



Newsletter

Proudly Serving Upper Dublin Since 1908

November, 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 October the Fort Washington Fire Company responded to 48 Alarms, averaging 16.4 responders per call, totaling 286 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 — Fire Marshal Tim Schuck

By Denny Zwicker

This month, get to know Upper Dublin Fire Marshal, Tim Schuck. Tim is a salaried township employee and not a member of the Fire Company. While all the firefighters are volunteers, he has a close working relationship with the fire company, especially when a serious fire has occurred in the township.

Tim assumed the fire marshal duties 5 years ago after serving as the part-time fire marshal in Rockledge borough for 10 years. Prior to joining the staff at Upper Dublin, Tim was also the Director of Facilities at the Sisters of Holy Redeemer, which is part of the Holy Redeemer Health Care System. He is also currently an Assistant Fire Marshal in Cheltenham Township, where he was born 51 years ago and has lived all his life.

What exactly does a fire marshal do? The fire marshal's duties vary. In the event of a serious fire, Tim's responsibilities include determining the origin and cause. Fortunately, in Upper Dublin, most fires are determined to be accidental



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Visit our Website www.FortWashingtonFC.org

Profile, Continued

or unintentional. If Tim determines a fire to be arson, it becomes a crime scene and the police and fire marshal's office work together to solve the crime. In some cases, such as a fatal fire, the incident can escalate to a Pennsylvania State Police investigation. When a fire has left a building uninhabitable, Tim's office will work with the owners or family to obtain a board-up company, help with insurance matters, and secure the services of the Red Cross, if necessary.

Tim's office is also responsible for life safety within all businesses, retail establishments, schools and any place that the general public frequents. The fire marshal inspects these buildings to make sure they meet code requirements. Fire alarms and sprinkler systems must be operational. Hood systems in restaurants and commercial kitchens must be clean and functional. The fire marshal's office even checks to make sure that EXIT signs are lit and placed where they should be.

Anytime there is new construction in the township or renovation of an existing structure, the fire marshal's office reviews the plans and conducts inspections to ensure that the safety standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the International Code Council (ICC) are met. Tim makes it clear that all must comply and he reports that most building owners are responsible and willing to do so.

The challenge of the fire marshal's job is that all this requires ongoing training and continuing education to keep current with the codes and standards that are constantly changing. After graduating from Bishop McDevitt High School, Tim earned his associates degree from Montgomery County Community College. He is currently a certified fire and explosive investigator, a certified commercial building plan reviewer and inspector, and of course, a certified fire inspector. All of these certifications must be kept current via continuing education.

Perhaps the most important job experience for a fire marshal is to also be a firefighter. Tim joined the Cheltenham Hook and Ladder Company at age 18 and has served in various line officer and administrative capacities over the years, including Fire Chief for 13 years. He is currently Vice

President of the company and remains a very active firefighter.

When asked what his most interesting fire investigation has been to date, Tim laughs and says it was actually his first. He had been the fire marshal in Rockledge for less than a month in the early 1990's when the tiny borough was rocked by a 7-alarm factory fire. After working with the Pennsylvania State Police, the ATF, and securing the services of the Philadelphia Fire Department's arson dog, the fire was determined to be arson. However, no one has ever been charged and the crime remains unsolved.

More recently, Tim recalls 2 serious fires in Upper Dublin where his training paid off, and despite considerable destruction, he successfully traced the fires back to their points of origin. Discussions with the respective homeowners confirmed Tim's investigations and that both fires were inadvertently caused by the homeowner's actions.

The new Upper Dublin High School is currently taking up much of Tim's time. Working closely with Township Building Inspector, Roger Mason, Tim has helped oversee the project since the initial demolition and blasting permits were issued. Now that the building actually looks like a school, Tim reports that the construction has reached the stage where testing and inspection of the automatic fire alarm will begin soon, something in which he will be very involved.

On the personal side, Tim has been married for 23 years to his wife, a photographer. Their daughter is in her senior year at Bishop McDevitt so the college search has begun at the Schuck residence.

In closing, Tim would like to remind the residents of Upper Dublin Township that his office is always available to address any fire safety concerns a resident may have. Additionally, smoke detectors are available from the fire marshal's office free of charge.

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

YOUR HOME HEATERS ... ARE THEY SAFE?

By Howard Schmuckler



Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires (16%) during the months of December, January and February, and is second to cooking in home fires (21%) year-round. In 2006, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 64,100 reported U.S. home fires, with 540 civilian deaths, 1,400 civilian injuries, and \$943 million in direct property damage. In addition, there were **many** other unreported fires. Space heaters were involved in 30% of the home heating fires and 73% of fire deaths in 2006.

For the years 2003-2006, the leading factor contributing to home heating fires (28%) and deaths (46%) was heating equipment placed too close to combustible materials (things that can burn such as curtains, drapes, upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding). Heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or space heater should be placed at least three feet away from all combustible materials

Only use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.

Never use your oven or stove to heat your home.

Keep your furnace and other heating devices in proper working order. Have your heating equipment installed by a qualified heating technician, and have all of the equipment inspected and maintained by a professional on a regular basis.

