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FAIR HAVEN FIRE COMPANY No. 1 Newsletter

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FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF
Mike Reddy

FIRST AID CAPTAIN
Joe Truex

FIRE POLICE CAPTAIN
Doug MacFarland

WATER RESCUE CAPTAIN
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AUXILIARY PRESIDENT
Dale Connor

FIRST AID SQUAD CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF SERVICE TO FAIR HAVEN

It was 75 years ago. The Fair Haven Fire Company was 26 years old, and the members decided the town needed a first aid squad. The Fire Department assigned nine firemen to be first aiders, bought a used white hearse for \$500, parked it at a local gas station, and thus, in early 1930, the Fair Haven First Aid Squad was born. The all-volunteer organization has provided around-the-clock emergency services for no fee ever since that humble beginning. Soon after it was formed, the Squad was answering more than eighty calls annually—a fraction of the calls it responds to today, but a noteworthy accomplishment at the time. In the years to come the Squad found itself called to some of the most famous and dramatic tragedies of our time.

To mark its 75th anniversary, the First Aid Squad will honor its 41 current members and the dozens of members who went before them with a dinner at the Nauvoo Grill on Saturday, May 21. Joe Truex, First Aid Squad Captain, says the occasion will be both happy and solemn. “Obviously, we’re called into action when people are suffering or in trouble, and our mission is a serious one. So we don’t often take the time to celebrate. But Squad has clearly been a huge benefit to the town over the past 75 years. It’s one of the best in the county. And that’s something we want to celebrate.”

Almost from the beginning, the Fair Haven First Aid Squad responded to scenes that are still etched in the nation’s history. The

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CHIEF’S REPORT...

This is my first report as Chief of the Fire Department, and I want to start by expressing my appreciation to all of the residents and merchants of Fair Haven for the wonderful support you give our organization. As you probably know, we are an all-volunteer outfit, and we cannot exist without that kind of support.

My objective for this report is to introduce this year’s officer lineup and to get you interested in fire prevention — something that you are in a better position to carry out than we are. First, here are the 2005 Line Officers for the Fire Department:

- Mike Reddy—Chief
- Paul Lenskold—Deputy Chief
- Robert Townshend—1st Asst. Chief
- Mike Wiehl—2nd Asst. Chief.

The four of us are working together as a team to provide the most capable leadership possible in fire suppression and in dealing with other emergencies—all at no cost to you. We’re privileged to have three young new members in the Department who are in various stages of their training at the Middletown Fire Academy and the Monmouth County Fire Academy. They will join all of our firefighters in the 26 training drills as well as three “live burn” simulations at the Middletown Academy this year. In

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(Chief's Report—Continued from page 1)

short, we're doing our part to be prepared for fire and other emergencies, when they do occur.

What we need your help on, however, is fire prevention. We have all read of the heart-wrenching loss of children's lives in fires in New Jersey this year—often resulting from conditions that simply didn't have to exist. I encourage you to take the lead in your family or business in looking for fire hazards and taking action to eliminate them. Here are some hazards—and their preventions - that have been the cause of recent fire casualties in New Jersey:

- New appliances that draw more electrical power than existing wiring is equipped to handle. Never add a higher amperage fuse or circuit breaker if you're having trouble with an appliance. Call your electrician for advice!
- Undersized windows—or windows fitted with air conditioning units — that block the primary emergency escape route. Develop a fire escape plan with your entire family that accommodates these windows and practice it at least once a year!
- Clothes dryers or dishwashers that are left unattended while they are running. We had a potentially disastrous clothes dryer fire in Fair Haven this past Christmas Eve. Fortunately, the homeowner was home and we were promptly alerted — allowing us to contain the fire with minimal property loss and no injuries. If you are leaving home, shut down the appliances!

Working together, we can minimize damage and injuries that result from fire. Let's make this be an "uneventful" year.

Finally, let me offer my personal congratulations to the First Aid Squad on their 75th Anniversary. The Fire Department and First Aid Squad make a great team!

Mike Reddy
Chief, 2005

make anything out of wood or plastic." He spent 32 years at the Fort, helping make prototypes of the military radios that were created there, including the radio President Nixon used to talk to Neil Armstrong on the moon.

As pleased as he is with all of his gadgets, he's even prouder of his—and his family's—commitment to fire and rescue work in the region. Lou has been a first aider for more than 40 years—he became a volunteer at Fort Monmouth in 1963, and joined Fair Haven's First Aid Squad in 1977. His father was an Officer of the Independence Fire Company in Red Bank. His two sons, Larry and Wayne, served as line officers in Fair Haven's First Aid Squad and Fire Department, and his granddaughter Debbie is an EMT and member of the First Aid Squad. "That's four generations," he is quick to point out.

