

## **Fire Fighters Prove Their Heroism Again**

As a volunteer fireman for almost 50 years, I know that statistically, during the Holiday Season, house fires accrue more than 4 times compared to the rest of the year. Many house fires during the Holidays are started by open flames from candles and fireplaces. Holiday lighting and unattended cooking are also among the top reasons for house fires during the holidays. A house full of decorations including Christmas trees adds fuel to any accidental fire. Our town fire companies all winter, especially during the holidays are putting out fires related to fireplaces. Clarence Fire Company had its second Fire Place related fire this week early Monday morning. If it is not a chimney it is carpets ignited from an open hearth or hot ambers left in the wrong place. Even if a chimney fire burns out or is extinguished there is a chance of unforeseen heat extensions that could reignite hours later. The Town has even had a house fire from a resident burning holiday candles left on cardboard boxes.

Sadly, as we entered this Holiday Season, our town lost an incredible resident, Joan Wozer, who lost her life in a house fire. When Fire Chief Brett Hanford pulled up to the scene, the first floor of the house was already totally ablaze. Knowing that Joan was still in the house on the second floor, Assistant Chief Christian Rider-Work and Fire Fighter Zachery Braunscheidel risked their lives to make a daring search and rescue for her. During their search, the heat was so intense that parts of their fire gear melted.

After finding Joan they carried her through a second-floor window and down a ladder. Once on the ground they and others started measures to save her life. All loss of life is tragic but certainly Joan was a very special person due to her love for her family and her love for her many Golden Retrievers, and her inspiring career as a nurse. Please keep Joan and her entire family in your prayers.

Christian and Zach, you trained for years on actions you took that night to try and save Joan's life. Your braveries were second to none. Thank you, all our firefighters, including those from several other districts that came in to assist. The service you give every day to our residents is very appreciated. Thank you also to the numerous community members that came together to support the family with donations, meal trains and more. We truly live in a special community.

Congratulations to the Clarence Lions Club and Clarence Youth Bureau for another very successful Holiday Pancake Breakfast. The line was out the door with families coming in. The Town Club House was a perfect setting for this Holiday Event which was enjoyed by all, but especially by our residents with kids. My grandson Patrick was having so much fun with the many activities, he didn't want to go home. This has certainly become a special tradition in our town during the holiday season.

We are very blessed with all our residents, volunteers and Town employees that make Clarence a place where everyone wants to live. May all of you have a safe, healthy, fun holiday and a Happy New Year.