

The Back Step

The Newsletter of the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum

Vol. 1, No. 1

All the News We Feel Like Printing

March 2012

In This Issue:

- Welcome – 1
- Museum Leadership – 2
- Frederick County Muster – 2
- Accessions – 3
- Help Wanted – 3
- Water Woes – 3
- Coming Events – 4
- Editor's Angle – 4
- Rig from the Past – 5
- Recent Activities – 6
- SPAAMFAA Convention – 7
- Original Junior Hose Reel – 8

Welcome!

Welcome to the latest project of the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum and Preservation Society, Inc., **The Back Step**, a quarterly newsletter to friends and supporters of the museum. The newsletter is the idea of the editor-in-chief, Frank Schmerral, an active member of the museum and organizer of our muster on June 30, 2012, to be held in conjunction with the Emmitsburg Community Day.

The museum is entering the second year of operation. We were very pleased that over 650 people visited the museum in 2011, and are optimistic even greater attendance will occur in 2012. The newsletter will provide information of coming events, highlight local histories, and provide information of some of the artifacts and displays in the museum.

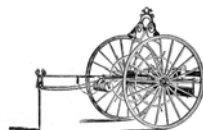
As a partner in fire service preservation, the National Fire Heritage Center shares space in the museum to promote the preservation of many of the written artifacts that have shaped our national fire service disciplines. Both the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum and the National Fire Heritage Center will be open on March 31, 2012 from 10:00AM to 4:00PM as part of the county wide Bell and History Day. The museum will reopen the weekend of April 14. The museum will be open Saturday and Sunday each weekend through October from 12 Noon to 4:00PM.

On behalf of the many people that have dedicated hundreds of hours to making the museum a reality, we are glad you have taken the time to read our newsletter, and seek your support. Hope to see you at the museum this year and hope you enjoy the first issue of **The Back Step!**

Clarence "Chip" Jewell, President

Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum and Preservation Society, Inc.

Copyright © 2012, Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum and Preservation Society, Inc., Emmitsburg, Maryland.
Editor.....Frank Schmerral
accobonack@aol.com



Museum Leadership

President: Chip Jewell

Secretary: Kathy Knipple

Treasurer: Paul Stull

Directors:

Brenda Harrison

Doug Harrison

"Doc" Kinney

John Maly

Wayne Powell

Jim Ridgley

Frank Schmearsal

Keyholders:

Chip Jewell

Wayne Powell

Jim Ridgley

Frederick County Muster

The Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum is sponsoring the first Frederick County Invitational Antique Fire Apparatus Muster on Saturday, June 30. Any fire apparatus that was built before 1988 and served (or serves!) in Frederick County, is invited to attend. The muster will be held on the museum grounds on South Seton Avenue in Emmitsburg, beginning at 1:00 PM and ending whenever the last rig leaves.

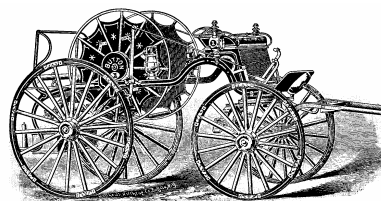
For those not familiar with the term, a muster is a gathering and exhibition of antique fire apparatus. There may or may not be contests, appearance judging, trophies, and other events. For many years the Chesapeake Chapter of SPAAMFAA held a muster each May at Culler Lake in Frederick's Baker Park; that muster now is held in June at the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster.

The Fire & Rescue Museum muster is being held in conjunction with Emmitsburg's annual Community Day celebration, an event right out of Norman Rockwell. Community Day includes games and other activities for all ages, plenty of food, music, a parade, and a fireworks extravaganza to close out the day. The parade steps off at 6:00 PM sharp; rigs attending the muster have been invited to participate as a unit, and we hope to have a number of hand-drawn rigs in the parade.

We plan to offer spectators the opportunity to fight fires the old-fashioned way (by pumping the Old Lady) throughout the afternoon, and we may offer other demonstrations as well. We also will have a "spectator's favorite" contest, with a trophy being awarded to the rig that is chosen by the spectators. (Voting will be done with donations, and stuffing the ballot box is encouraged!)

