

Hot Calls

Volume 7, Issue 6

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November/December 2020



Keep the Wreath Blue

17th Annual “Keep the Wreath Blue” 2020 Campaign

As we move into this holiday season Schuyler County Emergency Management, along with all the fire departments in Schuyler County and Schuyler County Volunteer Ambulance Corps., want to remind citizens to be safe with our seventeenth annual fire prevention “Keep the Wreath Blue” safety reminder. The participating agencies will be placing a wreath in front of their stations this holiday season starting the day after Thanksgiving (November 27) and running until December 31. The wreaths will be lit with blue lights. Whenever a structure fire occurs in the county a blue light bulb will be replaced with a red bulb.

We ask that the citizens of Schuyler County use this as a reminder that fire safety starts at home and to be vigilant in-home fire safety.

Trivia Question

**“How was mutual aid requested
in the late 1940’s to early 1950’s”**

Our last trivia question:

Question:

What is the advantage of using a Carbon Dioxide fire extinguisher?

Answer:

It leaves no residue after use.
Jason Fuller winner again!

Calendar:

Seneca Santa Deliveries 12/24—
Christmas Eve

Firefighter Profile: Kirk Smith

Kirk's interest in the fire service came from the tradition of being from a fire fighting family. He married wife Kim on February 2, 1991. They have five children and 9 grandchildren. One of his daughters has joined the fire service tradition.

Kirk joined the Watkins Glen Fire Department in 1985. He worked his way through the ranks to become Chief and served, as such, from 1994 to 1999. His father belonged to Watkins when there was two separate companies: The Hooks, where his Dad belonged, and the Steamers. Kirk's brother Dick also belonged to the department and also held the position of Chief for a time.

Kirk and his family moved out of Watkins to the quiet countryside and joined the Beaver Dams Fire Company in 2016. He became Chief of Beaver Dams from 2017 to 2018. It is very unusual that someone becomes chief of a department and to be chief at two different departments is very rare. We know of only one other person that did this and that is Joe Matwiejow, who was chief of Tyrone and Watkins Glen . Kirk became Deputy Fire Coordinator in 2004 till the present time.

Kirk's most memorable thing is all the relationships he's developed over the years. The worst thing is dealing with friends and family when they have emergencies.

The biggest change he has seen is the shared services that has come about in recent years.

"I guess the one thing that I should add is, that due to having my own family devastation with my house fire in the fall of 2001 and losing most everything it brought true clarity to the devastation that each and every family feels during these emergencies and humbles a family to the core with the amazing community we live in."

Kirk works for the Schuyler Sheriff's Department. He was appointed Sergeant and is in charge of the 911 center. He is very proud of his staff and feels they work very hard under some very trying situations. He has been there during some of the changes that have taken place in the center with computer aided dispatch (CAD), emergency medical dispatch (EMD) and programs like I Am Responding, which tells the dispatcher if first responders are under way. This has continued to improve the service of the 911 center.

Kirk has worked very hard to make Beaver Dams well-trained and well-equipped. When you see Kirk, thank him for his service.



Burdett Firefighters: Always at the Ready



Trucks make their way toward the new Fire Station/Village Hall during 2019 celebration.

BURDETT, Oct. 25, 2020 --

The Burdett Volunteer Fire Department was honored with an American Red Cross-Finger Lakes Region “Real Heroes Award” earlier this year. The award honors organizations which have shown courage, dedication and unselfish character through acts of heroism in our community. The Village of Burdett sponsors the all-volunteer fire department that provides fire coverage for 355 village residents and 1,055 properties in the Town of Hector. The BVFD fire district covers 55 square miles with a membership of fifty.

Burdett has the highest recruitment numbers for new members and the highest stability of older, experienced members. Six members have been members for over 50 years. Burdett was one of the first departments in Schuyler County to welcome women as firefighters. Twenty percent of its active members are women, who meet the same levels of training and readiness as all firefighters.



In 2019, Burdett firefighters rescued a kayaker who was caught in a storm on Seneca Lake, after his kayak overturned. Rescuers brought the victim to safety and then performed CPR.

In 2019, Burdett hosted 17 fire trainings with a total of 51 department hours and 1,401 individual firefighter hours and 9 rescue trainings with a total of 20.5 department hours and 269 individual firefighter hours. As with all volunteer fire departments, work bees play an important role. Last year, Burdett Fire Department work bees generated 140.5

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department hours and 1,401 individual firefighter hours.

In 2019, Burdett firefighters responded to 223 alarms (92 EMS; 20 MVAs; 20 service calls; 3 grass and brush fires; 6 automatic alarms, 14 hazardous conditions; 1 house fire; 3 general category fires; 3 smoke investigations; 1 water incident; 4 flooding events, 3 barn fires, and 53 mutual aid responses to other fire companies. Total department hours: 204; total individual firefighter hours: 2,047.

