

Mountaintop Hose Co. No. 1



MAY 2017

NUMBER 52

WELCOME

Welcome to our 52nd edition of *"Between Alarms"*.

Our May newsletter features all of our regular updates plus an important announcement about the future of our Bazaar.

18th ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

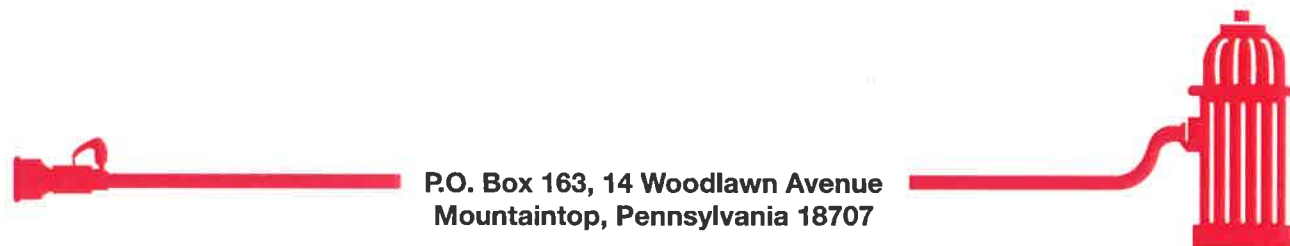
Our 2017 Annual Fund Drive titled *"Every Gift Matters, Every Year"* is enjoying a favorable return with many generous contributions received to date. We have received many contributions of \$100.00, several at the \$200.00-\$400.00 level, and two for \$500.00 and two for \$1,000.00. The total received as of May 9th is \$28,745.00 from 573 donors.

In 2017 we increased the amount requested for a family to \$45.00 from \$40.00. This request has been met with nearly 100% participation from our donors. We are appreciative of the generosity. We also increased the amount requested from our business community to \$45.00, which has also been met with the same generosity.

As we discussed in prior mailings/newsletters the total number of donors to our Fund Drive has decreased from our high in 2008 by over 200 donors. Unfortunately, the pattern of fewer donors continues in 2017. The 573 donations we received to date is 41 less donations than 2016. The Fund Drive remains open all year. We hope to even up with the number of donors in the months ahead.

Our follow up mailing was sent on May 4th. If you have not donated, please consider doing so as *"Every Gift Matters, Every Year"*.

Thank you to all of those who have donated. We appreciate your interest in and support of the Mountaintop Hose Company No. 1.



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Mountaintop, Pennsylvania 18707

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

In this edition we are off the page a little in that we are recognizing and thanking recently retired Fairview Township Police Chief, Joe Intelicato, for his 44 years of service to our community. Off the page, as Joe was not a member of the fire company, however during his tenure of service we have often worked together in both emergency and community wide activities. Joe has always been supportive of what we do and has lent a hand or some occasional advice which has been helpful.

His years of service to our community is unmatched. In his retirement he has been humble and has credited the success of our police department to all of its members.

We wish Joe much happiness and enjoyment in his retirement and we are delighted to know he will remain in our community.

Thank you Joe for all that you have done to help so many.

44th ANNUAL BAZAAR

Our 44th Annual Bazaar will be held on July 14th, 15th and 16th.

This year's Bazaar will be the last Bazaar that our President, Dave Hourigan, will oversee. Last year Dave gave notice that he would coordinate the 2017 Bazaar, which will be the 35th Bazaar that Dave will have chaired. Dave has done his part. Unfortunately, but for many reasons, the 2017 Bazaar will be the last Bazaar for the fire company. The reasons are discussed in the article titled "44th Annual Bazaar – The End of an Era" elsewhere in this newsletter.

With this being Dave's final Bazaar, he wanted to end his tenure in a big way. Back in the 1970s when the Bazaars started - initially at the picnic grounds at St. Jude's as the firehouse was not build yet – the Tom Slick Band, who were immensely popular, played at the Bazaar and for several years after. Dave learned that the Tom Slick Band does reunions, contacted them and they agreed to play. They are thrilled to return to Mountaintop. The band will play on Saturday night from 7:30 to 10:30. Additionally, Carl Alber and his band Sundance will return for an encore performance on Sunday from 4:00 to 7:00. Our longtime DJs, Tom Emanski will play Friday night and Mike Reilly will play Sunday night.

With the Tom Slick Band playing on Saturday, we have made schedule changes in our other events. On Saturday the parade will beginning at 4:30, touring many of Township subdivisions, and our popular Magic Show with Pat Ward will be performed at 6:30. Pat will be on the grounds providing balloon animals before and after the show.

