

# Mountaintop Hose Co. No. 1



## *Between Alarms*



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NOVEMBER 2019

NUMBER 57

### WELCOME

Welcome to the 57<sup>th</sup> edition of “*Between Alarms*”.

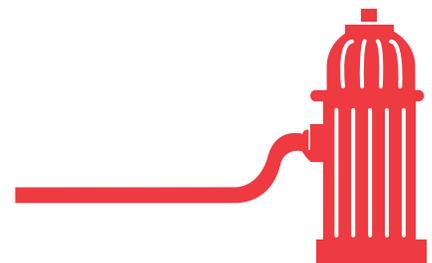
Over the years our newsletter has provided us a media to share all of our activities with our residents and businesses, keeping everyone up to date with what we do, along with the changes in the fire service.

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- We conducted our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Yard Sale on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The weather cooperated with a pleasant day, bringing out a good size crowd and many people to sell their treasures. The overall response was very good with many asking when the next event would be held. For the day we netted \$365.24 from the rentals and food sales.
- On Halloween night our firefighters were out distributing glow necklaces to the trick or treaters that were brave enough to face the elements. With the miserable weather turn out was light and our members called it an early night.
- In October we made our customary visits to Fairview Elementary and the Child Day Care Centers in our Township in conjunction with Fire Prevention Week. The visits are always a pleasure for our firefighters as they experience the interaction with the children seeing their excitement and curiosity about what we do.
- We hosted visitors from various organizations/groups a few times this year for a tour of the firehouse, including a look at our vehicles and equipment. We are always pleased to conduct these tours. Monday nights are best as they are activity night. If you would like to arrange a tour, contact Jared Aigeldinger at 570-239-3393.



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



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Member Jared Aigeldinger, assisted by his wife Michelle, has become immersed in our organization, taking leadership in many of our tasks.

Jared is nearly a 30 year member, joining at age 14 following a long tradition of family involvement in the fire company. Currently Jared serves as a Captain and a Trustee. In his position of Captain he is involved in our emergency response operations. He has obtained many certifications, completing extensive courses in various aspects of the fire service. Jared helps coordinate training for our members and is particularly involved with teaching our junior firefighters the aspects of firefighting. Jared recently accepted the position of Trustee. He is now coordinating the rental of our bazaar grounds as they are available for the summer season.

When our Bazaars ended in 2017 Jared recognized that we needed to both continue to do fundraising plus engage the community to interact with our fire company. Jared, along with his wife Michelle, took the initiative to create our Community Yard Sale, Christmas Tree Sale and Designer Purse Bingo in 2018. These events have proven to be very popular. Michelle is deeply involved in the activities, planning and coordinating all that needs to be done and being present to oversee the events as they are held. Always pleasant, Michelle is very organized and well respected. Our members are very willing to help when she asks. As they say “behind every good man is a good woman”. Without question this adage applies.

Thank you to Jared and Michelle for all they do.

## OUR LEADERSHIP

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

Dave Hourigan	President
Red Lines	Vice President
Jason Menghini	Secretary
Shawn Prohaska	Treasurer
Jared Aigeldinger	Trustee
Mike Herron	Trustee
Doug Guignet	Trustee
Peter J. Kohl	Fire Chief
Todd Wagaman	1 <sup>st</sup> Asst. Chief
Josh Antosh	2 <sup>nd</sup> Asst. Chief
Jared Aigeldinger	Captain
Steve Taylor	Captain

## **VOLUNTEERS / FIREFIGHTERS WELCOME**

As you may have read, the number of volunteer firefighters in the State of Pennsylvania is declining at a rapid rate. From a high of over 300,000 in the 1970s to now approximately 38,000. In response to the decline, the State is enacting several incentives to help recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. Incentives currently include a college tuition benefit program, accident insurance and a prescription drug discount program. Additionally, the State is working to provide more funding for the fire service. The allocations to Relief Associations were increased this year. Other incentives are being discussed and will be proposed.

