

"Back in Quarters"

Charleston Fire Department Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 1

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Inaugural Issue

Charleston Fire Department Newsletter "Back in Quarters" Launches

When the Charleston Fire Department was established back in 1845, the only way the community heard about the fire department was from what they read in the newspapers or by visiting fire stations and talking to the firemen. In recent times, much hasn't changed in the way the community learns about the fire department. Now with television and internet access in most homes the community has around the clock access to current news and events, however the fire department is only mentioned when there is an emergency or other significant "newsworthy" event. So, after many months of planning, discussion and development, the Charleston Fire Department is proud to present our new monthly newsletter, "Back in Quarters". This is going to be a work in progress providing the community and department members with insight into some of the monthly happenings within the fire department.

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CFD Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Charleston Fire Department to provide maximum protection of life and property through the prevention and extinguishment of fires, provision of Emergency Medical Services, Hazardous Material response and Mitigation, Rescue, and performance of any other services to the citizens of Charleston that may be required to ensure a safe community.

The Fire Department will attain this goal through preparation and training, dedication, public education, and a constant focus toward the end result -- a safe City of Charleston.

Changing of the Guard

New Fire Department Administration

On January 14th, Fire Chief Randy Stanley retired from the fire department, ending his 24 year career with the department serving the citizens of Charleston.

Assistant Chief Scott Shaffer has been appointed as the Acting Fire Chief until the promotional exam is given in April.

Other retirements include:

Assistant Chief Rodney Winter, Assistant Chief Tim Belcher, Captain Adrian Gillespie, Lt. Cam Monroe, Firefighter Pat Callender, Firefighter Tim McKnown.

We would like to thank them for their many years of service and wish them the best in the future.

We would also like to congratulate the following members for their recent promotions.

Assistant Chief - Bob Sharp, John Wilcox, Owen Hawk

Captain - Ken Tyree, Mike Shank, Steve Bennett

Lieutenant - Paul Niedbalski, Erik Daley, Tim Hartwell, Brandon Jones, *****

Remembering The 1949 Woolworth's Fire

George A. Coates, Richard E. McCormick, James Paul "Jiggs" Little, Emory C. Pauley, Thomas F. Sharp, Fred C. Summers and Frank Miller answered their final alarm on March 4, 1949. These seven Charleston Firefighters died in the F.W. Woolworth department store blaze March 4, 1949.

The fire, which broke out sometime before 4 a.m. on, was first detected by Charleston Policeman Wayne Casdorff, who smelled smoke and noticed an eerie, milky color coming from a window of the store while walking his beat along Capitol Street. The patrolman rushed to a nearby alarm box and reported the fire. Two firetrucks and their crews from the old Elizabeth Street Fire Station were initially sent to respond to the blaze.

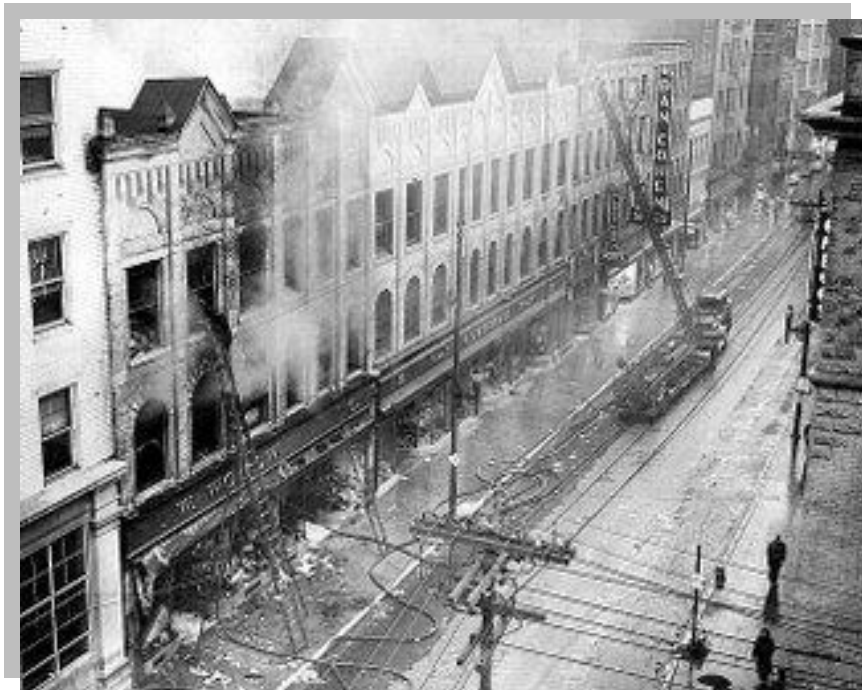
The fire, which was very deceptive in size, was first thought to be a small fire that was smoldering under a bunch of rags."

