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# The Spanner



Winter 2010

[www.lfco.org](http://www.lfco.org)

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## WORDS FROM THE CHIEF

I have the honor of serving as the 15th Chief in the 96 year history of the Lingohocken Fire Company. Our all-volunteer staff responded to 179 calls for service from November 2008 to October 2009. 43% of those calls were fire alarms. We encourage our residents and businesses to properly maintain their alarm systems, and communicate closely with their alarm company when service work is being done, or other work that could trip the fire alarm accidentally. Over the past several years, we have received grants from both the state and federal government that have helped us retire the mortgage on our Forest Grove station, replace our 1969 field firefighting truck, install exhaust ventilation systems that directly remove vehicle exhaust from inside of both stations, install laptop computers in our vehicles that give us access to a great deal of information with which to manage

emergencies, and to recruit and retain our most critical resource - our volunteer firefighters. We have been successful - stabilizing and improving our manpower turnout per call. A membership drive that occurred in the 2nd half of 2009 has resulted in 8 new firefighters joining the Company. We have strong working relationships with the communities we serve, and our mutual aid companies. We are continuing to work with the Upper Makefield Fire Company to study responses and ensure the most appropriate apparatus respond first due to the Western end of Upper Makefield Township.

We continue to work closely with the Central Bucks Ambulance to lease space for them to house an ambulance in our Wycombe station to ensure prompt emergency medical response to our area. If you would like to find out about becoming a part of our organization, or just have a question, feel free to email me at [chief@lfco.org](mailto:chief@lfco.org).

**Greg Jakubowski, Chief, Lingohocken Fire Company**

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## RELIEF ASSOCIATION

The Lingohocken Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association is an organization to which every active Lingohocken firefighter belongs. The Association has its own President, Secretary and Treasurer and exists to serve the needs of firefighters for safety, insurance, and health needs. It is funded by a pro rata share of a Foreign Fire Tax collected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Under state law, insurance companies who are not based in Pennsylvania must pay a 2% tax on fire insurance premiums written by these out-of-state insurance companies. Approximately 19% of the funds collected are distributed to paid fire departments like those in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The balance is distributed to Volunteer Firemen's Relief

Associations through out the state, through the municipalities they serve. The Lingohocken's Relief Association receives its allocation through Wrightstown and Buckingham Townships; no funds are received from Upper Makefield Township.

These funds are rather narrowly restricted and audited by the State Auditor Generals office every two years. These funds may only be used to buy turnout gear, air packs, radios, pagers, life insurance and our biennial physical exams. These funds also provide for a line-of-duty death benefit, which fortunately, we have never used.

The Relief Association is also there to help firefighters who may be injured or disabled while fighting fires or to assist family members during a time of need.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSES FOR 2009**

Lingohocken Fire Company covers all of Wrightstown Township and parts of Buckingham and Upper Makefield Townships – about 22 square miles - from its two stations. Occasionally, we are called upon to assist fire companies in other areas with manpower and/or trucks and water. In the past twelve months the Fire Company has responded to 183 calls for a variety of emergencies. By far the most frequent call is for a residential alarm system. We have responded to 62 of these. There also were 16 commercial alarm system calls. Most of the alarm calls were for accidental activations or malfunctioning systems.

Two of our rescue calls really stretched our resources, requiring mutual aid assistances from our neighboring fire companies. The first was for an overturned tractor-trailer with the driver pinned in the cab near the bottom of one of the quarries in Wrightstown. Working in July heat in a treeless area on a slanting, sand-like surface for two hours drained the responders, but the rescue was successfully

completed. Several days later, following a sudden, heavy rain, we were called to rescue five people who had been swept under the Chain Bridge on Second Street Pike. Again we called on Newtown and Northampton Fire Departments for their rescue boats and manpower. Fran Gorski, just that morning had put a ring buoy and rope in his truck, and used it to pull out one of the trapped people.

We were called to assist other companies 31 times, and to cover their stations 9 times. Several accidents along Swamp Rd. in Buckingham Township knocked out power and caused electrical havoc in homes in that area, but no serious fires occurred. We spent hours checking out homes and helping to calm anxious homeowners.

We spent 1,185 man-hours in training, 1983 on work details, and 1,121 man-hours responding to fires for a total of 4,289 man-hours. All of this given freely to our community.

Early in our careers we learned that no two calls are exactly alike, and this past year's work bears this out.

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## **PLEASE HELP US SO THAT WE CAN HELP YOU**

You may have read about a fire company in another part of the county which had a delayed response. One of the problems that they encountered was that the fire company had to cut branches as they tried to get up the driveway. Even then, they were stopped short from the home because of a sharp bend in a narrow driveway. Firefighters were forced to hand lay more than 400 feet of fire hose to the home. This caused a significant delay in extinguishing the fire. During an emergency, getting to your home quickly and efficiently is important.