Burdett firefighters provided mutual aid to other departments 63 times, while requesting mutual aid 17 times. Burdett firefighters have a large commitment not only to residents in our fire district but have demonstrated continued support to fire districts in surrounding communities when called upon.

The fire department is the heart of the community, hosting 8 fundraisers each year: 5 breakfasts (Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day), 1 Chicken BBQ, 1 dinner dance and a Squirrel Derby. 2019 was the Village of Burdett's Bicentennial year, with a daylong celebration June 2nd. The Fire Department served 400 people in a free community dinner. 2019 also included a golf tournament and a food concession stand at Burdett's first annual Arts and Crafts Holiday Fair. Firefighters donated over 1,000 hours to these events.

Jason Kelly has served 21 years as fire chief. This leadership stability, along with taxpayer support, support of the village board, members of the Burdett Fire Department and the Town of Hector Board, facilitated construction of a new Village Hall and Fire House that opened in April, 2019.



Our fire district extends across 2/3 the width of Seneca Lake. During an extensive August flood last year, our fire and rescue teams had to borrow a boat to help rescue residents with lake front property whose access roads had washed out. In view of changing weather patterns, the Village Board gave priority authorization to the fire department's request for the purchase of a pontoon boat for lake and lakeshore rescue. The Village of Burdett and surrounding community continue to support our firefighters. Recently, the department purchased a new pumper truck.

Through the years, Burdett volunteer firefighters have sponsored youth programs for our fire district. This includes a Halloween Parade and Party, delivery of Christmas packages

to children from Seneca Santa on Christmas Eve, and teaching, with other area fire departments, the "Learn Not to Burn" fire program in elementary school. There is also a Junior Firefighters program which currently has 5 members. Our youth look up to the volunteers as their role models and mentors. Although they haven't documented their many hours with these programs, the support of youth is evident by their presence.

If a fire alarm goes off, the firefighter that is the closest goes directly to the scene to assess the situation while the others grab necessary equipment and arrive on scene within a few minutes.

Community service and volunteerism are strong traditions in Burdett, a community that recognizes the special dedication and continued sacrifices of its volunteer firefighters. This selfless service has been passed from generation to generation. Burdett firefighters continue to thrive and protect our community beyond measure.

Article by
BFD and
Odessa File

Odessa: Brush Fire on Gulf Road

Firefighters battle brush blaze along Gulf Road

The Odessa Fire Department responded at 3:53 p.m. Monday, Nov. 9 to a brush fire alongside Gulf Road in the Town of Catharine. When firefighters arrived, they found brush and woodland burning over about 5 acres and spreading toward the Connecticut Hill State Forest. Mutual aid was provided upon request from the Montour Falls, Beaver Dams, Mecklenburg, Watkins Glen, Trumansburg, Van Etten and Hector fire departments. The Millport Fire Department stood by at the Odessa Station. Odessa Fire Chief John Jelliff said that "due to the quick efforts of approximately 60 firefighters, the fire was contained after burning over 8 acres of woodland." The Schuyler County 911 center and New York State Electric and Gas also assisted. The cause of the fire, said Jelliff, was an arcing power line that ignited dry vegetation.



Article and
Photo by
Odessa File

Odessa: Car vs Bus MCI

Car-bus accident in Odessa sends three O-M students to Schuyler Hospital 'as a precaution'

A car-bus accident at the intersection of Rt. 224 and Fowler Place on the eastern edge of Odessa Wednesday morning resulted in three students, the bus driver and a driver's aide being taken to Schuyler Hospital "as a precaution," School Superintendent Chris Wood told district residents in a subsequent robocall. The accident occurred about 7:02 a.m. when, said an official at the scene, the westbound car lost control and struck the bus, which was waiting at the stop sign on Fowler, facing north. Schuyler Ambulance, Erway Ambulance and Valois-Logan-Hector Ambulance all responded, as did the Odessa Fire Department, the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department and Wolfe's Garage, which removed the car and bus from the scene. No word was available on the condition of the car driver.



The car and bus, tangled together at Fowler Place and Rt. 224.



Wolfe's Garage's David Wolfe oversees the removal.

Story and
Pictures by
Odessa File



The scene, looking down from a hillside to the east

Odessa: Brush Fire on State Route 224

Firefighters fight brush fire on hillside off 224

Firefighters from Odessa, Montour Falls, Newfield, Van Etten, Watkins Glen, Spencer, Lockwood and Erin responded about noon Saturday to a brush and woodland fire on three acres of a hillside off Rt. 224 in the Town of Cayuta, near Johnson Road. The fire originated behind one residence and spread up hill to the west when first units arrived. Soon after the initial attack the wind direction changed to the east, which made companies readjust their forces to contain the fire. Being on a hillside made it more difficult to get under control. Because of dry conditions water was trucked in from the village of Odessa.

