

# The Back Step

The Newsletter of the Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum

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Vol. 5, No. 1

All the News We Feel Like Printing

January 2016

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## NFA State Weekends

You may be aware that throughout the year, the National Fire Academy works with various state organizations to hold training weekends tailored to the specific needs of the individual states. Wayne Powell has been working with Cindy Wivell, the new NFA coordinator for state weekends, to raise awareness of the Frederick County Fire-Rescue Museum and National Fire Heritage Center. The goal is to schedule time during each state weekend for visits to the museum and heritage center. This was quite successful in the last few months of 2015, especially with the North Carolina weekend in November – we had large groups visit both on Friday afternoon and Saturday evening.

Now we are looking at the schedule for 2016, and hoping to set up visits for at least some of the thirteen state weekends on tap. The list of these weekends is shown below; while we do not have any visits scheduled, we felt it was worth posting the list so we all can be prepared. As time goes on, we are hopeful that visits will be scheduled, and we will let people know as appropriate.

February 13-14	New York State Weekend
February 20-21	Maryland State Weekend
March 12-13	Connecticut State Weekend
March 19-20	Georgia/Indiana State Weekend
April 2-3	New Jersey State Weekend
May 14-15	Florida/Maine State Weekend
June 25-26	Ohio State Weekend
July 9-10	Pennsylvania State Weekend
July 16-17	Kentucky State Weekend
July 23-24	Rhode Island/South Carolina State Weekend
July 30-31	Michigan State Weekend
August 20-21	Alabama/New Hampshire State Weekend
September 24-25	Tennessee/Virginia State Weekend

Again, while these dates are fairly firm, there still could be changes, and there is no guarantee that the various state weekend coordinators will be able to fit us into their schedules.

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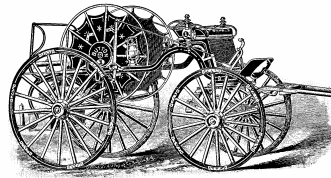
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## Sprinkler System Update

Progress on the sprinkler system for the museum building slowed during the holidays, but is picking up again in the new year.

Back in October we received a preliminary overall drawing of the system, showing locations of sprinklers and the configuration of the riser(s). This drawing has been on display in the engine bay, and has drawn considerable interest from visitors. Because we want to use the system as a teaching tool as well as a fire protection system, there will be several risers of different types, although only one will be active. Also, there will be a wide variety of sprinklers, in different configurations and by different manufacturers. In this way we will be able to show visitors the variations that can occur in sprinkler systems.

Now we understand that the final drawings and calculations are ready to be submitted to Frederick County for approval. Because of the retirement of a key member of the approval process, there has been some confusion about where to submit the drawings, but Chip Jewell is working to resolve this. We hope that the approval process will proceed smoothly and that work can begin soon on our new sprinkler system.



## Maintenance Issues

We have had more electrical problems to deal with since the last issue, this time involving one of the mercury vapor lights in the engine bay. The ballast short-circuited, and Wayne Powell found that it was less expensive to replace the bulb and ballast with an LED bulb than it was to just replace the ballast! An added advantage is lower operating cost: the LED bulb uses only 57 watts, as opposed to 400 watts for the old bulb. We will replace the other seven bulbs as they fail.

We had to have both back-room heating units repaired in November. Apparently one had not been producing heat for some time, so when the second one failed, it was very noticeable. A new thermocouple on one unit, and a new gas valve on the other, and we were back in business.

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and Preservation Society, Inc.,  
Emmitsburg, Maryland.  
Editor.....Frank Schmearsal  
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## Museum Leadership

President: Jim Ridgley

Secretary: **OPEN**

Treasurer: Paul Stull

Directors:

Brenda Harrison

Doug Harrison

Chip Jewell

“Doc” Kinney

John Maly

Wayne Powell

Frank Schmearsal

The Frederick County Fire & Rescue Museum is located at 300B South Seton Avenue (Business Route 15) in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Hours are 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM, Saturdays and Sundays, April through October.

To arrange a special tour for a group, please contact Jim Ridgley at 301-662-6557 or by e-mail at n3hta@aol.com.