Our very popular New Merchandise Auction will be held on Sunday at 5:00 in the firehouse building. The Auction has grown in popularity and profitability over the years, last year earning over \$9,300.00. We are hoping to top \$10,000.00 this year as some have already stated they will make a special merchandise contribution to the Auction to help us attain benchmark.

As always, we will offer a large assortment of food items and beverages, games and prizes. We will also have take out containers for all of our food items for those who cannot sit for dinner. Games will be featured from Fund Raising USA. Our Theme Basket Auction will once again feature many beautiful and unique baskets to win. The "Hose Company Store" will feature a variety of fun items to purchase, including our popular Bazaar theme T-shirts.

The Moon Walk Guy will return with their ever popular inflatable rides, including the giant bounce house, giant slides and obstacle course.

Our "Big Ticket" mailing in June will contain details of any new additions or special news about the Bazaar.

The Bazaar opens at 5:30 PM on Friday, 5:00 PM on Saturday and 4:00 PM on Sunday. Please mark your calendars to join us in July to enjoy the company of your neighbors and friends at this family oriented event.

BAZAAR SPONSORS / BIG TICKET PRIZE DONORS REQUESTED

A large part of the success of our Bazaar is the funds we receive from businesses or individual sponsors which offset the fixed expenses we incur in conducting the Bazaar. We acknowledge our sponsors in all of our advertising prior to the Bazaar and post signs recognizing them on the Bazaar grounds during the Bazaar. We also recognize them in our fall newsletter. The minimum requested level of a donation for sponsorship is \$250.00.

We have room on our Big Ticket for additional prizes. Merchandise, cash or gift cards are the prizes on the Big Ticket. The ticket is mailed to over 1,850 households/businesses and is sold throughout the Bazaar weekend so there are many favorable impressions from being included on the ticket. We request that prize values for the ticket be a minimum value of \$50.00.

If you would like to be a Bazaar Sponsor or a Big Ticket contributor, please contact Dave Hourigan at 570-715-7750 or 570-474-9381.

BAZAAR AUCTION AND THEME BASKETS

Our New Merchandise Auction will be held on Sunday at 5:00 PM during the Bazaar. Once again we will have dueling Auctioneers. Unfortunately our long-time Auctioneer, Frank Orloski, Jr., is unable to participate as he will be out of town. Our other Auctioneer, Paul Eyerman, is returning. We are working on finding a second Auctioneer. Two Auctioneers make the Auction fun while raising a lot of money for the fire company.

A list of the Auction items will be posted on our website, MTHC1.com, advertised in the Mountaintop newspapers, and posted on the Bazaar grounds. The Auction is at 5:00 PM. It will be held in the firehouse building with plenty of seating available.

Our Theme Basket Auction is enormously popular. Dozens of beautiful baskets are available, offering items of interest for all ages. Everything in the basket stand is donated. Bob and Mary Barley donate most of the baskets. Individuals or businesses of the Mountaintop area donate the contents. Several basket contents are also purchased through donations received from the industries in the Crestwood Industrial Park. Many remark that our basket prizes are among the best that they see at the Bazaars they attend. We have various electronic devices with many prizes valued at several hundred dollars.

The residents of Glen Summit contribute for the purchase of a major prize for the Basket Auction. With these funds, and the help of Peters Bottled Gas, we will feature the enormously popular Green Egg

Grill again this year. Additionally, township resident and long time supporter Mary McGinnis has crafted a beautiful handmade quilt for the Basket Auction.

Blasi Printing is providing the tickets for the Basket Auction which are very user friendly, only requiring one name and phone number for multiple plays.

If you would like to donate to either the Auction or organize/donate a basket, please call Dave Hourigan at 570-715-7750 during the day or 570-474-9381 in the evening.

HELP WANTED

Running the Bazaar requires a lot of help. Fortunately we have many faithful volunteers who return year after year, however we always welcome additional helpers. Jobs are available in our food and game stands, and the shifts run for a few hours each day. Working at the Bazaar offers an ideal opportunity for students to obtain their community service requirements and we are pleased to have them help. Please contact Dave Hourigan at 570-715-7750 or 570-474-9381 if you would like to volunteer.

SMART 911

We are and will continue to urge everyone to enroll yourselves in Smart 911 so that we will have any pertinent information that you would want us to have in the event of an emergency response to your home. You can provide information on your family, pets, special needs or special hazards that should be known. You can also provide information that you would want EMS or law enforcement to have in the event of a call.

