

## WRIGHTSTOWN

## The Gorskis to the rescue

*A trio of brothers has volunteered a combined 128 years for the Lingohocken Fire Company.*

By **GEORGE MATTAR**  
STAFF WRITER

In 1959, 16-year-old Fran Gorski walked into the Lingohocken Fire Co. to become a volunteer firefighter. On Saturday, he accepted an award for 50 years of service to that fire company at its annual banquet.

At age 66, when many are in retirement, Gorski begins work at 5:30 a.m. with his trash hauling business. He normally works six days a week and doesn't finish until at least 4 p.m. daily. That rigorous schedule would exhaust men half his age.

Add to that his duty as deputy chief at Lingohocken, where he still answers at least 80 percent of the company's calls, many just hours before he goes to work.

In the last two years, 375 calls for service came into the company, fire department records show.

His brothers — Paul, 56, and Steve, 58 — have been fighting fires for Lingohocken for 41 years and 37 years, respectively. They also work in the family business, Gorski Trash Removal.

Just as trash removal is a family occupation, so is the Wycombe village-based fire company. Their dad, Joseph, and uncle Walter Gorski were both firefighters.

Fran Gorski's sister, Rita, was once a member and his nephew Wayne Murphy also is a Lingohocken firefighter.

Fran Gorski said he joined the company at a young age because "it was in the family and it's something I've always done. We take pride in our fire company and the people in our company are all there for the same reason, to help people. Nobody is there looking out for themselves. We want to help people and we are all-volunteer."

Brothers Steve and Paul share their brother's sentiments.

"It's our town. We grew up here," Paul Gorski said. "If we don't watch it and protect it, who will?"

"It's a lot different today with all these alarm systems in homes and electrical problems and we get called," said Fran Gorski, who still lives on the 60-acre Cedar Lane farm his grandmother bought in 1929. "We probably had one-eighth of the calls we have now, but back in those days, it was a real fire."

"Probably the biggest fire I ever fought was Gerling's on Route 413 a couple of years ago," he said of the wholesale florist.

Fran Gorski has held nearly every possible title at Lingohocken, including chief.

"Fran has many times put the interest of the community above that of his business and his family," said Wrightstown supervisors Chairman Chester Pogonowski, who serves as president of the fire company.

"In any organization, there are individuals who volunteer for a number of reasons. Sometimes volunteers drop out as they lose interest in organizational goals. What is clear is that the Gorski family, as a whole, has kept their focus on what is important to this fire company, protecting the residents we serve."

Pogonowski said he's known Fran, Steve and Paul for almost 25 years. "They have the same energy today as the first day I met them. When things get tough, when I get tired, thinking about their commitment helps invigorate me to keep going".

The Gorskis agree the biggest change in firefighting they've seen is the high-tech equipment.

"These two fire trucks here cost the company just shy of \$1 million in 2001; that's plenty of money, but that's what things cost today," Fran Gorski said. "It should last us 20 years."

The new truck has tanks of foam that acts like a soap and clings to whatever is burning. It

uses less water, which is very important in rural areas like Wycombe, Rushland and other areas the company covers because there is no public water. Linghohocken also has a 3,500-gallon tanker truck.

Looking to the future, the fire company is working to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2013 and plans to host the annual Bucks County Firemen's Parade to coincide.

Throughout the years, the thing most important to the Gorskis is how "family oriented" the fire company is.

"Everything is very congenial and people are here because they want to serve and help our community," explained Fran Gorski. "Nobody is here for themselves. That's what makes us keep serving."

George Mattar can be reached at 215-949-4165 or .



The Gorski brothers of Wrightstown, (from left) Paul, Steve and Fran have all been volunteering at the Linghohocken Fire Company for years. "It's our town. We grew up here," Paul Gorski said. "If we don't watch it and protect it, who will?" ART GENTILE / **STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**