Fortunately, we have been able to maintain a core group of dedicated firefighters that engage in responding to our calls and engage in ongoing training that is necessary. However, additional active firefighters are needed to help lighten the load and assure we have sufficient personnel available for our calls. In addition to our firefighting activities we welcome the help to maintain our building, equipment and grounds, along with the various fundraising or special projects we undertake throughout the year. There is an opportunity for anyone that may be interested.

If you would like to learn more, either talk with one of our members or visit the firehouse on a Monday evening.

## **WINTER COOPERATION**

You know what is coming.

Each year we ask you to be prepared and to be cautious in the winter. At home, be sure your heating devices are cleaned and in good shape. Chimneys for wood burning need to be cleaned annually. Furnaces need to be serviced, including an inspection to make sure there are no blockages in chimneys that would cause a carbon monoxide build up in the home. If you are using a plug in heater, plug it directly into an outlet without an extension cord so there is no risk of overheating the cord and causing a fire.

On the outside, keep your walks and driveways clear to avoid slipping and falling. This benefits you, whoever the delivery or service people may be coming to your home and really us should you experience a need for emergency service.

As always, clearing deep snow from a fire hydrant located near your home is important. The hydrant does not have to be directly in front of your home. A hydrant even 1,000' or more away is service to your home. Talk with your neighbors and make a plan to dig out the hydrant when the snow is deep.

Lastly, drive at appropriate speeds for the weather conditions. Four wheel drive vehicles can easily fishtail out of control and definitely will have much impaired stopping ability in the snow and ice. Consider the risk to yourself, others and emergency services while driving in poor conditions.

## **DONATIONS WELCOME**

We are very pleased to report that we continue to receive annual donations from many people in our community even though we are primarily funded by the fire tax implemented in 2018. The cost of fire service related items, whether it is a pair of gloves or a new vehicle, increases annually. Within a few years, we will be facing the mandated replacement of components of our self contained breathing apparatus and needed replacement of the protective gear for our firefighters. We will pursue grants to use toward these major expenses, however the award of the grants is not guaranteed. The replacement deadlines must be met. We need to be prepared and able to make the updates as they come due.

As we have stated many times before, every penny that we receive is used directly in our operations. There are no financial or other perks for our members. Donations directly benefit our donors as they assure we are properly prepared to meet the challenges we face.

Donations are welcome and appreciated at any time. The closing of a year often inspires people to make donations for benevolent and tax purposes. Please consider us in your giving plans. All donations should be mailed to: P.O. Box 163, Mountaintop, PA 18707.

## **FIRE TAX UPDATE**

Year to date we have received \$111,111.04 from the fire tax. Last year we received \$107,355.86 for the same period. The difference is mostly attributed to taxes paid late in 2018 which were in turn turned over to us in 2019. Additionally, there is some increase in the tax base assessment in our township from new construction within our township.

The revenue is what we anticipated when we requested the tax. As published previously, the guaranteed income stream relieves our volunteers from the ongoing pressures of fundraising and assures that we are properly equipped for whatever challenges we may face.

## **RELIEF ASSOCIATION ALLOCATION**

Our allocation to our Firefighters Relief Association from the State this year is \$26,308.21. The amount is \$2,100.00 greater than our 2018 allocation as the State is making an effort to better fund the fire service to offset the increasing costs of equipment and operating.

The money is available to use to provide for the safety and welfare of our members. We use the funds to pay the premium for our accident and disability insurance and to purchase protective gear and safety equipment for our operations.