Know that Smart 911 is the only source of information available to us and other emergency services. We highly urge you to visit smart911.com and enter your information today.

WE ARE "DEBT FREE"

In our April 1st Fund Drive letter we announced that we were officially debt free in March of this year. In March we paid the principal remaining on the loan for our 2014 Pierce Pumper. We are enjoying being debt free as this is the first time in decades that we do not have any vehicle loans, which is quite an accomplishment for us. With your generosity and our careful planning and hard work, along with an exceptionally successful 75th Anniversary Fund Drive, our 2014 Pierce Pumper, which cost \$480,321.00, has been paid off in 2 ½ years.

Additionally, the extensive renovations that we completed to the firehouse building and grounds from 2013 to 2015 were all paid from current funds. No indebtedness was required for these projects.

Although we are thrilled that we are debt free, there is a reality that our 2004 Rescue Truck will be in need of replacement in a few years. We are planning and saving accordingly.

RABIES CLINIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Over the years, the interest in our Annual Rabies clinic has dwindled, so we will not be conducting the Clinic on the first Saturday of June as we have for many years. The Clinic first started with the guidance of Dr. Robert Colladay in the 1990s and then was taken over by Dr. Karen Spiece of the Mountaintop Animal Hospital in 2002. In recent years there have been many competing Rabies Clinics and our attendance has dwindled. Our many thanks to Dr. Spiece for her years of service to our community and our organization in performing this task.

There is a local alternative for this service in our community. The Kiwanis Club of Mountaintop, in conjunction with the SPCA of Luzerne County, are conducting a Rabies and Microchip Clinic at the Wright Township Municipal Park on Saturday, May 20, 2017 from 9:00 to 11:00, to be followed by a Pet Parade at 11:00. Please refer to the SPCA website for additional details.

UTILITY TASK VEHICLE ON ORDER

In our November newsletter we announce our plans to acquire a Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) for use in our operations. The vehicle will transport up to four people plus a patient. It will be used for transporting patients from inaccessible areas, it will be used in missing person searches, and it can be used to transport firefighters to brush/forest fires in off roads areas. The cost of the vehicle is \$14,672.00 and is entirely funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. The vehicle is on order and will be delivered by the end of May.

THE ALARMS

In the period of November 1st to April 30th we answered 136 calls for assistance. The call volume is consistent with the total calls in the past few six month intervals that we report in our *"Between Alarms"*. We are called to assist other communities far more frequently than we were years ago.

The breakdown of the types of calls is as follows: Motor Vehicle Accidents – 48; Automatic Fire Alarms – 36; Structure Fires – 17; Gas Leaks – 7; Vehicle Fires – 6; Assist EMS – 6; Stove Fires – 3; Tree/Wires Down – 2; Brush Fires – 2; Child Locked in Vehicle – 1; Furnace Fire – 1; Flooded Roadway – 1; Chimney Fire – 1; Leaking Pipe – 1; CO Alarm – 1; Tree on House – 1; and Mutual Aid Move Up – 1.

The breakdown of assists to other townships for the above calls is: Wright Township – 49; Rice Township – 17; Wilkes-Barre Township – 3; Dennison Township – 2; Ashley – 1; Hanover Township – 1; Dorrance Township – 1; Butler Township – 1; Nuangola – 1; and Slocum Township – 1.

The March 14th snow storm did not present any unusual circumstances for us. The various plow crews kept the road passable and had them pretty well back to normal the following day. Our members were out the shoveling out the fire hydrants throughout the Township and completed this task within a few days.

PENNSYLVANIA AMERICAN WATER GRANT OBTAINED

In January we applied to Pennsylvania American Water Company for a Firefighting Support Grant for the purchase of two Motorola Minitor pagers to be used for our firefighters. We are pleased to announce that a grant in the amount of \$800.00 was received and we have purchased the pagers.

Our thanks to Pennsylvania American Water for these funds.

SAFETY INITIATIVE

On Saturday, April 29th, in conjunction with the American Red Cross we and the Wright Township Volunteer Fire Department participated in a free smoke detector giveaway, including installing the smoke detectors in our residents' homes. Our group had eight pre-scheduled installs from the advance publicity, which we accomplished that morning and then we canvassed some of our Township streets knocking on doors to offer the service. Overall, the day was successful and several of our Township homes are better protected as a result of the operation.

