

Clint Colie

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Let's continue on to our second December spotlight: Clint Colie, Sons of the Legion Commander of Squadron 139. Clint was a bit hard to pin down for this interview but I am happy that we were able to work out a time and place. As with Linda, I've known Clint for quite some time and I didn't think I'd learn anything new or shocking. And of course, I was proven wrong!

Clint Colie was born on September 19, 1973 in Belleville, NJ, which makes him a Virgo! (sorry guys I swear I don't plan this!) Clint was also raised in Belleville, shortly living in Nutley after turning 18 for a few years then moving to Lyndhurst at the age of 23. This is where he got me like Linda did! I thought Clint was a born and raised Lyndhurst resident! It was definitely shocking to find out he's only been here since he was 23!

As previously mentioned, in addition to being a SAL (Sons of the Legion) member, Clint is currently the commander of Squadron 139 and has served in this position since approximately 2014. The super short definition of the requirements to be a SAL member is to be a male descendant of a someone who is currently serving or who has served in our armed forces. Clint's male descendant is his father, who served in the Army and enlisted to serve two tours of Vietnam. Yes, you read that right; he ENLISTED aka he volunteered. If that doesn't scream patriotism, I don't know what does. While Clint doesn't have any other blood relatives who have served, he still considers himself being raised in a military family. When I asked him to elaborate, he explained, "We weren't that military type family that moved from base to base but I'd still consider us a military family because I feel that my father's beliefs and how he raised us was influenced by his experience in the military." I have to agree with this sentiment, when I look back at how my grandfather raised his children, I can see what Clint's talking about.

My grandfather was heavily involved in several veteran organizations and this was no different for Clint's father. His father was heavily involved in both the American Legion and VFW organizations; in fact his father was a past commander of both the Elizabeth & Nutley VFW posts. His father began his American Legion membership in Belleville and later joined in Lyndhurst when Clint signed up to be a SAL member in 2007. This absolutely shocked me! I had assumed that Clint was a lifetime SAL member, especially with his father being so involved in these veteran organizations. Clint went on to explain to me that back when he was growing up, not all posts recognized the SAL program, which is what happened in

Belleville. He went on further to explain that he didn't even learn about the SAL program until he moved to Lyndhurst and found out about the program from friends in town. Clint said that it is because of this word of mouth, he's been able to continue his father's legacy with the American Legion; one that started in Belleville, NJ and is now holding strong in Lyndhurst, NJ.

Speaking of Lyndhurst, I'm still shocked to find out Clint wasn't born and raised here! He fits in so perfectly! But you know what else shocked me!? Clint did not attend college and is in fact a high school drop out! At the age of 16, Clint dropped out of high school and began attending a music school. During the evenings for the next year and a half, Clint worked hard to earn his GED. From the way, Clint kicks my rear sometimes at Words with Friends you'd never know! (Yes I've made a horrible assumption and was kindly put in my place.) Clint made a good point about education, he said that for him the education he's gained in the last ten years, from all the training he's received from the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) far surpasses any of the education he received when he was younger and if he even went to college. And you know, he's right! There's so unrecognized much value to life experience and job training. For one, I went to college, paid for an education and I'm still paying off my student loans. And as for Clint, he's gotten some of the same education I received at college, through his leadership academy and union training with the NALC and instead of paying for it, he's gotten paid to attend. I think it's clear who's the smarter one is here.

We tend to define who's "smarter" or "better" by the type of education or lack thereof, or even the type of work a person does: blue collar vs white collar but we forget something very important. We are all different and all have our own strengths and weaknesses. I think someone who has worked for the same company, regardless of it being a "blue or white collar" job, for 28 years shows a person with a strong work ethic, an amazing character and who is extremely fortuitous. Now consider his additional work with the union and the training he's received there, I'd define this man as very successful! But he'll tell you different. Most of us who know Clint, know how extremely humble he is and it shows. He does so much for the legion, the NALC and our local community; so many things that most people don't even know about because he doesn't want people to know; a truly humble man who is destined to achieve so much.

Speaking of achievements, I know such a corny transition but you'll live. I asked Clint what he considered his greatest accomplishment and he said he had a two part answer. He stated that "my greatest accomplishment will be when I reach my ultimate goal of no longer being a mail carrier and becoming a full time union spokesperson representing letter carriers. My biggest accomplishment to date, I'd say, is where I currently am because, honestly, I thought I'd never get here." I asked what made him choose this career path? He said, "I give a lot of credit to your uncle, Rich Mitchell. I was looking to make a move and I knew he was retiring soon so I told him I wanted to be his back up. I've worked hard to get to where I am today but he definitely helped open a lot of doors for me." We can all

see what a hard worker Clint is so I have no doubt that he'll be reaching his ultimate goal soon.

It's time for the section where I like to get a little personal. I asked Clint what is one interesting fact about himself that no one knows about him? Let me tell you folks, he did it again! Jaw dropping shock! He's a closeted ABBA fan!! Would you get that from just looking at him? I wouldn't AND I've hung out with him! Between the rock and country music we always listen to, I never would have thought! I asked him if he could have lunch with anyone dead or alive, who would it be and why? I'm not surprised when he answers his dad and I think the reason is self-explanatory. I can see Clint's getting antsy so he's lucky we're on the last question. Clint, what advice would you give to our readers? "Don't let anyone tell you you can't do something. If you want to do it, then grab the bull by the horns and go for it! Never feel that you can't accomplish anything."

I don't think truer words could be spoken. Thank you Clint for taking the time to sit and chat with me. And thank you for all that you do, not just for the American Legion and our post but for all the organizations that you are involved with. Keep up the amazing work!