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## Johnson, Robert

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**From:** Johnson, Robert  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 18, 2004 11:58 PM  
**To:** #Association Board; Giraudo, John  
**Subject:** Firefighter of the Year

Dear Association Board Members,

I am writing this letter to petition your votes to place firefighter John Wurdinger on the ballot for Menlo Park Fire Protection District Firefighter of the Year for 2004. In accordance with Policy Memorandum #5 of the Association By-Laws I would like to show evidence of how Firefighter Wurdinger has met each of the five criteria set forth by the Board.

The first has to do with quality as a firefighter; John has many great qualities to which I will point your attention. Six years ago myself and one other new recruit from Southern California began a new career in a new area, fortunately for both of us there was one other new hire that just happened to be a local San Mateo boy, John was not only familiar with the local demographics of the county but he had spent a great deal of time working for Menlo Park Fire Prevention. John quickly befriended Jason Pyle and myself, helped us get acquainted with the area, and all but carried us through the County Academy. John and I built a lasting friendship over the next 18 months, and I was fortunate to get to see John grow into the man you know today. John demonstrates many ideal qualities that we all could look up to, his ability to see a task to completion can be seen in everything John puts his hands on. Our Antique Apparatus Committee wouldn't even exist if it weren't for John. He has shown courage by taking on many leadership positions here at Menlo Park Fire, by standing up for what he felt was right even though it wasn't popular opinion, and when fellow firefighters were in need it was John that fought for them, sometimes even fighting for their jobs. I sat across the Table from him and watched tears fill his eyes when we heard the news that badge #86 was asked to resign, if this is not a man of compassion and love for fellow firefighters, I don't know who is! The Maltese Cross has eight points, a symbol of eight traits that a firefighter should possess, John has shown me from day one that he is charitable, loyal, chivalrous, gallant, generous, a protector of both friend and foe, and he shows dexterity in service... whatever that means.

The second is involvement in the community, John took over the annual toy drive a few years ago and made it even more spectacular, giving more toys to more citizens of the community than we ever have. I believe that alone fulfills this criteria but John has done more. A few years ago the Association Board wanted to take Old Tom off the streets; it was John's determination and drive that finally made the necessary repairs and modifications to keep Old Tom available to the firefighters and the community. John lives here local because he wants to make a difference here, he could by a mansion in the hills like so many others have but still he remains, because he grew up here and he wants to make this place better. Is John involved in the community; I think the evidence speaks for itself.

Third is attitude around the firehouse, Firefighter Wurdinger has had good days and bad, but who among us hasn't? There are those who love him and those who don't, but one thing I think we all would agree on is that John does what he does because he feels it's the right thing to do. John wears his heart on his sleeve, you will always know how he feels because John is not afraid to speak his mind, this has offended some but you always know where you stand with John. For six years I have watched John take classes, attend meetings, sit in seminars and do anything and everything he could to learn his job and find new ways to improve Menlo Park Fire. John's attitude is all about respect, following proper channels, and keeping order. John's the only person I know who still refuses to call a superior officer by their first name.

Fourth is contribution to the Fire District, I don't know where to start! His involvement with the US&R team, his involvement with the apparatus committee, his commitment to the adjutant position, his ability to research and write policy, or maybe his hours of time spent in labor and management meetings. Did you know John has started a search dog program that is county wide? He teaches at CSM College in an effort to prepare the up and coming generation of firefighters. John does it all, when we got here in '96 the fire district owned an Aherns Fox but it was hidden beneath an old parachute up on top of the hill. Today that piece of history is operational, polished and proudly on display at Headquarters. There is even talk of making it funeral ready in the unfortunate event that tragedy strikes us here at Menlo Fire.

Last but not least is his contribution to the Association, in case I haven't convinced you yet with all of the other evidence let me draw your attention to yet another aspect of John's influence here in the Menlo Park Firefighters Association. When John arrived at Menlo Park he brought with him a special talent that our very own Commander Steele would soon discover, and harness, making the Honor Guard even more amazing and

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impressive. John's history with the Marines gave our Honor Guard the talent it needed to grow into the well oiled machine it is today, attending some 12 or more functions this year alone. Certainly Commander Steele is at the reins, but guess who he calls upon when he's away or otherwise unavailable to lead this group of Firefighters and Captains. That's right, our old reliable John Wurdinger. John has not missed more than a couple of Association Board Meetings, he's been a shop steward, ran for a spot on the Board, walked streets to get votes, taken classes, some very boring classes I might add, for the betterment of our Association, and of course we can't forget his work with the toy drive.

I know John really well but I know I've left some things out. John does more behind the scenes than most of us do over the course of our entire career. I hope you will consider John for the award of Firefighter of the Year, I can't think of anyone else who deserves it more. John has a long career ahead of him and I for one can't wait to see what else he will accomplish.

Sincerely,

Rob Johnson #85

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