Attending apparatus does not have to be in perfectly restored, right-out-of-the-factory condition – it can be a work in progress, or even "barn-fresh." Our goal is to show Frederick County's firefighting heritage, and that can include showing the dings and dents resulting from years of service.

We are hoping for a large turnout of both antique apparatus and spectators for our first muster; if it is successful, the muster could turn into an annual event. Please feel free to print out the poster at the back of this newsletter, and display it where it will get the most attention.



Recent Accessions

Among the items recently donated or loaned to the Fire Rescue Museum are the following:

- “Romeo”, an 1893 Holloway hose carriage, placed on display at the Fire & Rescue Museum by Independent Hose Co. No. 1 of Frederick.
- A 1901 Badger two-wheeled chemical engine, restored and loaned to the Fire & Rescue Museum by Jefferson Fire Co.
- A section of burned timbers from the Loys Station bridge, donated by Dean Fitzgerald.
- A large display case made from damaged timbers from the Loys Station bridge, built and donated by Dean Fitzgerald.
- A collection of grenade extinguishers, loaned by Dan Hayward
- A hose reel, originally owned by Independent Hose Co. No. 1, purchased in 1901 by the New Windsor Vol. Fire Department and loaned by them to the Fire & Rescue Museum.

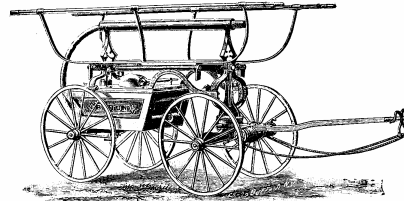
Help Wanted

For 2012, the hours of operation for the Fire & Rescue Museum have changed. We now will be open on both Saturday and Sunday, from Noon to 4:00 PM. (Previous hours were Saturdays only, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.)

Now that the Fire & Rescue Museum is going to be open on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons, there is a need for additional people to staff the museum when it is open. Since the museum first opened in 2010, we have depended on the same handful of people week in and week out. But it’s not fair to expect these same people to cover twice as many hours each week, so we need more help.

Duties of the museum staff members include welcoming visitors, answering questions, and a little light clean-up at the end of the day. There’s nothing complicated about it, and you get to meet interesting people from all over the country.

Please contact Chip Jewell (cjewell@frederickcountymd.gov or cjecc171@comcast.net) if you would like to help.



Water Woes

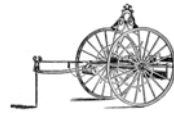
In early January, Wayne Powell was notified by Town of Emmitsburg employees that there was a water problem at the Fire & Rescue Museum. Upon investigation, it was found that the water supply line from the street was broken; water was coming in through the foundation and running out under the door for the south bay. Fortunately there was no damage to the interior of the museum or to any displays.

Estimates to repair the damage ranged from \$4,850 to nearly twice that; the work has been awarded to the low bidder, Mick’s Plumbing of Thurmont, and by the time you read this, the work will have been completed.

Although the National Fire Heritage Center has contributed 20 percent of the cost, this unexpected expense has put a halt to any other Fire & Rescue Museum expenditures for the time being. This would be a great time to consider making a donation to the museum! Donations can be sent to the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum, P.O. Box 382, Emmitsburg MD 21727.

Coming Events

- Mar. 10 Cleanup day at the Fire Rescue Museum, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
- Mar. 24 Cleanup day at the Fire Rescue Museum, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
- Mar. 31 Frederick County Bell and History Day; the Fire & Rescue Museum opens for the season. Regular hours Noon-4:00 PM, Saturday and Sunday; hours for opening day, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.
- Apr. 5 The Museum Committee meets at Junior Fire Co. No. 2 in Frederick, 7:00 PM.
- Apr. 7 Open House at the Baltimore City Fire Museum, 414 N. Gay Street, Baltimore, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM
- May 3 The Museum Committee meets at Junior Fire Co. No. 2 in Frederick, 7:00 PM
- May 5 Steam Day at the Fire Museum of Maryland in Lutherville, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
- May 15 Deadline for the next issue of **The Back Step**.
- June 2 Chesapeake Antique Fire Apparatus Ass'n muster at the Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster, 9:30 AM-2:30 PM
- June 7 The Museum Committee meets at Junior Fire Co. No. 2 in Frederick, 7:00 PM.
- June 30 First Frederick County Invitational Muster at the Fire & Rescue Museum, 1:00 – 7:00 PM



