

Magnolia would be a horrible place to live without the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department

Updated: 07.31.09

To the editor:

The following letter is in response to Mr. Goeddertz's website, that he has constructed, that I learned about in your article about Magnolia Fire Department (re: "Fire Chief Hopes to Put Out Flames of Defamation," published Wednesday, July 29, 2009). I have forwarded this to him via his website but I feel that there is so much being overlooked here. I certainly hope that the community of Magnolia, that I have been a resident of for 22 years, will offer help rather than ridicule.

Thank you for taking the time to read my feelings on the matter.

Mr. Goeddertz, after reading your little website you have constructed, I am sickened at the thought of your ignorance of how a volunteer fire department operates.

Let's start with clown and puppet programs. Who do you think goes to schools and day cares, on their own time, and teaches school age children about fire safety?

- Flowers- Is it not customary to send flowers to funerals of fallen comrades or to the hospital when a firefighter or close family member is injured or ill?
- Food - I think it's the least we can do, as taxpayers, to pay for these men and women that serve 24 hour shifts, without being able to leave unless on a call, rush into burning homes, extracting mangled bodies from crashed cars, rescuing people and pets from flooded creeks, rushing to a family member that has fallen ill and virtually saving lives, daily. These people are volunteers. They train every week for our safety. I pray every night for their safety and ours. So, I think buying them a hamburger every now and then is the least we can do.
- Banquets and trophies - Again, I think it's the least we can do, as taxpayers, to give these people the recognition that they so richly deserve by giving them a little plaque saying at least someone appreciates them (in the six years my children have been involved with Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department, there has only been a handful of times, less than three, that a victim has taken the time to come back and thank these people for being there for them!).
- Cell phones - I'm not naive enough to think they that are not used for personal use on occasion. You, as well as I, have made and received personal calls at our place of business. But there are many phones calls that are not of an emergency basis, that you are not comprehending. There are scheduling calls, what will be the training tonight, who's in charge tonight, did that equipment get fixed, we have an illness at our station, we need to fill that spot. There are multiple reasons for cell phone use. I'm just thankful that they have them so they can stay in contact with one another.
- Paper work - Obviously, this seems to be your biggest gripe. Why don't you volunteer your time to get the department up to code? These are firefighters, not bookkeepers. Yes, there should be accountability and records should be kept. Just because they are not up to your standards does not make these people thieves, as you have stated.
- Gas - I believe this has been explained clearly enough. (You might want to read the article in The Potpourri explaining about the equipment on these trucks, that saves lives.) You had an opportunity to have this explained and shown to you but you refused. A little close-minded, wouldn't you say?

Bottom line here, I find your accusations sickening. It is obvious you have a vendetta against Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department. You have handled this like a junior high student that is mad at another kid. This could have been handled a bit more professionally. As I stated before, both of my sons are very active with the fire department. I know first hand how hard their job is.

I wonder often how anyone else would handle pulling a child from a crumpled car, comforting a loved one because they just lost someone. Trying to explain to a child why mommy or daddy won't be coming back home or why their house caught on fire. I wonder how you would handle straddling a gurney in the back of a speeding ambulance pumping on a teenagers heart to keep him alive long enough to get him to the hospital, so the child doesn't die on your watch.

These men and women save lives and property, on a regular basis. They give up their time because it is their passion. They want to help, they want to be there and they want to give someone a chance to make it. Magnolia would be a horrible place to live without them. They are an asset to our community. I am so very proud of each and every one of them. They are a family. They know, without a doubt, that they can trust the person standing beside them. How lucky for them to be able to even say that, much less live it. There aren't many of us in this world that can.

Have you ever thought about what they do for our community and how horrible it would be if they were not there for all of us? It angers me when the department is attacked for what they aren't doing and totally ignoring what they are doing. These people take time away from their families, night weekends and holidays. Yep, I said holidays (refer back to your gas statements) I can't tell you how many times my kids have missed holidays with their family because they were on duty.

These men and women are certainly not in this for the money. It's volunteer. Yes, some get paid a nominal fee for some of their services but most do not. Trust me, what they do earn and what they are doing is no comparison. Would you run into a burning house and try to save whatever you can, for the family, for seven dollars? The only people I know that would are the same ones you are attacking here.

In closing, I truly hope that you find whatever peace you are looking for by your attacks. I also pray that you and your family never need them but I know with all of my heart, if you do every need them, you will truly be in the presence of real heroes.

Kim Carley