## **DESIGNER PURSE BINGO – ENORMOUS SUCCESS**

On October 20<sup>th</sup> we held our second Annual Designer Purse Bingo at the firehouse. Building on the success of our event in 2018 which netted over \$6,800.00 we set a goal of netting \$10,000.00 in 2019. In setting the goal we planned to solicit sponsors for the event to offset the costs and purchase the purses and we planned to have unique prizes for the four “special” games that were to be played at the event. Donations from sponsors totaled \$5,600.00. Our “special” game prizes included a Louis Vuitton purse purchased with a donation from Anneliese Moghul, our long time friend and generous donor, four tickets to the Trans-Siberian Orchestra concert donated by Mohegan Sun Arena, an eight day/seven night vacation six person stay at Myrtle Beach from Sundance Vacations and an overnight stay at Mount Airy Casino.

The 2018 Bingo was so well received, plus the fact that we had great “special” game prizes, the 200 tickets available for the Bingo sold out 10 days in advance of the event. People began to arrive to reserve their spot a half hour prior to the doors opening. The attendees were able to take chances on over a dozen baskets, a 50/50 and enjoy a wide variety of food prepared by our members.

The afternoon progressed very nicely. Once again a grand time was had by all, and people left asking the date for the 2020 Bingo (October 18<sup>th</sup>).

Our generous sponsors for the event were: Cavanaugh’s Grille; McCune Funeral Home; Mountaintop Animal Hospital; Ayers Towing; Century 21 Smith Hourigan Group; Frank Orloski, Jr.; Thomas Biscotti, DMD and Associates; I2M; Modern, The Floor Store; Preferred Travel; and Anneliese Moghul. In addition to our sponsors several businesses/friends of the fire company donated baskets, gift cards, food or merchandise. All of the donations made our Bingo more profitable. We are grateful for all of the sponsors, donors and workers who made the event a huge success.

Special thanks to our chairpersons, Michelle and Jared Aigeldinger.

## **AMAZON SMILE**

As you complete your holiday shopping be reminded that we are registered as a designated charity in the Amazon Smile Program. When shopping on Amazon, please consider us as your designated charity. To use the program, simply shop on Amazon Smile and designate us as the charity to benefit. There is no additional cost to you to shop in this fashion.

In 2018 we received a total of \$145.33. Year to date we have received \$142.26 with the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter due in December. This is “found” money for us and every dollar we receive is important to our operations.

## CHRISTMAS EVENT PLANNED / CHRISTMAS TREES TO BE SOLD

We will host our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas Event which includes visit/photos with Santa and a Christmas Tree sale the weekend of December 14<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> at our bazaar grounds behind the firehouse building. The hours will be 11:00 – 2:00 each day. Santa will be in his red sleigh that members built for him last year for photo opportunities. Bring your camera to create family memories.

A light menu, including hot dogs for sure and most likely potato pancakes, will be available. Hot beverages will be offered also.

This year we will also have available larger trees as many asked for them last year. The trees will be 5' – 7' in height. Pricing has not been finalized, however know that the trees will be as affordable as possible to help assure that anyone who wants a live tree will be able to have one for Christmas.

Sunday after 2:00 Santa will tour our township subdivisions in a fire truck. Stops will be made to greet the children. Our Santa parade route is shown below. On the day of the parade, the sounding of sirens and horns will announce Santa's approaching.

If you would like to reserve a tree or have any questions, please contact Jared Aigeldinger at 570-239-3393.

### **Leave Station @ 2:00 PM**

Turn L onto SR309 S

L onto N Main St.

L onto Gracedale Ave.

### **STOP #1 Cavanaugh's Parking Lot**

R onto Woodlawn Ave.

R onto Kirby Ave.

L onto Farmhouse Rd.

L onto Pine Tree Rd.

R onto Valley Ln.

R onto Farmhouse Rd.

L onto Longmeadow Ln.

R onto Highland Rd.

### **STOP #2 Longmeadow Ln. & Highland Rd.**

L onto Kirby Ave.

R onto Greystone Dr.

L onto Fieldstone Way

L onto Greystone Dr.

### **STOP #3 Greystone Dr. & Circle Dr.**

L onto Autumn Ct.

L onto Valley View Dr.

L onto Park Ln.