An official said the fire began when a nearby resident was burning brush in his backyard. "Everything's so dry," said the official, that with the wind gusting and shifting, the fire spread up the steep hill behind that person's home and behind several others before it was brought under control in about 45 minutes. Some trees that caught fire were felled by firefighters, and overhead power lines were expected to be checked for possible damage. Firefighters remained on the scene for several hours, watering down hot spots. Assisting were New York State Police, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the Schuyler County Sheriff's Office, the Schuyler County 911 Center, the Schuyler County Office of Emergency Management and Schuyler Ambulance. Odessa Fire Chief John Jelliff said he wanted to remind everyone "that current weather conditions and dry ground and dead top vegetation makes open burning extremely hazardous at this time."



A firefighter hoses down a hot spot in the woodlands off Rt. 224.



Emergency vehicles lined Rt. 224 near the fire.

**Article by Odessa File
and OFD
Photos by Odessa File**

Beaver Dams: Trailer Fire

Late afternoon fire brought out Beaver Dams and their second alarm partners to a single wide trailer fire. This was only two or three doors down from the fire station. A quick knock down kept the fire to the ceiling area near the bathroom. Some extension into the ceiling and roof area. Companies were returned to service within the hour.



Water supply was established and mutual aid received from Montour, Watkins Glen, Tompkins Corners, Schuyler Ambulance, the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department, and the Emergency Management Office. Operations Officer was 19-5 from Watkins Glen and the new C-5 are in pictured below. This shows the confidence in Mutual Aid companies to provide part of incident command when needed.



Watkins Glen: Historic Building Fire

WATKINS GLEN, Nov. 5, 2020 --

Firefighters rushed at about 4:30 p.m. Thursday to the scene of a fire at an historic property -- the old Carriage House on the corner of Decatur and Third Streets in Watkins Glen.

By the time they had finished their work, the major portion of the building -- a three-story section on the structure's western end -- was saved with minor damage. The two-story central section sustained fire and smoke damage on the second floor, and smoke and water damage below. And the easternmost section, a former horse stable, was mostly charred, a clear loss.

The good news regarding that loss was this: Aside from the fact that it was insured, owners Chris and Angeline Franzese -- who live in a stately and historic house on the southeast corner of the block-wide property -- had planned at some point to level that stable section as part of a renovation plan.

They had hoped to get Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds to help in that effort, which envisioned apartments and shops in the historic old building. Despite falling short of DRI funding, Angeline said a renovation is still being planned. While watching as firefighters swarmed about the property, she said she didn't know the extent of the damage inside the central portion, although she had checked to see if a car stored in the western section was okay. It was. There was no immediate word available on the fate of five motorcycles belonging to a Franzese daughter



Flames shoot out of the eastern end of the Carriage House at 3rd and Decatur Streets in Watkins Glen. (Photo by Kyle Chedzoy)



Fire rages in the eastern section of the Carriage House. (Photo by Anna Franzese)



A firefighter atop a truck ladder checks for any sign of fire in a cupola on the western end of the building. It was clear.

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that were stored on the ground floor of the central section.

Angeline's husband was mostly thankful that the flames had not devoured more of the building. "Our thanks go to the firefighters for saving the main structure.," Chris said. "I was afraid the fire would get in the main section and wouldn't stop. But they got it."

How fast the water started flowing was in dispute, with Angeline saying that nearby hydrants proved useless, and that it took 25 minutes to draw water along hoses from Franklin Street, farther away. But Fire Chief Judson Smith said his firefighters "put water on it" within a few minutes, knocking down the flames before they could reach the three-story portion of the structure. "We stopped it there," he noted.

Fire vehicles surrounded the structure -- some on Third Street, some on Decatur and some on the property itself. When the flames were at their height, a wind from the south was blowing them horizontally across Third Street, raising concern for homes across the roadway, said one observer. But the wind died down, as did the flames -- the firefighters' water sending thick plumes of smoke out over Seneca Lake mere blocks away.

The 911 emergency number was reportedly called by two different neighbors, and the Watkins firefighters -- their station just blocks to the east -- responded quickly, with the call for mutual aid bringing in departments from around the region.