About one hour after the fire was reported, firefighters inside the smoky, three-story building found flames rising from the rear corner of the department store's basement.

"Unable to descend to the basement, they advanced out onto the floor through a rear door and sprayed a stream of water back in under the stairway," wrote Gazette reporter James A. Hill in an eyewitness account of the fire. "Suddenly, without warning, a whole section of the floor all the way across the building gave way plunging seven firemen into roaring flames below."

Coates perished after first pulling one firefighter from the flaming basement and flinging him to safety in an alley, then returning to the building to look for his partner. Coates did not realize his partner had safely exited the building and was in a hospital-bound ambulance.

A memorial plaque for the fallen firefighters is set up where the Woolworth building once stood on Capitol Street. There are also trees planted on Kanawha Boulevard to remember them as well ❖



March History

March 4, 1949 The Charleston Fire Department experienced its worst fire in city history and greatest tragedy on March 4th, losing seven brothers at the Woolworth Fire. While searching for the fire inside the Woolworth Building, the first floor gave way and collapsed, sending firefighters into the smoke and flames below. While some of the firefighters were able to be rescued from the basement, others were not. Seven firefighters perished, including some of those who were attempting to rescue their brothers. Thirteen firefighters were injured and loss and damage was over one million dollars. A memorial plaque stands as a constant reminder of that fateful day and is located on the original building that still stands at the corner of Capitol and Quarrier Streets.

March 10, 1932 The St. Albert's Hotel fire took six hours to extinguish in freezing temperatures.



Safety Tip of the Month

St. Patrick's Day is synonymous with good music, good food and green colored adult beverages. Another, and far less enjoyable, thing people find synonymous with Patrick's Day is the likelihood of celebrations going too far, often with celebrants drinking in excess and possibly leading to some potentially fatal side effects. Rather than enjoying themselves responsibly, many revelers drink to extreme excess, putting themselves and others in serious danger as a result. Here are a few tips for making St. Patty's Day a safe and good time for all.

- Utilize the designated driver. Utilizing a designated driver is arguably the safest means to ensuring a safe St. Patrick's Day. While you might think you're not breaking the law driving after a drink or two, even a little alcohol could be impairing your driving ability. The best way to stay safe and avoid arrest is

to have at least one person agree to abstain from alcohol.

- Don't forget to eat, and don't be ashamed to overindulge in food. Food and drink are big parts of a Patty's Day celebration, and indulging in the food can ensure you don't drink too much or that the alcohol you do drink doesn't produce the negative effect it would on an empty stomach.
- Avoid drinking games and hard liquor. Drinking games have grown in popularity, particularly among younger drinkers. Unfortunately, the nature of drinking games often requires players to drink substantial amounts of alcohol in a short period of time. But many celebrants are already in a good mood on St. Patrick's Day, so you shouldn't need something extra like a drinking game to help you enjoy the day more.
- It's also a good idea to avoid hard liquor on St. Patrick's Day. One shot of hard liquor is equivalent to 12 ounces of beer. So while a shot's stature might make it seem less harmful, it's packing a considerable punch that should be avoided for those hoping to drink responsibly.
- Drink water throughout the celebration. Come the end of the night, it's common for those who have been drinking to have a glass or two of water. However, drinking water throughout the whole night can help keep revelers hydrated and can be a good means to drinking more responsibly.
- Rather than continually drinking alcohol throughout the night, alternate between an alcoholic beverage and a glass of water instead. This will save you money and help you avoid drinking to excess.

Please follow these guidelines for a safe and Happy St. Patty's Day. If you don't, even the Luck O' the Irish may not help you. You may find yourself spending a night in jail, the hospital or even worse getting to meet St. Patrick personally. Have a safe and happy St. Patrick's Day.❖



Charleston Firefighters Local 317 Raises Money the Salvation Army



During the Christmas Season, the Firefighters of Local 317 donated a day of their time to "Ring The Bells" for the Salvation Army at the Town Center Mall. Our brothers raised over \$3000 for this charity. A special thank you to all that helped to make this event a success. This was an outstanding effort an unselfish act of community service.

Safety City

Once again the Charleston Fire and Police Departments will be hosting safety courses for Kanawha County Elementary School Students at Safety City. Organized in 1985; the firefighters, police, community businesses and various civic groups developed a partnership to donate their time, resources and skills to create a miniature injury prevention city.