When anyone calls the Fire Company for help, more than a million dollars worth of

equipment is dispatched to help the caller. The largest of our trucks is almost 10 feet wide, 9 feet tall, and about 30 feet long. Sometimes driveways, particularly those with curves, are difficult to navigate when trees are crowding the edges, or have overhanging branches that are too low. Careful pruning will be a great help. Please keep this in mind as part of your fire safety preparation because hazards slow down our response time and our ability to help you.

If you live on a tree covered driveway and are interested in having the Fire Company make recommendations how you might improve the entry to your home, please contact call us at 215-598-3500 for an appointment.

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## **CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION COMING!**

In 1913 local residents and businessmen founded the Lingohocken Fire Company to meet a local need, and in 2013 we will celebrate this event in our community's history. For several years a small committee has been involved in some of the preliminary planning.

We have agreed to host the annual parade and convention of the Bucks County Firemen's Association in June 2013. This will be a major undertaking involving the firefighters, the associate members and others. For instance, planning the parade route will be tricky considering the size of the coverage area. We

may see some creative solutions to this challenge. In our budgeting, we have set aside funds to meet the anticipated expenses, and we are planning ways to raise additional funds to offset these expenses.

We will have our own Fire Company celebration with a formal dinner to be held in the spring of 2013 celebrating not only present-day members, but also past members who have helped to make the Fire Company what it is today.

If you have any photos or memorabilia to share, please let us know. We'll take good care of it. If you would like to help, that too, will be appreciated.

## UPPER MAKEFIELD CONTRACT EXTENDED

Last year we reported on the fire protection ongoing negotiations with Upper Makefield Fire Company (UMFC). We are happy to report, that we have agreed to extend our contract through 2010 while the fire companies work out what makes the most sense from a response perspective for the sections of Upper Makefield Township we currently respond first-due to.

While we have provided fire response to Upper Makefield for the past 96 years, we have been responsible for providing primary fire protection to a portion of Western Upper Makefield that is closest to our Wycombe station under contract for the last 36 years. This contract gives us permission to solicit funds through our annual fund drive, as well as receive 66% of the fire tax collected in the area we serve. The balance of the fire tax is retained by the Township to fund fire equipment purchases by the Upper Makefield Fire Company. Lingohocken also does not receive any of the Foreign Fire Tax received in Upper Makefield.

The continuing disagreement is over the status of a substation that has been established by the UMFC at the Upper Makefield Township Building on Eagle Road. Substations have been generally recognized as being a way to reduce response to rapidly growing areas within the coverage area of the fire company. Lingohocken as well as other fire companies in the area have substations. These substations help provide better service

in our coverage areas. These substations are not positioned to "take over" areas from our mutual aid companies.

The UMFC has expended money to retrofit the old township office/garage which allowed them to locate an engine to that location. This year, UMFC added a tanker. Their position is that this station is fully capable of providing first response to portions of the area we have protected for the past 36 years.

The Lingohocken Fire Company continues an open dialog with UMFC over these issues, evaluating response times and manning of apparatus that is expected by the community around-the-clock. Lingohocken's primary concern is the fire protection needs of the residents we cover in Upper Makefield. When we respond into Upper Makefield, we commit the full resources of all our personnel and apparatus, not just one or two pieces of apparatus.

Personnel responding on our first trucks live in Wycombe, providing timely response. During the day, four qualified firefighters, employed by Wrightstown Township, are able to respond. Where life or property is at risk, we have requested Bucks County to automatically dispatch our closest mutual aid companies including UMFC.

Substations do add value to improve fire protection. Lingohocken is committed to utilizing the available resources from its neighboring fire stations to ensure that the residents we serve have the best fire protection available. We appreciate the support we have received.

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## LIFESAVING DATA AT OUR FINGERTIPS



In 2007, the Lingohocken Fire Company received a Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant that allowed us to install laptop computers in almost all of our vehicles. A recent regional grant provided two additional laptops for our Deputy Chief's vehicle and Utility truck at our Forest Grove Station. These computers have greatly enhanced the information we have at our fingertips in responding to emergencies. Many of our laptops have direct on-line communication with the Bucks County CAD system, giving us details about the caller and the incident online.

We have detailed map files for not only our coverage area, but all of the surrounding communities. We have an internet-based pre-

planning software program that allows us to store drawings, annotated photographs, chemical information, and other important details about businesses in our coverage area, as well as details on construction projects and flood emergency plans from several area dams that could have an impact on our coverage area. This software allows us to share this detailed information with the police and surrounding fire companies. We have access to multiple hazardous materials databases, and a database of vehicles that includes locations of air bags, battery disconnects, and other key items that allow us to safely work on today's complicated vehicles. If your business has important information you would like us to include in our database, please contact us.

