



Newsletter

Proudly Serving Upper Dublin Since 1908

March, 2009

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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 February the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 28 Alarms, averaging 25.1 responders per call, totaling 324 responder hours.

For All of 2008 the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 627 Alarms, averaging 18 responders per call and totaling 4662 responder hours

For a multi-year comparison visit our website under Activities/Statistics.



Profile Of The Month — Tony Squadrito

By Andy Rathfon

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

Born on July 7th, 1958 in New York City, Anthony Squadrito and his parents resided in Staten Island for the first five years of his life. In 1963, Tony's father, who worked as a travel agent, moved the family to Fort Washington. For the next seven years, Tony attended Whitemarsh Elementary while his family resided on Militia Way near the Fort Washington State Park. In 1970, the Squadrito family relocated, once again, to Flourtown. Here Tony attended Hillcrest Junior High School and eventually Springfield High School.

After graduating high school in 1976 Tony began working as a mechanic for the Morano Brothers in Erdenheim until he took the same position with the Flourtown Sunoco. In 1988 Squadrito took a position with Upper Dublin Township as a senior mechanic, where he is currently employed. Tony is the proud father of three children. Tony's oldest son, whom he had with his first wife Claire, is a senior at the University of North Carolina. With Karynn, his wife of the last thirteen years, Tony has an eight year old son named Jonathan and a seven year old daughter named Kaitlyn. The Squadrito family currently resides in Springfield Township.



(Continued on page 2)



Visit our Website www.FortWashingtonFC.org

Profile, Continued

Tony was first introduced to the fire service when he joined the Flourtown Fire Company in 1976 at the age of eighteen. Here Tony learned the intricacies of the volunteer fire service. His enthusiasm and dedication would elevate him to the rank of Lieutenant, Captain, Assistant Chief, and eventually Chief in 1996. Squadrito would serve as the Chief of the Flourtown Fire Company until 2000. During his time with the company, Tony served on the Board of Directors, the truck committee, banquet committee, and the parade committee. Additionally, Squadrito served ten years as a Rescue Instructor at the Montgomery County Fire Academy, and volunteered fifteen years as an EMT with both the Springfield and Ambler Ambulance companies.

Tony joined the Fort Washington Fire Company No.1 in 1988 when he was hired by the township. Squadrito is currently an Assistant Engineer with the company and serves on the apparatus committee. Tony, who is permitted by the township to run calls during the work day, typically functions as a driver, but is dual certified as a firefighter with the company. When given the opportunity, Tony enjoys driving the Tower, as he has always admired ladder trucks.

Squadrito's recalls his first working fire as a commercial building fire with Flourtown. The District Court building, across the street from his apartment at the time, had been set ablaze by an arsonist. Tony recalls manning the nozzle of an 1 3/4" line that he advanced into the back door of the building. As he attempted to extinguish the blaze, the superheated gases kept flashing over - causing the ceiling tiles to float up and down as if they were breathing.

Tony's most memorable fire was approximately eight years ago when the Springfield companies and the Barren Hill Fire Company were dispatched to the Lincoln Woods apartments at the corner of Northwestern and Germantown Avenues. The fire, which was started by a fake Christmas tree on a balcony, quickly spread into the attic area of the building. Squadrito vividly remembers watching the ceiling of an entire apartment come crashing down on the rest of his crew. Tony, who was in the doorway to the apartment as the collapse occurred, assisted his fellow firefighters by extracting them from the rubble. Fortunately nobody was seriously injured.

Admittedly, Squadrito recognizes that much has changed in his 33 year career as a volunteer firefighter and EMT. For instance, Tony recalls the original driver training program of the Fort Washington Fire Company, compared to the extensive certification laden version of today. In 1988, when Tony joined, he was asked by then Chief Engineer Art Haggart, "Boy... can you drive that truck?" When Tony replied, "Yes", he was officially made a driver. Of course he already possessed a multitude of experience from his time with Flourtown. Despite the many changes, Tony is most fond of the relationships that have been established with his fellow firefighters. The camaraderie is what continues to peak his interest and fuel his dedication to the fire service.

Annual Scholarship Award

By John Reilley

The Memorial Committee of the Fort Washington Fire Company No. 1 offers a scholarship on a yearly basis to promote advancement in education and community service in the amount of \$1000.00. The scholarship is open to Fort Washington Fire Company members in good standing who are attending high school in their graduating year. Applicants are required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average and are asked to submit an essay entitled "Why Volunteering is Important to Me" and document their scholastic achievements, both academic and extra curricular, as well as submit a list of accredited post-secondary institutions to which they have

applied. Letters of recommendation from leaders within the students' high schools are also submitted. Applications and submitted materials are judged independently and the name of the firefighter/scholar is announced at the May regular meeting of the Fire Company and sent to the respective school for award recognition. The Memorial Committee and Board of Directors of the Fire Company have made a long term commitment to the scholarship program and look forward every year to awarding the scholarship to a deserving individual who is committed to advancing his or her education and continuing to serve the community.

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 control and crowd control at emergency scenes as well as 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.

Associate Members-

Provide administrative support to the fire company. These administrative functions include, but are not limited to, accounting, clerical, computer networking and programming, facility management, etc

Editor's Note

By Ed Schuler

The City of Coatesville in Chester County has made the local and national headlines lately due to a spate of arson fires. In this month's issue we have two articles that are timely for Upper Dublin homeowners.

The first article titled **Alarming Statistics** outlines the leading causes of structure fires.

Last month we provided a checklist of ways to reduce the fire hazard in your home. Visit our Website and click on Information/ Newsletters/ February 2009.

