

To: Association Board
From: John Wurdinger
Re: Firefighter of the Year Nomination

Association considers five criteria when presenting a member with the “Pete Chanteloup Memorial Firefighter of the Year Award.” The list in attributes include; Quality of a Firefighter, Involvement in the Community, Attitude around the Firehouse, Contribution to the Fire District and Contribution to the Association.

Rob Johnson has served our Community, our District and our Association in a stellar manner since September of 1998 and his stalwart dedication to our profession should not be able to continue to go unnoticed. Please consider Fire Captain Rob Johnson for the “2008 Pete Chanteloup Memorial Firefighter of the Year” based on the following traits:

1. Quality of a Firefighter

I was hired with Rob Johnson in 1998 and I believe I know him better than any member of our Association. I have always worked hard in all areas that I apply myself but Rob can always seem to run circles around me with ease. His scores were consistently better than mine while on Probation and in the Academy, he was a better Firefighter than I was, a better Engineer than I was, and I believe he is now a better Captain.

When responding to a chimney fire at the Stanford Park Hotel on Truck One, I was the Acting Captain and he was the Engineer. While enroute, Engine 6 radioed that there was active burning in the chimney of the foyer. On arrival, I got out of the Ladder Truck and surveyed the entryway to the Hotel. I returned back to the rig and told Rob that I thought He could make the turn, Rob told me that it looked tight and asked me if I thought I could make the turn if I was driving, I told him yes, but I was lying.

Rob made the turn and the stick could not have been placed in a better area, Todd Ellis and I made the Almanac. Several senior members were awed at Rob’s ability and commented on how Rob was able to maneuver the Truck and place it into service. Rob Johnson is made up of the highest quality of a Firefighter and it shows.

2. Involvement in the Community

The Menlo Park Firefighters Association has organized and sponsored the Menlo Park Easter Egg Hunt for nearly three decades. This program was run by the 1987 Firefighter of the Year, Don Overacker, for two of those three decades and when he retired in 2002 the program was handed over to Rob Johnson.

Rob Johnson has had big shoes to fill in the last six years but he outdoes himself nearly every year with his organizational skills commitment to the community. The joy of the Easter Egg hunt is experience by thousands of citizens throughout the community

because of the direct involvement of Rob Johnson. Robs commitment to the community it second to none.

3. Attitude around the Firehouse

Rob has a quick wit and a jovial attitude around the Firehouse. He is always playing practical jokes and is a general prankster. His attitude makes it easy to come to work. No sooner than Deputy Chief Randy Shurson painted “do not park” on the area surrounding the garbage BFI dumpster, Special Operations Chief Harold Schapelhouman parked his car there.

Rob looked at me with a glint of sheer evil in his eye and within 10 minutes Harold’s vehicle was up on blocks by ¼ inch. The only thing funnier that watching our Chief repeatedly switch the car from “drive” to “reverse” and having the vehicle not move was the two hours we spent crouched down in the kitchen peering though the window in anticipation of Chief Schapelhouman’s return. Rob’s attitude around the Firehouse makes work enjoyable.

4. Contribution to the Fire District

As a Captain in this organization, one of the more important things Rob does is train new employees. Rob excels in this arena and by the scores posted by his Probationary Firefighter Tim Bogner, it can be argued that he is amongst the best trainers in our Department. New employees of this organization are the future of our organization. Rob’s skill as a Firefighter and Engineer are not lost with his training of Probationary Firefighters. His contribution in the future of our organization is the one of the best ways to contribute to the Fire District.

5. Contribution to the Association

In 1998 David Hitchcock was the Firefighter of the Year. For over 25 years Dave Hitchcock was the Association Treasurer and prior to his service as Treasure he was our President for three years. Dave Hitchcock retired this past year and there are many reasons why he is sorely missed by our Association. One of the many reasons why Dave is missed is because of his years of service as our Treasurer. In 2006, Rob Johnson took on the Office of Treasure and has done a fabulous in that capacity. I did not know anyone could pinch a penny harder than Dave Hitchcock but if there was such a person I believe we have found him in Rob Johnson.

Rob Johnson watches our funds like a hawk and has created several spread sheets to show that our Association President is spending way too much money on attorneys, certified public accountants, public service announcements, flowers, tuition for classes and various plaques (Dave Hitchcock would be proud). Rob may give a jab or two relating to how we are spending our funds but his oversight is not only necessary but warranted, our Association dues represent the hard cash that our members have earned.

There is not a better person with higher morals that I would want to watch over the nearly \$350,000.00 our Association has in our coffers.

Rob Johnson serves as a workhorse as a Firefighter for the District both in the station and on calls. His positive attitude sets the standard for other Firefighters and contributions to both the Community and the Association are solid. As I look at the wall of Firefighter of the year both past and present I have come to the realization that it would be a shame to allow Rob Johnson to go unnoticed for yet one more year. Please vote for Rob Johnson as Firefighter of the Year.

John Wurdinger
Member in Good Standing