

# Aurora Volunteer Fire Department

## Newsletter Volume III

February 1, 2005

Mid-winter in the Fingerlakes and the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department's thoughts turn to... jumping in the lake? That's right, during our February drill, we will be practicing Ice Rescue training. Ice Rescue is our featured skill this issue, and Sarah Jones Homick, who is certified in Advance Ice Rescue, is our featured member.

Also included in this issue are winter safety tips, a letter from the chief and various programs we're working on. So grab yourself a cup of something warm and find out how your fire department is occupied this winter.

### Winter Safety Tips

#### Fire and Burn Prevention

Candles are pretty but can be dangerous. Never leave a burning candle unattended. Make sure the candle is in a sturdy holder that will not tip over. Do not place a burning candle near flammable items such as bedding or curtains.

Check your smoke detectors monthly

Practice your monthly home fire drill with your family

Still have some Christmas lights up? Check that all electrical cords are in good condition without any frayed ends.

Keep your pellet and wood burning stove clean and well maintained. Only burn material approved for that particular model.

Enjoy your fireplace safely. Make certain the fire screen is in place. Never let a fire burn unattended.

#### Road Safety

If you don't have snow tires - buy them now. There is a lot of winter left.

Allow plenty of extra driving time in winter

Slow down. Drive for the road and weather conditions.

Keep blankets, flashlights and other emergency supplies in your car.

Make sure you pull over AND stop when you see an emergency vehicle with its lights flashing.

Maintain a safe distance from the car in front of you.

Remove all the snow and ice from all the windows and lights on your car BEFORE driving.

#### Outdoor Safety

Your mother was right. Dress for the weather with a hat, gloves, coat and boots. Dress in layers

Frostbite can occur quickly. If you feel cold, you are cold. Get some place warm.

Yes, it is tempting, but stay off the ice.

Wear sunblock. the sun radiating off the snow causes sunburn.

Enjoy outdoor activities in safe areas. Ski, snowboard or sled in approved places only. Watch out for trees.

Pets can get frostbite also. Bring your pets indoors in very cold weather. Outdoor pet houses should be well insulated with their openings out of the wind.

### Ham & Turkey Raffle March 12th 2005

The Aurora Volunteer Fire Dept. is reviving the Ham and Turkey Raffle this year. We've done this in years past and had great fun, while raising some money for the fire department. The raffle is a game of chance that costs one dollar. You buy a ticket for a dollar and we spin the wheel. Whoever has the lucky number wins a ham or turkey. We usually have other prizes so there is more than one winner each round. There will be several rounds. Free food and drink is served as long as we're playing.

Please come and have some fun. You'll be supporting the department at the same time! It's loads of fun for the entire family and you can get your Easter ham or turkey for a buck!

### Our Biggest Failure was a Huge Success.

Hundreds of people expressed interest in our most ~~dramatized~~ dramatic rescue of 2004. If you haven't seen it yet, go to our web site. On October 31, we attempted extrication of a figure trapped under the former Holland family house. Maybe we should have tried harder. Judge for yourself.  
[www.avfd.net/events/Halloween2004.htm](http://www.avfd.net/events/Halloween2004.htm)

### Statistics

As of press time, the Fire Department has responded to 1 fire call and 12 ambulance calls during 2005.

Please remember that the people who respond to these calls are volunteers in your community. Help support your fire department in any way you can.

## Know your Fire Department

Meet Sarah Jones Homick. Sarah, 26 years old, lives with her husband, Kevin and their six month old son, Maximilian, in Levanna. Sarah is a lifelong resident of the Levanna/Aurora area and is the daughter of Ron and Cindy Jones. She graduated from Cayuga Community College and SUNY Geneseo with a BA in History and Certification in Secondary Education.

*When and why did you join the fire department?*

I joined the department in March, 1994 when I was 16 years old. My dad has been a fireman forever. I always hung out at the department from when I was little. I wanted to hang out with my dad and I like helping people.

*What are your roles and duties in the department?*

I'm an outside firefighter. On the fire scene, I'm usually helping the pump operator or I am the pump operator. I'm also a basic EMT and I was certified in July, 1998. As an EMT, I provide emergency care to patients. I'm also a member of the High Angle Rescue Team [see issue 1 of our newsletter]. The High Angle Team is a rope/rappelling unit that rescues or recovers people. We rescue people who have fallen off a cliff or have gotten into a tight spot that is difficult to reach from the ground. I'm also an advanced Ice Rescue Technician II. I wear an ice rescue suit and I'm trained to rescue people from cold water/ice situations. I'm captain of the engines for our department. As captain, I have to maintain both engines and know how to operate them. I'm president of the AVFD. My duties include handling all the business affairs, running the monthly meeting and taking notes for the Executive Committee.

*What do you do to maintain your skills?*

I attend regular monthly drills and I also attend courses that are offered by the state. I keep my EMT certification current and I am participating in the pilot program for NYEMS (New York Emergency Medical Services) continuing education.

*You are very busy with a baby under 1 year old. How do you manage to take care of your family and be an active member?*

I rely on my husband, Kevin. My mother helps me with the babysitting and takes care of Max when I'm on a call. Max has actually attended many meetings and classes with me.

*What do you enjoy most about being a member?*

I really like working closely with my father, Ron Jones and my brother, Kevin Jones. I love the camaraderie of the members. I also love helping people.

*Who are your role models and why?*

My parents are my role models because they have such a strong relationship with each other. They have always demonstrated for us how to be decent people and to give back to the community. I hope I can teach my children as much.

