

# LUPTON'S LAUGH & LEARN FOR 9 MARCH, 2009

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## ***THOUGHT FOR TODAY***

Change starts when someone sees the next step.--William Drayton

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**FIREMAN:** a man whose business is to extinguish fires in towns; a member of a fire company

**QUESTION:** "The fireman had saved the house before much damage was done" **or** "The fireman saved the house before much damage was done." Which one is correct, or are both correct but with different meanings?

**Answer:** The second sentence is the most correct. The second one is the way a native-English speaker would say it. The addition of "had" in the first sentence adds nothing of value.

**FEATURE:** One of America's favorite charities\* is the **Make a Wish Foundation**. It began with Billy who received wish number one. Thousands of dying children have since received their wishes.



In Phoenix, Arizona, a 26-year-old mother stared down at her 6 year old son, who was dying of terminal leukemia. Although her heart was filled with sadness, she also had a strong feeling of determination. Like any parent, she wanted her son to grow up & fulfill all his dreams.

Now that was no longer possible. The leukemia would see to that. But she still wanted her son's dream to come true.

She took her son's hand and asked, 'Billy, did you ever think about what you wanted to be once you grew up? Did you ever dream and wish what you

would do with your life?'

Mommy, 'I always wanted to be a fireman when I grew up.'  
Mom smiled back and said, 'Let's see if we can make your wish come true.'

Later that day she went to her local fire department in Phoenix, Arizona, where she met Fireman Bob, who had a heart as big as Phoenix. She explained her son's final wish and asked if it might be possible to give her six year-old son a ride around the block on a fire engine.

Fireman Bob said, 'Look, we can do better than that.

If you'll have your son ready at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, we'll make him an honorary Fireman for the whole day. He can come down to the fire station, eat with us, go out on all the fire calls, the whole nine yards!\* And if you'll give us his sizes, we'll get a real fire uniform for him, with a real fire hat - not a toy -- one-with the emblem of the Phoenix Fire Department on it, a yellow slicker like we wear and rubber boots.' 'They're all manufactured right here in Phoenix, so we can get them fast.'

Three days later Fireman Bob picked up Billy, dressed him in his uniform and escorted him from his hospital bed to the waiting hook and ladder truck. Billy got to sit on the back of the truck and help steer it back to the fire station. He was in heaven. There were three fire calls in Phoenix that day and Billy got to go out on all three calls. He rode in the different fire engines, the Paramedics' van, and even the fire chief's car. He was also videotaped for the local news program.



Having his dream come true, with all the love and attention that was lavished\* upon him, so deeply touched Billy, that he lived three months longer than any doctor thought possible.

One night all of his vital signs began to drop dramatically and the head nurse, who believed in the hospice concept - that no one should die alone, began to call the family members to the hospital. Then she remembered the day Billy had spent as a Fireman, so she called the Fire Chief and asked if it would be possible to send a fireman in uniform to the hospital to be with Billy as he made his transition.

The chief replied, 'We can do better than that. We'll be there in five minutes. Will you please do me a favor? When you hear the sirens screaming and see the lights flashing, will you announce over the PA system that there is not a fire?' 'It's the department coming to see one of its finest members one more time, and will you open the window to his room?' About five minutes later a hook and ladder truck arrived at the hospital and extended its ladder up to Billy's third floor open window... and 5 fire-fighters climbed up the ladder into Billy's room. With his mother's permission, they hugged him and held him and told him how much they LOVED him.

With His dying breath, Billy looked up at the fire chief and said, 'Chief, am I really a fireman now?'

'Billy, you are, and The Head Chief, Jesus, is holding your hand,' the chief said. With those words, Billy smiled and said, 'I know, He's been holding my hand all day, and the angels have been singing...' He closed his eyes one last time.



\*"the whole nine yards" This means everything or all there can be.

\* "lavished" Given in large amounts.

\*"Charities" Organizations that help the ill, poor and others who have needs.

## ***FIREFIGHTING TERMS:***

**Accelerant:** flammable fuel used by some arsonists to start or increase size of fire

**Arson:** the crime of setting fire to property

**Backfiring:** Intentionally setting fire to grass, brush or trees to control the original fire by creating burned over areas.

**Drills:** Training during which firefighters respond to a pretend fire as if it were a real emergency.

**Evacuation:** Removal of people, including firemen, from a dangerous area

**Fire Break:** Roads or paths cut through brush in hilly or mountainous areas. The purpose of these is to have an area with no brush, so that a fire will burn out rather than jumping to another area with brush.

**Fire escape:** Stairs attached to the side of a building to assist to help people escape.

**Hotshot crew:** A trained group of approximately twenty people which specializes in fighting forest fires

**Pumper:** A fire truck with a water tank.

**Smokejumper:** a firefighter that parachutes into a remote area to fight wildfires in forests and other nature areas.

**Water drop:** An airplane drops of water onto a fire from above.

## ***THE LINKS***

This link tells the rest of the story about Billy: <http://www.snopes.com/glurge/fireman.asp>

THE OLDEST FIREMAN: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i\\_AwOIs2buE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_AwOIs2buE)

## ***THE LAUGH***

1. Why can one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box of matches to start a barbecue?
2. A fire started on some grasslands near a farm. The county fire department was called to put out the fire. The firemen arrived in an old fire truck. They rumbled straight towards the fire, drove right into the middle of the flames and stopped! The firemen jumped off the truck and frantically started spraying water in all directions. Soon they had snuffed out [put out] the center of the fire, breaking the blaze into two easily-controlled parts.

Watching this, the farmer was so impressed with the volunteer fire department's work and was so grateful that his farm had been spared, that he presented the volunteers with a check for \$1,000.

A news reporter asked the fire captain what the department planned to do with the funds. "That ought to be obvious" he responded, wiping ashes off his coat. "The first thing we're going to do is get the brakes fixed on our fire truck!"



*"If the firemen come, tell them everything's under control."*



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