

# Mountaintop Hose Co. No. 1



## *Between Alarms*



Visit us @ [www.MTHC1.com](http://www.MTHC1.com)

MAY 2019

NUMBER 56

### WELCOME

Welcome to the 56<sup>th</sup> edition of “*Between Alarms*”.

There are lots of happenings at the firehouse that we are sharing with you in this edition.

### CAVANAUGH’S SOLD

As most know, the building that houses Cavanaugh’s Grille was gifted to the fire company by the then owner/operator, Kevin Foley, in December of 2008. Kevin continued to operate the business, paying rent that covered the expenses of the building, until he sold the business to Billy Aigeldinger in 2013. We entered into a 5 year lease with Billy that generated net income to us after expenses. Last year, considering other business interests and commitments, Billy decided to sell the business. Jim Foley, Kevin’s brother, expressed an interest in purchasing both the business and the building. Jim was always intrigued by the business for a variety of reasons, one of which was the legacy of the name Cavanaugh’s, as Cavanaugh was the maiden name of Jean Foley, Kevin and Jim’s mother.

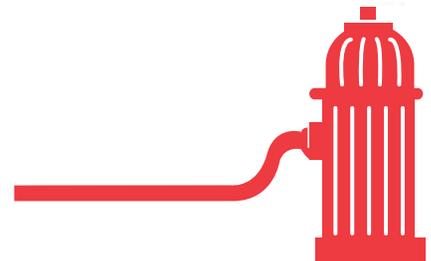
An agreement was made for both the sale of the business and the sale of the building to Jim Foley. Jim became the real estate owner at the end of November and the owner of the business in late December.

The building sale resulted in net proceeds to the fire company of \$167,534.46. By the original “Memorandum of Gift” agreement with Kevin, he had to approve a sale and what the disposition of the funds would be. Kevin approved the sale and our intent to apply all of the proceeds toward the debt we incurred with the purchase of our new rescue in September. These funds reduced our overall debt by more than half.

The significant gift to the fire company drew much media coverage to acknowledge and tell the story of the generosity displayed. Rarely does a volunteer fire company receive a donation of this proportion.



P.O. Box 163, 14 Woodlawn Avenue  
Mountaintop, Pennsylvania 18707



## **MEMBER(S) SPOTLIGHT**

An important component of our operations is the recruitment and participation of younger people to both help with our tasks and to learn about firefighting. Our junior firefighter program allows members to join at age 14 and participate until they become 18, at which age the state allows them to be active in all aspects of firefighting and rescue.

Currently we have three junior firefighters who are Kyle Johns, Ryan Smith and Rachel Kohl. A fourth junior, Patrick Lyle, turned 18 last year and he now serves as a Captain in our department. These individuals devote time to us, balancing their school work, part-time jobs and other responsibilities to help us.

Serving as junior firefighters, they help us maintain our facilities and equipment. They also help with our events. Although there are age restrictions on what they can physically do, they are able to attend classes and training sessions, gaining knowledge and skills for future use.

As importantly, there are life lessons learned from the process. Teamwork is key in what we do. Sizing up a situation and making a decision is a critical skill, as is the necessity to follow directions in the operation. There are a lot of fun moments with the camaraderie that exist and lifetime friendships are frequently formed.

Over the years, as former members have stopped to visit they have commented on how much they learned in the time with us and how it enhanced their life skills as adults.

We acknowledge and thank Kyle, Ryan, Rachel and Patrick for their dedication and we invite anyone who may be interested to stop at the firehouse on a Monday night to check things out.

## **ALWAYS TRAINING**

Many of our members attended various training sessions throughout the winter and spring, sharpening their skills to be ready for the challenges that we face.

Members participated in sessions that included Rope Technical Rescue, Trench Rescue, HazMat Awareness and Confined Space Awareness. Through Mountaintop Mutual Aid various sessions were held, including the ability to practice techniques in a home that was slated for demolition.

## **FIREHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS**

Thank you to member Mike Herron for rebuilding the entrance vestibule to the firehouse. Mike has rebuilt the vestibule adding artificial stone on the outside and finishing the inside walls. The finished work greatly enhances the look of our firehouse building.

## REMEMBERING NICK HOLLOCK

Mountaintop lost a good friend in January when lifetime member Nick Hollock passed away at the age of 95. Nick was a leader in our fire company for many years. It was his foresight and hard work that purchased the property for and raised the funds to build our firehouse facility in the 1970's.

Nick's larger than life personality, along with his lasting effects on our community, was well described in an article written by Norberta Kosin and published in *Mountain Peaks* after Nick's passing. Following is the article as it was published.