*What is something people would be surprised to know about you?*

People are surprised when they learn I'm a member of the fire department.

*What are your future aspirations?*

I want to continue contributing to the fire department. I also hope to be a good wife, mom and member of my family.

*What would you say to someone that is considering joining a fire department?*

Do it!

*If you could change or add anything to the fire department what would it be?*

If I could change anything, I would get the equipment each member needs. I would also get the vehicles we need to better serve our district. I would especially like to see membership increase.



# Aurora Ice Rescue

By Frank Zimdahl

In the last newsletter I touched on Aurora's Ice Rescue Team. The Ice Rescue Team is part of our Water Rescue. Aurora has had an Ice Rescue Team for five years. We have not had a winter rescue yet, but we have used the equipment in cold water. Almost the entire department is trained and we are ready for a call in the worst weather imaginable.

We have four suits, over 1000 feet of specialized rope, and an inflatable boat. Most importantly, we have a team of people willing to go in the water at any temperature. As a matter of fact, they're excited to go in. The suits are not underwater capable; they are floatation suits,



made of heavy insulated vinyl. Once you're zipped in, the cold water is kept out and you are warm and dry. The boat is 14 feet long, extremely light, and can be paddled by one or two people.

Many ice rescues go bad when untrained people attempt to help. People go in the water without a suit and immediately become another victim. Ice accidents can quickly escalate from one victim to a dozen victims, as more well-intended people fall through the ice or jump in to help. When any ice rescue call is received, the incident commander should call for as much help as possible, to be prepared for many victims.

When someone is in the cold water, the safest rescue is a self rescue. The first thing an ice rescue team should do is try to talk to victim into pulling themselves out. The next step is to throw the victim a rope and pull them out. As the rescue escalates, the whole team needs to plan for the next step. So, when someone is talking the victim into pulling themselves out, others should be preparing ropes to throw. Others should be getting in the suits. When all the suits are on and an assisted rescue is underway, the inflatable boat must get inflated.

If assistance in the water rescue is required, a suited rescuer goes in with a hoop on a rope. The victim is approached from the side and the hoop is quickly slipped on and around them. Then, the rescuer signals to the shore crew and the victim is pulled in.

The boat can be walked, pushed or pulled across the ice; there are openings at each end. A suited rescuer stands in the rear opening and pushes the other suited rescuer, in the boat to the victim. If the ice breaks you are both safely suited and in the boat. The front opening is pushed over the victim and the other rescuer can pull the victim into the boat. Again a signal is given and everyone is pulled to safety.

Our annual ice rescue drill is in February. We try to do it in the coldest part of the year so that we have some ice to work with. Other outdoor drills that time of year would not get a large turnout. The ice rescue drill is always well attended. The thought of breaking through the ice and jumping in near freezing water is exciting and doing it is extremely fun.

If you want to watch our next drill this February, email me ([chief@avfd.net](mailto:chief@avfd.net)) and I will have a spot for you to watch and someone to explain the proceedings. Bring your camera and remember to dress warmly!

## Letter from the Chief

Our elections were held in November and I have been elected to my fifth and final year as Chief. When I took over four years ago I asked for and received more volunteers and EMTs. 2004 has ended and we have added two new members, but two have left; that's not so good. The department needs volunteers again, this time our emphasis is on firefighters. The department has much experience, but it is time to pass on what we know to some younger members. We would love to get five new members that are physically able to be firefighters.

We've worked emergencies, fires, water rescues, motor vehicle accidents and several false alarms. We used our jaws of life once and they truly proved to be life-saving. We had nine chicken BBQs, and a large raffle. We will be doing BBQs again starting April 24th and continuing on the 4th Sunday of each month. We will do the large raffle again and also a Ham & Turkey Raffle this year. We are planning to raise money for a new vehicle and start a vehicle replacement program; two of our trucks are over forty-five years old.

This year will also mark our first year to give away a scholarship at Southern Cayuga Central School. The Aurora Volunteer Fire Department \$250.00 College Scholarship was started this year and will be awarded in 2005. **"Applicant must be a member of any volunteer fire department or volunteer ambulance service, or be pursuing an education in emergency services"**

As I've said before, the fire service is more fun, exciting and rewarding than it is work. Please email us or see any member about joining and we can get you into a state-sanctioned training program this year. Talk to your son or daughter about joining.

I look forward to a good 2005, and hope to see all of you come to the fire department this year for some fun and camaraderie, and some to join.

Frank Zimdahl, Chief

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### Order your Reflective 911 House Marker

A house marker purchased from the AVFD will make you easier to find in an emergency, and provide income for the department.

Contact Chris at 364-5528 or visit our web site for more information

### A New Emergency Medical Technician class is under way.

Ann Balloni and Bill Reynolds (*Mr. Anne Vawter*) started Basic EMT training at the beginning of January. We're looking forward to having them certified. Wish them good luck!

Remember to visit our web site at <http://www.avfd.net>.

We have all the newsletters posted on it, as well as pictures from our scrapbook and upcoming events.

Our news page has updated information, with an opportunity for you to add your comments.

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Contributing to this newsletter were: Ann Balloni, Ethan MacCormick, Sara Miller and Frank Zimdahl

Anyone interested in receiving this newsletter should email us at [secretary@avfd.net](mailto:secretary@avfd.net). All mail is sent bcc (blind carbon copied) so your address is kept private.