

McKownville Fire Dept.
Incorporated

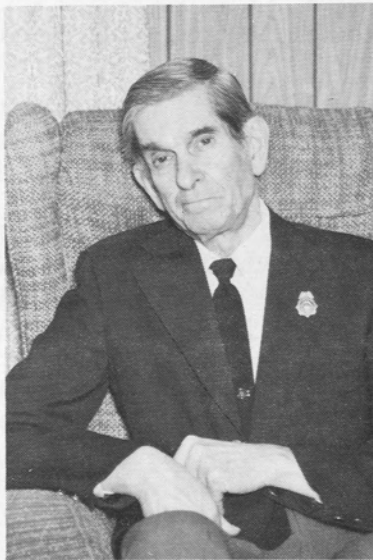
1918 - 1993

75th Anniversary



PROGRAM

Parade Step Off At 11:00 A.M.
Opening Remarks By Master Of Ceremonies
Massing Of Colors And Pledge Of Allegiance
Invocation
Installation Of Department Officers
Installation Of Auxiliary Officers
Life Member Awards
Fireman Of The Year Award
Reading Of Fireman's Prayer
Dancing and Children's Rides



Milt Greenfield
Parade Grand Marshall
Past President
Life Member

DEDICATION

To the residents and businesses of McKownville who have generously supported the work of the Fire Department for the past Seventy-five years.

To the members of the Department, past and present, who have given so much of their time and energy to provide fire protection for McKownville.

To Fred B. Abele who did so much to preserve the history of McKownville Fire Department, both in pictures and written records.

And to the future of McKownville.

Message from the Chief

Friends:

As we go into our 75th year of dedicated emergency service, we can look back with pride and a tremendous feeling of accomplishment.

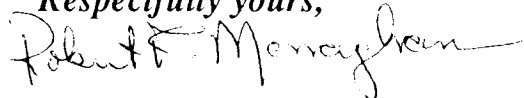
The early years of McKownville were of incorporation of the Department. Member dedication along with years of good community service enabled McKownville Fire Department to emerge as a respected organization and mutual aid partner.

As the years progress we find ourselves asking our volunteers to do more and more. It is not just, when the siren blows, come down to the station and give us a hand type situation anymore. People must be qualified to drive apparatus, operate specialized tools and they must be told of the risks they are taking when dealing with John Q. Public.

Now, looking into our future, I see our members getting the respect they deserve for devotion to volunteerism. I see not routine calls, every call will have to be scrutinized by our leaders to insure the safety and well being of our members.

In closing, I see McKownville Fire Department as a survivor, a Department who will work to stay in the times, a Department that will continue to be governed by people with foresight. These people will see that the department gets what it needs to do the job it has been doing for the past 75 years.

I am extremely proud to serve with the men and women of the McKownville Fire Department and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Respectfully yours,


*Robert F. Monaghan
Chief, McKownville
Fire Department, 1993*

Message from the President

Friends:

It is with great pride to be a part of this celebration to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the McKownville Fire Department. Many years have come and gone, but the one thing that still remains the same is the purpose for our existence. This purpose is the prevention and protection of life and property from and during fires.

To give of one's time and energy requires a great commitment, but to do this in addition to working and raising a family requires a special dedication. One of the things motivating me into becoming a volunteer fire fighter was that we are neighbors helping neighbors.

So to all the past and present members I want to thank you for all the hours, days and years that you have volunteered in making McKownville a safe place to live.

Sincerely,



*Paul J. Bednarczyk
President, McKownville
Fire Department, 1993*

**SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE
1918 - 1993**

CHARTER MEMBERS

March 18, 1918

James Allanson
J. H. Bloomingdale
W. F. Bryan
W. J. Bryan
Walter Gladding
Thomas Gordon
Alfred J. Garrison
John J. Haggerty

R. E. Hartman
W. J. Knowles
George Manville
Charles R. Parks
George Roehr
Marcus Toedt
T. Truck

Harmon E. Veeder
W. H. Witbeck
A. W. Witbeck
B. F. Witbeck
M. R. Witbeck
W. C. Witbeck
W. Witbeck
W. J. Weigmann