## Coming Events

- Feb. 11 Museum Committee meeting at Co. 2, Frederick, 7:00 PM  
March 10 Museum Committee meeting at Co. 2, Frederick, 7:00 PM  
April 9 Bell & History Day, official opening of the 2016 museum season.  
Museum open 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
April 14 Museum Committee meeting at Co. 2, Frederick, 7:00 PM  
May 12 Museum Committee meeting at Co. 2, Frederick, 7:00 PM  
June 4 Chesapeake Antique Fire Apparatus Ass’n muster, Carroll County Farm Museum, Westminster. Parade steps off at 9:45 AM  
June 9 Museum Committee meeting at Co. 2, Frederick, 7:00 PM  
July 9 Pennsylvania Pump Primers muster, Riverfront Park, Harrisburg. Parade steps off at 10:00 AM

(Note that the Museum Committee normally meets on the *second* Thursday of the month, except during the summer months.)



## Angle

### Editor's

We're writing this as the Great Blizzard of 2016, also known as Snowmageddon, is beginning to hit Emmitsburg. Time will tell just how great a blizzard it is, but we had a couple of visitors from Montana at the museum yesterday who were very amused by the panic being caused by the storm forecast. In their part of the world, two feet of snow is no big deal. Of course, they don't have the traffic we enjoy, either!

Part of the reason for mentioning this is to point out that, even though the museum is officially closed for the winter, we still have lots of visitors. If there's a car in the parking lot, chances are somebody will stop in. Sometimes it's students from the National Emergency Training Center, or visitors to the Fallen Firefighter Memorial, but sometimes it's just somebody driving through town. Whoever they are, we're always happy to put aside what we're doing and show them the museum and heritage center.

In case you didn't already realize it, the editor gets whatever space is left over. That's why "Editor's Angle" may appear on Page 6 of one issue and on Page 3 of the next . . . and may be left out completely if it means adding another page!

## Here 'n' There

It's great to have full engine bays once again. The 1939 Ahrens-Fox from Uniteds came back in October, and resides in the south bay. John Hollinger's 1945 Ford/American, ex-Vigilant Hose Co., has been moved to the center bay, and Romeo, the 1893 Holloway hose carriage from Independent Hose Co., is in the north bay.

We received a very nice, very large display case from Independent Hose Co. in November. Right now it is in the engine bays, but at some point it will be moved into the back room and put to work.

As we add display cases, we gradually are replacing the folding tables. There are only three left - - - do you remember when all our displays were laid out on folding tables?

## Recent Activities

"Doc" Kinney has been working on the hand pumper throughout the fall, and has made great progress. He has cleaned and lubricated the mechanism so that it operates much more smoothly, to the point where the engine practically pumps itself! He has discovered some mahogany, some original paint, and a lot of pinstriping under the ugly black paint that was smeared all over everything, and he has cleaned and polished some of the brass details. Chip Jewell brought in the original playpipe, which he had been safekeeping. And "Doc" has been doing a lot of research into the early history of this engine. With all of this effort, the old girl is looking pretty good!

Fallen Firefighters Weekend in October was very quiet, primarily because of the absolutely awful weather. Normally we get a lot of visitors who are passing by on their way between the National Fire Academy and the village, but this year everyone stayed inside. The memorial service was held at the Knott Arena at Mt. St. Mary's University, so there was very little traffic past the museum after the service. While we had a handful of visitors, there were far fewer than usual.

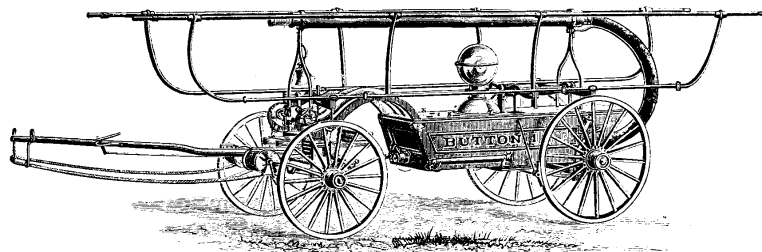
The museum was open on Saturday for two state weekends in November, with many visitors on each weekend. Wayne Powell has been working with Cindy Wivell at the National Fire Academy to promote visits on these weekends, and so far his efforts have been rewarded. (See article, Page 1)

Museums by Candlelight on December 12 was very successful this year. Santa Claus, the chief of the North Pole Fire Department, made an appearance, as well as one of the

Frederick County fire prevention princesses. There were many visitors, and they filled three large cartons with donations for Toys for Tots and left many larger donations as well.



