



# Newsletter

Proudly Serving Upper Dublin Since 1908

April, 2010

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This is one of a series of newsletters from the Fort Washington Fire Company No.1 in an effort to keep the citizens and taxpayers of Upper Dublin informed about the many and varied activities carried out by our organization. Anyone may opt out of receiving these e-mailed newsletters by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of this Newsletter. In each newsletter we will endeavor to provide information that is informative, useful and even entertaining.

## This Month Around The Fire House

In March the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 61 Alarms, averaging 20.6 responders per call, totaling 420 responder hours.

For All of 2009 the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 622 Alarms, averaging 19.5 responders per call and totaling 5699 responder hours For a multi-year comparison visit our website under Activities/Statistics.



## Profile Of The Month — Sean Keenan

By Denny Zwicker

Each month we profile one of the many Volunteers that make up the Fort Washington Fire Company.

**T**his month we profile one of the fire company's line officers, Sean Keenan, who currently holds the rank of sergeant.

Sean was born in Chestnut Hill Hospital in 1982 and is a true local boy, having lived in Fort Washington all of his life. Along with his older brother and sister, Sean attended Upper Dublin schools and graduated from Upper Dublin High School in 2000. Growing up, he enjoyed playing baseball and soccer, and was active in the Boy Scouts which gave him his first taste of community service. In high school, Sean excelled at Lacrosse and played for three years.

Following high school, Sean attended Montgomery County Community College where he took both liberal arts and fire science courses. He graduated with an Associate's Degree in liberal arts and went to work for Dick's Sporting Goods. Sean remained in retail up until last May, when he accepted a position as a waiter at



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Visit our Website [www.FortWashingtonFC.org](http://www.FortWashingtonFC.org)

## Profile, Continued

Coleman's of Normandy Farms. Asked what it's like to work for an internationally acclaimed celebrity chef, Sean reports that it's a great place to work! The food is wonderful (and free!), the customers are nice and Chef Jim Coleman will talk your ear off if you let him.

Sean joined the fire company as a junior member in 1998. When asked why, Sean says he had a friend who was a member. Sean was with him when his friend responded to a call that turned out to be a fatal car accident and fire involving a young man they both knew from school. Sean saw the impact the terrible tragedy had on his friend, but he also recognized the vital importance of the extraordinary service provided by the fire company.

Since joining the fire company, Sean has served on the Good Will Committee and has held the position of Vice-President of the Active Workers Association for six years. Sean is in his second year as sergeant, a position he sees as a liaison between the firefighters and the senior officers. He wants the members, especially the younger ones, to see him as approachable, someone they can come to with an issue or concern. Sean reports that he has learned a lot in the past two years. His next goal is to become an apparatus driver and he will be taking the necessary EVOC training in the next few weeks.

Sean's most memorable fire call to date occurred early in his career. Sean was only 17 when the company was called to assist at the

Maple Avenue Father's Day fire in West Ambler, which involved a dozen row homes. Too young to fight the fire from the inside, Sean was instructed by a Wissahickon Fire Company officer to man a deck gun in the street and "if you see fire in the windows, put it out." Sean sat in the street and did just that.

More recently, Sean recalls being dispatched to a kitchen fire on Hartranft Avenue. Upon arriving, he realized that it was a house belonging to an old friend and he had been in the building several times. Sean grabbed the hoseline behind the nozzleman and was able to quickly guide him to the kitchen where they made a fast knockdown of the fire.

While Sean doesn't consider himself a role model, in reality he is for thousands of young people with Type 1 or insulin-dependent diabetes. Sean has lived with the disease for almost 20 years and is well aware that his blood sugar can drop quickly from the physical exertion required at a fire scene. He keeps sugar packets in his turnout gear, which he is quick to point out he has never had to use, and takes time to gulp down some milk on his way out the door to a call. An advocate of the insulin pump and careful blood sugar monitoring, Sean says also that he just pays extra attention to how he feels.

Firefighter, officer and role model, Sean says he's in the fire company for the long haul, a good thing for both the company and the community we serve.

## Join Us, Become A Volunteer

The Fort Washington Fire Company is a 100% volunteer organization and is always seeking new members. We have several types of membership, which do not all involve fire fighting. All training and equipment is provided by the Fire Company.