*Nick Hollock, a man who shaped our community.*

*On the morning of January 4, the Mountain Top community lost a force that shaped it into the community it is today. Nicholas Hollock Jr. passed away at the age of 95.*

*Where to start when talking about Nick Hollock? He was a mover and shaker in Mountain Top for over 75 years. Born on December 17, 1923 in the Solomon Gap area of Mountain Top, Nick lived here all his life, except for the time he served in the Navy during World War II.*

*Nick was a man of the rails and loved to tell stories about his travels. He started working for the Lehigh Valley Railroad as a fireman on steam engines in 1942 and retired as an engineer in 1985.*

*Nick was the last of the founding members of the Mountain Top Ambulance Association. He liked to recall how, on March 5, 1952, he, Dr. Joseph Buckey, George Yeager, and Burt Kneal were having coffee at the Triangle Restaurant, which was located where the PSC gas station is today. Dr. Buckey said that Mountain Top needed an ambulance and he knew where they could get a 1938 Buick ambulance. With help from the Mountain Top Lions Club, they bought the first ambulance. For over 40 years, Nick responded to 3,300 calls as a driver and attendant.*

*Today, the Mountain Top Ambulance Association has a state-of-the-art facility at the top of the mountain, with a helicopter pad and another facility in Rice Township.*

*Nick was also a member of Mountain Top Hose Company and served as president for over 23 years. He was responsible for procuring the property for the firehouse.*

*He took care of St. Catherine's Church, which was across the street from where he lived and was heartbroken when it was closed in 2000. Nick was a fixture in the ticket booth at the St. Jude picnics for many years. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and was a Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus. Nick was also a Forest Fire Warden and served as Luzerne County Forest Fire Inspector for 10 years.*

*I came to know Nick while working at Mountain Peaks. He was a character -- one of my most unforgettable characters. After meeting Nick, he would call me to let me know about an upcoming Ambulance Association event -- he would usually call 30 minutes before or after the event started. He would call me to take pictures of the pumpkins that filled his front yard in the fall and for special family events. He once stopped me at St. Jude's to see if I would take a picture of him and his wife Kay after Mass for their upcoming anniversary.*

*Every time I stopped by his house, Nick managed to find something among his "stuff" that he thought was camera related and I might be able to use! He loved to talk, show photos and tell stories about working on the railroad, Mountain Top, the bears in his back yard that he would feed with day-old donuts, a recent hunting trip, his weekly trips to Amish country and trips to visit his family.*

*Whenever I see a tootsie roll, I think of Nick. He always gave me a handful when I saw him. I don't like tootsie rolls and I told him that, but he still gave them to me. One Sunday morning at St. Jude's I was kneeling after communion and as Nick came back from communion, his hand came out and I got another handful of tootsie rolls!*

*Nick was a man who loved to help people. He served his God, his country, his community and his family. It is hard to imagine what Mountain Top would be like if it were not for Nick Hollock.*

*Rest-in-peace Nick with your beloved wife Kay and life-long friend and cohort Dr. Buckey. I was proud to call you my friend. You will be missed.*

## **CHRISTMAS TREE SALE EVENT HUGELY POPULAR**

On the weekend of December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> we conducted our Christmas tree sale on our grounds. Live trees were available for purchase at very reasonable prices. Santa was present for photos, a light menu of food and refreshments were available, and everyone who bought a tree was given a special hand painted MTHC 1 ornament to place on it, which were created and donated by a member's wife. On Sunday after the sale, Santa was escorted throughout the township on a fire engine, handing out candy canes along the way.

The event was enormously popular. We had a steady stream of patrons on Saturday and ended up having to get more trees to sell on Sunday. Considering the popularity of the event, we will be conducting another event in December.

There was some concern on social media that were selling trees at prices that were subsidized by the fire tax. This of course was not the case. The trees were priced a few dollars over what they cost us. The unsold trees were able to be returned for credit. In fact, with donations and food sales, the fire company netted a few hundred dollars for the weekend.

## COMMUNITY YARD SALE

We will be conducting our second Community Yard Sale on our grounds on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. Both covered space and open space is available for people to set up their wares. We will promote the event in the Mountaintop and daily papers and on social media.

The event will begin at 8:00 AM. We will be serving breakfast for a small fee. Space must be reserved in advance. Please call Jared Aigeldinger at 570-239-3393 with questions or to reserve your space. The cost is \$15.00 for covered space and \$10.00 for open space. You may also mail your check to us at P.O. Box 163, Mountaintop, PA 18707, to save your space.