## NATE HULME DEPLOYED

Recently the Fire Company and friends bade farewell to Nate Hulme at a small party held at the Firehouse. He has served as a Lieutenant in the Company and now he prepares to report to California for further training before deploying to Afghanistan as a medic attached to a SEAL unit. Nate is a member of the Naval Reserve and a career firefighter working at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey as well as being a member of both Newtown Fire Association and the Lingohocken Fire Company. We wish him Godspeed and a safe return.

## FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Each year local fire companies in the Central Bucks area have the opportunity to nominate a member of the fire company to be honored by the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce with the Burpee Fire Services Award. This year there was no difficulty in selecting our nominee. Fran Gorski has served his community for more than 50 years with distinction!

Fran joined as a 14-year-old Junior firefighter in 1959. Over the years, he has served in a variety of positions. Fran had served as Chair of our Fund Drive for many years and continues today a Chair of our Audit Committee. He also served as Treasurer, Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief and Chief.

Today he continues to be among the most active of our members as our Deputy Chief.

He is generous with his time and also with equipment from the family trash removal business that bears the family name

Fran's leadership is low-key and steady in all sorts of stressful situations. Common sense and integrity are hallmarks of his personality along with respect for others.

At our annual banquet in March, Fran was honored with surprise gifts and commendations from our local Supervisors and State legislators.

Firefighting often is a family affair, and so it is with Fran whose brothers, Paul and Steve, are members, and as his father and uncle were before him. His wife Ollie and daughter Cheryl are Associate members serving in a variety of roles. Other fire departments would count themselves fortunate if they had a Fran Gorski! We thank him for his commitment.

## SANTA CLAUS RUN – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2009

On Saturday, December 19th Santa will rely on his helpers from the Lingohocken Fire Company to get him around to the children of the community. He will start around 2:00 and finish his rounds around 6:00. Listen for the siren and you'll know when he's in your neighborhood!

### 2:00PM – 3:00PM

Devonshire Estates:  
Oxfordshire  
Phase 1 Gazebo Playgrd.  
Phase 2 Gazebo  
Phase 3 Gazebo  
Buckinghamshire

### 3:15PM – 4:30PM

Buckingham Forest:  
Powder Horn @ Trotters,  
@ Green Ridge  
Green Ridge @  
Hedgerow,  
@ Forest Hill, @ Deer  
Meadow, @  
Wheatfield, Powder Horn  
@ Spring  
Hollow  
Windsor Square:  
Springtown @  
Winterbridge Upper  
Mountain  
Edge Hill

### 4:45PM – 6:00PM

Buckingham Springs  
Spring Meadow  
Community Center

### 2:00PM – 2:45PM

Buckingham Valley Nursing  
Home

### 3:00PM – 3:30PM

Fox Hill @ Martindell  
Warner Meadows

### 3:45PM – 4:45PM

Alexanders Ct.  
Skoures Ln.  
Jericho Valley @ Warner Way,  
@ Fire Creek, @ Fire Thorn,  
@ Hunters Woods, @ Ridge,  
Williams @ Ridge, @ Woodland,  
@ Ranch

### 5:00PM – 6:30PM

Wrenwood Way  
J. Chapman Dr. E/W  
Hampton Court  
White Gate:  
Buckman @ Maher  
Neshaminy Cliffs  
Hallowell @ Wooley Run  
Brownsburg @ Colts Neck  
Thompson Mill

### 2:00PM – 2:30PM

Rushland Post Office  
Estates of Balamore  
Swamp @ Mega Way  
Swamp @ Apple Hill  
Smith btwn Forest Grove &  
Swamp

### 2:45PM – 3:45PM

Dark Hollow @ MacClesfield,  
@ Camelot  
Mozart Road  
Lower Mountain @ Franklyn,  
@ Devonshire, @ Lookaway,  
@ No Name, @ Holicong  
Holicong @ New Hope, @ New  
Ridge @ Towerview

### 5:15PM – 6:00PM

Heritage Center:  
Rosemont  
Meadowview  
Forest Grove Church  
4:00PM – 5:00PM  
Street Rd. @ Windy Hollow,  
@ Lurgan, @ Eastburn  
Buckmanville  
Pineville  
Pine



### 5:10PM – 6:00PM

Township Line @ Brian  
Cherry @ Benjamin  
Park to Durham  
Durham @ Perry  
Cherry @ Washington  
Wycombe Post Office  
Cedar Lane  
Penns Park @ Cedar  
2nd Street @ Penns Park Pub  
Penns Park Church