F.M. KIRBY FOUNDATION GRANT RECEIVED

Knowing that we would be awarded a grant through the State to purchase the Utility Task Vehicle; we needed to make arrangements to purchase a trailer to transport the vehicle. We are pleased to announce that in February we received a grant from the F.M. Kirby Foundation, Inc. in the amount of \$6,000.00 for the purchase of the trailer. The trailer will be built by Look Trailers, the new manufacturer in the Crestwood Industrial Park. Look Trailers will customize the trailer to our exact needs. Look Trailers is providing special pricing to us since we are all in the same community. The \$6,000.00 grant will cover the cost of the trailer, lighting and lettering for the trailer and some hand tools we will need.

Our sincere gratitude to the F.M. Kirby Foundation, Inc. for the grant that makes this acquisition possible.

FIRE SAFETY TIPS

As we approach the summer season we thought some fire safety tips would be helpful. Some thoughts to consider:

- Gas Grills – Gas grills must be outside and should be a safe distance from your home. Place the grill at the far end of your deck or patio, as in the event of a fire your home will be less endangered.
- Gasoline – Store gasoline in approved containers. Do not store in your home or basement. Always store away from possible ignition sources, including heating and electrical devices. Containers are best stored in a shed or detached garage away from your home.
- Fires Extinguishers – Fire extinguishers are relatively inexpensive. Purchase extinguishers that are multi-purpose and approved by an independent testing agency. One extinguisher should be located near the kitchen for quick access in the event of a fire. It is a good idea to have an extinguisher on every floor being sure that all family members know the location and are familiar with how to operate it.

- Swimming Pools – Be sure that electrical devices and/or extension cords are not used near a pool. Be sure that all receptacles in the area of the pool are GFI protected and test the receptacles annually to be sure they are working. Make sure all pool chemicals are stored in a safe place, out of the reach or view of children, and be sure all lids are securely fastened.

44th ANNUAL BAZAAR – THE END OF AN ERA

At the conclusion of our 2016 Bazaar, our President, Dave Hourigan, announced that the 2017 Bazaar would be the final Bazaar that he would chair. Dave said that after 35 Bazaars he thought he did his part and invited others to take over, volunteering to show them the way in the preparation for the 2017 Bazaar. Over the next several months much discussion ensued, first focusing on who would be Dave's successor, with the conversation leading to an absolute honest discussion as to whether the Bazaar was viable looking to the future for many reasons.

A core group of people have organized, prepped for, and staffed the Bazaar for many years. Over the years literally hundreds of people have worked at the Bazaar to cause it to happen, but the same core group have done the planning and preparation, along with the take down and clean up. As the honest discussion took place it became evident that our core group really felt as Dave did, that they had done their share and they stayed involved in the work in support of Dave as he had dedicated so many years to making the Bazaar happen.

Conducting the Bazaar has been challenging, especially in the past years. Some of these challenges include:

- The willingness of people to volunteer to staff the Bazaar. Many annual workers are either no longer available for various reasons or unable to help.
- The availability of time for our members to devote to our organization is a factor. Between jobs, family and other community responsibilities, there is only so much time members can devote to the fire company. Other functions of our operation require large blocks of time. Currently we have four firefighters spending two evenings a week and several Saturdays a month in a 140 hour Firefighter I training course. Other training, maintenance and many tasks consume lots of time and commitment.
- Over the years the sources of profitability for the Bazaar have changed significantly. With a few exceptions most of the food items make only a small profit or break even. We simply cannot charge enough for the food to make a fair profit. Games, besides games of chance, do not have a lot of play. Our beer sales are less than half (a good thing) of what they were 20 years ago. The decline in profits of these items is offset by Bazaar Sponsorships, which amount to approximately \$5,000.00, a hugely successful Auction netting over \$9,000.00, our Basket Tent netting approximately \$4,500.00 and our soda, water and ice tea sales where all the products are donated, netting approximately \$2,000.00. Interestingly, the profit from our 1996 Bazaar was \$34,402.76. The profit from our 2016 Bazaar was \$34,198.51. Unfortunately, the food and games sales require an intense amount of labor and prep, yet contribute far less to profitability than they did 20 years ago.
- The duty to comply with the regulations of the Small Games of Change State laws. These laws make it unlawful for a child under 18 to play any game of chance where the value of the prize exceeds the cost to play, which is typically twenty five cents. Children cannot pick their pull tabs to win a stuffed animal, teenagers cannot spend twenty five cents to play instant bingo, and no wheels of any type are allowed. We know that we have directly lost at least \$2,000.00 in Bazaar

profits from lost game revenue. We don't know how many people don't come at all because of the rules which impacts our food, beverage and other sales.

