

The PLAYPIPE

The newsletter of Pompier, Pump and Playpipe Society of Indiana, the Indiana chapter of SPAAMFAA.

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Washington Fire Department Museum

by Rodger Birchfield

WASHINGTON, Ind. A trip to the southern Indiana city of Washington is a must for PPPSI members for three reasons, a stop at the Graham Cheese Factory at Elnora; a fantastic lunch at the Amish operated Black Buggy buffet and Washington Fire Department's museum.

The West End Fire Station was built about three years ago to replace an older two-story early 1900s one bay brick firehouse. The city had outgrown the older station and a new roomy station with multiple bays was erected next door. Fire Chief Ken Brown, a PPPSI member, encouraged city officials to add a large area to the new station to house the city's fire department heritage, an Ahrens steamer, a 700 Series American LaFrance, a Maxim pumper, and Elnora's Graham Brothers-Boyer.

The 1878 steamer, No. 202, is reported to be the second or third oldest Ahrens steamer in existence. A sign on the apparatus tells of its history. For a number of years the steamer was housed in a lean-to at the Daviess County Museum located on Washington's south side. The museum is in an old school house located next door to the Washington Township Fire Department.

Early motorized apparatus included a Model T, and a photo hanging in the fire station museum depicts what appears to be

either an early Webb or a Robinson.

In 1923 the city purchased 600 gallon triple combination Model H Stutz. Chief Brown said he believes the Stutz was extensively damaged in a traffic accident.

In 1927 Washington purchased an American LaFrance. Washington purchased another American LaFrance in 1953. The open cab 700 Series engine was delivered from Elmira, N.Y. to Washington in a boxcar. The city kept the 700 Series over the years.

When a new station was built downtown, the 700, the Ahrens and the 1927 American LaFrance were crammed into the building along with the city's latest Century Series in service American LaFrance and a ladder truck. The steamer eventually went to the local museum.

In 1958 Washington ordered a Maxim through Midwest Fire & Safety in Indianapolis. The pumper, a Model F 1000

gallon per minute pumper was delivered April 4, 1959. The city managed to hang onto this piece of history. Another vehicle in the collection

is a 1925 Graham Brothers-Boyer with two chemical tanks. When this vehicle was delivered to Elnora, Ind., located a few miles

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Washington Fire Department's 1878 Ahrens steamer.



Identification plate on steamer.

**February meeting will be at the Indianapolis Star's new production center.
More information on page 5**



Greetings, by now you should all have your calendars, I hope you enjoy them. There has already been one change, the swap meet in Jackson, Michigan is on April 19th this year.

Below is a box with your 2003 officers in case you need to contact one of us.

There is really not a lot to comment on this month; Rodger has written a great article about the Washington Fire Department's Fire Museum, and I can see us planning a road trip to Washington soon.

Our meeting on February 2nd will be at The Indianapolis Star's new Pulliam Production Center on Indy's northwest side. The paper is anxious to show off the most advanced newspaper printing plant in the world (and you can see where I work) to any who are interested. After our meeting we'll take a tour of the facility. Wear your walking shoes! It's a big place. Directions are on page 5 of this issue.

Mark Storey got some exciting news right after our January meeting, Ken Soderbeck will be our guest speaker for the summer muster in Indianapolis. This should be a big draw for our muster and those of us restoring rigs will get some insight on problems we might be having.

SPAMFAA has passed down their new safety

rules for musters. These will be melded with our current guidelines for muster safety. This has to be done to comply with the SPAAMFAA insurance regulations. Clyde will love getting this dumped in his lap also.

As I said, there is not much going on this time of year and right now it is even too cold for me to go work in the shop.

A quick think about this poll; What do you think of putting pictures of recent purchases by neighboring fire departments in this newsletter? Let me know.

2003 dues are now being collected. We would like all dues to be paid by March 1st.

Tidbits

Your Officers for 2003.

Pompier, Pump & Playpipe Society of Indiana Officers for 2003

President-Scott Rollins 317-439-8425 or firetrux@comcast.net

Vice President-Jeff Henry 317-341-4350

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Washington Fire Department Museum continued

north of Washington, it carried four 35-gallon chemical tanks. Over the years two tanks had been removed and a home made wooden hose bed was installed on the engine.

The Graham Brothers chassis was built in Evansville by the same family whose descendants operate the Graham Cheese Factory in Elnora. Graham was acquired

by Dodge Brothers in the 1920s. David Graham donated the Graham Brothers-Boyer to Washington for the city's fire museum. Fire Chief Ken Brown said city firefighters overhauled the motor and it runs.

Although it is still in service, the city grass rig a 1960 vintage International, is parked in the station with the antique collection. The International was assembled by Boyer in Logansport and sold to Washington by Midwest. In 1960 Washington purchased an International-Boyer

pumper from Boyer through Midwest. The city later acquired a Century Series American LaFrance. These two vehicles collided at an intersection going on a fire run. Both apparatus were declared totals and sent to an insurance salvage yard in Indianapolis. An Indianapolis towing service acquired the Century and later sold it to the Wayne Township Fire Department where it was eventually turned into a hazardous materials response vehicle.