In fact, if we get any more successful, Jim Ridgley will have to get a larger truck next year to take the toys to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve!



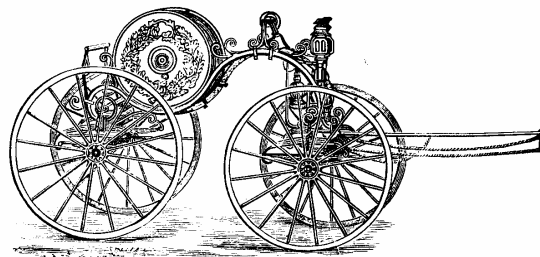
## Rig(s) from the Past



Dodge was not one of the more popular chassis for fire apparatus unless you lived in Hamtramck, Michigan, which was the site of the Dodge truck factory and which specified a lot of Dodge chassis for fire apparatus. Elsewhere, though, it was fairly unusual to find a Dodge pumper in service, much less a fleet of two pumpers and a tanker. But in the early 1970s that's what was in service at the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company: two Dodge pumpers and a Dodge tanker (along with their first pumper, the 1930 Ford AA purchased from Vigilant Hose Co. in 1951.) In the photo above, provided by Company 13, are the 1955 Dodge tanker, purchased in 1969; the 1950 Dodge/American pumper, purchased in 1968 (yes, it's white!); and the 1955 Dodge/American pumper, purchased new in 1955.

The Dodge fleet lasted only a few years. In late 1974 a new International/American pumper replaced the 1950 Dodge, and the next year an International chassis was put under the tank from the 1955 Dodge tanker. The 1955 Dodge pumper stayed around until 1978, when it was replaced by a new GMC. But for a few years, the Dodges reigned supreme in Rocky Ridge.

**In the next issue:** an early rig from Carroll Manor Vol. Fire Co. No. 14.



## From the NFHC . . .

The National Fire Heritage Center continues to grow both in reputation and in the size of its collection. Each year the Heritage Center receives more donations of materials than the year before; in 2015, the total was 90 donations, ranging in size from a single challenge coin to 65 cartons..

On Veteran's Day, November 11, Executive Director Wayne Powell and Your Fearless Editor drove to Tenafly, New Jersey, to receive the collection of the late Harvey Eisner. Harvey was the editor-in-chief of Firehouse Magazine for many years; he passed away in November of 2014. In addition to his editorial duties, Harvey had been a volunteer firefighter in Tenafly, and a fire buff in New York City for many years, so his collection contained a wide variety of materials. One of the gems in the collection was the 1862 annual report of the New York Fire Department, still volunteer at that point; the report lists each company, its apparatus, its members, and their occupations.

Because of the Eisner collection, and a donation from Roger McGary, our collection of W.N.Y.F. Magazine has grown significantly. W.N.Y.F. is the quarterly magazine of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), first published in 1940, and it always had contained a mix of technical and historical material. In the last few months our collection has grown from one shelf box to five, and now Dick Nagle, FDNY retired, is going to help us fill in the gaps.

The next time you visit the museum, check out the photograph over the door of the Heritage Center office. NFHC Secretary Fred Brower, of Takoma Park, is downsizing his collection, and recently he gave us a panoramic photo of downtown Baltimore after the fire of 1904. It's pretty hard to miss: in its frame, it's seven feet long! Fred has given us a lot of "neat stuff" recently, but this is by far the biggest.

In October the Heritage Center received a fragment of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Office Building in Oklahoma City. A large delegation from the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal's office visited to make the presentation. You may have seen coverage of the presentation in the local media.

Lou Amabili and Steve Austin of Delaware visited in November, and brought us 13 cartons of materials from Lou's collection. Some of the materials are source documents that were used in the preparation of the **America Burning** report in 1973 - - - the kind of goodies that make an archivist drool!

We also have received, among other things, a collection of embroidered patches from John Coyle of South Dakota; some Detroit materials from Michelle Meyer of Michigan; Maryland materials from Bob Young, formerly of Uniteds; an early heat detector and a canvas bucket, from "Doc" Kinney; and more interesting materials from Daniel B.C. "Boone" Gardiner of Connecticut. Among the donations on the horizon is one that includes a sliding pole, which we plan to install between the library and the (imaginary) second floor. (Hopefully visitors will not realize that we are in a one-story building!)

