

The Spanner



Winter 2008

Issue 12

Lingohocken Fire Company • Post Office Box 102 • Wycombe, PA 18980 • Telephone 215-598-3500
Contributors: Cheryl Gorski • Greg Jakubowski • Wayne Murphy • Chas McHenry • Chester Pogonowski • George Rowe

A LETTER FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF

Greetings to one and all during this most festive holiday season. I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to read the most recent edition of *The Spanner* and for your support of our fund drive. The officers and members of the Lingohocken Fire Company truly thank you for your assistance.

Last year, we started our campaign and sale of our highly reflective address signs. As you drive around the area, you will notice the Blue Reflective signs at the end of driveways marking the address. If you are one of those families who have purchased and affixed the sign to your post or mailbox, we thank you so very much. For those of you without these highly visible signs, locating your address in an emergency is extremely difficult. With our coverage area ever expanding, we cannot stress the importance of a clear, highly visible address sign enough. Nicely landscaped bushes or mailbox posts decorated for the

holidays can prevent us from seeing your street address numbers. Brass numbers look great during the day but are not visible at night. Please make sure that your numbers are reflective and are not blocked by foliage or decoration. Numbers placed on the home are also very difficult to see. All these situations are intensified by the dark of night and inclement weather. To purchase a highly reflective address sign for your home (\$15 includes hardware), please visit our website or stop by the Wrightstown Township building for a sign order form.

May you have a safe and joyous holiday season. Once again, thank you for taking the time to read *The Spanner* and assisting with our fund drive. Feel free to stop by the firehouse on Tuesday evenings to learn more about us and how you might get involved.

Wayne G. Murphy, Jr, BS, NREMT-P
Chief, Lingohocken Fire Company

Chief's Safety Tips

Here are some important tips to remember all season long, to decrease the chances of having the fire company come out for an unwanted visit:

- Change your smoke detector batteries once a year. Many people do not realize that their smoke detectors, even the hard wired type, all have battery backups.
- Keep your smoke and heat detectors clean of spider webs and other insects. A good vacuuming once a month will help greatly. This is also a great time to test the detector and see if the family is ready to move when they hear the alarm. Remember, exit drills save lives.
- Cover the smoke detectors with a plastic bag before starting any dusty home improvements.
- Do not spray room freshener or cleaners near the face of the detector.
- Smoke detectors and heat detectors, as well as carbon monoxide detectors all have a 5 year life span, so check the date on the inside of the unit and replace it when necessary.
- Do not place pots on the stove and walk away. The latest report by the National Fire Protection Association shows that cooking mishaps cause nearly 40% of all house fires. Keep a proper fitting lid for your pots or frying pans handy. If you have a fire extinguisher in your home, be sure you know how to use it. If not, call the firehouse or send me an email to chief@lfc.org and we will be glad to set up an appointment for your training.

SANTA CLAUS MAKES SPECIAL REQUEST!

VISIT TO LINGOHOCKEN FIRE COVERAGE AREA IS CHANGED

Lingohocken firefighters have brought Santa through the area for many years on Christmas Eve. It seems that last year, boys and girls asked Santa for last minute gifts that he didn't have time to fill. To avoid any disappointed children, Santa asked that we bring him around to see you earlier - on **Saturday, December 22!** Listen for the sirens to alert you to his arrival. See back cover for the complete schedule.



HONORING OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS

Volunteer firefighters often serve their communities in relative anonymity, deriving satisfaction from doing their job well. Only occasionally are they thanked or are their contributions to the community acknowledged.

In an attempt to recognize their service we are embarking on a project to place markers and memorial flags on the graves of our late active members. We need to obtain their family's permission and the interment location. Our markers will be placed permanently with the flags in place from Memorial Day until Labor Day each year.

If you wish to receive this recognition for a loved one, please send a note that includes the firefighter's name, service dates and the place of burial to George Rowe at the address on the front of this newsletter.

Why Do You Have That Siren?

The evolution of our alerting devices is a part of the Lingohocken Fire Company's history.