1953 700 series ALF



1953 700 series ALF

The city still has two Century Series in service. A quad is parked in the West End Fire Station-Museum on West Walnut Street while an engine responds from the Downtown Fire Station. The city also has a new pumper and an aerial ladder truck.

Other items in the museum include old radios, a Gamewell fire alarm box and a gong.



1925 Graham Brothers-Boyer



1960 International/Boyer Grass Rig

From the August 24, 1878 edition of The Democrat:

The new steam fire engine arrived per announcement last week, and on Saturday was tested under the supervision of Mr. Chris Ahrens of Cincinnati.

The "machine" threw two streams through 400 feet of hose over the top of the new school building, which is 131 feet high. Seven-eighths inch nozzles being used. Steam was generated in 80 seconds and, in 3 3/4 minutes from the time the fire was started, the engine was throwing water as high as an ordinary house. The engine is fourth-class in size, but first-class in all other respects.

Other tests have been made during the week at various places in the city, an extended account of which we will print next week. Our engine is unanimously conceded to be all the manufacturers claim it to be. It cost, with hose reel and 500 feet of hose, \$4,300.00

To the right is a newspaper article about the steamer. Note who conducted the test

Maggie also rises

by Scott Rollins

Editors note: This article was written for Steve Prange to publish in May of 2001, but we had a few other things going on then. I just found it last week while cleaning off my hard drive and thought I would share it.

Personally, I think it was all Clyde's fault, after all, he's the one that wanted to make sure we had two aerials that would stay in the air for 12 hours for the WPGA opening ceremonies.

Saturday May 12th, we had an open house for my step-daughter's graduation and of course, I had to move some fire trucks around to hide the brush pile I had yet to burn. Jeff and Rodger thought that since my aerial and Jeff's tiller were both out, running, and easily accessible we should put both ladders in the air for Clyde's test. We raised both ladders and they stayed up for 5 hours with no sign of movement, other than Jeff's little oopsy of extending the tiller ladder through where the tillerman's windshield was (new windshield was not installed yet) it was a perfect test.

Jeff and I proceeded to talk Rodger into raising Maggie, after all it was a perfect day, only 4 in the afternoon, and there were plenty of us there to help in the endeavor. So we started playing musical fire trucks to get Maggie out of the barn and in place. This accomplished, we got Maggie started and in position to raise. Jeff placed the aerial transmission in gear and I (I outran Jeff to the controls) pushed the raise lever and watched the ladder smoothly raise from the cradle, a marvel of German engineering. The ladder rotated easily left and right. Then we decided to extend the ladder a little, bear in mind we had no manual for this rig, well we had one but it was written in "old German" and Rodger had yet to get a translation back from any of the copies he sent out. Oh well, we carried on and extended the ladder about 20 feet, as soon as I let go of the extend lever the ladder proceeded to retract. Now most would stop there and think maybe they should get a good translation of the manual before extending the ladder again, not us, we notice that the dogs that catch the rungs are all wired up so they won't catch the rungs as they are supposed to. We volunteer Drew to climb up and cut all the dogs loose. This accomplished, again the extend lever is pushed and by golly let's go out about 40 feet this time, and great news the ladder stays extended! After congratulations are passed around we realize that there is not a way to bring the ladder in under power, it is all gravity power and for this to work well the grooves the fly sections ride in should probably be clean and lubricated. Maggie has been sitting at least 35 years without being raised so we know there is no way the grooves are clean let alone lubricated.

We lowered the ladder to the cradle and shoved Rodger onto the ladder (well it is his rig) armed with a wire brush and grease. After much scraping and slopping of grease the mission is completed and we raise the ladder in the air. A little wiggling of the ladder and moving the cables attached to the ladder and it starts retracting. The ladder retracts in fits and starts, but we finally get it all the way down. Now what better way to grease the grooves in the fly sections than to extend the ladder again? Well you know we did, we were now the kings of Magirus knowledge in America what else could we do. It worked, there were still a few retracting problems and we figured out the drum the cable for the fly sections wraps around is oil filled to control the ladders retraction speed, this was good as we had been putting Jeff by the handwheel for this drum to throw a pawl into place if the ladder speed was too fast when retracting. Still, nobody would stand at the bottom of the ladder very long.

In all it was a good day, we learned a few things and had a good time. Seeing a ladder built in 1927 go in the air was an awesome sight. There was no way I was going to climb it. This rig was built back when men were men and didn't know a ladder should be straight and made of steel or aluminum.



Ladder stuck while trying to retract

The first time in the air after 30 some years.



Ladder is close to full extension.



A look up the ladder.



