



Left: Capt. Jim Penrose, Atlantic Hook and Ladder Co.; right: Captain John Walters III, Protection Engine Co.

FIRE FOCUS By Les Kent, PWvFD

Meet the New Captains

John J. Walters III, after serving in all the line officer positions over the years, was elected captain of Protection Engine Co. No. 1 January 1998. Born in 1968 and raised in Port Washington, John comes from a long line of local residents, starting with his great-grandfather Walters who owned the farm much of which is now called New Salem.

A graduate of local schools, Schreiber Class of '86, John also earned his Nassau County Community College degree in 1988. He joined the Port Washington volunteer Fire Department right out of high school in '86, following in the footsteps of his father, John Walters, Jr., who is still active after 30 years in the department, and his grandfather, a member of Atlantic Hook and Ladder Co. for many years. His brother, Timmy Walters, was just elected as 2nd assistant engineer, too.

Since 1995, our new captain has been an active firefighter with the fire department of New York City. Starting with Engine Co. 237 in Bushwick just out of the FDNY Fire Academy, he now serves with Ladder Co. 138 in Corona, Queens.

When asked about his most memorable fire he, as with almost all fire department members at the time, immediately responded with the "Cat Lady" store/building fire when our Lieut. Bobby Dayton lost his life.

However, he also recalled another fire which was memorable because it was almost a comedy, rather than tragedy: PWvFD firefighter Andy Trinchitella's home came across as an active fully involved working house fire alarm at 2 a.m. John Walters' house was within a stone's throw distance! John left his bed, put on boots, turnout coat and, grabbing his helmet, he ran out to the street and raced to Andy's house, which was lighting up the sky with a second-story fire.

The fire alarms were beginning to sound all over Port when John arrived at the scene, where a frightened Bonnie Trinchitella was standing with her children, but crying that Andy was still in the burning second floor of the residence.

John, still all alone while fire vehicles were rushing to the scene, ran into the house to rescue his fellow firefighter Andy. The flames were spreading around and above John's head as he crawled to the master bedroom...but no Andy! Finally, John (not wearing a SCBA mask) had to retreat to the fire-free first floor kitchen, at which moment Andy appeared at the door to the cellar...coming up from the laundry room where he'd gone to put on a pair of pants so as not to appear in the street only in his underwear shorts!

John's comments to Andy at that point are unprintable.

James Penrose - who became captain of Atlantic Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 prematurely when Capt. Jimmy Della-Iacono resigned in March '97 and First Lt. Penrose stepped in, was elected to serve a full term as captain in January '98.

Born in New York City, he came to Port Washington when he was 3 years old with his family, 26 years ago. A product of all local schools, Schreiber Class of '87, Jim earned an associate degree in science from SUNY Manhattan College in '94. In three months time, after nine years of apprenticeship and on-the-job training, he will be nationally certified as a journeyman electrician, through Local 3 of the I.B.E.W., working with P.E. Stone Co. in Manhattan.

Married to the former Doreen Arena of Glenwood Landing in Oct. '96, they are the proud new parents of Alyssa Marie, their daughter born in 1997.

An 11-year member of AH&L, Jim comes from a family dedicated to community service. His brother John is a member of the North Sea FD based in Southampton on Long Island; his cousin Michael Scott is an active FDNY firefighter; and his grandfather John Penrose was killed in action with the NY Police Department some years ago.

New Captain Jim has been involved in most major fire and emergency calls of recent years, including the Avianca crash, Sands Point Nursing Home fire and the Shields Hardware fire. Purely by chance, he also happened to be working close by and therefore was among the very first rescuers on the scene minutes after the World Trade Center bombing in the city, where not only his fire fighting experience but his status as a fully qualified EMT-D were of immediate value.

His most memorable fire?...the "Cat Lady" building incident, where he and others administered CPR efforts to revive Lt. Bobby Dayton on the fire escape while the fire and smoke raged a few feet away.

His plans for the future as captain include organizing a surface water rescue team for hurricane, flooding or boat rescues. He is already a member of the 8th Battalion Scuba underwater search and rescue team.

This column, and the whole PWvFD, extend best wishes for a safe, successful and productive term in office for these two dedicated young men.

Sports Flash! Just as in the real Super Bowl Sunday, two superb teams of incredibly talented touch football players met in the unofficial 1998 PWvFD "Super Bowl" (originally the "Scud Bowl" during Desert Storm days). The Atlantics beat Protection 21-14 in close overtime play. Peco says "Wait 'til next year!..."