

Hot Calls

Volume 6, Issue 4

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July/August 2019



Nominations for the Annual First Responder of the Year

The Tri County First Responder Honor Park Committee is now accepting nominations for the First Responder of the year from all agencies in the Tri County area. Please forward your nominations as well as any documentation in support of the individual to Chief Peter Bierwiler at the address provided below. Nominations must be submitted by August 12, 2019 to be considered. The individual selected will be honored at our Annual Event at The First Responder Park on Forest Drive on September 11, 2019. Inquiries can be made by email to: pbierwiler@gangmillsfire.org

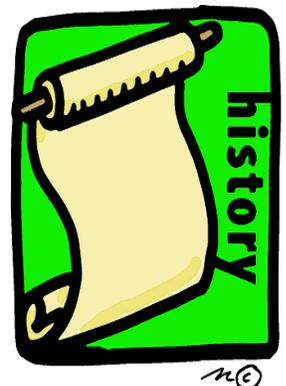
Calendar:

Hector Fire
Department Fair July 25 - 27

Odessa FD
Chicken BBQ Aug 3

Not the First Newsletter

The current newsletter is not the first for the county fire service. As far as we can tell the first newsletter was produced in or about 1990. It contained the "Coordinator's Column" which was a section for the EMO office to pass information to all. Fire department news and EMS news were next. Learn Not To Burn followed with updates on classes. "Bits and Pieces" were from each department with news on new equipment and etc. We also had a firefighter of the month.



Firefighter Profile: Ron Tormey

Ron Tormey has been with Tyrone Fire Company since 1967 (52 years). He and his wife Pat have three children: two girls and one boy. Son Nate entered the fire service in Tyrone and has since become Chief, as Ron did twice. Ron has served as Deputy Chief for over 20 years. His interest in the fire service came from his grandfather who just missed being a charter member of the Company.



When Ron joined, he shadowed Leon DeCamp and tried to learn all he could. The biggest change was the new fire station and the ability to purchase new and updated equipment.

He was one of the first "METS" (Medical Emergency Technician) in the area. This certification was supposed to be forever. (Don't we all wish.)

Ron worked for Taylor Wine then went to Columbia Gas where he retired after 40 years. They were really good about letting him respond to emergencies whenever the need was there.

Most memorable moment was to have 50 years in the Company. Also that he was glad when they gave up the Carnival as it was a lot of work. He was always there though, helping every night. Tyrone is very well off now but, like us all, he wishes they had more help.

Along with Bill Meehan, they both are seeing that the old Engine 23 is getting restored.

The worst part of the job is losing lives in emergencies. Five children were lost on DeCamp Road during one tragedy. You never forget those no matter how long it has been.

After being an interior firefighter for many of the 50 years, staying on the outside is not so bad. He's now a driver and trainer for the apparatus. He is currently Deputy Chief and gets plenty of calls where he is in charge.

When you see Ron tell him thanks for his service and keep doing what you do.

Odessa Banquet

Odessa Fire Department held their annual banquet at Logan Ridge in Hector on April 13, 2019. The following Officers were sworn in:

- Chief Mike Tomassi
- 1st Asst. John Jelliff
- 2nd Asst. Adam Mahnke
- 3rd Asst. Keith Pierce
- Capt. Rich Brown
- Lt. Aubrey Tomassi
- Lt. Rescue Charlene Mahnke



Charlene Mahnke received the Ridge Runner award.

The Department Responded to 322 alarms for the past year.



ODESSA FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL CHICKEN BBQ

SATURDAY,

AUGUST 3RD

NOON-TILL

Dinner-\$ 10 Halves-\$ 7

All proceeds go to support the

Odessa Fire Department

Learn Not to Burn: Truck Day

Learn Not To Burn finished another year with fire trucks day at the respective schools. The weather did not cooperate on several of the scheduled days which made for an interesting scheduling problem for Donnie. All said and done, it was completed and I might add, with very positive results.



Foggy weather hampered the fire trucks day in Odessa.



Dasia Herman and Shirley Churches explain the equipment of the local Rescue Squad.

Trivia Question

At a cellar fire in a multiple dwelling with interior and exterior stairs where should the first line go?

First to contact rickshirlc27@gmail.com gets a pick of a fire service novel. This month it is "COMMISH" by Leo Stapleton then Commissioner of the Boston fire Department.

