



## “Clearwater’s Hottest Department”

SPRING 2003

### **FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR 2003**



*Steve Colbert was nominated by his peers for the prestigious award of “Fire Fighter of the Year” 2003. Steve was presented with the award at a ceremony held on April 15, 2003 at Station 45. His wife, Jeannine, his father Joe Colbert (retiring Fire Inspector), and mother, Sandy, were all in attendance to witness Steve accepting the award. Although the award of Fire Fighter of the Year is truly an honor, Steve was also presented with the MEDAL of HONOR for GALLANTRY, which is unprecedented in the history of Clearwater Fire & Rescue. As a Lead Medic, Steve was on scene at the Dolphin Cove fire incident in June 2002, at which time he saved another paramedic’s life by pulling her to safety after a flashover occurred in the enclosed hallway. Both were burned in the fire. As a result of Steve’s courage under extreme pressure while confronted with intense heat and roaring flames, CF&R incurred no fire fighter deaths in this incident. Steve feels as though he is “blessed” to be a*

*firefighter/paramedic. He says he “cannot imagine doing anything else with his life” and was “speechless and humbled when he received the Medal of Honor for Gallantry” because he believes everyone in the department is a “hero”. Steve, thank you for everything you do for the department and congratulations from all of us!*



**Ground Breaking Ceremony  
for NEW FIRE STATION #49**

On February 27, 2003, the official ground breaking ceremony for Clearwater Fire & Rescue's new Station 49 was held on the property adjacent to Clearwater Mall. **Pictured here:** City Manager Bill Horne, City of Clearwater Commissioners, and Fire Chief Rowland Herald. The new station is tentatively scheduled for completion in November 2003.



**SAFETY VILLAGE CHURCH GETS A  
NEW ROOF**

Did you know that Clearwater Fire & Rescue's Safety Village complex on Lakeview Road opened almost 16 years ago in 1987? Since that time over 53,500 children between the ages of 4 and 11 have received lessons in how to be safe around fire, electricity, water and when crossing a street. Safety Village is open to any group of 10 or more in Pinellas County by appointment. Full scale programs are held almost every day, including the summer months. The Fire Safety House is also currently receiving new siding and termite treatment. The complex will likely be needing a new paint job in the coming months to be ready for this fall's 17th Annual Open House.

**U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT  
DELEGATION FROM MEXICO  
VISITS Clearwater Fire & Rescue**

A delegation of six officials from the country of Mexico recently visited Clearwater in an effort to learn more about how we respond to large scale



emergency situations. In their own "estados" in Mexico, these individuals represent their cities as Emergency Managers, Civil Defense Directors and in other municipal leadership roles. At one time, earlier in their careers, several of these individuals had been fire chiefs or fire officers and paramedics. The group was accompanied by two State Department official translators. While visiting our department, they were escorted by CF&R's Emergency Coordinator, Randy Hinder and Public Education Specialist/CERT Coordinator, Elaine Lewis. After leaving Clearwater, the group was scheduled to travel to El Paso, Texas and then on to San Diego, California. Their comments were very positive about our city and they were very impressed with our fire trucks, engines and other emergency equipment. They were overheard saying how they wished they had the money to provide their communities with the same level of service we do in Clearwater. We wish them luck in their mission. Pictured here in the center of the group is City Auditor, Robin Gomez.



Son, Steve and Joe Colbert

Inspector, and in 1985 was hired as an Inspector with Clearwater Fire Department/Clearwater Fire & Rescue. Joe has spent eighteen plus years as an Inspector, with the last few years as the primary Plans Examiner for the Department. Joe served on the City's Building Plans Review Committee and the Development Review Committee. He was also a member of the Achievement Awards Committee and mentored two young men at Kennedy Middle School. During the many years of working with Joe, people have always commented on the positive influence he shares with his co-workers. He always seems to have a smile and a humorous comment for people he meets. Joe's son, Steve, is a Firefighter/ Lead Paramedic with CF&R. Joe lives with his wife, Sandy, in St. Petersburg and says he is really looking forward to new challenges and exciting adventures in his "golden years". Joe, you will be missed! Be safe and come back and see us. .

### **FIRE INSPECTOR, JOE COLBERT RETIRES**

Joe Colbert began his career in the Fire Service in 1969 with the Prince Georges County Fire Department in Maryland. He received his training and certification at the University of Maryland Fire Training Center. Joe attained the rank of Captain and served as both the Training Officer and Fire Prevention Officer until he moved to Florida in 1978. In Florida, Joe worked in private industry as the Purchasing Director for a group of nine resort hotels. In 1981, the call of the Fire Service was too strong and he went to work with the Largo Fire Department as the Fire Public Education Specialist. While in Largo, Joe became certified as a Fire



**Pictured:** Recently promoted Lieutenant Matt Burwood, Jay Schmitt, LT/LR Wendy Cason, (Chief Rowland Herald), Monte Gibson, Jim Thomas, and Gary Spence. **Congratulations!**

## Clearwater Fire & Rescue's Accreditation Update

The CFAI Accreditation Review Team performed a site visit at Clearwater Fire & Rescue from March 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>. The Review Team analyzed the Department's Self-Assessment Manual that we submitted in November of 2002, inspected the librated exhibits, critiqued our documentation regarding the department, and finally performed an exit interview with the Department Division Heads and Fire Chief in which they submitted suggestions for present and future enhancements to Administration and Operations. Also, during the site visit, the Review Team conducted interviews with various City Directors, Assistant City Manager, and department employees.