ACTIVE MEMBERS

May 15, 1993

Domenico R. Adami
Howard G. Altschule
Joseph G. Anderson
August Baglione
Michael J. Barber
Paul J. Bednarczyk
Herbert I. Brown
Frank Casatelli
David P. Clancy
Sean M. Coburn

Fred R. Deichman, III
J. Leo Dugan, Jr.
Gerard A. Fennessey
Carl Fricke
Thomas H. Funk
Stanley F. Gecewicz
Thomas C. Glenn
Stephen J. Haggerty
Ronald R. Jones
Robert W. Leddick
Anthony J. Mason

Allan B. McLean
Robert F. Monaghan
Edward H. Pelton
John T. Pendergast
Robert L. Perry
Joseph D. Powers
Leland O. Sweeney
Paul O. Sweeney
Shawn M. Sweeney
James D. White



President Fred Abele presented Awards in 1983.



Tom King celebrated 50 years of Active Service.
February 13, 1984

McKownville Fire Department

LIFE MEMBERS



Standing: Wally Robinson, Frank Casatelli, Bill Karins, Bob Perry, Marv Herbst, Dan Relihan

Seated: Jim Wilson, Jim Barber, Stan Gecewicz

Missing From Picture: Vince Belfort, Milt Greenfield, Leo Dugan

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Listing Date of Active Service and Highest Offices Held



Bob Monaghan
12/13/83
Chief



Bob Perry
7/11/50
Past Chief
Longest Active Service



Paul Bednarczyk
11/14/89
President



Frank Casatelli 1/2/51
Chief — Life Member



Jim Wilson 9/14/54
Assistant Chief



Leo Dugan 9/1/55
Chief — Pres. Life Member



Stan Gecewicz 11/14/61
President — Life Member



Tom Glenn 1/10/61
Assistant Chief — Treasurer



Dom. Adami 10/26/61
Lieutenant



Fred Deichman 8/14/63
Lieutenant



John Pendergast 4/13/65
Lieutenant — President



Mike Barber 3/13/72
Assist. Chief — Life Member



Ed Pelton 5/9/72
President



Herb Brown 1/9/73
Chief — Life Member



Ron Jones 7/9/74
Chief



Al McLean 3/26/76
President



Gus Baglione 4/12/76
Lieutenant — President



Bob Leddick 5/13/80
Lieutenant — President



Paul Sweeney 8/18/83
Captain



Carl Fricke 5/8/84



Lee Sweeney 8/2/84
Lieutenant



Joe Anderson 9/9/87
Lieutenant



Gerry Fennessey 9/9/87



Steve Haggerty 12/8/87
Lieutenant — President



Jim White 12/8/87
Lieutenant — Secretary



Sean Coburn 8/14/90



Joe Powers 6/11/91



Dave Clancy 6/11/91



Howie Altschulz 11/12/91



Shawn Sweeney 2/11/92



Tom Funk 6/9/92



Tony Mason 10/13/92



Bernie Selkis 2/12/59
Captain



Dr. Michael Melas
Dept. Physician



Paul Laudato
Dept. Attorney

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS



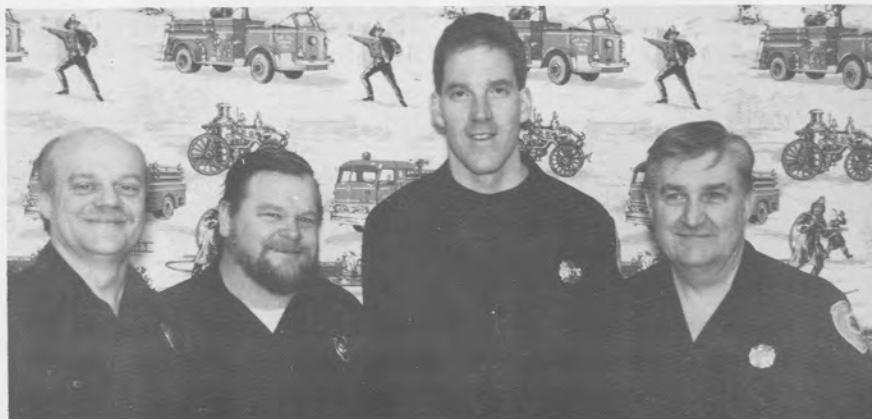
Left to right: Stan Gecewicz, Ron Jones, Lee Sweeney, Chairman; Frank Casatelli, Tom Glenn.

