

# Safety News from the Northport Fire Department

By Jim Mahoney

## Meet Your Friend the Firefighter

**Saturday, September 14, 2013**

Northport Fire Department will host their 18<sup>th</sup> annual Meet Your Friend the Firefighter program on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon until 2 PM at fire headquarters located at 204 Main Street. This program is specially designed for children under the age of 6 years and their parents. These youngsters will have an opportunity to practice lifesaving fire safety skills, see a firefighter in civilian attire and then in full response turnout gear with air tank. They will be able to see the inside of an ambulance and learn how the ambulance crew communicates with the local hospitals. A simulated bedroom with non toxic smoke will be the practice setting for children learning how to crawl low and get out of a burning building. The children will also learn and practice the skill of putting out a fire on their own clothing with the "Stop, Drop and Roll" maneuver.

Parents will have the opportunity to learn about proper use of safety helmets for their children who ride bicycles, skateboards, scooters, etc. They can also learn about the WHALE program (We Have A Little Emergency). Emergency information regarding their youngsters can be written on decals posted on the back or underneath side of child/infant car seats. In the event of an accident where the parent is incapacitated and requires hospitalization, responding police and firefighters can quickly learn of the parents designated emergency contact. That person will be contacted from the scene. The child may not be able to give this emergency information to the first responders. Spot the Tot is another nationwide program designed to better insure children's safety by reminding all adult drivers to check behind their cars before backing out of driveways. Unfortunately, each year here on Long Island adults are pre-occupied and back out of driveways without looking for little ones who may be playing just behind the car.

Children's identification packages will also be available. A visit to all the safety stations takes about 30 minutes. There is no charge for this program and all materials are free. A special guest will be at fire headquarters to greet all those attending the program. He is Sparky the fire safety mascot.

## Driving Distractions

Safety News has continually stressed the need to reduce driving distractions that cause motor vehicle accidents. The September, 2013 issue of Consumer Reports on Health carried a timely safety message for all adult drivers. They cite a study by Accident Analysis and Prevention which found that the accident rate for adults who drive with pets unrestrained in their cars is nearly double the rate of those drivers without pets in their vehicles. Unrestrained pets are a definite driving distraction. Also it is not

in the best safety interest of the animal to have it move about the vehicle, especially when it is traveling at a rapid rate.

Safety News commends AT&T who continues to remind their customers with a notice in the monthly billing letter of the need to avoid texting while driving. They continue to urge their customers to take a pledge to text only when they are not driving.

### **Where is Your Home?**

Safety News would once again like to remind our readers to check the numbering on their homes. Vacations will be ending, school will start in early September and the home may not be identified. Before the busy schedule is part of the daily routine, please take a few minutes and check your home and property for a clearly visible identification. In any emergency time is of the essence and can be a life saving factor. Be sure your home, mail box and driveway have some clearly visible numerals to permit quick recognition for police, first responders and ambulance crews. Procrastination does not create personal safety!

Coming in the next Safety News column in **The Observer** – The 2013 Fire Safety & Fire Prevention schedule with this year's safety theme.