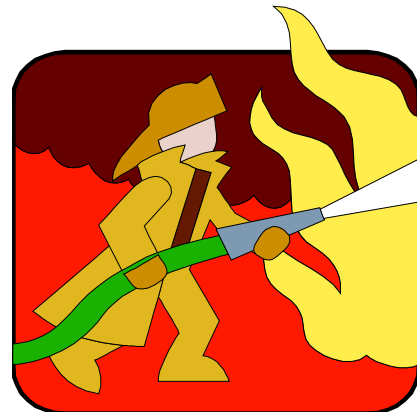
The Accreditation Team identified strengths and weaknesses within our agency. The Accreditation Review Team was clearly impressed with Clearwater Fire & Rescue operations, administration, and life safety/prevention. The weaknesses identified will now be incorporated into the Department's plans for future goals and objectives.

Throughout the site visit team members provided feedback to Management staff, and multiple revisions/enhancements were made to capture specific needs and/or tangible items we already have (that we overlooked) within our agency's self-assessment documentation. The Team was not just another "inspection agency." They truly came to help and agreed to partner with us for long-term growth and improvement. One vital piece of documentation we are required to have for Accreditation certification is a Standards of Cover, which is currently being revamped to not only capture statistics and data that is required to meet a core competency, but to also clearly prescribe our measurable service levels and how we meet those standards.

Upon CFAI receiving the newly enhanced revised version of our Standards of Cover, we will prospectively be recommended for Accreditation. The Accreditation Review Team will submit the recommendation to the Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) for their review within a month. Once CFAI approves the recommendation, Clearwater Fire & Rescue will receive the honorary recognition of being an Accredited Fire Agency. A formal presentation will be given to the Fire Chief at the next International Fire Chiefs' Conference.

### *Recent Promotions- Congratulations!*

Matt Burmood	Lieutenant
Monte Gibson	Lieutenant
Jay Schmitt	Lieutenant
Gary Spence	Lieutenant
James Thomas	Lieutenant
Anthony Tedesco	Fire Fighter/Paramedic
Wendy Cason	Lieutenant/LR



## *Fire Fighter Saves a “Brother’s” Life*

On March 9, 2003, our Station 49 company was eating dinner when one of the senior Firefighters started choking on his food. He could not speak or breathe and was on the verge of passing out from lack of oxygen. Steve Coward, Firefighter/Driver Operator, reacted quickly and performed the Heimlich maneuver which dislodged the obstruction. “If not for Steve’s quick thinking and action, a tragic ending might have prevailed”, said EMS Chief Jim Fogarty. As a result of his efforts, Steve received a *Promoting Employee Excellence Through Recognition Award* (P.E.E.R.) for his exceptional customer service. Congratulations, Steve and thank you!

## *THE LATEST FROM THE CHIEF*

### Recognizing the Need for Work/Life Balance

The number of hours professionals spend in workplace settings is on the rise. The resulting conflict between work and family life has been associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, a greater likelihood of leaving a position, lower career and life satisfaction, and substantially increased stress. Here are a couple of ideas that could help with the management of these stressors.

Employee development programs are one way to address employees’ long-term personal and professional growth as well as reduce stress. Training and development activities range from seminars to independent reading to job rotation and supervisory coaching. From the employee perspective, a development program says that the organization is interested in the well-being of its people as well as the future of the organization. Most employees’ benefit from continuous learning and adaptation. Research also suggests that managerial advancement can be predicted by the amount of the employee’s training and development activities. Working towards long-term career goals and objectives has been found to be positively related to satisfaction, performance, and commitment, and negatively related to turnover, intent to leave and stress.



The health of an organization’s personnel is obviously related to work/life balance. As this balance becomes more difficult to maintain, work stress has become an important consideration for all. When work interferes with family life, it apparently tends to affect psychological and physical well-being. Occupational stress substantially raises absenteeism and reduces productivity. Lifestyle issues also affect employees’ health, accounting for the majority of the causes of death resulting from preventable illnesses such as heart disease. In light of this, individual and organizational support of health programs are important component of overall fitness. Take advantage of the opportunity to use the cardio-respiratory and strength building exercise machines in the stations. They’ll provide you with a lifetime of benefits.

Source: Business Horizons / March-April 2003

## Hurricane Season Approaches & C.E.R.T. Members Get Ready...

It's not too soon to start preparing for hurricane season. Officially, it opens on June 1st, but we need to begin thinking about what we will do, and how we will respond, before and after the storm. Surrounded by water on three sides, Pinellas County is definitely a prime target for massive destruction, especially if we were to receive a direct hit from the Gulf of Mexico. Toward this effort, Clearwater Fire & Rescue took the lead several years ago by securing a grant from the State of Florida and F.E.M.A. to implement a Community Emergency Response Team cadre of trained citizen volunteers. We currently have trained over a 100 individuals. On Saturday, April 26th, CF&R is planning to hold a mass disaster drill for all the C.E.R.T. groups at the Fire Training Facility on Belcher Road, adjacent to Station 48. There will be City, County and department-wide participation. The Red Cross is bringing in their equipment, the cadets from the Civil Air Patrol will be on hand to assist, the Fire Explorers, and many fire fighters and paramedics will act as observers. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

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