

IT'S A FAMILY TRADITION: Steve Slemer follows long line with Glen Carbon Fire Department

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Steve Slemer follows a long line of Slemer family members who have been Glen Carbon firefighters.

Slemer is a man who also believes in serving his community and recently earned a spot on the Village of Glen Carbon Trustees. He had the most votes of all the trustees with 802 votes.

He has been a member of the Glen Carbon Fire Department since 1979 and is the third generation Slemer in the department.

“Glen Carbon is a great place to live and to have 110 years of ties says something,” he said. “This August will be 110 years that my great-grandfather moved to Glen Carbon. There are still seven Slemer family households in Glen Carbon and three of us boys live here in town. It is amazing how families intertwine.”

Slemer received strong support from the Glen Carbon Fire Department and also the community in the election and he said it was humbling.

“I was very pleased with the turnout,” he said. “It means a lot to serve the community. I had strong support from the fire department, St. Cecelia’s Church parishioners, American Legion, family and friends. I am eager to work with the other village board members. Ross Breckenridge won a place on the trustees by literally one vote, so it shows the importance of voting.”

Slemer became well known for his rescue efforts as a volunteer firefighter when he was on his way home from his regular job at the Wood River Refinery in Roxana and helped a man who had his car overturned in a drainage ditch along County Club Drive at Bluff Road in Glen Carbon. Slemer said when he arrived, he found a 62-year-old man, Paul Wanda, trapped in place by the car, struggling to hold his head up. He said he broke the window of the car and helped the man hold his head up but the water rose and the firefighter fought to stay where he could breathe.

With a borrowed pocketknife, using almost Boy Scout-like skills, Slemer used his quick thinking to slice the seat belt and with a Madison County Sheriff’s Deputy, Timothy Lawrence, had people present tilt the vehicle to improve access to the victim. Mitchell firemen cut the man from the vehicle and airlifted him to safety.

There hasn’t been any other rescue that stayed with Slemer like that one and it is something he will never forget. It made him realize the importance of his rescue training as a firefighter and Wanda has never forgotten what Slemer did that day. Wanda will be forever thankful to Slemer for his heroic actions.

Slemer is a man devoted to his family and has also been a member of the Wood River Refinery's emergency response team. He said he loves his new role as a Glen Carbon Village Trustee and being a firefighter. What he is most proud of is being one in a long line of Slemers on the Glen Carbon Fire Department roster.

"My father, grandfather, uncles, cousins and brothers have all served in the fire department," he said. "It is a family tradition."