### Junior Members-Age 16-17.

Go through regular training and provide fire ground support functions, but are not permitted to operate in hazardous environments until they reach the age of 18. Many of our current members started as junior members.

### Firefighters-Age 18 and up.

Respond to fire calls and undergo extensive training at one of the local fire academies as well as in-house training through the fire company.

### Fire Police-

Provide traffic and crowd control at emergency scenes as well as at special events such as parades and carnivals.

### Ladies Auxiliary

The Ladies Auxiliary assists the Fire Company, by promoting sociability among members and aiding the financial and general well being of the fire company.



**Come one, come all...  
Our Indoor Flea Market is on  
Saturday, April 3rd  
8 AM to 2 PM Rain or Shine!  
220 Summit Avenue**



## Road Closed Ahead

### By Howard Schmuckler



**W**hile driving, you may come across a road that is blocked off, and you cannot understand why. It may be a police officer, a fire police officer, or a state or municipal vehicle. It may be barricades, flares, or traffic cones.

Any time that the road is blocked, it is for a very good reason, there is a danger. It is to prevent someone from potential injury or worse. There may be a tree down and/or live electric wires down across the road, or an electric pole may be split as a result of a motor vehicle accident and it may fall on

the roadway at any time. There may be icy roads, a flooded roadway, a traffic accident, a fire, or some other incident.

If there is a person there to direct you around the incident, **please follow their instructions.**

If there is not a person stationed at the road blockage, find an alternate way. **Never move a barricade or go around one**

The person is there, or the equipment that is there, was placed there for a valid reason. It was not because someone had nothing better to do. Too often, someone feels that the road blockage is not meant for them, they go through the barricade, and they then find themselves in the need of emergency services. And, in addition, they may be cited for traffic violations

If it is a fire police officer that you encounter, remember that they are there because they have been requested to be there by the police. They are doing what they have been told to do.

**Please help us to help you! It may be an inconvenience, but it is well worth a little extra time.**



**Station A**

**220 Summit Ave**



**Station B**

**Susquehanna and Twining Roads**



**Fire Training Grounds**

**Twining Road**

## Come to our first Basket Bingo



The Fort Washington Fire Company Ladies Auxiliary will be sponsoring a Basket Bingo featuring Longaberger products for the benefit of the Fort Washington Fire Company, on Friday, April 30, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. (doors will open at 6:00 p.m.) tickets are \$20.00 in advance (if purchased before 4/15/2010), \$25.00 at door, at the Fort Washington Fire Company, Main Station, 220 Summit Ave., Fort Washington. If you wish to purchase tickets, or would like to be a sponsor of a basket and advertise your organization or have any questions please contact Cathy at 215-654-9684

*We Hold drills each Monday Night at 7 PM*

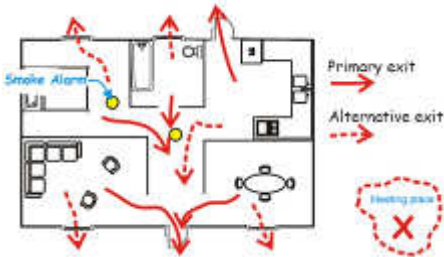
*Our Business Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM*

**Contact Information**  
220 Summit Avenue  
Fort Washington PA  
19034

**215-646-2555**

## Are You Prepared? By Howard Schmuckler

If you do not have a home fire escape plan, NOW is the time to start one. If you have a home fire escape plan, regularly review it with your family and practice it. Do not believe that a fire will not happen in your home, that it will only happen to someone else. That way of thinking could cost you your life, or the life of a loved one.



To develop a home fire escape plan, sit down with a drawing of the inside of your home. Draw each room with all doors, windows or other ways out of the room. Every room should have at least two ways out. The first way out would be a door, but if smoke or fire block that way, a second way out should be known and used. It is preferred that the second way out lead to ground level or the roof of a porch, to a balcony or other location that can be easily reached from the ground. If you are above the second floor, do not jump; wait where you are and signal for help. Only jump if you are in a life-threatening situation.

Consider purchasing an escape ladder from a home improvement center. Be certain that the ladder is sturdy and approved by an independent testing laboratory, such as the Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Store the ladder near the window and practice hanging it out of the window, following the manufacturer's instructions.



