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GIVING BACK TO COMMUNITY



Michael Frink is Dunn's Corners first full-time, paid fire chief. | (Jill Connor / The Westerly Sun)

A 'special breed' bound by friendship and trust

Editor's note: Our holiday tribute to firefighters recognizes men and women who are "on call" all year long in their effort to make our communities safer places.

By DALE P. FAULKNER
Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — Like other members of the Dunn's Corners Fire Department, Michael Frink became interested in the department through the influence of family members — in his case two brothers whose involvement preceded and prompted his own.

"I was always hanging out with my brothers so I saw what they were doing and it seemed interesting and fun," Frink said.

The department's chief for close to 10 years and a member for 27 years, Frink has firsthand knowledge of how firefighting is often a family affair. The department was formed in 1942 with Edwin Greene serving as chief. Dutch Greene, Edwin's son, although no longer an active firefighter, remains on the rolls as a member of the department.

Henry Morris succeeded Edwin Greene as chief and two of his grandsons, Thomas Algiere and Daniel S. Schilke, are high-ranking members of the department: Algiere is third deputy chief and Schilke serves as captain. The family ties within the department don't end there. Algiere and Schilke both have children who also serve in the department.

As another example of the urge to serve as a firefighter passing from one generation to another, Frink pointed to the department's Keith Kenyon, who became first deputy chief after his father, Karl, who held the same position, died in 2010. Frink called Karl Kenyon a mentor. "I miss him a lot," he said.



ALWAYS ON CALL

Serving as a volunteer firefighter is not easy, Frink said.

The volunteer post requires an intense commitment of time to get trained and certified and to keep those levels current. Department members stand ready to respond, night and day, to a host of potential emergencies, many that can be dangerous, tragic, and gruesome. "It takes a special breed of person. It's not for everyone," Frink said.

While many firefighters in the department are bound by blood, other important connections develop, Frink said.

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