The Fire Company began back in 1913 when a group of local leaders met at the Wycombe Hotel (now the Victorian Wycombe Inn) to organize fire protection for the farms, homes and businesses in the area. Soon a 1909 Buick truck was purchased. Albert Thompson, owner of the lumberyard (now Histan's Supply), offered to house it in one of his buildings. By this time telephones were in limited use and a telephone exchange was in a house just east of the Wycombe Baptist Church. Outside of the lumberyard office a large steel ring, that had been the rim of a locomotive wheel, was hung. When a fire call came, it was routed through the exchange to the lumberyard office and then the secretary would do her part and use a large hammer to ring that bell and alert the volunteers. In those days there were fewer engine noises, windows were open in the spring and summer and sound carried more clearly.

By July 1918 the need for a better alarm was recognized and a committee formed. The minutes show that each month the committee reported progress until December 1921 when the president of the Company thanked the committee for its satisfactory performance and an electric siren was erected.

In 1920 a Bell Telephone line was installed in the home of the Chief and by January 1924 extension phones were in the homes of the apparatus crew.

Later, telephones with the Fire Company's number were installed in two member's homes and in Abel Landes' General Store (now the Wycombe Post Office). Any one of the three phones could be answered with the recipient setting off the siren. Eventually, a relay system was developed whereby some of the women of the community, on hearing the siren, would phone firefighters who may not have heard the call. This system continued until the early 1960s when Instalerts – radio receivers that were sounded by relays connected to the siren – were purchased. Some of these devices are still operating in the homes of firefighters.

By the 1970s, Bucks County fire departments were being dispatched by radio via the County Courthouse and firefighters wore pagers. The phone calls were no longer necessary. The siren remains in use as a safety alert for the immediate fire house neighborhood. The siren only sounds between 6:00AM and 10:00PM and runs three cycles instead of six.

We continue to be dispatched with increasingly sophisticated and expensive pagers in our effort to provide the community more efficient fire response. Recent Federal and State grants have enabled us to put laptop computers in our trucks—making maps and pre-plans easily accessible.

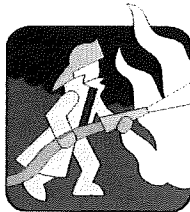
Ninety-four years have seen many changes, and surely, there are more to come!

FROM NEW RESIDENT TO NEW FIREFIGHTER

Having recently moved into Furlong last August, we received a copy of *The Spanner* newsletter. We found it to be very interesting and were impressed with everything that the fire company does for the area it serves. Upon reading that volunteers were needed, we thought it would be a great way to get involved and give something back to the community. I decided to email the chief and volunteer my husband to become a firefighter, and that email has led to a great experience for our whole family.

After expressing an interest in joining, several members called us to discuss volunteering and answer all of our questions. Tony was able to attend several meetings to meet the members, all of whom have been helpful and appreciative of him getting involved. The time spent in class over the past

four months will soon culminate in graduation from Firefighter One at Bucks County Public Safety Training Center.



We have been very impressed at how hard the team works and that they feel responsible for the well being of our community. The members are very appreciative of the donations it receives from residents, and works to make those dollars go as far as possible to improve the fire company.

It has been a pleasure participating in some of the activities that Lingohocken Fire Company is a part of, for example; the Grange Fair, Fire Prevention at many of the schools and the Open House at Station 35. We are looking forward to meeting more people at the Pancake Breakfast.

Submitted by **Jill Roggio**

VEHICLE EXHAUST REMOVAL SYSTEM

Everyone coming to the Pancake Breakfast this year will notice something new in our engine bay. New ductwork and fans are being installed to help keep our firefighters safe.

We are able to install a state-of-the-art exhaust system through a Federal Grant program. The system hooks up to each vehicle and removes all of the carcinogen-containing exhaust, toxic dust and fumes from the building. Prior to the system, the firefighters that remained in the building were breathing in these chemicals. It will also help contain our heating costs as we will no longer need to leave our 25-foot doors open to air out the building in winter.

These duct systems are designed to capture all vehicle exhaust at the source through a series of ducts and tracks. Once the sensors detect an engine's exhaust, an exterior fan is engaged and pulls the harmful exhaust out of the building and away from firefighters, gear and valuable equipment. The system will help to maintain a cleaner and safer firehouse environment.

This system is being installed in each of our bays in Stations 35 and 95 and also in the Central Bucks Ambulance bay in the original part of the building. NIOSH and OSHA have declared diesel exhaust an "occupational carcinogenic hazard". In our on-going efforts to protect those who protect you, this system is a step toward maintaining a safer, cleaner environment for our firefighters. In turn, a healthier firefighter is better able to serve you.