Look for obstacles that may block your escape path and remove them. Make sure that any keys to a door that locks from the inside, or locks security grills for doors or windows are always kept near the door or window for quick opening and escape. Quick release mechanisms, which everyone can operate, are preferred. Make sure that all windows, doors and locks open easily and are wide enough to allow you to escape. Never paint a window shut. A child must be able to open all windows and doors.

If you live above the second floor, your second escape route should be a fire escape, balcony or the roof of a porch. Those who live in an apartment should become familiar with the building's fire evacuation plan. Follow all directions that may be given by emergency personnel. If you attempt to escape, take your key with you, as you may need to return to your room or apartment if smoke or flames block your path. As you exit, close all doors behind you to keep the smoke and flame from spreading. Know your surroundings, such as how many doors you are from the fire escape or window. Always use stairs, never the elevator, to escape. The elevator may stop at the floor where the fire is or fail to operate and trap you inside.

Select a meeting place outside the home, in the front but away from the building. Do not remain too close to the building as broken glass or other objects may hurt you. Meet in the front so that everyone can be quickly accounted for and you can advise the police and/or Fire Company that everyone is or is not safely out of the home. A fixed object such as a tree, telephone pole, mailbox, or a neighbor's home should be designated. Once you are outside, never go back inside for any reason.

Once smoke or fire is present, or the smoke alarm begins to sound, everyone should immediately leave the building. Time is essential, never stop to get a pet or valuables.

### Take the smoke alarm seriously and put your plan into action immediately.

In most cases you only have a couple of minutes to safely escape. Call the fire department from a neighbor's house, a cell phone or from anyplace outside of the building. As you exit, close all doors behind you to slow the spread of the smoke or flames. If you must escape through smoke, crawl low to the ground where the air is cleaner and cooler.

If the smoke alarm sounds while you are asleep, safely go to the door leading toward the exit. Feel the door and doorknob with the back of your hand and if it is hot to the touch, do not open the door, use the second way out. If the door is cool to the touch, carefully open it, but be prepared to close it quickly if fire or heavy smoke is present. If you are faced with smoke or fire along your escape

route, retreat to another path or back into the bedroom. If you must remain in the room, take bedding, clothes or other objects to seal the cracks around the door and vents to keep out the smoke. If it is safe to do so, open the window from the top and the bottom. Fresh air will enter from the bottom and the smoke will exit through the top. Do not break the window. If smoke enters through the open window, or flames are near the open window, close the window immediately. Signal for help by using a flashlight or waving a bright colored object. If there is a phone in the room dial 9-1-1 and advise the call taker of the fire and the fact that you are trapped in the room. Even if fire trucks have arrived, call 9-1-1 and advise them of your location so the firefighters can quickly reach you. Be very specific in describing your exact location so that they can relay the information to the firefighters who can save you. Remain calm!

Make certain that smoke alarms are properly installed and maintained. They should be placed on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Test the smoke alarm and clean it once a month, and replace the battery every year.

When you visit a building whether for business, personal, or vacation, always pay close attention to your surroundings. Make a mental note of where the exits are and how you would escape if the need should arise.

**Remember to practice your fire escape plan at least twice a year, and be sure to teach your children how to escape in case of a fire. Children should be told that they should never hide under the bed, in a closet, in the bathtub or anyplace else.**

Even though a firefighter in gear may appear to be scary, the firefighter is there to help, and the child should not fear the firefighter – the firefighter is not a monster. Additional planning may be required if a small child, an elderly person, or a person who is physically or mentally challenged lives with you.

The volunteers of the Fort Washington Fire Company bring this information to you. If you have any questions or comments about this article, please feel free to call the Fire Company on their business line at 215-646-2555 or stop into either fire station any Monday night. Their Fire Prevention Committee is available to present programs upon request. Visit the Fort Washington Fire Company on our Web Site at [www.fortwashingtonfc.org](http://www.fortwashingtonfc.org)

## Training Update

By Eric Clauson

Members of the FWFC are wrapping up our 1st quarter training schedule and planning drills for the coming months. Future drills will include a vehicle rescue technician course, a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) review class and a class on elevator emergencies.