FIREMATIC OFFICERS



Left to right: Bob Monaghan, Chief; John Pendergast, Lieutenant; Paul Sweeney, Captain; Steve Haggerty, Lieutenant; Jim White, Lieutenant; Bob Perry, Assistant Chief.

CIVIL OFFICERS



Left to right: Jim White, Secretary; Al McLean, Vice President; Paul Bednarczyk, President; Gus Baglione, Treasurer.

DEPARTMENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Standing, left to right: Paul Bednarczyk, Joe Powers, Bob Monaghan, Paul Sweeney, Mike Barber.
Seated, left to right: Jim White, Ron Jones, Tom Glenn.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Standing, left to right: Bill Peer, Tom King Jr., Fred Dascher, Harold Ragotzkie, Brian Wilson. Seated,
left to right: Wendell Stockholm, Frank Stockholm, Marty Gecewicz, Bill Hein.

A History of Fire Service in McKownville

The year 1918 marked an important step in the growth and development of the little Hamlet known as McKownville. In that year it assumed its first legal status as a political subdivision, that of a Fire District. It also acquired its first nucleus of fire protection, the McKownville Fire Department, Inc.

The Hamlet had grown as a farming community during its earlier years. The old McKown Tavern, located on the Great Western Turnpike at Fuller Road approximately on the site of the present Kings Shell Service Station, was its nucleus. The Tavern at one time contained a post office with a post mark "McKownville" long since lost in the economies of the Post Office Department and never regained.

By World War I the character of the community had changed from farming to suburban-residential, probably spurred on by the opening of the Country Club trolley line in 1911. By 1916 it had become apparent that some form of fire protection was needed. In that year, the move which led to the incorporation of the McKownville Fire Department, Inc. and the establishment of the Fire District began.

On April 4, 1916 a group of residents met at the McKownville District School, known as the brick schoolhouse, on Schoolhouse Road to discuss formation of a fire district and organization of a fire company to serve it. A committee was formed, headed by the late Alfred A. Garrison, to circulate the necessary petition among the residents and to secure initial contributions.

On April 18, 1916 Mr. Garrison presided at a meeting held at the Witbeck Hotel (formerly McKowns Tavern) to organize a fire company. The late Milo Clark, for many years Town Clerk of the Town of Guilderland and a resident of Schoolhouse Road acted as Secretary. A copy of the by-laws of the Voorheesville Fire Company was presented for study and apparently served as the basis for the by-laws adopted for the McKownville Fire Department.

On May 9, 1916 another meeting was held at the Witbeck Hotel. A charter for the Fire Dept. was in preparation and a committee composed of W. Bryan, Jr., B. Witbeck, G. Ziehm and William Hein was appointed to look into purchase of apparatus. Mr. Garrison again presided at this meeting.

More meetings were held and on November 13, 1917 it was decided to petition the Board of Supervisors to establish a Fire District. On June 11, 1918 the certificate of incorporation for the McKownville Fire District was transmitted to Frederick J. Van Wormer, Supervisor of the Town of Guilderland.

The District, as originally set up, extended from the Albany City Line westward to Gipp Road in the area now known as Westmere. Later it was shortened when the Westmere Fire District was organized.

The first Board of Fire Commissioners was composed of Mr. E. F. Hunting, Chairman, Alfred A. Garrison, W. H. Witbeck, Thos. Gordon and Thos. Helme.

On March 18, 1918 the McKownville Fire Department, Inc. was organized and 23 members signed the charter. Their names are tabulated elsewhere in this book, John J. Haggerty was elected Captain.

On March 25, 1918 a constitution and by-laws were adopted. Limits were set at 60 active and 25 associate members. Officers were to consist of Captain, First Lieut., Clerk and Treasurer. A Board of Directors was to consist of the Captain, Clerk, Treasurer and the five fire commissioners. Active members had to be 21 years or older. Meetings were to be held on second Tuesday of the month as they still are. Mr. E. F. Hunting was the first President and Dr. Thos. Helme, Secretary.