January Meeting Minutes

submitted by Secretary Rodger Birchfield

President Scott Rollins opened the meeting at 2:17 p.m. - 21 members attending.

Treasurers report: Treasurer Russ Lambert's financial report was read and approved.

Old Business: A question was asked about a new membership list which would include Email addresses. Rollins reported the addresses would be in the new calendars.

New Business Mark Storey reported the Gas City Muster is set for Saturday, Aug. 16 and not Aug. 17 as previously published. He also passed along kudo's to Dan Bernth for the Kelly Pirsch article in "Enjine Enjine," noting PPPSI is still getting publicity two years after our National Muster. Storey also said he had been approached to run for national trustee and he accepted. His name is on the ballot and if you have not sent in your ballot, do so.

Muster Committee: The same format for dash plaques and patches would be the same. It was suggested the wording "25 years" be included since 2003 is the club's 25th year of existence.

A discussion also was held regarding events at the muster including the "Headless Driver Beanbag" event. Storey also said he would work on getting Ken Soderbeck from Jackson as a seminar speaker for the muster.

Bernth reported the Studebaker Museum at South Bend was working on a fire fighting display and needed items for the display.

Good of the Order: Dan Bernth discussed his recent acquisition, a former South Bend Fire Department 1916 Seagrave aerial ladder tractor with a South Bend Motor Cars Works hose bed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

February meeting change

We are going to the Indianapolis Star's new production facility (PPC) for our February meeting. This facility is at 8278 North Georgetown Road on the northwest side of Indianapolis. The easiest way to get there is off I-465. Take I-465 to 86th Street then go east on 86th to Georgetown Road. Go south on Georgetown Road (this is a T intersection and you can only go south). The PPC will be on the west side on Georgetown Road and there is a large Indianapolis Star sign on the front of the building. Come to the farthest north door (see pic at right) by the flagpole. We'll try to get a rig parked there for ease of identification. There will be a short tour of the facility after the meeting.



As always call me at 317-439-8425 for more information.

CLASSIFIEDS

MX 7000 Lightbar

Twinsonic Lightbar

5" and 6" steamer caps

Fire hose, 2 1/2" and 1 1/2" available.

Fire Hydrants \$75.00

Federal Q Siren \$650.00 For more info contact Dave Burton @ 317-826-4894 or e-mail burton49@iquest.net

American LaFrance Pioneer

pumper originally from

Anderson. Pumper is diesel with automatic transmission.

Asking \$1500.

Contact Pat McGinley for more information. 765-482-3152



1946 ALF 100 foot ladder truck. Original owner was Gary, IN F.D. I am the 3rd owner. Purchased truck 2 years ago with over 90 percent original equipment still on truck. All ground ladders, tools, hoses, nozzles, all stay with truck. Ladder extends to 100 feet. Truck runs well. Have invested \$7,000. Will sell for \$6,000.

Losing storage. Contact: Mark Storey 765-674-8936 or E-mail: mstorey303@aol.com



1962 ALF 900 series closed cab pumper. 1250 gpm pump, 1000 gallon tank. 603 Continental gas V-8, manual trans. runs and pumps good. Very nicely equipped and in nice shape.

Minor rust, good tires and 2 year

old batteries. \$4000 or best offer. Contact Dan Bernth at 574-340-5882 or e-mail stonegates@netnitco.net

Pictures available by request.



1932 Seagrave quad, ex Portsmouth Ohio, low mileage, original specs, w/spare engine, transmission, rear end, 40' long. Complete ground ladders & other equipment; Indianhead designs, stored indoors. Crack in engine needs repair. \$3395.

Contact Ruth Dougherty 317-784-1183 or rdougherty6@juno.com

1951 Maxim pumper missing engine and radiator, lots of good parts. Has Indiana title. Asking \$375. Contact Jeff Rider 812-523-3305.

10 ton floor jack formerly used for aircraft work at McDonnell Douglas.

Asking \$450. Contact Louis at 317-247-4722.



Dave Richards needs suction hose trays for a 700 series ALF. Contact Dave at 765-552-1469 or e-mail him drichards@kingsystems.com

Your dues for 2003 are now being collected.

PPPSI
PO Box 51605
Indianapolis, IN.
46251-0605

Upcoming meetings and events

February 2nd Meeting at Indianapolis
Star's new production center (see page 5).

February 13 to 15 SPAAMFAA
Winter National meeting in Richmond, Virginia.

March 2nd Meeting at Wayne Twp fire
Headquarters at 2:00 p.m.

April 6th Meeting at Wayne Twp fire
Headquarters at 2:00 p.m.

April 19th Swap meet in Jackson, MI

Rig of the Month



Pictured is Tom Beard's latest acquisition, a 1927 GMC/American LaFrance City Service Truck. Powered by a Buick 6 cylinder engine. Look at the headlights mounted on the cowling instead of the fenders.