### **STOP #4 Park Ln. & Deerpath Dr.**

Cross Kirby Ave onto Fairview Park

### **STOP #5 Fairview Park at ball courts**

Straight on Summit Rd. to Spruce St.

### **STOP #6 Summit Rd. & Spruce St.**

R onto Spruce St.

L onto SR309 S

L onto Garden Ave

R onto Wilkes Ln.

R onto Hemlock Terr.

### **STOP #7 Hemlock Terr. / Wilkes Ln. / Bow Creek Dr.**

Continue on Hemlock Terr.

L onto Cedar Manor

### **STOP #8 Cedar Manor Dr. & Shady Tree Dr.**

R onto Shady Tree Ln.

### **STOP #9 Fairview Elementary Driveway**

R onto Spruce St.

### **STOP #10 Spruce St. & Bradley Dr.**

L onto Kirby Ave.

L. onto SR309 S

Bear R onto S. Main St.

R onto Lee Ave.

R. onto Woodland Ave.

R. onto Woodcrest Ave.

### **STOP #11 Woodland Ave. & Woodcrest Ave.**

Continue on Woodcrest Ave.

L onto S. Main St.

Bear L onto SR309 N

L onto Sherwood Dr.

L onto Robbins Way (continue around)

L onto Sherwood Dr.

### **STOP #12 Robbins Way & Sherwood Dr.**

Continue on Sherwood Dr.

L onto SR309 N

**Concluding between 4:30 & 4:45 and**

**Return to Station for Santa's Departure!**

## **THE ALARMS**

In the period of May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> we responded to 140 calls for assistance. The nature of the calls were as follows: Automatic Fire Alarms – 60; Motor Vehicle Accidents – 29; Structure Fires – 12; Gas Leaks – 7; EMS Assists – 5; Wires Down – 3; Vehicle Fires – 2; Appliance Fires – 2; Trees in Roadway – 2; Brush Fires – 2; Burning Complaints – 2; Chimney Fire – 1; Electrical Fire – 1; HazMat Incident – 1; Industrial Accident – 1; Entrapment (vehicle on top of person) – 1; Smoke Investigation – 1; Child Locked in Car – 1; Person Search – 1; and Technical Rescue Team Response – 1.

43 of the calls were in Fairview Township, 57 calls in Wright Township and 29 in Rice Township. Responses to other communities were: Dorrance Township – 1; Ashley – 1; Hanover Township – 2; Hazle Township – 1; Nuangola – 2; Slocum Township – 3; and Wilkes-Barre – 1.

As the numbers show, we respond to more calls out of township than in our township. The large volume of responses to Wright Township are mainly contributed to automatic fire alarms in the Industrial Park. The majority of the calls in Rice are either automatic fire alarms or motor vehicle accidents.

Know that the Wright Township Fire Department is automatically dispatched to assist with many of our calls. Our assisting one another is part of both of our operations.

## **FIDELITY BANK IMPACT GRANT**

As part of the grand opening promotion of the new Fidelity Bank at 1 South Mountain Blvd., the bank is conducting a contest and will be awarding a grant in the amount of \$15,000.00 to one local non-profit organization that impacts and betters the life of the residents of the community. Fidelity has contacted us and encouraged us to participate in the program.

Applications outlining the need for and purpose of the request are due to the Bank by December 6<sup>th</sup>. A panel from Fidelity will then review the applications and pick five finalists that best fit the criteria of the program by January 10<sup>th</sup>. The general public will then be encouraged to stop at the new bank between February 1<sup>st</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup> to vote for their favorite charity. The organization with the most votes on April 10<sup>th</sup> will win the \$15,000.00.

Our plan for the grant is to use the money to purchase equipment that will be used to clean our firefighting turnout gear. The leading cause of sickness and death to firefighters is cancer. Cancer causing carcinogens are encountered in our operations. The carcinogens not only remain on the gear after an incident, but can permeate the gear if not removed and may cause skin cancer. The awareness of this situation has significantly come into the spotlight in the past 10 years. It is highly recommended that protective gear be cleaned after use to reduce the exposure to carcinogens.