On June 22, 1918 the Board of Directors adopted a resolution consenting to the formation of the McKownville Fire Department, Inc. under the Membership Corporation Law and the certificate of incorporation was presented to Dr. Thos. Helme, Clerk. The first permanent officers of the Fire Dept. were Mr. W. J. Weigmann, Capt.; Geo. Roehr, First Lieut.; W. J. Bryan, Clerk and Charles R. Parks, Treasurer; F. W. Frids, Second Lieut.

Signers of the charter were E. F. Hunting, Wm. H. Witbeck, Alfred Garrison, Thos. Gordon, Thos. Helme, W. J. Weigmann, Wm. J. Bryan, Charles R. Parks, Harmon E. Vedder, Sr., and Geo. A. Manville.

The McKownville Fire Dept., Inc. then replaced the first temporary fire company which had apparently functioned since 1916 under the direction of Mr. Wm. H. Witbeck as Chief.

Records for the first ten years of the Fire Department are unavailable and those of the Fire District meager, but it is definitely known that the first piece of apparatus was a two wheeled hose cart purchased in 1918 with a chemical tank mounted, towed behind a car. The Fire Department apparently purchased this and was reimbursed by the Fire District from tax monies. Mention of O. G. Childs, Co. is noted in connection with the apparatus but nothing else is known. A Graham Paige car was acquired either by donation, lease, or purchase to tow the cart. It was later equipped with additional chemical tanks and equipment, a tank purchased in 1919 was presumably for this purpose. The car was supplied by Mr. Ben Witbeck.

The apparatus was first housed in the carriage house in the rear of the Witbeck Hotel. In 1919 a garage was rented to store the apparatus.

The first fire, according to the memory of Milo Clark, was in a house near the pond in the rear of the property occupied by the McKownville Methodist Church. The McKownville Fire Dept. used a bucket brigade to fight the fire. The house burned but some furnishings and the barn close by were saved. A donation of \$10 was received from the Board of Underwriters in recognition.

One of the big fires in the District, soon after its formation, was the Witbeck Hotel. Built in 1793, it had served as a meeting place for the Department. The fire occurred in the middle of the night, got a good start, and burned to the ground.

Late in 1922, Mr. Witbeck was appointed a committee of one to erect suitable housing for the fire apparatus which was completed by August of 1923. The Commissioners had the name "McKownville Fire Department" painted on the fire car.

The first fire alarm "system" consisted of a locomotive tire hung outside the Witbeck Hotel. This was struck with a sledge hammer to sound the alarm. District records indicate the purchase of such a hammer was one of the expenditures authorized during 1924. Three oilskin coats and rubber gloves were purchased that year as well as a warning device installed on the fire car. A telephone for Chas. Ebel was authorized. He had opened a tavern in the carriage house of what had been the Witbeck Hotel.

In 1925 Mr. O. Wendell Holmes, proprietor of the Country Club Garage and later a Fire Dept. Officer was authorized to secure a new fire car chassis and mount the tanks thereon. This was a Packard touring car.

In 1927 investigation began for a fire alarm siren. This was finally purchased in 1929 and installed in 1931 on the Country Club Garage. A warning Klaxton horn was installed on the new fire car, also during that year.

By early 1930 a study, by the Fire Commissioners, began for the purchase of a new fire truck to replace the aging, outgrown Packard. On Nov. 1, 1930 a referendum was approved by a vote of 50 to 1 to spend \$3500 for this purpose. In January 1931 the Brockway fire truck was purchased for \$1825 with tanks mounted. The balance of money was spent to equip this truck which served the district alone until 1951 and as a second truck until 1957. In 1931 space was rented from Wendell Holmes in the Country Club Garage to house the truck and serve as meeting rooms, and a Federal Signal Code fire alarm system was installed with boxes on poles working in conjunction with a leased telephone line.

In 1932 the Witbeck water system was placed in service and six hydrants were purchased by the Fire District and installed on these lines. They were a simple, single outlet type.