ASSISTING IN MISSISSIPPI

In July, two members of the Lingohocken Fire Company joined six other firefighters from Upper Makefield, Hartsville, Bryn Athyn and Berwyn Fire companies to bring some relief to some very overworked and dedicated personnel at the West Hancock Fire Rescue in Pearlinton, Mississippi. Pearlinton is where the eye of Hurricane Katrina made landfall and completely devastated everything in its path. With all the talk about New Orleans, smaller communities with an amazing amount of perseverance are often not recognized.

A town of about 3,000 was completely submerged when the storm surges swept across the Pearlinton River. Most of the homes that were not washed away were left uninhabitable. Many are beyond repair. Piles of debris can still be seen lying on the side roads. Shells of vacant and abandoned homes sit empty waiting for grant, insurance and FEMA monies to be rebuilt, while families live in small camping trailers on the same properties not able to even drink the water from their own wells. The Fire Chief and his wife are living in a trailer at the Firehouse because their home was condemned. Their new home has been sitting on their lot for 18-months, held up in red tape from the loss of title history and other documents.

West Hancock Fire Rescue Service is a volunteer fire company with a modest tax base that, before the storm, annually ran 400 to 500 emergency response calls, including medical response, with fifty members. After the storm they were left with about seven active members and upwards of 1000 calls per year. All this is being done with the one piece of apparatus that rode out the storm at the

nearby Stennis Space Center, a 2006 tanker purchased through a federal grant and a wide variety of

donated equipment. A donated 1983 pumper is handling most of their calls. The Chief is driving a donated 1990 GMC SUV with a cracked windshield and 162,000 miles on it, with no money for repairs.

West Hancock Fire Rescue covers approximately 75 square miles that include a plastics factory, several small chemical plants, a contaminated water facility and homes in every manner of construction. There's even a church that now sits, completely intact, about 150 yards across the street from where it was on August 28, 2005. Any mutual aid is at least 15 miles away and ambulances are 15 to 20 minutes away.

Our group handled 13 calls in the six days we spent there, including a mutual aid woods fire, a Peterbilt tractor fire, several serious car wrecks and medical calls to check on the hundreds of volunteers. The volunteers from church groups and other organizations have vowed to keep sending people to help for the duration of the estimated 5-year rebuild.

Our group also conducted inspections of local temporary housing facilities, gave a training demonstration on using rescue airbags to lift large objects off of victims, and a lecture on the hazards of methamphetamine labs and the improvised security that people have come up with to protect their labs. We also did a makeover on the 1983 fire truck using parts from other donated trucks that did not run, helped to hang 78 sheets of dry wall on the station's second floor for a future office and bunk room.

Shortly after the storm, Lingohocken donated our 1973 Hahn pumper to the neighboring Waveland, Mississippi. It remains their first-out apparatus. Point Pleasant Fire Company donated its old brush truck to Claremont Harbor Fire Company, a short ride away.

In June, Hope and Larry Padalino spent two weeks in Pearlinton assisting the Fire Department. They and their twin boys drove down in their motor home and lived in it in the Firehouse parking lot.

We were all moved and inspired by the dedication and determination of the members of the West Hancock Fire and Rescue Service.



IMPROVED INSURANCE RATING FOR WRIGHTSTOWN

In March 2004, Lingohocken members began a project to prove to the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) that we are capable of using water tankers to flow an equivalent quantity of water as fire hydrants do for Wrightstown Township. The ISO sets ratings for communities around the country upon which many insurance companies rely to set their rates. Wrightstown does not have any public water nor any pressurized hydrants. Due to the foresight of the Fire Company and the Township, dry hydrant water sources do exist within the township. Dry hydrants are non-pressurized feeder pipes that allow water to be drawn from ponds, basins and underground tanks. It takes a little extra work to get the water from these but we practice and have proven that we can make them work well.

ISO rates communities from 1-10 with only a few dozen reaching 1. A rating of 10 indicates there are no fire departments within 5 miles of a residence. In all of Pennsylvania there are only 19 fire departments rated 3 or better. Most departments are rated 9. Historically, Wrightstown has been a 9 and we wanted to improve. However, as water supply is 40% of the rating, hydrants are very important. ISO requires proof of a sustainable water supply in order to come out to re-evaluate the remaining 60% of a community. ISO considers that any location within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant supplied with public water has a sustainable water supply. The difference in insurance rates can be quite significant without hydrants.