The equipment consists of an extractor (washer) and a dryer. The cost of this equipment is \$17,300.00, plus approximately \$3,000.00 to install the plumbing and electrical services needed to operate the machinery. If we are successful in obtaining the grant the balance of the funds needed to purchase and install the equipment would come from our savings.

None of the fire companies in Mountaintop have this equipment. It is our intention to share the use of the equipment with the fire companies, so the entire Mountaintop community would benefit from its availability. We need to be able to protect ourselves in order to best protect our community.

If we are among the finalists, we will do an aggressive campaign to notify the community and get out and vote. Blasi Printing has offered to do a get out and vote postcard for us to mail to our residents. Others have indicated a willingness to provide donations to be used toward postage and publicity. Note that a person can vote as many times as they wish during the period, with a vote being cast upon each visit to the Bank.

Wish us luck for all of us in the endeavor and watch for our notification if we are a finalist.

## **INSURANCE REVIEW & CHANGES**

In September in anticipation of the renewal of our commercial insurance policy, which includes liability, property, equipment and vehicles, we choose to shop for coverage options as our current provider, Selective Insurance, was becoming more expensive and also mandating operating policies for us to enact which included ongoing background checks that required a significant cost to undertake. Our long time agent, Jim Davis of Davis Gregory & Kyle, proposed we switch carriers to VFIS as the company would offer equivalent or in some instances better coverage and not create the ongoing expense. That stated, we decided to entertain Jim's proposal and also to solicit a proposal from another carrier for price comparison.

The proposal from VFIS was significantly less money than the other two carriers. With the savings we added some additional coverages, particularly with an increase in coverage for our "umbrella" policy. Overall the total premium is \$12,417.00.

In the course of the insurance discussions Jim Davis strongly recommended that we ask Fairview Township to enact an ordinance naming us as the provider of fire/rescue services for the Township and authorizing all of our activities. The purpose is to make sure everyone is covered for any injuries that could result if a workman's compensation claim needed to be filed. By law, a municipality has to provide workman's compensation coverage. The Township is in the process of enacting the ordinance which will be in place in December. Although we are now in our 80<sup>th</sup> year of being the provider for Fairview Township it will now be official so proper protection is in place. We are passing this information along so there is no confusion as to why the ordinance needed to be enacted.

***FROM THE PRESIDENT***

My sincere thanks to Jared and Michelle Aigeldinger for taking the lead in our fundraising and community enjoyment activities. Their lead continues our tradition of interacting with our community and has lightened my responsibilities in these areas.

Our Designer Purse Bingo was exceptionally well done and enthusiastically received. People were actually asking if tickets were available for the 2020 Bingo.

In the course of planning the Bingo, we reached out to businesses and individuals who faithfully supported us over the years as Bazaar sponsors or significant donors. All gladly responded. The funds purchased the purses, offset the costs and provided for extra profit. In addition to the sponsors listed, many businesses and some individuals provided food, door prizes or a purse donation. A wonderful response to the request resulting in nearly a \$12,000.00 profit for the day. Very rewarding for everyone involved.

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Wish us luck in being chosen as a finalist in the Fidelity Bank Impact Grant Program. \$15,000.00 is a huge amount of money to us or any charity. Please be sure to watch for what organizations are finalists and participate in the voting if we are a finalist. A vote can be cast on each visit to the back. With over 1,800 addresses in our mailing list, along with all of the people we have touched, we feel we have a good chance of winning if we are a finalist. Your vote will help assure we win.

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It is hard to imagine that another year is closing. It certainly was a pleasant summer although September is the new June as it didn't warm up until mid June and then it was great through October. To date November has not been kind with the rapid change in temperature. Hopefully the winter will not be miserable.

Whatever the case, we will endure. Please use extra caution in your outdoor activities in the winter for your and our good.

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My best wishes for a great Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

Dave Hourigan