We expect the event to be popular, so reserve your space early.

## FUTURE EVENTS / SAVE THE DATES

- We will be conducting our hugely popular Designer Purse Bingo on October 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Our Christmas Tree / Visit with Santa Event will be on the weekend of December 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. The Santa parade will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We will publish the parade route in our November newsletter.
- The Cavanaugh's Golf Tournament will be held in September. The day and place are being finalized. This year the tournament proceeds will be exclusively for the benefit of our fire company.

## MOUNTAIN TOP WELCOME CLUB DONATION

Each year the Mountain Top Welcome Club conducts a "Night at the Races" as their principal fundraiser. In 2018 we were chosen to be one of the charities to benefit from the event and we are thrilled to report that we were chosen again in 2019 to receive a grant. With a matching challenge from a friend of the fire company, our members sponsored races and sold horses, totaling \$1,420.00. So with the match we raised \$2,840.00 for the event. The Welcome Club recognized both our commitment to the community and our efforts in securing funds for the event, and on May 16<sup>th</sup> presented us with a check in the amount of \$5,000.00. Checks were also presented to the Marian Sutherland Kirby Library in the amount of \$2,000.00, Candy's Place in the amount of \$1,800.00 and three scholarships presented to Crestwood students. Additionally, donations were made to other organizations in the community.

Our donation will be used for the purchase of equipment as described elsewhere in this edition of *"Between Alarms"*.

We are most appreciative of the donation and proud to be recognized with such generosity by the Welcome Club.

## **F.M. KIRBY FOUNDATION, INC. GRANT RECEIVED**

In April we received a grant of \$3,500.00 from the F.M. Kirby Foundation, Inc. to be used toward the purchase of new rams, which are hydraulic rescue tools used in conjunction with the operation commonly known as “The Jaws of Life”. A ram is used to push apart/lift items such as a dashboard in a car trapping a victim's legs. We carry a 30” and a 60” ram. Our existing rams were purchased in 1982. This replacement of the rams completes the replacement of all of our rescue tools. The total cost of the rams is \$4,956.00. A donation we received from the Mountain Top Welcome Club will pay the difference.

As always, we are grateful to the F.M. Kirby Foundation, Inc. for their ongoing support of our fire company.

## **FIRE TAX SUMMARY**

In 2018 we received a total of \$111,810.30 from the Fire Tax that was implemented in Fairview Township for 2018. The tax is 3/10 of one mill, which equates to \$30.00 for every \$100,000.00 of assessed value to a property owner. The amount we received met our projections for the revenue the tax would produce.

The tax replaced the income we gained from our Annual Bazaar and Fund Drive, plus an annual allocation we received from Fairview Township. The “guaranteed income” has enabled our volunteers to devote the time they share with us to training, thereby enhancing their skills and knowledge.

## **STATE GRANT RECEIVED**

Each year the State allocates money to be distributed to fire companies and ambulance companies for the purchase of equipment or improvements to facilities.

In April we received a grant in the amount of \$12,740.00. The funds are being used to replace and/or add to the equipment we carry for rope rescue operations. Rope has an expiration date and must be replaced. In addition, we will be replacing the (in simple terms) tripod used to engage in the operations and adding various pulleys, slings and other equipment.

## **DEBT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED**

The sale of the Cavanaugh’s building enabled us to pay off the \$100,000.00 bank loan we obtained to pay for our new rescue and significantly reduce the amount owed on the \$200,000.00 loan we obtained from the State for the purchase. The balance of the sale proceeds of \$67,534.46, a \$25,000.00 principal payment from savings, and seven months payments, has reduced the amount we owe to just under \$98,000.00. Basically, in just seven months we were

able to reduce our indebtedness by over two thirds. The fire company has no other loans outstanding.

## **POSSIBLE TRAILHEAD TO BE BUILT**

In December we met with officials of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor to discuss the proposed construction of a Trailhead on our Bazaar grounds for entry/convenience and comfort for the 165 mile trail from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol, which is nearing completion. The Trailhead would provide parking for trail users and restrooms would be incorporated into the plan. Grant monies are available for the construction of the Trailhead. Currently Delaware and Lehigh is working with their engineers and the Department of Forestry to finalize the feasibility and scope of the project. Should the project move forward, a large portion of the parking area on our grounds would be paved and the storm water traversing our property would be managed, and our Bazaar grounds restrooms would be re-built.

This is a long-term project. Updates will be provided in future editions of *“Between Alarms”*.