What impresses his colleagues most, though, is that Lou continues to turn out regularly for emergency calls, despite his 76 years. "He's incredible," says Hal Trenton, another regular on the squad. "It's hard enough for me, and I'm a 'youngster' compared to Lou. I don't know how he does it." Lou says he doesn't plan to slow down. "I love this." And if you saw the grin on his face when his invention saved the child on the ice, you'd understand.

Lou Hartman - Fair Haven's Indefatigable First Aider, Inventor, Septuagenarian*

When the Fair Haven Water Rescue Unit rescued a little girl stuck on a frozen pond this past winter, there was one member of the Unit at the scene who was especially proud. Lou Hartman, who is celebrating his 76th birthday this month, helped introduce into Fair Haven's arsenal of rescue gear the clever contraption that was used to rescue her. The device was as simple as it was ingenious: a red plastic container (a plastic detergent bottle, actually) with a rope coiled inside. A squad member was able to throw the assembly to the girl and hold the other end of the rope. She then grabbed the container and was safely pulled off the thin ice.

It was just one of the many tools Lou has devised or adapted in his 28 years in the Fire Company. Much of his creativity has been devoted to the First Aid Squad, where he was Captain back in 1981. To help drivers back the ambulances safely into their narrow spaces at the firehouse, he designed a painted line on the floor and reflector on the back wall. "When everything lines up, you can't miss," he says (not every driver would agree). If you fall through the ice and are too numb to grab a rope or a ladder, another of Lou's inventions might save you. It's a long pole with a leather loop at the end. Rescuers can twist the loop around your wrist and pull you free. When Lou saw that rescuers using the Jaws of Life at a car accident sometimes had trouble with the couplings on hydraulic lines, he machined some notches in them that make them easier to use while wearing heavy gloves. "I'm always looking for ways to make the work easier," says Lou.

How did Lou get so handy? After WWII he worked in construction and helped build many of the homes in and around Fair Haven. When the building boom peaked, he went to work as a boat builder, helping make the famous "Sea Bright Skiffs." In 1960, he left the boating industry and started a career at Fort Monmouth. "By then, I was considered a woodworker, not a carpenter. I could



Lou Gets Ready for the Next Run

* septuagenarian (noun): sep'tu'a'ge'nar'i'an [somebody in the 8th decade of life]

(FIRST AID SQUAD Continued from p. 1)

Squad was there when the S.S. Morro Castle sank off Asbury Park in 1934, and it raced to the Hindenburg disaster in Lakehurst in 1937. A passenger train plunged from a bridge into the Raritan River in 1951, and the Squad was there to help. More recently, as survivors of the World Trade Center attack staggered off the ferries in Atlantic Highlands September 11, 2001, Fair Haven's ambulances, like those of many surrounding towns, were on scene, providing first aid and bringing stunned passengers back home.

The mission of the First Aid Squad hasn't changed much over the years, but its resources and techniques have improved significantly. In the early 1960's the Squad recognized the need for an underwater rescue team to assist with accidents on the nearby rivers. A dive team was subsequently formed and became the First Aid Squad's "SCUBA Team." Over the years, the SCUBA team evolved into a combined "Water Rescue Unit" of the Squad and the Fire Department, with its own boats and specialized rescue equipment. Ambulances have changed, as well, from the hearse-like Cadillac ambulances of the 1960s and early 1970s to the truck-body units that carry much more sophisticated equipment and provide much more room for Squad members to carry out their duties. In 1998, the Fire Company acquired a heavy duty crash and rescue truck and equipped it with the tools used to swiftly extricate victims from serious vehicle accidents.

Today's First Aid Squad members are better trained and equipped than in years past, too. All Squad members undergo 60 hours of

training to become First Responders, and many have chosen to become Emergency Medical Technicians, or EMTs, which requires 180 hours of training and hours of annual retraining. "In the old days it was 'scoop and run'," says Bill Acker, who joined the squad in 1974, and served as Captain in 1979, 1998, and again in 2002. The emphasis was on getting patients into the ambulance and off to the hospital as quickly as possible. Speed is still important, says Acker. But now Squad members have gear that allows them to stabilize patients at the scene of the call and electronic devices to monitor vital signs such as blood pressure, pulse rate, and blood oxygen levels. These pre-hospital stabilization steps improve the patient's chances for a smooth recovery.

As the population of Fair Haven has grown, the number of first aid calls has steadily increased, and now numbers around 400 per year. A particular source of pride for the First Aid Squad is the large number of members who respond promptly to every call, in spite of the growing number. While many squads sometimes struggle to get a team together and frequently require mutual aid from adjoining towns, Fair Haven consistently manages to get a crew promptly for virtually every call. "We did not miss a call last year," reports Captain Truex. "Not only do we get the ambulance moving very quickly, but there's usually several members who go directly to the scene and start giving help immediately."

