

Farmington firefighters heading to the Rose Bowl Parade

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Patty Cormier and Steve Bunker.

PASADENA, Calif. - Farmington firefighters Steve Bunker and Patty Cormier will be bringing in the New Year in a special way, as they head for the annual Rose Bowl Parade in California. Their all-expenses paid trip to ride on a special float in the parade was an unexpected surprise given through the generosity of the Maine Odd Fellows and Rebekah's organization.

Upon seeing the tragedy of the Sept. 16 explosion and its devastation upon the Farmington firemen, longtime Odd Fellow member, Michele Trynor, of South Portland's Unity Lodge #3 was determined to let the firemen know that they were not alone in their pain, that she and many others in the Old Fellows and Rebekah's were thinking of them, and not alone. She came up with a very unique and poignant idea. Odd Fellows and Rebekah's have participated in the Rose Parade since 1908, continuously since 1955 and in 2019, their organization nationally had celebrated their 200th anniversary as a benevolent and charitable organization. Trynor and her

husband traveled to the Rose Bowl Parade to help decorate and walk in the parade where their organization sponsored one of the many floats. She found that this year their national organization was again sponsoring a float, this time the theme was to recognize first responders in our country. The float design is to be a huge fire truck, with leaders from their organization riding, along with a select number of sponsored firefighters.

Trynor was able to gather enough funds from the organization members to not only help support the float, but also secure a coveted position on the float for a rider from Maine, and to cover all travel expenses for the three of them to attend. After making contact with the fire department, Acting Fire Chief Tim Hardy chose Bunker and Cormier to represent the department on the float.

Cormier is the Director of the Maine Forest Service, as well as the owner of Kennebec Home Brew Supplies in Farmington with her husband, John. Bunker, retired from the state Maine 911 Bureau, is a longtime selectman and 1st Vice Commander of the American Legion Post 28 in Farmington.

"Out of our tragedy, there have been so many blessings, so much caring and good will has poured in," Bunker said. "The generosity of the Odd Fellows and Rebekah's organization is a real morale booster to our department."

"It's a real honor to represent such a great group of firefighters," said Cormier. "We wish they could all be there with us."

Bunker, Cormier and Trynor will travel out the day before in order to be there to help put the final touches on the float and observe the judging prior to the parade. Cormier will actually be on the float and has been practicing her official "hand wave." Bunker and Trynor will be in a special reserved grandstand, along with dignitaries from the many state chapters.

The parade is set to kick off at 8 a.m. PST, 11 a.m. EST for those who want to watch the big event. The float is said to be the 64th unit in line. They will be mixed in with countless floats, marching bands and equestrian groups. Steve will try to text/message friends back home with updates, and lots of photos.

For more information about the [Odd Fellows Rebekahs Rose Parade Float](#). For information about the Odd Fellows and Rebekah's, visit [Grand Lodge of Maine](#)

Michele would like to thank NANTUCKET LODGE # 66 <http://massioof.org/lojdes/11> , Unity Lodge #3 <http://unitylodge3.org> , The Grand Lodge of Maine <http://OddFellowsOfMaine.org> , Fraternity Lodge #6 <http://ioof6.com> and the Odd Fellows Rebekah's Rose Parade Float <https://www.oddfellows-rebekahs-rosefloat.org> for all the help and donations to make this happen.