- Not complying with the Small Games of Chance Laws exposes us and our Bazaar workers to penalties or arrest. Several law enforcement personnel are involved in conducting or working at the Bazaar. Not complying with the law could jeopardize their careers. Worse yet, in the past few years an anonymous person has targeted us with "tips" to the LCB, the enforcement agency for Games of Chance and alcohol sales, that we are not complying with the laws. To be fair, the LCB identifies themselves when they come on property. Finding no violations they commend us for properly conducting the Bazaar. Imagine our frustration when we know many other Bazaars do not comply with the regulations and there appears to be no enforcement.
- Within the new few years perhaps as soon as next year, we will lose at least a third of our parking. We use the former Lehigh Valley Railroad right of way for parking. This area is part of the Delaware & Lehigh National Corridor Trail that will eventually be a continuous trail from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol. Once the Trail is built, motor vehicles are prohibited as the Trail surface would be damaged; therefore we cannot use this area for parking. We acknowledge the fact the area is not ours and we greatly appreciate the fact that we have had permission to use it for many years.
- Finally, the long term availability of the games we use and the merchandise we give away is uncertain. Our primary vendor for games and merchandise has changed their policies in response to dwindling demand as many other Bazaars ended years ago. We no longer can acquire the merchandise on assignment; rather we must purchase and retain items we don't give away. There are no new games available and there is a reality that the Bazaar portion of their business may end.

We trust that this explanation suffices to understand the challenges of operating the Bazaar and the decisions that we have made. Going forward we will be able to rent the Bazaar grounds for parties and events as we do now.

In order to replace the Bazaar profits, we are contemplating the enactment of a Fire Services Tax to support our operation and guarantee that we are funded. We are in discussion with our Township Supervisors on a November referendum to enact the tax. If this is moving forward, we will provide full details on the possible tax in a special edition of "*Between Alarms*" in late summer/early fall.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been an unwieldy six months since our last edition of "*Between Alarms*" as we discussed the future of the Bazaar. I discovered that many of our core group of organizers were in agreement with me. The Bazaar has become more challenging to plan and conduct over the past years, plus it is more layered with responsibilities such as conforming to the Small Games of Chance laws and other factors.

For many years the Bazaar was always a lot of work to plan and organize, however it was also a lot of fun for all of us. Over the years it has become so much more challenging and the fun factor has diminished. The work involved is exhausting, especially with fewer people willing to help. Not everyone in the fire company favors conducting the Bazaar. In some ways, not conducting the Bazaar will bring harmony among our members.

Overall, the tenure of the Bazaar has been a wonderful experience. There are many pleasant memories from so many years, especially as they pertain to my children and what it has meant to them. Over the years many friendships were made, reunions occurred with former residents coming back to

reunite with old friends, and even some introductions were made that evolved into committed relationships. Along the way we've made a lot of money and have done a lot of good with the money.

I will miss the pleasure I felt as I watched the Bazaar unfold, bringing our community together and the successes we experienced. I am sure I'll be a mess the final night of the Bazaar when it is over. However, I know I have done my part. I am appreciative to all those who helped over the years to make it work and make me look good. Thank you to everyone for believing in me when I asked for your help and making us so successful.

I am thrilled that the fire company is now debt free. Honestly, this is the first time we are debt free since 1985 when we began to modernize/expand our fleet of vehicles. Unfortunately, we won't be debt free for long, as we need to replace our 2004 Rescue Truck in the next few years, which will be our next large expense.

As I review our Annual Fund Drive returns, I remain dismayed at our decline in donors, in our current Fund Drive compared with our donor high of 2008. Overall, there are 200 less donations in 2016 vs. our high in 2008. In this same period our mailing list expanded by at least 50 addresses. We simply need your help. If you have not contributed in 2017, please do so when you are able. Your generosity is key to us maintaining our operation.

Congratulations to Joe Intelicato on his retirement. A job well done for many years. It was always a pleasure to work with Joe and I wish him the best in his retirement.

Going forward, we will reveal a careful and well thought out plan outlining our plans for the future budgeting of our operation, along with the reasons that support the plan. You will receive a special edition of "*Between Alarms*" in late summer/early fall outlining the same and asking for your support.

As we look forward to a pleasant summer with family and friends, I wish everyone the best in all of your plans. And, of course, as I ask every May, please reserve a day on the third weekend in July to visit our Bazaar.

Dave Hourigan