## **THE ALARMS**

In the period of November 1<sup>st</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup> we responded to 145 calls for assistance. The nature of the calls were as follows: Automatic Fire Alarms – 47; Motor Vehicle Accidents – 42; Structure Fires – 12; Gas Leaks – 8; EMS Assists – 4; Vehicle Fires – 4; CO Alarms – 4; Furnace Fire/Malfunction – 3; Flooded Basement – 2; Odor Investigation – 2; Trash Fire – 2; Lost Person Search – 2; Lock-Outs – 2; Trees Down – 2; Bomb Scare – 1; Dumpster Fire – 1; Wires Down – 1; Tanker Explosion – 1; Assist Police Department – 1; Electrical Fire – 1; Water Leak – 1; Brush Fire – 1; and Burning Complaint.

Fifty one of the calls were in Fairview Township, 55 of the calls in Wright Township and 27 in Rice Township. Responses to other communities include: Dorrance Township – 4; Dennison Township – 3; Slocum Township – 2; Butler Township – 1; Hobbie – 1; and Butler Township – 1.

In 2018 we responded to a total of 348 calls. This was the first year that our responses exceeded 300 calls. As stated in prior editions of *“Between Alarms”*, a large portion of the increased call volume is attributed to responding to automatic alarms and motor vehicle accidents.

## **TRAFFIC SIGNAL PRIORITIZATION DEVICES INSTALLED**

Through a state grant the two traffic lights in our Township will very soon be capable of receiving a signal from an approaching emergency vehicle that will change the traffic light to green as the vehicle approaches. All other lanes of traffic will go through the normal time cycle to switch to yellow and then red, allowing the vehicles to pass quickly and safely through the intersections. Receivers have been installed on the two light stands on Mountain Blvd. which will change the signal as a vehicle approaches with its opticom (transmitter) turned on.

Knowing that this system would soon be available, we ordered an opticom with our new rescue when it was being built last year. We need to retrofit our two engines, which we are in the process of doing. The installation of the opticoms is somewhat involved as the opticoms needs to be wired to shut off when the vehicle's parking break is set, allowing traffic lights return to their normal operation if a vehicle is nearby.

The cost to install the equipment is \$1,725.04 per vehicle. The donation that we received from the Mountain Top Welcome Club will be used for the purchase.

## **CONSIDER A LEGACY**

In the past few months we received notification that two Fairview Township residents have remembered us in their wills. Both people were faithful contributors to the fire company. The gesture is a tribute to them and to us.

We would be humbled if others remember us in their estate plans and ask that you consider doing so if charitable distributions are in your thoughts.

Also, in our experience, we have been named as a charity by families for loved one's obituaries asking contributions be made in lieu of flowers at the time someone passes. No matter what the charity may be, these instances are a great benefit to the charity designated. A meaningful memorial is created in the deceased's memory. Considering the fire company in these situations would be most meaningful to us.

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Now in the second year of being funded by the fire tax, we are enjoying firm financial footing. It is a relief for all of us to know our income is guaranteed as we plan for the immediate and long-term needs of our operation. We continue to conduct fundraisers, seek grants and look for financial opportunities that will bring revenue to our organization. As I have stated in past editions, the increasing costs of equipment and vehicles is most challenging; in fact, I have used the word "stupid". It is. However, we will deal with the increases and as always spend every dollar prudently in all we do.

\*\*\*\*\*

My personal thanks and recognition goes to the Foley family for all that they have not only done for the fire company, but additionally for our community. Besides the donation of the Cavanaugh's building to the fire company in 2008, Kevin has generously supported many community organizations over the years. Jim's purchase of the building brought the eventual windfall to the fire company that Kevin envisioned when he made the donation. Additionally, Jim is continuing to support the fire company and will be sponsoring the Golf Tournament for our benefit in September.

I have been involved in the fire service for nearly 50 years. I have not heard of any other instance where a fire company in Northeast Pennsylvania received a gift or donation remotely similar to the funds we received.

\*\*\*\*\*

The fire company and Mountaintop lost a good friend with the passing of Nick Hollock in January. It was Nick's leadership and foresight that enabled the construction of the firehouse building in the 1970s and founded the Mountaintop Ambulance Association in the 1950s. Emergency services in both our Township and the Mountaintop area were greatly impacted by the many years of service that Nick devoted to both.

\*\*\*\*\*

When you read this newsletter we will already be to Memorial Day weekend. Each day the scenery greens a little more and our warm outdoor weather is just about here. A wonderful time of year in Mountaintop.

Enjoy the summer and be safe in all that you do and *"Do All The Good That You Can"* whenever possible.

Dave Hourigan