HECTOR



JULY 25-27TH, 2019

**HECTOR FIRE
DEPARTMENT FIELD**

9 Miles North of
Watkins Glen on Route 414

THURSDAY, JULY 25TH

FAMILY NIGHT
1/2 PRICE RIDE TICKETS
 5PM Gates Open
 6PM: Rides and Concessions Open
 6PM-10PM: Beer Garden Open
 6PM-10PM: Bingo
 7PM-10PM: DJ Miller Time

FRIDAY, JULY 26TH

5PM: Gates Open
 6PM: Rides and Concessions open
 6PM-12AM: Beer Garden Open
 7PM: Parade Begins
 8PM-10PM: Bingo
 8PM-11PM: Band - *Delta Mike Shaw Band*

SATURDAY, JULY 27TH

12PM: Gates Open
 12PM: Chicken Barbecue Begins
 12PM-4PM: Car Show
 12PM-12AM: Beer Garden Open
 1PM: Rides and Concessions Open
 1PM-5PM: Ride Matinee
 (Wristbands \$18)
 5PM-6PM: Ride Inspection/Break
 5PM: Firefighter Demonstrations
 6PM-11PM: Rides Open
 6PM-10PM: Bingo *Nick Cody & The
Creek Road Band*
 8PM-11PM: Band - *Nick Cody & The
Creek Road Band*
 10:30PM: Fireworks - *Sponsored By WENY TV*

THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND

**50/50 Drawings, Animal Tent,
 Cake Booth, Book Tent,
 Attractions for the Whole Family!**

What's New at Schuyler Ambulance?

Those that have been by the ambulance station on south Decatur Street may have noticed construction going on. The building is getting a much needed refurbishing, both the outside and the inside. Built in 1972, it was the single building with four bays to house the crews and four ambulances.



Refurbishing The outside with new walkway under construction



Training and business area.

Rescue Squads Do Help

By: Rick Churches

Formed in 1969, after the undertakers and several fire departments no longer wanted to continue ambulance service in the county, a group decided to form the Volunteer Ambulance Corp. They were to be based in two stations. One in Watkins, the other in Montour Falls. They eventually were combined in the new building. They ran about 800 calls the first year. The station was manned 24-hours a day. This was fine for a while. If you notice in the article (see page 7), that the need for volunteers and the lack of the same threatened the existence of the new organization. It has been said at recent meetings that the reason ambulances are having trouble is because of the formation of Rescue Squads. They only have to be on duty for half an hour and the ambulance much longer to transport patients. Rescue Squads never came about until 1980 after discussions from the ambulance corps to see if the fire companies could form units to assist the ambulance. There was no one beating down the doors then to join the ambulance. Ambulance volunteers were working sometimes over 40 hours per week. They did, and always have done, the transports out of Schuyler Hospital. The T.V. show "Emergency" was new and the idea for Fire Department "Rescue" was born. Since 1980, rescue squads have been there to assist the ambulance. They were never intended to be the primary provider of EMS. They are there for the sole purpose of providing patient care until the ambulance service arrives and to assist the ambulance on the scene. Now the call volume for EMS has increased from the original 800 calls a year to over 3,000. Do the math. When there are only 365 days out of the year, there are logistical problems, as we all have. None of us have an abundance of "certified people". The ambulance is no different as Paramedics and EMTs are in short supply and nobody volunteers any more.

Rescue Squads have killed the ambulance service? I think the opposite. I think they have saved the ambulance service in the county. You only need to listen to ambulances outside the county to know that they are having response issues also. My sister-in-law works in an assisted care facility. She had a client fall and fracture a hip and waited 2 hours for an ambulance. No rescue squad to help, either. This was a paid service.

I think there is always room for improvement. We need to continue to work together to keep our ambulance service in the county. There are answers!!

From Sunday Telegram June 11, 1972

Schuyler Ambulance Service Threatened

Sunday Telegram 6/11/72

WATKINS GLEN — A lack of volunteers may force the Schuyler County Volunteer Ambulance Association (SCVAA) to reduce its dispatching stations from two to one.

Presently, there are 30 volunteers manning the two stations, 30 in Montour Falls and 30 in Watkins, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "Right now we are manning both stations but we've got people that are working 24 to 30 hours a week," said SCVAA President Louis S. Dickinson.

An example is the L. & M. Continental race next weekend when SCVAA Treasurer Jonas VanDuser, William Randolph and Floyd Hull are scheduled to pull 48 hours duty, Dickinson said. "Tom Fenaghty averages 36 hours a week easily," he added.

"The only thing that can endanger our existence is the lack of volunteers," he added. "If something were to happen to three of these men who are pulling all of this time, where are you going to get anybody to cover for them?" said Mrs. Shirley Davis, one of eight women volunteers.

"We don't have the problem in Montour that we have in Watkins but we do occasionally run into a bind down there," Dickinson said. "I don't know why we don't get the support in Watkins."