For many years Lingohocken and our neighboring companies have prided ourselves on being capable of flowing up to 1,000 gallons a minute in most of our coverage area using tanker trucks to supply water at a fire scene. Our tankers have been called as far away as Falls and Abington Townships to shuttle water to



building fires that were without hydrant access. To improve our rating with ISO and provide insurance premium savings to our residents, we focused on Wrightstown Township since we cover 100% of the municipality. The number of dry hydrants meets the ISO criteria for alternative water sources.

Dumack Engineering wrote a professional evaluation of the 50-year drought levels of several of the water supply ponds and the Mill and Neshaminy Creeks. We conducted numerous tanker shuttle drills with neighboring fire companies and we laid a 2,600-foot large diameter supply hose to prove that we could obtain the required water flow levels. We are capable of pumping nearly 1,000 gallons per minute within 12 minutes of arrival at a fire one-half mile from the nearest water source. We dumped and filled water tankers from a dozen area fire companies to time how fast this could be achieved – always striving for the 1,000 gpm. We tested our pumps yearly, tightened pre-plans, run cards, maps and training records for a 2005 submission to ISO. While it is documented as "one of the best alternative water supply submissions {ISO had} ever seen", we faced another full year of submissions before an on-site evaluation was set.

In March 2007 the ISO reviewed our call, training and testing records and evaluated our equipment. We then spent several hours with tankers from four surrounding communities to be evaluated on timing of our dumps and fills, large handline in-service timing and dry hydrant connections.

Effective October 1, 2007, Wrightstown Township was awarded an ISO rating of 7. We are proud to be the first Bucks County community with public hydrants more than 1,000 feet away from structures to be given a rating lower than 9.

To find out if the lower rating impacts your insurance costs, we recommend that you contact your insurance agent. Tell him/her of the new ISO rating of 7 for Wrightstown Township. If you experience a drop in your premiums, please let us know by sending an email to chief@lfc.org or send a note to the address on the cover.

SANTA CLAUS RUN -- DECEMBER 22, 2007

2:00PM - 3:00PM
 Devonshire Estates
 Oxfordshire, Phase 1
 Gazebo, Playground, Phase 2 Gazebo,
 Buckinghamshire
3:15PM - 4:30PM
 Buckingham Forest:
 Powder Horn @ Trotters,
 @ Green Ridge
 Green Ridge @ Hedgerow,
 @ Forest Hill, @ Deer
 Meadow, @ Wheatfield
 Springtown @ Winterbridge
 Forest Grove Church
 Upper Mountain Road

Edge Hill Road
4:45PM - 6:00PM
 Buckingham Springs
 Spring Meadow, Comm. Ctr.

2:00PM - 2:45PM
 Buck. Valley Nursing Home
3:00PM - 3:30PM
 Fox Hill @ Martindell
 Warner Meadows

3:45PM - 4:45PM
 Alexanders Ct., Skoures Ln.,
 Warner Way, Fire
 Creek, Fire Thorn,
 Hunters Woods, Ridge,
 Woodland, Ranch,

Brownsburg @ Colts Neck
5:00PM - 6:30PM
 Wrenwood Way, J. Chapman Dr.
 W., Hampton Court, White Gate,
 Buckman @ Maher, Neshaminy
 Cliffs, Hallowell @ Wooley Run

2:00PM - 2:30PM
 Rushland Post Office, Estates of
 Balamore, Swamp Rd @ Mega
 Way, Swamp Rd @ Apple Hill,
 Smith between Forest Grove &
 Swamp

2:45PM - 3:45PM
 Dark Hollow @ MacClesfield, @
 Camelot, Mozart Road, Lower
 Mountain @ Franklyn, @

Devonshire, @ Lookaway, @ No
 Name, Holicong @ New Hope, @
 New, @ Ridge, @ Towerview
4:00PM - 5:00PM

Street @ Windy Hollow, Lurgan
 Road, Eastburn Drive,
 Buckmanville Road, Pineville Road,
 Pine Lane

5:10PM - 6:00PM
 Township Line @ Brian, Cherry @
 Benjamin, Park to Durham, Cherry
 @ Washington, Cedar Lane, Penns
 Park @ Cedar, Penns Park
 Church