Instruction is given by members from both the Charleston Fire Department and Charleston Police Department. Safety topics covered include: motor vehicle safety, fire and burn prevention, smoke detectors, home fire escape drills, bike and pedestrian safety, and 9-1-1 emergencies. Safety City's main attractions include a 9-1-1 simulator, driving cars through a realistic miniature city, and practicing a home fire escape drill using theatrical smoke.

Third grade classes from approximately 60 schools in Kanawha County and nearby areas transport their students to this three hour program from September to June. Every class has 20-30 students scheduled. ❖



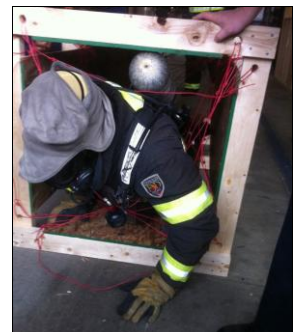
Firefighter Survival Training

Firefighters learn self-rescue skills during intense training

Every year over 100 firefighters lose their lives in the line of duty. Approximately 40 of these deaths are incurred on the fireground as a result of the firefighter becoming disoriented, entangled in electrical wires, or from structural failure such as floor and ceiling collapse. Since its inception, the Charleston Fire Department has lost fifteen of its firefighters in the line of duty. In recent years there have been many close calls with firefighters falling through floors, having ceilings fall on them and in one instance after saving a victim from a fire, a firefighter became disoriented in a structure and almost ran out of air.

The Fire Department Administration realized the need for firefighter survival training and has since implemented the firefighter survival training program. All members are required to go through this training which is comprised of several self-rescue drills. Some of the drills are basic, everyday tasks, like following a hose line out of a building or basic air-pack confidence drills. While others are more taxing, both mentally and physically. Examples include performing an emergency bail-out, by escaping out of a second story window using a personal escape rope and everyone's favorite crawling through the entanglement box (pictured below).

We are currently in the third phase of the training which consists of five phases. The firefighters who have completed this phase have affectionately named the training props "the Polish Palace of Pain" in honor of the instructors who are conducting the training, and the physical stamina it takes to navigate the obstacles. ❖



HOT TOPICS

FIRE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE

If you haven't had a chance to visit the fire department website please take a few minutes to check it out. www.charlestonfire.com

NEW FIREFIGHTING GLOVES

We are currently in the process of outfitting all of our firefighters with new, state-of-the-art firefighting gloves. These gloves are made by Pro Tech and are a definite improvement over our current issued gloves.

TRI DATA CORPORATION

Recently the fire department was visited by Tri Data Corporation to review our efficiency and readiness. Tri Data is one of the nation's leading public safety consulting firms. They specialize in research, analyses, and management studies in fire protection and emergency medical services, prevention and preparedness, and homeland security. Their array of fire and emergency research extends across the U.S., supporting the federal government; state, municipal, and local governments; and the private sector.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Would the fire department come and talk to my group about fire safety?

A: Yes. We would be more than happy to come and spend some time talking to your group about fire safety. All you need to do is call us at 304-348-8058 to schedule a visit. We do ask that you try to give us at least one week notice so that we can schedule appropriately.

Q: I don't have any smoke alarms, can the department help me?

A: Yes. All you have to do is come to the fire prevention office and fill out a short form and we will give you one.

Q: I have some yard waste I would like to burn can I do this?

A: It depends on where you live and what you are going to burn. If you live within the Charleston city limits you must call the fire prevention office at 304-348-8058 to get permission to burn. If you live outside the city then the restrictions are as follows:

March 1st - May 31st after 4pm-6am

October 1st - December 31st 4pm-6am

Please keep in mind that other restrictions and safety measures must be considered. Please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office or DNR Office if you have any questions.

Firefighter Safety Cards

Assistant Chief Bob Sharp

Once again we will be producing a set of new Safety Trading Cards for this year 2011 to be given out to children during the year. I have agreed to take the photos, edit the information and work on the graphic design for the cards.

If you want your photo on one of the cards for 2011, here is what you need to do:

Sponsorship– You can sponsor yourself, contact a business or friend and give them a copy of the sponsorship letter and information worksheet, which I have included with this notice. The cost is \$195 for 2,500 cards of the same photo and **checks need to be made out to "MINT CARDS"**. There is a place on the card to include a company logo or sponsorship information.

Personal Information- You need to fill out an information sheet about yourself, which I have also included with this notice. Please do NOT put any information on the sheet that you do NOT want to be used in writing your biography.

