



*Between Alarms*



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NOVEMBER 2011

NUMBER 41

WELCOME

Welcome to the 41<sup>st</sup> edition of "*Between Alarms*".

Our newsletter contains the news of all that is happening at the firehouse. It can also be viewed on our website at [www.MTHC1.com](http://www.MTHC1.com).

12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

The results of our 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Fund Drive, titled "*Every Gift Matters, Every Year*" are as follows:

Through November 1<sup>st</sup> we have received \$32,295.00 from 924 donors. The amount of money we received is \$649.00 greater than our 2010 Fund Drive. The number of donors decreased by 13.

Overall, our gross receipts from the Annual Fund Drive are \$2,400.00 less than our high in 2008 and our number of donors is decreased by 83. These numbers are a disappointment; however the current economy dictates that people are not as able to make contributions as they may have been able to do so in the past.

In all cases, we are thrilled to receive donations throughout the year as *every gift does matter* whenever we receive it. If you have not contributed to this year's campaign, please consider doing so as you plan your year end giving. If you want to donate, please mail your contribution to P.O. Box 163, Mountaintop, PA 18707.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

Chris Mooney, who is a professional firefighter and paramedic in Kingston, made his home in our township in April of this year. Chris immediately joined our organization and is an active firefighter.

Chris has been in the fire service as a volunteer for many years and has been a full-time professional firefighter for a few years. He has vast experience and knowledge, and we are thrilled to have him as part of our organization.

## **OUR LEADERSHIP**

In August we held our annual election for officers. Our officers are:

Dave Hourigan	President
Phil Holbrook	Vice President
Bill Aigeldinger	Secretary
Shawn Prohaska	Treasurer
Tim McGinnis	Trustee
Mike Herron	Trustee
Doug Guignet	Trustee
Peter J. Kohl	Fire Chief
Todd Wagaman	1 <sup>st</sup> Asst. Chief
John Yazwinsky	2 <sup>nd</sup> Asst. Chief
Brent Jacob	Captain
Allen Gillman	Captain

## **RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

Annually we receive funds from the state that are to be used to provide for the safety and welfare of our members. The funds are derived from a tax on insurance premiums paid to companies that are not based in Pennsylvania.

In 2011 the State changed the calculation period of the time frame that the checks cover, and all Relief Associations received a one time increase in their funds. Our check was in the amount of \$49,268.35, which was \$19,000.00 greater than 2011.

This money will be used to pay insurance premiums of \$3,000.00 and purchase protective equipment, with the balance committed to savings.

## **FIREHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS**

This fall we are making some significant improvements to our grounds. Concrete work has been completed to replace a sidewalk and part of the apron in front of the doors of the firehouse. By the end of November the entire parking lot will be resurfaced as it is badly deteriorated. The lot has not been resurfaced since the firehouse was built in the early 70's and it is at the point where patching is not prudent.

Prior to the Bazaar we purchased some new tables and chairs for the firehouse. This is the first purchase of new furnishings since the firehouse was built. Over the years we have discarded some broken/worn out tables and chairs, plus we had some existing furnishings that needed to be replaced. We also purchased badly needed new carts to house the tables and chairs.

We have recently undertaken some needed roof repairs on the firehouse. Prior to the Bazaar we did some necessary painting and spruce up of the Bazaar grounds.

Lastly, our member Mike Herron has installed new railings on the second floor of our Cavanaugh's building, and along with member Joe Moran has re-built one of the large support columns in front of the building. The building looks great. Thanks to Mike and Joe for their work.

## **OTHER NEWS**

- Thank you to Karen H. Spice, VMD of Mountaintop Animal Hospital for conducting our Annual Rabies Clinic in June. 100 dogs and cats presented themselves for their shots. We made a profit of \$499.00 for the day.
- In early October we conducted our annual fire safety week visits to Fairview Elementary and the day care centers located in the township. On Halloween night we were out in force distributing 1600 glow necklaces to the children of the township. Our thanks to the Township Supervisors for paying for the necklaces.
- Cavanaugh's Grille's Seventh Annual Golf Tournament for the benefit of the fire company and the Marian Sutherland Kirby Library resulted in checks in the amount of \$2,400.00 being presented to each organization. The tournament had been sold out; however the flood evacuation was in effect the day of the tournament, so 16 golfers had to cancel. Although the course was somewhat soggy from all the rain, the sun was out and a pleasant day was enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Kevin Foley for conducting the tournament and to the numerous players and sponsors who participated.

## **ANNUAL BAZAAR A HUGE SUCCESS**

Three days of near perfect weather and a very successful Auction contributed to us having our most profitable Bazaar in our history. Our profit was \$36,759.83.

Steady crowds on all three days consumed our food items, played our games and enjoyed the delightful evenings. Once again, Frank Orloski and Dick Hughes were dueling auctioneers, enticing the crowd and raising \$9,444.00 in two hours! As always, our basket tent featuring 46 beautiful baskets filled with items donated by our business community and friends was a big hit, and it netted \$4,002.00 in profit.

Thanks to all of our volunteers who return annually to help with the Bazaar. Special thanks to the Mountaintop Family Center that staffs our games all three nights of the Bazaar. Thanks also to the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs who each staff our kitchen for one night and have been doing so for decades.