Angle

Editor's

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **The Back Step**, the quarterly newsletter of the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum. In this and succeeding issues, we will endeavor to keep you informed of activities at the Fire & Rescue Museum, coming events, and anything else in which we think you might be interested. Your feedback is welcomed; please send your comments to the editor, whose e-mail address is accobonack@aol.com.

The name of this publication reflects the fact that, just like the displays in the museum, riding the back step of an engine is a thing of the past. Today's firefighters ride in air-conditioned cabs on their way to or from an alarm, far different from the "good old days" of riding the

(continued on page 6)

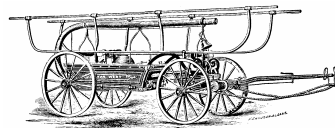
Rig from the Past



This Ahrens-Fox Model I-K-4 pumper, serial no. 756, was in service with United Steam Fire Engine Co. No. 3 of Frederick from 1919 until 1939, when it was replaced by Engine 32, the Ahrens-Fox Model IT now on display in the museum. Its pump was rated at 750 gallons per minute, and was driven by a four-cylinder engine. The rig originally rode on hard rubber tires.

The Ahrens-Fox company was located in Cincinnati, Ohio; their specialty was building powerful piston pumps. For many years, companies 2, 3, and 4 all had Ahrens-Fox apparatus in service: piston pumps at companies 2 and 3, a rotary-gear pumper and later a centrifugal pumper at Company 2, and an 85-foot tillered aerial at Company 4. (Company 2 is the only fire company in the United States known to have had Ahrens-Fox rotary-gear, piston, and centrifugal pumps all in service at the same time.)

Acquired by Buck Gladhill of Damascus, this engine now is owned by his grandson, Marshall Gladhill, and appears occasionally at musters in the area. The photograph was taken at the Ahrens-Fox muster at the Fire Museum of Maryland last May, but you'll be able to see this engine at the Fire Museum Muster on June 30.



Recent Activities

Here are some of the activities that have taken place at the Fire & Rescue Museum in recent months:

On Friday, October 14, the museum was open for the dedication of the National Fire Heritage Center. Dignitaries from across the country (including Benjamin Franklin!) were on hand.

On October 15, the museum was open extended hours as part of the annual Fallen Firefighters Weekend at the National Fire Academy.

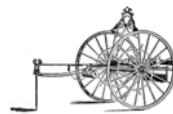
On Saturday, October 22, the museum was open for the Ladies Auxiliary convention being held in Emmitsburg.

The Pennsylvania Pump Primers, the central Pennsylvania chapter of SPAAMFAA, visited the museum and the National Fire Academy on Saturday, November 5.

The museum was open again on Saturday, December 10, as part of the Frederick County Museums by Candlelight program; we also collected Toys for Tots that day for the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Santa was on hand (in his Class B's), as was Miss Frederick County Fire Prevention.



Finally, even though we had no “facilities” because of the water problem, we entertained about forty visitors from the SPAAMFAA Winter Convention in Gettysburg on February 3.



Editor's Angle *(continued)*

back step and clinging to a handrail while putting on your turnout coat. (Come to think of it, that back step was air-conditioned too, especially on a nice crisp winter night!)

Our goal is to prepare four issues a year, in March, June, September, and December, with the deadline for submitting material being the 15th of the previous month. (And we encourage you to submit material for publication – we don't plan on writing all of this ourselves!) As is typical with such goals, however, deadlines and publication dates are cast not in concrete but in Silly Putty. Production will be limited to electronic media; if you simply must have a printed copy, you'll have to print the PDF!

SPAAMFAA Convention in Gettysburg

SPAAMFAA, the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America, held its 2012 Winter Convention at the Eisenhower Inn in Gettysburg, February 1-4. The convention was hosted by the Central Pennsylvania Chapter of SPAAMFAA, also known as the Pennsylvania Pump Primers.

