WELCOME

Welcome to the 39th 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.

11th ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

The slowdown in the economy negatively impacted our 11th Annual Fund Drive titled "Protect the Future".

Through November 1st we have received $31,646.00 from 937 donors. In 2009 we received $34,105.00 from 995 donors in the same period. The average gift amount in 2010 is $33.37 and in 2009 was $34.28. The 2009 fund drive was only slightly off the 2008 totals.

The difference of $2,500.00 is significant to us, but understandable given the current economy. We hope that going forward the economy and our numbers improve, as although there is little inflation in the economy, this is not the case as it applies to the fire service.

Government mandates and new technology are forever increasing the costs of our tools, equipment and vehicles.

The money from our Annual Fund Drive is used to cover the cost of our operations, along with a sum committed to savings for future vehicle replacement.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Our Fire Police force has quickly become an important part of our operations. Members respond on all our calls. They deal with the hazards of controlling or diverting traffic around our emergency scenes through whatever weather nature has provided. For the entire operation they are stationed outside their vehicles dealing with the elements.

Dave Smith, a thirty plus year member, is Chief of the Fire Police. Dave, along with his wife Candy and daughter Amanda have run the Big Six stand at the Bazaar for over twenty years. Ray Locks, Dan Titus and Henry Nork have all belonged to the fire company for many years. With the reinstatement of the Fire Police force they all enthusiastically committed to participate and have completed the necessary training to do so. Recently, Jack Rosenzweig became a member, having served in the capacity in New York where he previously lived.

We acknowledge and recognize our Fire Police for their service and are pleased to have an active Fire Police force in the fire company.

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
John Kim         Trustee
Doug Guignet     Trustee
Peter J. Kohl    Fire Chief
Todd Wagaman    1st Asst. Chief
Jared Aigeldinger 2nd Asst. Chief
Josh Antosh     Captain
Allen Gillman     Captain

There was a significant change in officers as our long-time Treasurer, Jim Cornelius, decided to retire from the job this year. After fifty years on the job he felt it was time to turn over the position. Our Secretary, Shawn Prohaska, was elected to take over the position. Shawn, who has an MBA from Wilkes University, gladly accepted the job. The transition has gone very smoothly as Jim was able to assist and guide Shawn in the process. Member Bill Aigeldinger was elected to the position of Secretary to take over the job that Shawn held for eleven years.
ALWAYS TRAINING

We are in the process of implementing new Standard Operating Guidelines for the fire company. Part of the Operating Guidelines establishes classifications for our firefighters, along with minimum levels of training for each classification.

Working toward these classifications, courses were conducted at the firehouse by State Certified Instructors so members could obtain various accreditations needed.

A basic vehicle rescue class ran nearly four months and included three levels of training: awareness, operations and technician. Several members completed one or two levels of training and five completed the entire program, which was a huge time commitment. Fifteen members completed the 16 hour pump operations class. In addition, members attended other training courses conducted in the area throughout the year.

FIRE HYDRANT MARKERS

We are in the process of installing new permanent hydrant markers that we acquired through grants from Pennsylvania American Water Company and the state of Pennsylvania.

The markers are reflective for nighttime operations and are color coded identifying the capacity of the hydrant. Being permanently mounted to the hydrant the markers eliminate the need to install and remove the markers for the winter season. Overall, they will be a big improvement and an asset to our operations.

OTHER NEWS

- Thank you to Karen H. Spice, VMD of Mountaintop Animal Hospital for conducting our Annual Rabies Clinic in June. 125 dogs and cats presented themselves for their shots. We made a profit of $753.00 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 1200 glow necklaces to the children of the township. Our thanks to the Township Supervisors for paying for the necklaces.

- Cavanaugh’s Grille’s Sixth Annual Golf Tournament for the benefit of the fire company and the Marian Sutherland Kirby Library resulted in checks in the amount of $2,500.00 being presented to each organization. Our thanks to Kevin Foley for conducting the Tournament and to the numerous players and sponsors who participated.
**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.

This year’s check was for $30,089.00, which is the largest check we have ever received. Approximately $3,000.00 is spent to pay insurance premiums. A portion is used for equipment purchases, and the balance is committed to savings.

**ANNUAL BAZAAR A GREAT SUCCESS**

A little bit of rain just before we opened the Bazaar on Friday night slowed down the first few hours, then warm weather prevailed for the rest of the weekend, helping to make the Bazaar another successful event.

A newly purchased funnel cake stove requested by funnel cake cook extraordinaire Shawn Prohaska created perfectly shaped, delicious funnel cakes for all to enjoy. In addition, deep fried Oreos and Twinkies were also big sellers. Though the cooking process was easier with the stove, the sales were so brisk that extra mix had to be purchased for Sunday and the crew in the stand was worn out by the end of the weekend.

The auction was a huge success with the highest profit ever. This year, we had two auctioneers, Frank Orloski, Jr. and Dick Hughes who made the auction move quickly and be a lot of fun. Frank and Dick interacted with each other and the audience, sometimes coaxing higher bids for items and surprising a few attendees with successful bids on items that they were not anticipating buying. All were good sports about their newly acquired treasures and everyone had a grand time.