Finally, our thanks to our major supporters who made significant financial contributions leading to our success: McCune Funeral Service, Inc.; Anneliese Moghul; Preferred Travel; Triangle Pharmacy; Modern, The Floor Store; and Century 21 Smith Hourigan Group.

## **WINTER COOPERATION**

If we even have a fraction of the snow we would have had if all the rain we endured was snow, we are all in for a lot of snow shoveling/removal this winter.

This stated, we will appreciate your help in maintaining access to the fire hydrants throughout the township. If there is a hydrant near your home, please clear the snow away so it is readily available in the event of a fire. We use the center connection with the large cap. A straight path from the hydrant to the street the width of a snow blower or snow shovel is all that is required.

Please also heed our reminder of how dangerous the curves are on the mountain when the weather turns cold. It does not have to be snowing for the dangerous conditions to exist. In the early or late daylight, the surface often glazes over on the highway from the atmosphere conditions, causing accidents. We and the Hanover Township fire department respond to dozens of accidents every year on this section of the mountain. Nearly all of them could have been avoided if people drive slowly. Please heed our advice and drive slowly in the winter.

## **STATE GRANT PROGRAM**

Each year the Volunteer Assistance Program of the State of Pennsylvania awards grants to fire companies and ambulance services to be used for the purchase of equipment. Our 2011 grant was in the amount of \$9,677.71. We used the majority of the funds to purchase 4" supply hose, as we are replacing our 20 year old hose.

## **THE ALARMS**

The period of April 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> was exceptionally busy. In total, we answered 101 calls for assistance. This call volume is 50% greater than average for a six month period.

The calls were as follows: Motor Vehicle Accidents – 25; Pump Basements – 16; Automatic Alarms – 10; Assist EMS – 8; Assist Flooded Towns – 6; Trees Down – 6; Wires Down – 4; CO Alarms – 4; Smoke Investigations – 3; Vehicle Fires – 3; ATV Accidents – 2; Open Burning Complaints – 2; Gas Leak – 1; Structure Fire – 1; Oven Fire – 1; Brush Fire – 1; Technical Rescue Team Response – 1; and Assists to Other Townships – 7.

The late August and September weather created havoc for our community. Fortunately within our township there were not any wide spread power outages. Although we pumped 16 basements it was over the course of the various storms, not in response to an outage. Power outages in heavy rains result in dozens of calls for us as people's sump pumps are not operable. We also responded to investigate wires down or trees/limbs down in roadways during the storms.

During the flood threat and evacuation in September we were asked by the county to stand by at our station to be available to respond to related emergencies if needed. As soon as the water subsided we did respond to Plymouth and Jenkins Townships to assist with basement pumping and street wash downs. Several members spent four days performing these duties with a total of 326 hours of time involved. In addition, our rescue stood by for Plains Rescue in their station for a full day while Plains was involved in post flood investigating and air testing with crews from the State.

## **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

We have indicated in the past that we are contemplating the replacement of our 1993 fire truck in 2013. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) classifies a fire truck as rated for service until it is 20 years old. In addition, as the truck ages, repairs become a reality, plus older vehicles do not have the technology and safety enhancements of new vehicles.

Due to the technological, environmental and safety improvements, many mandated for a new vehicle, the cost for a vehicle is exorbitant. We have learned that the cost for vehicles comparable to our existing vehicles exceeds well over \$500,000.00.

With this knowledge, we have formed a committee consisting of our entire leadership to evaluate what our needs are for the future and plan accordingly. We will be reviewing our needs, the firefighting members we have available now and in the future, and the costs for alternatively built vehicles as part of the process. We will complete all research and formulate our plan for the future in the next six months. We will report our decisions in our May newsletter.

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

It is thrilling to me when we top our previous profits in our Annual Bazaar. The months of preparation we all do are well rewarded. There are literally hundreds of people and businesses that help make the Bazaar happen, donating their time and/or money to the cause. Many of our Big Ticket sponsors have donated for decades, along with many of our volunteer Bazaar workers who have also helped for decades. Every year it comes together smoothly, creating substantial revenue for us and an enjoyable community event.

Thank you to all that help. I sincerely appreciate what you do and I value the confidence that you place in our organization.

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I have been indicating for years that we need to plan and save for the reality of a vehicle replacement and that the cost would be expensive. In September I had to update the replacement cost of our vehicles for our insurance policy. When Bud Strauss, our sales representative from Pierce Manufacturing, told me that the cost of a vehicle equivalent to our fire engines would be in a range of \$525,000.00 - \$550,000.00 I was stunned. Our 1993 truck was just under \$200,000.00 and our 1997 truck was just under \$250,000.00.

Numerous mandates, including safety and emissions, along with inflation have caused the prices to climb to these levels. The reality of these mandates is that they cause prices to be out of reach for many fire companies, which prevents them from being able to afford the improved vehicles which are designed to better protect and serve them.

As we face the decisions as to what to do, we will look at other model trucks and likely other manufacturers. We will solidify a plan for the future and report what it will be in our newsletter in May.

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As always, as we approach the Holidays, my best wishes for a great Holiday Season with family and friends.

Be safe,

Dave Hourigan