Convention activities included business meetings, seminars on restoration techniques and other topics, and bus tours to local points of interest. One tour visited the Crimson Fire facility near Lancaster. Another tour visited historic fire houses in Harrisburg. A third tour visited the National Fire Academy and the Fire & Rescue Museum of Frederick County; we had about forty visitors on that tour.

The winter convention usually is held farther south, and usually includes an antique apparatus muster on Saturday. However, because of the vagaries of February weather in this area, this time only an indoor muster of hand-drawn apparatus was scheduled. Since the weather was not too bad, there

also were a handful of motorized antiques in the parking lot, as well as quite a few modern pieces from nearby companies. The Fire & Rescue Museum brought the Old Lady and water tender for



the entire convention; they were displayed prominently in the hotel lobby until the Saturday evening banquet, when they were moved into the banquet hall. Company 1 brought Romeo, its 1893 Holloway hose carriage, for the muster; unfortunately the doorway into the ballroom was an inch too low, so Romeo had to stay outdoors.

At the concluding banquet, Chip Jewell performed his living history presentation on early firefighting in Frederick. He was followed by an actor portraying Benjamin Franklin, then a contingent of Zouave re-enactors, and finally James Getty as Abraham Lincoln.

Our museum and the National Fire Heritage Center had display tables at the muster, and we spoke to many attendees about the missions of the two organizations. Special thanks to Wayne Powell, Jim Ridgley, and Johanna Schmersal for staffing the tables.

Original Junior Hose Reel Possibly Found

The most recent addition to the apparatus inventory of the Junior Fire Co. No. 2 is actually one of the oldest pieces of fire equipment in Frederick County. A massive hose reel manufactured by the Silsby Manufacturing Company of Seneca Falls, NY, may well



be the original hose reel purchased by the Junior Fire Co. No. 2 in 1876 to accompany the Silsby steam pumper .

The reel, offered for sale by Wolfe Antiques, was displayed along East Patrick St. for several weeks before it was determined the hose reel could be a lost artifact of Frederick County fire service history. After receiving several calls inquiry about the hose reel, Chip Jewell, a life member of the Junior Fire Co. No. 2 and president of the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum, stopped by to investigate. "Because of the large size, I initially believed the reel was most likely an industrial fire brigade reel" mentioned Jewell. But, upon further investigation Jewell discovered the words Seneca Falls, New York and Silsby Manufacturing cast on the large wheel covers.

Further research of the design of the hose reel revealed the correct markings and metal work for a hose reel built in 1876. Todd Johnson, president of the Junior Fire Co. No. 2, and Jim Deater, Historical and Archives Committee Chairman of the fire company, both visited the site and agreed it was a strong possibility the reel originally was owned by the Juniors and purchase of the reel was necessary to assure it remained in Frederick.

"It would be a tremendous loss to our company, as well as the history of Frederick, not to make sure this reel remains local," stated Johnson. "There is no doubt the reel is of the correct vintage, and, as the Juniors had the only Silsby pumper in Frederick, there is a very high probability the hose reel was ours." He also noted further research is being spearheaded by Jim Deater to confirm the lineage of the reel.

The hose reel is in reasonably good condition, with some slight damage to the wheels and a few parts missing. But, overall, the hose reel is in good shape for a 135-year-old piece of fire equipment. The reel is now owned by the Junior Fire Co. No. 2 and is in storage at the fire company on North Market Street. Documentation continues from a variety of sources to determine if the hose reel is the original Silsby hose reel purchased by the company in 1876. Restoration will be determined once authenticity of the reel is determined.

The First
Frederick County Invitational



**Antique
Fire Apparatus
Muster**

Presented By

The Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum

Saturday, June 30, 2012

In conjunction with Emmitsburg Community Day

**Any Fire Apparatus, Built Before 1988, That Served in
Frederick County, Maryland, Is Invited to Participate**

Muster Begins At 1:00 PM

(at the Museum, 301 South Seton Ave., Emmitsburg)

Parade Steps Off at 6:00 PM

For more information:

Frank Schmearsal, 301-447-3523 (accobonack@aol.com)