Thanks to all our volunteers who return annually to help with the Bazaar, with special thanks to three organizations: the members of Mountaintop Family Center, the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs who all have helped for years. Thanks are also due to our major Bazaar sponsors whose cash contributions offset the expenses of the Bazaar. The sponsors were: Preferred Travel; McCune Funeral Services, Inc.; The Triangle Pharmacy; and Anneliese Moghul.

The profit from the Bazaar was $34,089.13. This amount was slightly greater than our 2009 profit.
FIRE POLICE

Our Fire Police have proven invaluable in assisting us in our operations. Intersections are protected while we respond to calls and roads are quickly closed as we arrive on scene. Their work provides for our safety and welfare while we are engaged in our activities.

Members are trained and fully equipped with safety equipment and radios. Part of the equipment is large pink signs that read “Emergency Operation Ahead”. When you see these signs, please proceed with caution.

Our Fire Police are Dave Smith, Chief, Ray Loucks, Henry Nork, Dan Titus and new member, Jack Rosenzweig.

THE ALARMS

In the period of May 1st through October 31st we answered 56 calls for assistance. The calls were as follows: Motor Vehicle Accidents – 19; Assist to Other Townships – 6; Automatic Fire Alarms – 5; Assist to EMS – 5; CO Alarms – 4; Trees Down – 4; Vehicle Fires – 3; Wires Down – 2; Technical Rescue Team Response – 2; Brush Fires – 1; Gas Leak – 1; Appliance Fire – 1; Stove Fire – 1; Smoke Investigation – 1; and Land Lifeflight – 1.

Our Technical Rescue Team is part of a six company task force in Luzerne County that is trained to respond to calls that involve confined space rescue, structural collapse and other incidents requiring special equipment and training. Our two responses were to Rickett’s Glen State Park to rescue a hiker who had fallen from the trail.

A relatively new procedure in fire operations is to call for a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to respond to working structure fires to be available in the event that firefighters become trapped, disoriented or lost while operating in a fire scene. Members of the RIT do not actively become involved in the operation unless there is an emergency situation. Members are in full gear wearing their self contained breathing apparatus, ready to enter the active fire scene if needed to perform rescue duties.

RIT teams generally come from outside a fire company’s immediate mutual aid area, as mutual aid companies are involved in extinguishing the fire. One of our assists to other townships was for our RIT team to respond to the major fire on Main St. in Conyngham in September. To date, when we have had a major incident, we have had the Hanover Township Fire Department respond to stand by as our RIT team.
STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Each year the Volunteer Assistance Property of the state of Pennsylvania awards grants to fire companies and ambulance services to be used for the purchase of equipment. Our 2010 grant was in the amount of $11,433.54. We used the funds to purchase rescue tools, a hose tester and fittings, and a large diameter hose.

WINTER COOPERATION

As always, 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.

In addition, a reminder that SUVs or all wheel drive cars don’t stop any differently than other vehicles on icy roads. Maintain safe distances and slower speeds when driving in winter conditions. Be reminded that we are all at risk if you don’t, as when called we need to respond to the firehouse to respond in our trucks and operate in dangerous conditions once on scene.

We would all be better off if you use caution and common sense in winter driving.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In has been a busy year for the firehouse. We have enjoyed success in our fundraising, our new Standard Operating Guidelines are being developed, and members have committed large blocks of personal time for necessary training. There is always ongoing maintenance of our vehicles, equipment and facilities, along with other projects and/or fundraisers that we have undertaken. In addition, our call volume is increased this year, as we are averaging 11-12 calls per month.

I want to acknowledge and thank each of our members for all that they do to make all of what we do happen. It really is extraordinary that we are able to fund, operate and maintain ourselves with an all volunteer effort, and I want each of “The Men” to know I appreciate their efforts in all that we do.
Fairview Township lost a good friend last month with Supervisor Harry Zearfoss passed away. Harry served as Supervisor for fifteen years and was a past member and Fire Chief in the fire company.

Being retired, Harry devoted many hours per week to overseeing the operation of the Township involved in its day to day operations and working to secure grants for the Township. Harry treated the Township funds as if they were his own, carefully accounting for the funds and stretching them as far as possible in the Township operations. I treat the fire company funds in the same way, so Harry and I had a mutual respect for each other. Due to our respect I always knew I could ask for the fire company without being shown to the door.

Harry served our community well. We have a better community as a result of his service.

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I guess I wasn’t surprised in July when Jim Cornelius told me that he was going to retire from our Treasurer’s position after 50 years of service. I knew in my heart Jim deserved the right to retire.

I wrote about Jim’s service in our May newsletter commenting on how incredible it was that Jim served in the position for 50 years. His service has been exemplary, meticulously maintaining our finances through the years. Fortunately the transition to our new Treasurer has gone smoothly with Jim’s guidance; however we will miss Jim in the position.

On behalf of myself and all of our members, thank you Jim for all that you have done for all of us and for our community over the past 50 years.

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Thanksgiving is next with the Holidays right around the corner. My best wishes for the Holidays with peace in all that you do.

Be Safe,

Dave Hourigan