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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

The image of Jack Dodson shines brightly for his daughters, Karri Dodson, left, and Dodie Coolbaugh this Father's Day.

Working with Dad

By REBECCA BRIA
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Kunkle Deputy Fire Chief and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Karri Dodson and EMT Dodie Coolbaugh have extra respect for Fire Chief and EMT Jack Dodson. Dodson is not only the leader of the force to which the girls belong; he is their father.

For the Dodsons, working for Kunkle Fire and Ambulance, an all-volunteer company, is truly a family affair.

Jack Dodson grew up in the Kunkle firehouse and had a photo taken with the firefighters when he was 6 years old and his father, Fred Dodson, served as fire chief, a position the elder Dodson held from 1948 to 1970. Jack Dodson took over as fire chief in 1971 and his wife, Sally, was an EMT for over 20 years.

"I thought it was the best thing in the world because I got to hang out in the fire hall all the time," Karri Dodson said of her childhood.

Both Coolbaugh and Karri joined the company at age 15. Now in their mid-30s, the women have each accumulated over 20 years of service to Kunkle Fire and Ambulance. Coolbaugh's husband, Russ, is assistant fire chief.

Working with dad isn't always easy and Jack Dodson admits he expects more from his own flesh and blood.

"I think once they got here and got the training, that I expect more all the time,"

he said.

"And sometimes we have to remind him we're not 12," Karri laughed.

Coolbaugh recalls an instance where she felt very worried for her father. He was in a burning building when fire fighters outside sounded the warning horns to immediately get out of the burning structure.

"It's your dad," Karri said. "You never want anything to happen to him. But I could go to a fire and not even see him and know he's going to be OK."

The three remember many calls to which they all responded. One morning at 2 a.m., they headed out to an accident scene on Route 309 where a car had struck a tree and was on fire. All of a sudden, the trio saw the driver of the car, who had been catapulted out of the car into the creek. The water was up to his neck and, at first glance, he appeared to have been decapitated.

They also will never forget the call for a car accident that claimed the life of a young boy.

During the flood of June 2006, Jack and Karri, along with others, rescued 17 people from rising water. One family was trapped and kept calling the station for help so Coolbaugh remained on the phone with them as her father and sister attempted to save them.

The brush truck Jack and Karri were in tipped in the intense floodwaters so they threw a rope to someone who tied it to a tree. The Dodsons tied the other end to the truck and pulled themselves to the family

in danger. They loaded the family onto a boat and pulled them out of the house with the rope.

Sometimes the relatives don't even need words to communicate.

"It's kind of weird because if we're in the back of the ambulance, we know what each other is thinking," Karri said.

A Pennsylvania State Trooper, Karri says her father didn't want her to become a trooper because he felt it was too dangerous. But, she admits to finding humor in the situation because she knows firefighting is just as hazardous.

The trio agrees it's the desire to help others, adrenaline and excitement that keeps them coming back as volunteers.

Jack Dodson is retired from Commonwealth Telephone. Coolbaugh works in the business office at a nursing home and has two children, Breezy, 9, and Rusty, 7, who have already shown an interest in following in their family's footsteps. Breezy would like to be a Kunkle firefighter and EMT because her entire family is involved in the company and Rusty wants to have a lemonade stand to benefit Kunkle Fire and Ambulance.

At the Dallas Rotary First Responder of the Year 2007 Awards Dinner on May 22, Jack Dodson received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of service to Kunkle Fire and Ambulance.

Many junior firefighters have come back to thank him for their experiences - and some even call him dad.

"We call it one big family," Jack said.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Lehman-Jackson Elementary School Principal Marilyn Glogowski was queen for a day during a medieval program following a week of reading enrichment at the school.

Lehman-Jackson principal becomes 'Queen for a Day'

By REBECCA BRIA
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The children of Lehman-Jackson Elementary School couldn't wait to see Frederick the Great. As the horse assisted the maintenance staff by munching on grass, the student body of 400 walked out onto the field. It was clear the feeling was mutual when Frederick whinnied at the sight of the young people.

Students were treated to a medieval program, sponsored by the PTA, on the sweltering morning of June 10 as a reward for reading 1,000 books in just two weeks. The reading competition was part of the Lehman-Jackson Parent Teacher Association's Reading is Fundamental Program. The program encourages reading and distributes three books a year to every child in the school.

Each time a child read a book, they put their name on the book's title on a knight paper cutout. Principal Marilyn Glogowski said that, if the children could wrap the cutouts around the entire school, she would ride a horse.

The cutouts did wrap around the entire school and Glogowski rode Frederick the Great, an 11-year-old, 1600-pound Belgian half quarter horse and half draft who came to the Back Mountain from RoundTable Productions of Litzitz, Pa.

Children and faculty members wore medieval style outfits, in-

cluding princess costumes and crowns as they gathered to watch the show.

"I really want to see what she's going to say about riding the horse," said Sophia Soifer, a first-grader dressed in a purple princess gown who read four books during the two-week competition.

Volunteers from the crowd were selected to participate in the performance. Lara Shiley, sixth-grade, and Trey Leo, first-grade, were given a wooden sword-fighting lesson. The left-handed Shiley was informed that, if she had lived in medieval times, she would be forced to use her right hand as her dominant hand.

Fifth-grader Jeff Williams got to wear a 55-pound chainmail, a piece of armor made of hundreds of rings. Performer Robert Earhart rubbed the blade of the sword back and forth sideways against Williams, showing the protection chainmail provides.

Ricky Abate, third-grade, held a shield as Earhart demonstrated the usage of different medieval weapons and their impact on the shield.

Glogowski, who admitted to being a tad bit nervous, had no idea Frederick would be so big.

"Is he going to have to go to the bathroom? Are you going to walk with him and me?" Glogowski asked Kate Hopkins, trainer and

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Scouts get bronze award

In recognition of completing 21 hours of community service, members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 2615 of Dallas received a bronze award on May 17. The girls volunteered at the Mercy Center in Dallas where they led and planned activities for residents, including playing instruments, karaoke and dancing in addition to doing shamrock and leprechaun crafts for St. Patrick's Day. The girls also spent time at Kids Care Club run through the Jewish Community Center of Wyoming Valley. There, they filled and packed hygiene items for the Domestic Violence Center and filled emergency room care bags for pediatric patients. Three guests of honor at the May 17 event included Senator Lisa Baker, Representative Karen Boback and Mark Williams, director of marketing at the Mercy Center. Two members of Boy Scout Troop 281, Scott Knapkora and Robert Menig, were the flag bearers at the event. Donna Menig serves as troop leader for Junior Girl Scout Troop 2615.



Caroline Sheehan, left, and Mercedes Whitaker wait for the ceremony to begin.

ON THE WEB

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Allison Rismondo, left, Angela DiMaria, center, and Sydney Emershaw process with candles during the ceremony honoring the Girl Scouts.



Lehman-Jackson third-grader Ricky Abate does what anyone would do when attacked by a knight - he holds up his shield.