The Franzeses, who have operated the nearby Villager Motel since 1986, purchased their house and the Carriage House in 1991. The Carriage House has a history dating back to the 1800s; a



A view of the flames from the street. (Photo by Denise Hayden)



The smoke was thick as the flames were doused. (Photo by Laurie DeNardo)

WG...cont...

high point coming when Dr. Samuel Watkins -- after whom Watkins Glen is named -- inherited it from his brother John. (For a history of the property prepared by the Franzeses, click here: <https://www.wgvillagermotel.com/history>)

The Carriage House -- once housing horses, hay and carriages, and boasting a Carriage House keeper who lived on the second floor of the building's primary section -- served mostly as storage space in recent years while standing stately as a reminder of glory days of long ago.



Firefighters direct water on a hot spot of the building.

It boasted a new roof put on in the past year, and hopes for a future of greater use. Those hopes are still alive, Angeline reiterated.

As firefighters roamed the grounds, dousing any stubborn embers -- with several dousings directed on one of two cupolas, this one in the central section -- fire inspector Tim Hudson was interviewing witnesses, trying to determine the cause.

He seemed interested in a lawnmower that had been used earlier in the day and then stored in the eastern section of the building, but would only say that the fire started in the vicinity of the lawnmower. "I haven't reached a determination yet," he noted.

View photos taken by Burdett FD at:

www.schuylerscounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/9386/NovemberDecember-2020-Newsletter---WG-Carriage-House-Fire

**Article
by
Odessa
File**



Smoke wafts over Seneca Lake from the fire at the corner of 3rd and Decatur Streets.

NYS Fire Academy: “How it got here.”

Continued from the previous issue of Hot Calls

We left off knowing the then Gov. Rockefeller had pretty much nixed the idea of the academy being at St. Johns. Even with the new offer. The county (Harlow) and some of the political powers befriended the services of Senator Ted Day (Interlaken) to help them win over a decision that the Gov. had and place the academy in Montour.

Senator Day along with others managed to change the ruling and the Academy became a permanent residence in October 1970. There was or is not much documentation as to the exact date that we were informed of the success. Sen. Day attended the Monterey meeting of the County Association. He talked about the important need for the volunteer service and had nothing but praise for Harlow Bailey for his work both for the Academy and the fire service in general. The first meeting was State Chiefs Association at the academy. Since that time the facility has grown from an academic-only institution to a full-fledged Academy with burn buildings and hazmat training, to EMS training and the list goes on. We are lucky to have this in our own back yard and I myself have attended and taught classes there. If you have not gone you should once at least.

Now you know the rest of the story.

What is “J Fire”?

This program was first started in 2004 formally. The idea is to deal with youths that are involved in fire related issues. They have caused fires for a variety of issues and the county (EMO) felt the need to address the issue. Rochester Fire Department had a program that was presented at the fire academy on how to go about developing such an effort. Kirk Smith was then appointed Deputy Fire Coordinator in charge of the program. He has attended “J Fire 1 and 2”. Eight children have been through the program and even though the numbers are low they feel there has been much success with the program. The other part of this is the county fire prevention program which we feel has added education to the danger of fires.

Referrals can come from a variety of reliable sources such as fire chiefs, schools, fire investigators, or police agencies.

Agencies that partner with this program are schools, child protective service, Catholic Charities, and Mental Health. Counseling can be provided. Burn reports that have to go to the county from hospitals are also followed up on.

Kirk and a representative from the Sheriff’s Department are sent out to interview the subjects. So even though we do not see a lot of advertisement there is a program still going strong to address the problem of juvenile fire setting issues. Good work guys.

Joint Training Department 9 and 5

In 2019 the WGFD and MFFD line staff got together and went over our tech rescue equipment. Both departments decided to join their training as one. As you know, manpower during the day and even sometimes on the weekends is hard to get. So the plan was to combine both departments into one team with the hopes of moving this into a county wide team in the near future. 2020 was the start of our combined training. Both departments have put in long training hours to not only learn the craft but to also learn how to work together as one team. Here are some photos of this years trainings that were conducted. In the next 3 months we will be finishing up with confined space aspects of the tech rescue.

Thank You,
Jason Hudson
1st Asst. Chief WGFD

Visit this link for more pictures from the joint training:

www.schuylercounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/9387/NovemberDecember-2020-Newsletter---Joint-Training-Drill-Photos



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Last Alarms



Paul Taber
Mecklenburg

John Mason
Hector, EMO, OFPC

Upcoming Classes

We will be offering the following classes:

None at this time.

Want to be notified of our upcoming courses? Join our mailing list! Send requests to jgeck@co.schuyler.ny.us

For more information, visit:

www.schuylercounty.us
www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc
www.emstar.org

**Send Us Your
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and
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To send information, or if you want us to visit your station, contact the Emergency Management Office at 607-535-8200 or Rick and Shirley Churches at 607-594-2189 or rickshirlc27@gmail.com