxes at local merchants throughout December.

Holiday Safety

As the Christmas holiday season approaches, please be careful with your decorations. Putting up the outdoor lights can be dangerous enough, but always remember the potential fire hazards you are creating. Interior decorations can be even more of a hazard if not placed carefully. Live trees always add to the beauty of the family room but soon become worse than a large pile of kindling sitting in the corner. As a reminder, cut and paste the link to this short video clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJGjwo3MQ8g>

Have a safe and joyful holiday season and a great new year,

Roy Allan, President, WL-N.GL VFD

Fire Chief's Report

It has been another fun year at your Fire Department. We currently have 29 members. 19 members are full time residents. The rest live elsewhere and are only here part of the time. Many of the full time resident members are retired people and have been on the department for 10 years or more. As such, it seems we have a definite need for new residents to join since many of these will be retiring from the department over the next while. Please come out and get some training now so we won't have an emergency situation without enough fire fighters. It is only 2 hours a week (less in winter) plus any calls you are around for. Last year we had a total of 10 calls. One never knows who will be around when a call comes through, so we all need to be ready. We also have had a few members return to the department after being away for a few years/months. We also had one major retirement. As Roy Allan mentioned, Les Hewitt retired just after celebrating his 90th birthday in the spring. He was always ready to go whether it was practice or a callout and he knew all the equipment and often helped with repairs. We miss him already.

Our practices have been focusing on water movement over the summer. We use the nice weather to practice hauling water and getting it flowing. Each member gets practice on how the engine drafts water because we never know who might come when there is a call. Everyone has had lots of practice on how to get the water from the tenders out through the engine to the hoses. Together we can get water flowing no matter who responds to the call. Even if there are only 2 members available, water will be flowing! The Provincial "Playbook" is the other main part of our training. There are a number of units from personal protective equipment to ladders to command structures that we have been working on for the last year in conjunction with the South Green Lake VFD. Once a month in the fall and winter months we join with them and work through a unit. Many of our members have been to these courses and we always come away with new information and new methods to try.

Our equipment is functioning well and we have a full complement of vehicles ready to roll that will be good for the next few years without any changes required. The newest is our ETV, emergency transport vehicle. It has a basket stretcher and first aid equipment as well as rehab capabilities. Whenever there are 10 of us at a call or practice, it is present for safety requirements (Worksafe BC). Engine 11 is the "new" to us truck we got this summer. Everyone has had a chance to look it over and we have set it up similarly to the old Engine 11 it replaced. We have been practicing water drafting with it all summer and are all now quite familiar our new 1995 truck.

You will probably receive this newsletter after the end of the month and setting our clocks back to Standard Time, but remember this is the time to test and change the batteries in the smoke detectors. (See the information in the poster on the next page.)

Our best to all for the holiday season and new year,

Andy Palaniak,
Fire Chief, WL-N.GL VFD

Have a safe winter.

Smoke Alarms at Home

SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

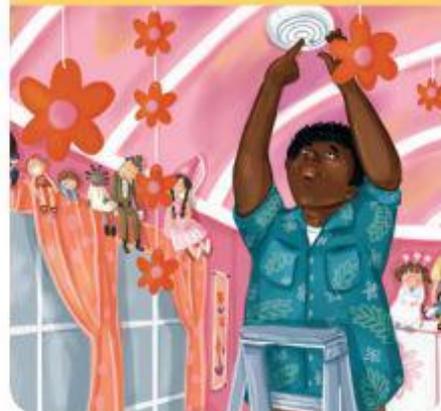


SAFETY TIPS

- » Install smoke alarms inside and outside each bedroom and sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- » Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- » It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound.
- » Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- » There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use both types of alarms in the home.
- » A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- » People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- » Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- ! Smoke alarms should be installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ! Roughly 2 out of 3 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or the alarms are not working.



Your Source for SAFETY Information www.nfpa.org/education
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

Fire Dues Invoicing (same information for a new year) – Please share with your neighbours.

With the invoices for the 2017 annual fire dues there is a notice regarding a payment deadline of January 1st with a grace period for paid properties from the previous year until January 31st. The payment date has always been January 1st of every year, yet members who had not paid at that time were not considered delinquent until March 1st of that year. This has led to the situation where payments are coming in throughout January and February and many property owners who travel south for the winter have not been paying until they return. Director Bill Thomas, who looks after collections for the Department, is usually still knocking on doors until the end of June and sometimes later. It has been pointed out by our lawyer that *according to our bylaws we are not obligated to respond to fires at unpaid properties* even for members who had been paid-up for the previous year. Furthermore, property owners cannot legally claim to have a responding fire department when applying for insurance if dues for the current year are not paid. A property owner's failure to inform his or her insurance broker that there is no responding fire department is, in effect, fraud by omission and can render the insurance coverage void.

The bottom line is:

- Dues are payable by January 1st.
- Members from the previous year have until January 31st to remain in good standing.
- Unpaid properties have no fire department protection.*

*NOTE: *This does not necessarily mean we won't respond, however, if we do respond to an unpaid property it states in our Bylaws that:*

1. In the event that a member requests a Call-Out and that member is not a member in good standing, that member will pay the fees and debts owing by them to the Department in addition to an amount set at the discretion of the directors up to the amount of the current director-set Call-Out rate.
2. If a member is a member in good standing, they will not be charged for a Call-Out.
3. The Directors and Officers of the Department will have the right to utilize all legal options available to them to recover debts owing to the department by any person as a result of a Call-Out.
4. Nothing in these By-Laws will require or be construed to require the Department to respond to the Call-Out of a non-member.

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