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THE CRETE NEWS

Friend
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REPUBLICAN

A Salute to FIRE & RESCUE

4JORDAN: Plate honors lost firefighter

by Amy Hausman
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In 2017, the Crete Fire Department lost one of its own to a fight that could not be won.

On Jan. 8, 2017, Jordan Lampila lost his battle with colon cancer after the disease spread to his liver. His father, Don Lampila, continues to honor his son with a simple vanity plate on a 1978 Chevy Nova.

Don ordered the maroon sleeper car in 1978 as a single man.

"It took six weeks to get it and the sticker price was \$4,700, but I talked the sales person down another \$500," Don said "I like my cars simple without options, so I bought it without air conditioning, power steering or chrome."

Jordan was born in January 1982, and soon after Don's young family drove the Nova to Denver, Colorado, with Jordan strapped in the back seat.

"After that trip, I realized I am a family man and sold the car to my brother-in-law. Traveling across the country with no air conditioning and

maneuvering an infant out of a two-door sedan was not what was best for us anymore," Don said. "When I sold the car it had only 27,000 miles on it."

Don's teenage nephews had their fair share of fun with the car's power, putting another 150,000 miles on it in four years – to the point when the engine needed replaced. The Nova was stored behind a barn, waiting for another chance.

In July 2005, Don purchased the car back for \$125 but laughs he's spent much more on the car than that.

"Restoring cars is an expensive hobby. I lucked out getting a crate engine but also replaced the windshield and dash pad," he said. "Larry Crist repainted it and is incredibly talented. Everything else is original, and there is probably not another Nova like it because of how I ordered it."

The restoration process was slow. Tinkering was done during the weekends and an occasional evening after work.

Continuing to honor his family commit-



AMY HAUSMAN/CN/WR/FS

Don Lampila's 1978 Chevy Nova was on display at the 8th Annual Crete Chamber's Pumpkin Festival on Oct. 2. The Nova honors his late son, firefighter Jordan Lampila.

ment, Don prioritized spending time with his children over his hobby he described as "a sickness without a cure."

Jordan inherited the ability to fix things with his hands, just like Don. Jordan rewired his personal truck's electrical system to have the lights and alarms of an emer-

gency response vehicle. He was so committed to being able to respond as quickly as possible that Jordan negotiated his way with Don to the prime parking spot at the family home, the garage attached to the house.

"How was I supposed to argue that?" Don asked.

In addition to being

a firefighter, Jordan served Crete as a dispatcher for the police department. He took the position after leaving a higher-paying position because job satisfaction was more important to him.

"When Jordan was interested in something, he was totally committed to it and did whatever it was to the

best of his ability," Don said. "Jordan never got a chance to ride in the car and it is something that I still feel bad about. To honor him I dedicated the license plate to him."

For the third year in a row, the car was parked on Linden Avenue for the Pumpkin Festival in the town Jordan loved.

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Member SIPC

12-year-old Paulsen explains family sacrifice

by Amy Hausman
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Level-headed seventh grader is not a word combination many are used to, but that is exactly what Meredith Paulsen, 12, displays. The preteen's parents, Tim and Kelly Paulsen of Friend, are both volunteer firefighters, shaping Meredith to be easily adaptable to the unexpected.

"My parents were both firefighters before I was born. They met in a fire hall," said Meredith, who giggled at the idea that is why her folks have a burning hot love. "I have never experienced life differently, and this is our normal."

The family's sacrifice for the community extends outside the walls of their home. Meredith's grandmother also keeps a rescue scanner in her home, and when Meredith

was in the lower grades of elementary school, Grandma was always on call and prepared to care for her so Tim and Kelly could respond.

"When we get a call, we are all instantly all ears. We pause whatever we are doing: turn down the TV, be quiet and listen, even for the calls that come in that are not for Friend," Meredith said. "My parents never tell me who was involved; that is breaking the law. I just know whether it was a male or female and their age from what comes across. Sometimes I know who it is, though, because of our small town."

Meredith said that with both of her parents working full time, the calls they respond to typically are at night and on the weekends. This time in most homes is considered family time.

This can be difficult for Meredith,

who is active in dance, volleyball, confirmation classes, band and other seasonal sports in Friend.

"Even if a call comes in during a family activity or event, my parents go and stay as long as needed for everybody to be safe. They always come back as quickly as possible, but there are times when they miss out and I miss out on having them with me," Meredith said.

With that kind of normal in the household, Meredith has become adept at preparedness and handling stressful situations. At 12, she is able to perform CPR on infants and children and knows exactly what to do if she is alone during an emergency. The families around the Friend community consider her the "baby whisperer," and it is not uncommon for a trail of little ducklings to follow her every move.



AMY HAUSMAN/CN/WR/FS

Twelve-year-old Meredith Paulsen has known the fire house her whole life and explained her fire fighter parents met at a station. Paulsen explains how their whole family sacrifices when a parent is a firefighter.

"I am almost an expert on safety," Meredith said. "The fear kicks off and I know what has to happen and I use that understanding when I babysit now."

Meredith said she is proud of the whole family's commitment to protecting the community of Friend.

"If you have a family member that is a firefighter, treat them with

respect for what they do for the whole community because it is not easy," she said. "That is something my parents have taught me by what they do, not just what they say."