Portable space heaters require proper ventilation, so they should be placed in an open area. Cords to portable heaters should be plugged directly into wall outlets that have sufficient capacity, do not use extension cords. Fuel must be stored in the proper safety



container and labeled with the contents, gasoline, kerosene or another. Never mix one product with another in the same container. Always refill the heater outdoors, never inside, and be certain that the heater is cool when refilled. Turn off all space heaters when you go to bed or leave the house. Keep all children and pets away from space heaters.

In your fireplace or wood stove, use only dry, seasoned wood to avoid the build-up of creosote, an oily deposit that easily catches fire and accounts for most chimney fires and the largest share of home heating



fires. Use only paper or kindling wood, not a flammable liquid accelerant, to start the fire. Do not use artificial logs in wood stoves. Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room. Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing them in a metal container, which is to be kept outside and a safe distance from your home. Chimneys and chimney connectors accounted for the largest share of home heating fire incidents. Failure to clean accounted for over half of the confined chimney and chimney connector fires.

Make sure fuel-burning equipment is vented to the outside, that the venting is kept clear and unobstructed, and that the exit point is properly sealed around the vent. This is to make sure that deadly carbon monoxide does not build up in the home. Install a Carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home, and outside each sleeping area. As you test your smoke alarms monthly; test your carbon monoxide detectors as well. It is well documented that carbon monoxide detectors have saved many lives.

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. Visit the Fort Washington Fire Company on the Internet at www.fortwashingtonfc.org.



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

Ladies Auxiliary Fall Flea Market November 7th

By Sheilagh Wagner

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Fort Washington Fire Company welcomes new members anytime. Most members are wives or mothers of firefighters but any Upper Dublin resident, age 18 and older, is welcome to join. We meet on the last Tuesday of every month except July and August. Our meetings are held at the firehouse on Summit Avenue in Fort Washington; we begin at 7:30 p.m.

Our main focus is to support the firefighters both financially through various fund-raisers and as "goodwill ambassadors". We help by handing out literature at the Fire Expo in September, serving food at "Housing Ceremonies" for new equipment, and various other activities the company may become involved in.

But we are not all about work either, we have, in the past, enjoyed dinner thea-

ters, demonstrations, our annual Holiday dinner party, and we are always welcome to ride in the parades with our firefighters. Please visit our Ladies Auxiliary Page on the Fire Company Website <http://www.fortwashingtonfc.org/main.asp?curid=199> or stop by on the last Tuesday of any month. Feel free to call us if you have questions. We would love to tell you more about our organization. Our number is 215-646-2555, Option #5.

Getting back to our fundraisers... Our semi-annual Flea Market is back and in full-force. The Fall Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, November 7th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We have over 50+ vendors and we offer both tables and spaces in a rain or shine indoor setting. Our kitchen is open and we offer a wide variety of delicious home-made items including soup, sandwiches; be sure to check out our fabulous bake table! Friday evening set-up is available for those not so early "early-birds" who rent tables. Please call 215-646-2555 and press Option #5 to leave a message if you are interested in reserving a spot or need more information. An Auxiliary member will call you back.



Training Update

By Eric Clauson

On October 18th, FWFC members participated in an emergency management drill hosted by Upper Dublin Township. This drill was one of several drills being held in the county. The focus of the drill was a simulated failure of the Loch Alsh Reservoir dam and the actions that would need to be taken. FWFC provided two chief officers at the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) and had a large contingent of apparatus and members responding to various simulated incidents in the Township. The drill concluded with a



brief critique and a summary of lessons learned. The drill served as a tool to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and



work to improve upon them, so we can be better prepared for an actual emergency. Thanks to all of the FWFC members who attended.

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Training Continued

Monday night's drill on October 19th focused on helicopter safety. Flight paramedic Blaine Leis from PennStar gave a presentation at the firehouse on safety issues, landing zone procedures and general knowledge of helicopters. Following the presentation, FWFC landed a PennStar helicopter and had a chance to ask questions and look at the helicopter up close. FWFC occasionally lands medical helicopters in the township, but sometimes sets up landing zones on Route 309 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike following serious vehicle accidents.

This training increased our knowledge and better prepared us to do our job of setting up a proper landing zone and securing the area. Many thanks to Blaine Leis for presenting this drill.

In November, we will be starting water rescue training and are already working on scheduling training for 2010.



Member Milestones

The FWFC is pleased to welcome Dan Cooper and Greg Pierce, our two newest members voted in on October 8, 2009. Cooper is 20 years old and a resident of Fort Washington. He was prompted to join the Fire Company because of his cousins who are firefighters, as well as friends of his who are members at Fort Washington. Pierce is 21 years old and also a resident of Fort Washington. Pierce joined the Fire Company because his father was a firefighter and because of his desire to serve the community.



Dan Cooper

Greg Pierce

We welcome our two newest volunteers and thank them for their willingness to serve their community.



Past President and a member since 1990, Tim Evard married the lovely Margaret (Maggie) Bratcher in an outdoor ceremony on the Historic grounds of Graeme Park in Horsham.

Tim is a police officer with Lower Gwynedd Township and Maggie teaches Art in the Philadelphia School System.

They honeymooned in the South with his motorcycle trailing behind their car. They cruised through the scenic Smoky Mountains including a fun-filled day at Dollywood.



Captain Andrew Rathfon and his wife Maureen have a new addition. On Tuesday, October 13th, 5lb 10oz future firefighter, Kane Lee Rathfon was welcomed into the FWFC family. Mom and baby are doing well. We're not sure about dad.



Kane Lee Rathfon