

MEET YOUR TOWN STAFF

Captain Jesse Chaplain, PKSFD

By Jacquie Pipkin

Captain Jesse Chaplain is a third generation firefighter and passionate about it. His dad, Jesse Sr., was a 20-year veteran firefighter and his granddad Jackie Chaplain served 40 years as a firefighter, both with the Beaufort Fire Department. As a youth, Captain Chaplain spent his free time and school holidays hanging around the fire station with his dad, observing and absorbing all there was to know about firefighting and the workings of a town fire department.

Captain Chaplain describes himself as "born and bred Carteret County." He grew up in Beaufort and attended East Carteret High School. Upon graduation, he had already completed the required classes to become a firefighter. At age 16 he joined the Harkers Island Volunteer Fire Department where he continued his training. At age 18, he celebrated joining the ranks as a full-fledged firefighter, able now to enter burning buildings to rescue victims and quell fires. He went on to earn his EMT certification, and in 2011 joined the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department on a part-time basis. In a short time he became a full-time member of the department and just this past February was promoted to captain.

Captain Chaplain and his wife, Courtney, and 11-month-old daughter, Carter, live on Harkers Island with their two cats, Binsky and Simon. Mrs. Chaplain, after taking nearly a year off work to take care of Carter, who was born prematurely and weighed only 3.5 pounds, recently began her position as a receptionist with Carteret Ob-Gyn Associates.

As we learned from previous interviews with other Pine Knoll Shores firefighters, their schedule of three 24-hour days on duty and four days off duty provides an opportunity for additional employment opportunities. Captain Chaplain has not only a second, but a third job. It shouldn't surprise you to know that both are with other local fire departments. He is the assistant chief at the Harkers Island Fire Department and firefighter-on-call with the Beaufort Fire Department.



Captain Jesse Chaplain, wife Courtney and daughter Carter.

With Mom working full time and Dad working more than full time, the Chaplains cherish their time at home with their daughter. In addition, they enjoy local family celebrations and visits with friends in New Bern.

During our interview, Captain Chaplain enlightened me as to the four-step process required for full-time employment as a firefighter. First there is an application and then an agility test conducted by the department, followed by an initial interview with the firefighting team and a second interview with the chief. Finally, there is a drug test and psychiatric evaluation conducted by a private agency. If all steps of the process are completed and tests passed, the candidate is welcomed to the department.

It is interesting to note that the first question asked by the interview team is, "Why do you want to work for the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department?" The reply is often because of the professional and inviting way the candidates have been treated in their dealings with the department, as well as the respect they have been given during every step of the hiring process. One candidate replied, "Because you make me feel like family."

Mayor Ken Haller

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As we know, Ken Haller also liked poetry and would sometimes publish colloquial poems. Over the years, some appeared in the *Carteret News-Times* and *The Shoreline*. Here's one entitled "A PKS Retiree on a Summer Day," printed in 1980:

The fish ain't bitin' in this heat.
The sea's too warm for swimmin';
My boat's laid up, my house is full
Of tea and cards and wimmin.

It's much too early in the day
To take a nip – I'm certain
The grass needs mowin', but the thought
Just starts my back ahurtin'.

So what's to do. Go spread that stuff
To stop those weeds from creepin'?
I think I'll rest a bit
And do a little sleepin'.

He ended on a more serious note, reminding residents to vote. And, in a 1983 *Shoreline*, Haller wrote this stanza about residents not showing up at Board of Commissioner meetings:

If people ignore
These meetings much more
And attendance continues so low,
This indifference may
Bring about a new day
When Commissioners, too, fail to show!

Ken Haller died on December 30, 1994, at the age of 88. His wife, Newell, lived until November 15, 2011. Both are remembered for their major contributions to Pine Knoll Shores. In 1995, Mayor David Hasulak signed a resolution as "a token of appreciation" for all Mayor Ken Haller did and sent Newell a letter indicating that the Board of Commissioners had on February 10 held a moment of silence in her husband's memory.

Editor's note: The name of our town newspaper changed over the years. From June-September 1973, it was called Pine Knoll Shore-Line; from October 1973-July 1977, it was called Pine Knoll Shore Line; beginning with the issue of August 1977, it was called Pine Knoll Shoreline; and in September 1979, the name changed to The Shoreline.