March has continued to be a busy training month with several members enrolled in a Firefighter I class through Bucks County. In addition, several members have attended courses at the Montgomery County Fire Academy on topics such as incident safety and new car construction. This is on top of the weekly training we conduct on each Monday night.

Our March drills consisted of a class at our training grounds dealing with firefighter survival skills. This included knowing how to call



a “mayday” when in trouble, knowing how to provide a downed firefighter with extra air in a smoky environment and using the couplings on a hoseline to determine how to safely exit a building if disoriented. These are all critical skills that must be practiced.

The following week, we were again at the training grounds-this time we were reviewing foam operations. Consisting of how to set up a foam system and the methods of applying foam. We also drilled on our high expansion foam, which is rarely utilized, but carried on our rescue truck for special situations that might require it.

To conclude March, we conducted our annual hazardous materials refresher training.



## Awards Banquet Highlights

By Ed Schuler; photos by Jeff Ollis

Every year, on the last Saturday in February, the Fort Washington Fire Company sets aside a night to recognize each of its volunteers that go the extra mile to make the company one of the best fire fighting organizations in the area.

In order to be invited to the annual awards banquet, a member must participate in a specified number of incidents, drills and meetings depending on their number of years of service. Each invitee is able to bring a guest, usually a spouse or significant other, that has also contributed by being the person or family member that gets left behind when the siren sounds.

We feel it is extremely important to take the time each year to provide some token recognition of the hundreds of hours spent by these volunteers.

Awards are presented for 1, 5, 10, 20, 25,30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of membership and service.

Additionally, there were presentations for past officers, the top 5 responders and the junior firefighter of the year.

Each year, members look forward to attending this event that in addition to the awards provides a chance to be with their friends, dance, and have a really fun filled and memorable evening.

Also each year the members nominate 1 person that has really set him or herself above all others in that year for their contribution of service to the Company. This award, called the Arthur Sr. and George Haggar Award was created by a township resident in recognition of the Haggar's invaluable contribution to the Fire Company over a 70 year span.

This year it was presented to our past president, Timothy Evard, in special recognition for his work on organizing and preserving the company's past and present personnel and training records as well as his service as secretary, vice president and president.

Turn to page 6 for Banquet photographs.

## Photos by Jeff Ollis



Tim Evard receiving the Arthur and George Haggar Award



Recipients of the 1 year Service Certificates



Outgoing Board Members Ed Hurt and Dave Haggar



Outgoing V P and Treasurer Andrew Krimmel and Ron Keillor



Andy Rathfon receives a gag award... from his friends



Junior Firefighter of the Year Jimmy Schwader



An opportunity to talk and enjoy old friends...



to dance...



and to just have fun

Turn to page 7 for list of award recipients

Visit our Website [www.FortWashingtonFC.org](http://www.FortWashingtonFC.org)

## Award Recipients

**1 Year certificates:**

Sean Allen  
Amber Blusiewicz  
Marie Blusiewicz  
William Frick  
Michael McSpadden  
Kelly O'Brien  
Jeffrey Ollis  
James Schwader  
Howard Stein

**5 Year Service Pin:**

William Kane

**10 Year Service Pin:**

Sean Keenan  
James Kelble  
Robert Scheswohl, Jr.  
Zachary Velivis

**20 Year Service Pin and Life Member  
Plaque:**

Jeffrey Fogel, M.D.  
Brian Newhall  
Kelly Rines

**25 Year Membership Pin:**

James Diver III  
Richard Roberts  
Gary Sylvester

**30 Year Membership Pin:**

Fred Bohlander Sr.  
David Haggard

**35 Year Membership Pin:**

William Carroll  
Thomas Lynd

**40 Year Membership Pin:**

Edmond Hurt, Jr.  
William Keyes  
James Warren \*

**45 Year Membership Pin:**

James Diver, Jr.  
Stanley Smith

**50 Year Membership Pin:**

Ralph Jennings, Jr.

**Junior Firefighter of the Year:**

Jimmy Schwader, Jr.

**Top Responders of the Year**

1. Kevin McCann (467)
2. Brian Adams (445)
3. Gordon Languell (427)
4. Eric Clauson (380)
5. Zach Velivis (337)

\* Awarded Posthumously