Crete Volunteer Fire Department

AMY HAUSMAN/CN/WR/FS

Members of the 2022 Crete Fire Department include, from left: (first row) Landon Chao, Brandon Smejdin, Dakota Wells, Arlin Pomajzl, Terry Petracek, Marvin Barlow, Amber Kuss, Rod Kuss and Tiffany Canahan; (middle row) Archie Sukovaty, Donavin Viger, Stephanie Yost, Julian Diaz, Sean Hummel, Courtney Marcelino, Adam Kuss, Phil Oelschlager, Presto Zvolanek and Elayne Jones; (third row) Alex Miguel-Jacinto, Hayden Deboer, Harrison Gaman, AJ Page, Brad Elder, Tim McLaughlin, Will Dehart, Luke Knoke, Carissa Moore and Nikki Wells; and (fourth row) James Yost, Josh Marcelino, Gene Garza and Ned Goertzen.

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Clatonia Volunteer Fire Department

COURTESY PHOTO

The Clatonia Volunteer Fire Department includes, from left: (front row) Pat Derickson, Jesse Hajek and Jon Strunk; and (back row) Karel Polacek, Josh Niles, Eric Kracke and Ian McDougall. Not pictured are: Amy Latshaw, Andrew Seyfert, Brody Fuller, Christopher Jones, Collin Hayek, David Duensing, Earl Latshaw, Jason Siems, John Kaiser, John Schuerman, Justin Haack, Kallen Nissen, Keith Heckenliable, Kristopher Holsing, Marilyn Brueggemann, Max Latshaw, Michael Spilker, Monte Murkle, Paul Hajek, Riley Haack, Ronald Pohlmann, Ronnie Miller, Russell Schuerman and Shane Cline.



Dorchester Volunteer Rescue Department

AMY HAUSMAN/CN/WR/FS

Members of the 2022 Dorchester Volunteer Fire Department are, from left: (front row) Todd Axline, Hannah Railsback, Jacob Railsback, Rebecca Steuk and Andrea Pracheil; and (back row) Cory Schleuter, Marcus Kastanek, Justin Ceele, Travis Fuller, Tim Stehlik, Matt Steuk, Jerad Fuller, Brent Kasl and Brant Pracheil.



DeWitt Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

COURTESY PHOTO

Members of the 2022 DeWitt Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department include, from left: (front row) Kerri Thornburg, Brittany Murray and Kristi Rake; and (back row) Sam Kirchoff, Dale Seachord, Doug Stokebrand, Eugene Shores, Tim Garrison and Shawn Weisl. Not shown are: Jose Almazan, Deanna Brown, Noah Fuller, Brad Gronenthal, Tony Martinez, Kyle Meers, Chris Peters, Kyle Pohlmann, Travis Rahe, Kyle Thernes and Cody Wollenburg.



Exeter Volunteer Fire Department

The 2022 Exeter Volunteer Fire Department members include, from left: (first row) Shari Michl, Hope Strate, Vicki Androyna, Meghan Miller, Jackie Miller, Lisa Ring and Ashley Miller; (second row) Ken Strate, Tim Axline, Richard Erdkamp, Starlene Benorden, Doug Papik, Beth Gerberding, Joe Miller, Adam Chrans and Alan Michl; and (third row) Dave Polak, Dylan Axline, Derek Axline, Terry Salyer, Dan Everhart, Tim Wilbeck, Jalen Maxson, Spencer Papik and John Graham. Not pictured are Mark Beethe, John Mueller, Kory Kahlandt, Dylan Ring, Nate Staskal and Lane Strate.

LEESA K. BARTU/CNWR/FS



Milligan Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

The 2022 Milligan Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department includes, from left: (front row) Michael Nadherny, Gabe Jaeger, Dennis Kotas, Lois Kotas, Kim Gurley and Daniel Kotas; (middle row) Daniel Nadherny and Adrienne Capek; and (back row) Justin White, Scott Oliva, Bruce Filipi, Jeff Spiehs, Richard Michl, Larry Michl and John Kassik. Not pictured are Steve Briskie, William Fogel, Garrett Hafer, Dean Kassik, Michael Kassik, James Korbelik, Douglas Kotas, Rose Oliva, Brad Scarf, Yvonne Steinacher, Kyle Svec, Alex Uldrich, Tyler Williams, Brian Zelenka, Brandon Zoubek and Jordan Zwickl.

2019 FILE PHOTO



Plymouth Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

The 2022 Plymouth Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department members include, from left: (first row) Randy Ebke, Dana Upchurch, Jose Hernandez, Hunter Glover, Kaleb Nickel, Bryan Paxton, Greg Schultis and Jon Zuluaf; (second row) Brian Schwisow, Jim Earnhart, Evan Brandt, Gary Vorderstrasse, Anna Gronenthal, Alan Gronemeyer, Justin Weichel, Jeremy Connelly and Barry Weichel; and (third row) Preston Gronemeyer, Chad Weichel, Greg Meints, Shane Vorderstrasse, Jacob Henson, Brad Eisenhauer, Jim Franzen, Matt Umland, Ahren Ambrose, Lee Nickel, Dave Schmidt and Noah Fuller. Not pictured are Andrew Kreikemeier, Chris Mammen, Derick Meyer, Brett Scheiding and Ancel Witton.

COURTESY PHOTO

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Swanton Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

Members of the Swanton Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department 2022 are, from left: (front row) Eric Strouf, Tim Lekens, Jared Deke, Larry Barta, Alan Strouf, Tom Bass and Jim Vales; and (back row) Lynn Strouf, Dennis Bessler, Eric Eyer, Gary Jiskra, Lonnie Karl, Gary Barta, Bob Homolka and Matt Raber.

2019 FILE PHOTO



Western Volunteer Fire Department

The 2022 Western Volunteer Fire Department members include, from left: (front row) Alexis Henk, Kelli Schoenbeck, Kaleb Kotas, Bryan Kotas and Butch Nickel; and (back row) Mark Kratochvil, Rod McKinzie, Rodd Paul, Kevin Homolka, Kent Musil, Colby Krueger, Alan Orf and Rod Nickel.

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