The second article titled **Arson Prevention** outlines things you can do to minimize the likelihood that your home would be targeted



Station A
220 Summit Ave
Fort Washington PA
19034



Station B
Susquehanna and
Twining Roads
Dresher PA 19025



Fire Training Grounds
Twining Road

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

Alarming Statistics

By Howard Schmuckler

Source: U.S. Fire Administration / FEMA; and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

In 2007, the last year that statistics are currently available, fires killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined. There were 3,430 civilians that lost their lives, and 118 firefighters were killed while on duty. 84 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences. Homes are considered to be dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, townhouses, row houses, and condominiums.

There were an estimated 1.6 million fires reported in the United States in 2007, resulting in direct property loss of an estimated \$14.6 billion.

Of the 1.6 million fires, 530,500 were structure fires that resulted in 3,000 deaths (87 percent of all civilian fire deaths in 2007); as well as 87 percent of all civilian injuries in 2007, and \$7.4 billion loss in property.

84 percent of all civilian fire deaths in the U.S. in 2007 were in residential structure fires. 79 percent of all injuries to civilians were caused by residential structure fires. Property loss from residential structure fires was \$6,029,000.

Cooking is the leading cause (40%) of home structure fires and home fire injuries (36%). While only 4% of home fires started in the living room, den, or family room: these fires caused 24% of home fire deaths. 8% of reported home fires started in the bedroom, and caused 24% of home fire deaths, 21% of home

fire injuries, and 15% of the direct property damage. Smoking is still a leading cause of civilian home fire deaths.

December, January and February are the peak months for reported home structure fires and home fire deaths.

Almost two-thirds (63%) of reported home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

These statistics are astonishing. Every person needs to do everything that they can to prevent fires from occurring. Even if you think that you are doing everything possible, take a few moments and look around you. You will probably find some fire hazard that has been overlooked. In last month's edition of the Fort Washington Fire Company newsletter, we presented a home fire safety checklist. We strongly encourage you and your family to take the time and make the effort to complete that exercise. You may find that you are keeping a safe home, BUT you may be surprised to see ways that you are not. If you have any questions, or need assistance contact the Fire Prevention Unit at 215.646.2555 and follow the prompts.

The Fort Washington Fire Company is very active in trying to meet folks in the community, but we rather do so at a civic or social event than at an emergency in your home.

Arson Prevention

By Howard Schmuckler

Arson is a crime that affects everyone, no exclusions. Innocent people are injured or killed, their valuables are lost (many items have personal meaning much more than their monetary value), workers lose jobs, and cities lose tax dollars. There is also severe emotional affects, whether the fire strikes someone directly, or someone near to them.

During 2007, there were approximately 32,500 reported incidences of intentionally set structure fires in the United States. These fires resulted in 295 civilian deaths, and \$733,000,000 in property loss. No one and no area is immune from being a victim. Yes, we have had arson fires set in Upper Dublin Township.

The crime of arson is committed by children and adults. Children start fires for two reasons: curiosity and behavioral issues. Adults start fires because of mental issues (mainly destructive behavior, wanting attention, etc.), and for monetary gain.

Take responsibility for the safety of your home and family!

You'll help reduce the loss from this crime.

Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure a safe environment and teach safe behaviors. If done correctly, these lessons will impact the child, the family and the whole community. Parents can set a good example. Point out to your children the fire safety rules you follow, and discuss the dangers of fire. Explain how fire is a tool for adults to use, it is not for children, and that it is not to be played with. Control access to fire by keeping all matches

and lighters out of the reach of children, and teach them to tell an adult if they find them.

Learn to recognize the warning signs that indicate that a child may be prone to this kind of behavior. Check in waste baskets, under beds and in closets for burned or unburned matches, lighters, or other evidence your child is misusing fire. If you find evidence, react positively. Use it as a teaching opportunity. Monitor the situation closely, and if it continues, seek professional help. Among the resources available are your doctor, the local fire marshal, and your child's school principal.

Keep your home secure by locking doors, garage doors, gates and windows. BUT, make sure that windows, screens and doors **can be opened easily from the inside**, if needed for escape in case of a fire or other emergency.

Remove combustible material near all structures. Do not store papers, clothing, toys, furniture, or any other items that could be used to start a fire and to fuel the fire. Trim shrubs, trees and all other plant materials, so that they are away from the house and all other structures. This will not only prevent fire from spreading to the structures, but will also improve visibility to see any suspicious activity.

Leave outside lights on when it is dark, so that you and others can see if anything is occurring. If you do not have outside lights, or they are not working properly, have them repaired, or have new ones installed.

Install and maintain smoke alarms (detectors) and fire extinguishers. Check the batteries in the smoke alarms monthly, and change the batteries twice a year (when the clocks are changed in the spring and fall). Learn how and when to use a fire extinguisher.

If you own a business and have commercial dumpsters, place locks on the dumpsters. Do not allow dumpsters to become over-filled, so that it can not be closed and locked. Place the dumpsters and other containers at least five feet away from building walls and openings.

Immediately report any suspicious behavior that you see to the police. It is always best to call 9-1-1, report what you see or hear, and have the police come and check it out. Do not feel that you are bothering the police. Do not ignore it. Also, you could team up with neighbors to form a "Town Watch / Neighborhood Watch" group. Together, we can reduce the suffering from this crime.

Fire safety is something that everyone needs to be aware of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. ***Do not wait until it is too late, practice fire safety every day!*** If you have any questions or comments about this article, or any other fire safety subject, please feel free to call the Fire Company at 215-646-2555 or stop into either fire station any Monday night. The Fire Prevention Committee is available to present programs upon request. .