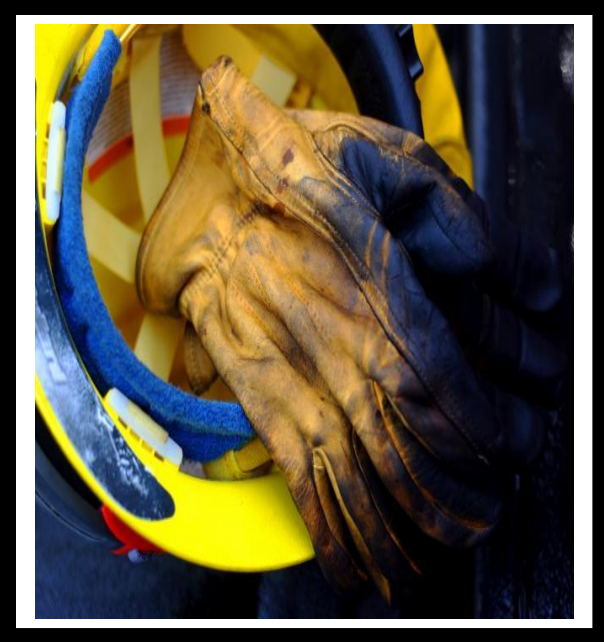
Sample Cards- If you need a sample card or any other information to give to a sponsor, please give me a call at the office– 304-348-8098 or my cell phone 304-346-8833.

Photos- I will photograph you sometime while you are on duty at work or you can supply your own photo. Please get all sponsorship checks, sponsorship information sheets and your personal information to me by May 1st, 2011.

Thank you in advance for your interest with this safety project.



Have you ever wondered what it was like to be a firefighter? To see what we see? To experience and get to know what we do? Well, we really can't describe what it is like. You would just have to be one of us to fully understand. The following poem, about a firefighter's gloves, is as close a description as any. Enjoy!



St. Florian's Prayer for Firefighters

Dear God, through the intercession of our patron, Saint Florian, have mercy on the souls of our comrades who have made the supreme sacrifice in the performance of their duty, and on all who have gone before us after years of faithful discharge of their responsibilities which now rest on ourselves. Give us Grace to prepare each day for our own summons to Thy tribunal of justice. Into Thy hands O Lord, I commend my spirit. Withersoever Thou callest me, I am ready to go. Merciful Father of all men, save me from all bodily harm, if it be Thy will, but above all, help me to be loyal and true, respectful and honorable, obedient and valiant. Thus fortified by virtue, I shall have no fear, for I shall then belong to Thee and shall never be separated from Thee.

Amen.

A FIREFIGHTER'S GLOVES

A Firefighters Gloves hold many things
From elderly arms to a kids broken swing
From the hands they shake and the backs they pat
To the tiny claw marks of another treed cat
From the DWI who was on her way home
And the equipment they use to roll back the dash
From a family of 6 she involved in the crash

The brush rakes in spring wear the palms out
When the wind does a "90" to fill them with doubt
The thumb of the glove wipes the sweat from the brow
Of the face of a firefighter who mutters "What now"

They hold inch and three quarters flowing one seventy five
So the ones going in, come back out alive
When the regulator goes; then there isn't too much,
But the bypass valve they eagerly clutch

The rescue equipment, the ropes, the C-collars;
The lives that they save never measured in dollars
Are the obvious things firefighters gloves hold
Or, so that is what I've been always told

But there are other things Firefighters Gloves touch
Those are the things we all need so much

They hold back the rage on that 3 am call
They hold in the fear when your lost in a hall
They hold back the pity, agony, sorrow
They hold in the desire to "Do it tomorrow"

A gloves just a glove till it's on firefighters
Who work all day long just to pull an all-nighter
And into the fray they charge without fear
At the sound of a "Help" they think that they hear

When firefighters hands go into the glove
It's a firefighter who always fills it with love
Sometimes the sorrow is too much to bear
And it seeps the glove and burns deep "in there"

Off comes the gloves when the call is done
And into the pocket until the next run
The hands become lonely and cold for a bit
And shake just a little thinking of it

And they sit there so red eyed with their gloves in their coats
The tears come so fast that the furniture floats
They're not so brave now; their hands they can't hide
I guess it just means that they're human inside

And though some are paid and others are not
The gloves feel the same when it's cold or it's hot
To someone you're helping to just get along
When you fill them with love, you always feel strong

And so when I go on my final big ride
I hope to have my gloves by my side
To show to St. Peter at that heavenly gate
Cause as everyone knows, firefighters don't wait.