Why such a good turnout? Bill Acker says Fair Haven's Fire Department has always attracted a large number of volunteers, and many also join the First Aid Squad. "For many people in Fair Haven, being a part of the Fire Company is a family tradition, with children following their parents and grandparents in the organization. And the annual Firemen's Fair is a popular event that helps make people aware of who we are and what we do." Acker says there has also been a recent influx of people who joined when the Fire Company changed its membership rules. "It used to be that you had to be a firefighter to be a first aider. So people who didn't like climbing ladders or going into burning buildings didn't join. Back in the late 1990s we changed that, so you can be in the First Aid Squad without fighting fires." (*editors note: see Affiliate Member category on p. 4 of the Newsletter.*)

What will the first aiders talk about at their 75th anniversary celebration? There will be a few formal words of thanks and congratulations. And some teasing will probably take place, because that's part of being on the Squad. But most likely the discussions will be about the good memories that come from the emergency runs—the old guy who started breathing again, the stunned soccer player whose legs came back to life as the ambulance raced to the hospital, the kid who got pulled off the ice and the enormously relieved mother who watched the rescue. That's what makes the work so satisfying, and that's what the first aiders will reminisce about the most.

FIRE COMPANY LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE—www.fhfd.org

The Fire Company has undertaken a major initiative to update the technology it uses to manage its internal and external communications and the significant amount of record keeping the various operations require. An Information Technology Committee, headed by member Frank Leslie, was appointed by President Jack Mulvihill to investigate solutions for numerous issues the Company is facing in this area. As a part of this effort, a new website was launched this month. Although the Fire Company has had a website on line for several years, a number of needed improvements were identified by the IT Committee, including:

- A simpler website address (URL) than the original website used — which was www.fairhavenfiredept.com
- A better method of showing how to find information of interest on the website (navigation improvements)
- An "upcoming events" area to inform the public of Fire Company activities they may be of interest
- An archive of previous *Newsletters*
- The ability of the IT Committee to post updates and changes

to the site quickly, without the need for involving the website designer

- A capability that allows the public to sign up for various events — from volunteering to work at the Firemen's Fair to applying for membership in one of our organizations
- A photo gallery of the Fire Company's apparatus and events
- A "Kid's Stuff" area that engages youngsters in understanding and preventing fire hazards
- A "members only" area that can be used for posting important information for the Fire Company members .

Based upon responses to a "Request for Proposal" that was widely disseminated, the IT Committee engaged the services of Red Bank Web in developing the new site.

The new website is now on line at www.fhfd.org — a simpler address. The Fire Company invites you to visit the new site and enjoy its many informative pages. Your feedback will be welcome at email address: website@fhfd.org.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT AND FIRST AID ORGANIZATIONS SEEK NEW MEMBERS

Fair Haven Fire Company No. 1 is an all-volunteer organization, and we continue to seek members who can help in a number of capacities. Please consider volunteering your time to this worthwhile effort. Here is the information you need, if you are interested:

Fire Department—Active Firefighter. Members in this category respond to fires and emergencies in Fair Haven and surrounding communities in cases of “mutual aid.” Although prior experience is helpful, none is required for admission to this category. Rigorous training is provided by both the Fire Department and by the Monmouth County Fire Academy. Applicants must pass a physical exam and a routine background check. Interested residents should contact James Butler, III at (732) 671-8082 to discuss the membership application procedures.

Fire Department—Social Member. Members in this category participate in non-firematic aspects of operating the Fire Company, including fund raising events such as the annual Firemen’s Fair. The only requirement for membership is that you have reached the age of 46 and have a sincere interest in helping the Fire Company. Interested residents should contact James Butler, III to discuss membership application procedures.

Fire Department—Affiliate Member. This is a new category of membership that has been established to encourage area residents who are interested in joining the First Aid Corps but who are not interested in joining the Fire Department as an Active or Social Fire Department member. Membership to this category requires a sponsor in the Fire Department. Residents interested in joining the First Aid Corps through this venue should contact William Acker at (732) 747-0241, Ext. 224.

First Aid Corps Member. Members in this category respond to emergency trauma and medical situations and provide basic life support services. The First Aid Squad also responds to all fires and other emergencies in which injuries are likely. Members must be a member of the Fire Department (Active, Social or Affiliate), before they can join the First Aid Corps. No prior experience is required, although new members must pass an approved First Responder or Emergency Medical Technician course during their first few months in the organization. Applicants must pass a physical exam and a routine background check unless they are Active Firefighters. Interested residents should contact William Acker to discuss membership application procedures.

Published by the Fair Haven Fire Company Newsletter Committee Contributors to this Issue — John Davis, Brian O’Reilly Please email any comments to newsletter@fhfd.org