"I was getting so mad because it seemed like every time I turned around he was on duty. I figured I might as well join and go on duty with him—at least I'd see him," said Mrs. Davis. She was referring to her husband, Glenn E. Davis who is captain of the Watkins station.

To volunteer, a person must be at least 19 with a New York State operator's license. There is no age limit as long as a person is physically able. "We've got several retirees without them, we'd be in worse trouble," Dickinson said.

7) A volunteer must have standard first aid training and get an advanced first aid certificate within one year after joining. Standard first aid is a 10-hour course taught in 2-hour weekly lessons in five weeks. The

advanced course is 16-hour eight week course. Both courses are taught by SCVAA personnel as well as specialty areas.

In addition, a volunteer can get a state-sponsored Medical Emergency Technician course. These courses were held in 1970 and 1971, the number depending on state finances.

The danger in the lack of volunteers is not to the point of where the county would be left without ambulance service, Dickinson said. "The danger is that we would have to close one station." This would involve reducing the ambulance fleet from four to two because neither station is capable of housing four vehicles," he added. "If we had a station where we could put the four together, this would be beautiful."

SCVAA is self-supporting through annual subscription drives. A family received as many ambulance calls as necessary including transportation up to an 80-mile radius for \$7.50 a year. The charge to a single person is \$5. No taxpayers funds are used. In fact, the SCVAA pays rent to the county for the use of a portion of the county-owned Helfer house as the Watkins station.

The Montour station is rented from John E. Hodge. With the backing of the county Board of Supervisors, SCVAA was formed Jan. 1, 1969 largely through the efforts of men like Harry Klube, Robert German, Randolph and Charles Richards. Local and funeral directors discontinued ambulance service as cost increased and state regs became strict.

The county bought the first two ambulances and some equipment to get the volunteers started. SCVAA paid it back within one year and has since added two ambulances and much equipment—all paid for.

"According to the state requirements, our ambulances are better equipped than most," Dickinson said.

SCVAA made 840 runs in 1971 involving 23,000 miles. All ambulances are dispatched by the Schuyler Sheriff's Department through a separate emergency telephone and ambulances are connected to the sheriff's office through two-way radio.

State of the Fire Service Across NYS.

Over the past year the Fire Coordinators Association, along with NYS Fire Chief's Association, FASNY, Fire Districts Association and others, have been working to address the biggest issue that faces the fire service today: the shortage of firefighters to respond to calls. Many of you took the surveys that the Fire Coordinators had created. This data is being sorted through and the results will be available for your review shortly.

As a group, we are trying to find ways to help resolve this critical issue. We do not believe that there is a "one size fits all" solution. We anticipate that it will be more of a laundry list of possible solutions and guidance that a department or region will be able to use to help meet the needs they have.

The fact is, we should have addressed this years ago. But sometimes the fire service is a proud bunch that try to work around our short comings.

In a 1987 report titled "The Future of The Fire Service" almost all the issues are the same, we are just in more of a crisis today.

Here is an excerpt from the 1987 report:

The fire service of New York State is facing many complex issues and finding it continually more difficult to provide the high level of protection they desire with the community resources (funding and personnel) that are available. Many of the current issues are as follows:

- ◆ Reduction in the number of firefighters available to respond
- ◆ Recruiting
- ◆ Funding for tools, equipment and quarters
- ◆ Increased awareness of dangers of firefighter health and safety
- ◆ Business management experience
- ◆ Increased demand for training requirements
- ◆ Cost of borrowing money
- ◆ Equipment maintenance
- ◆ Station upkeep and maintenance
- ◆ Liability of members and officers

It is with amazement that 32 years ago we had the same issues and we are still searching for solutions.

Going forward the fire service needs to keep an open mind to all ideas. We will not survive another 32 years with out addressing these issues. I would urge you to stay informed and involved in moving the fire service forward, so we will continue to provide this valuable service to our neighbors.

Bill Kennedy
Schuyler County Fire Coordinator

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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Twitter: twitter.com/SchuylerEMO



Last Alarms



*Dave Wells
Hector FD*

*Frank Wyre
Schuyler Ambulance*

Upcoming Classes

We will be offering the following classes:

- *Engine Company Ops (8/13)*

Tentative:

- *BEFO (early September)*
- *School Bus Rescue (Fall)*

Want to be notified of our upcoming courses? Join our mailing list! Send requests to jgeck@co.schuyler.ny.us

For more information, visit:

www.schuylercounty.us
www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc
www.emstar.org

**Send Us Your
Photos, News,
and
Suggestions!**

To send information, or if you want us to visit your station, contact the Emergency Management Office at 607-535-8200 or Rick and Shirley Churches at 607-594-2189 or rickshirlc27@gmail.com