Having a water supply was an improvement. However, the system was not too dependable. There is a story told about a garage fire on Elmwood Street during this era. The fire truck arrived and a hydrant hookup was made. The fire was quickly knocked down, but the water pressure disappeared and firemen stood by helplessly while the flames again gained headway. When sufficient pressure built up in the main, they again attacked the fire. After three or four repetitions of this, the garage was totally destroyed.

In 1933 Shell Oil Co. offered a plot of land to the Fire District for \$1.00 adjacent to its gas station on Western and Arcadia Avenues. The land was accepted and in early 1934 August Lux, Architect, was authorized to prepare plans. On July 14, 1934, voters approved a bond issue of \$12,000 by a vote of 87 to 30 and plans for the building were approved. There was a setback when bids ran over the estimate, but the project was finally built without a General Contractor at a cost of \$10,850. It was accepted on April 6, 1935. A formal open house was held on that date at 8 P.M. The District now had a permanent fire house and a piece of fire fighting apparatus built for that purpose. Some of the chairs and other furnishings of the building were donated by the various Women's organizations of the district and by individuals.

In 1936 the Commissioners made it mandatory that detailed reports be filed on each fire and drill, and extension of the district to cover newly built areas was initiated.

In 1938, probably as a result of the garage fire described previously, an order was placed with American Marsh Pumps, Inc. of Battle Creek, Mich. for a pump for the Brockway truck. The pump, mounted in front, was very dependable and simple to operate and was still in service on the truck when it was sold in 1957. A booster reel and a tank with a capacity of 250 gallons was installed.

In 1939 six more hydrants were installed by the Fire District and in 1940 the first face masks were purchased.

In 1944 Civil Defense offered a 500 gpm trailer pump which was accepted with hose and ladders. In 1946 this equipment was transferred to the Conservation Department.

Several members of the Fire Department served in the Armed Forces during World War II. A bronze plaque was dedicated to their memory and an honor roll of all McKownville Boys who served during World War II was hung in the fire house until its removal to the new.

In 1949 the new McKownville Water Supply was placed in service. This provided a more dependable supply with modern hydrants. However, during the summer, uncontrolled sprinkling and outside use of water frequently depleted the storage tank and left the district with no pressure for fire fighting. Subsequent restrictions on summer use in 1955 alleviated this. Other improvements have made the supply more efficient and increased its capacity to cope with the domestic requirements and fire flows of a community changing again from a quiet suburban community to a shopping, office and campus complex.

In February of 1950 the last of the founders, Alfred A. Garrison died. He had served on the Board of Fire Commissioners for over 31 years and was the prime mover behind founding the district. He was still a commissioner at the time of his death.

In 1950 it became apparent that the Brockway truck could not carry all the hose required by the Board of Underwriters. In November, voters approved 73 to 1 the expenditure of \$8500 to purchase a modern fire pumper. It was pump tested on October 10, 1951 and accepted by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

The Brockway truck was retained as a second truck because of its small size and ability to get over the narrow roads of the Country Club and Pine Bush to fight brush fires. It could pump while being driven which the other trucks cannot. It was a fast little truck and many times passed the more sluggish Dodge on the way to a fire or drill. It also towed the Dodge back to the fire house when the latter broke an axle in soft sand and filled its place during repairs. Only a small man could squeeze behind the wheel to drive and only certain small men could fit into the hose bed to load hose. It had mechanical brakes and stops had to be planned for about one block ahead and made by standing on the brake pedal.

A portable pump and a gasoline generator to operate flood lights were purchased, and in 1954 the first Scott Airpack breathing apparatus was purchased.

The Fire District was extended to its present boundaries in 1951 and a new telephone alarm system installed.

In 1955 a new large siren was purchased and installed on a pole where the Pancake House now stands. It was moved in 1962 to the property at the pumping station of the Water District where its wailing call informs people of the area of alarms. Each evening at 6 P.M. its single call informs the firemen that it is surely working. The last of the fire alarm boxes installed in 1930 were removed at this time. One was retained for the front of the fire house.

In Sept. 1956 a hose drier was purchased in order to better care for the hose and prolong its life. It has proved its worth.

On April 5, 1957 voters approved the expenditure of \$20,000 to purchase a new fire truck by a vote of 66 to 5 to replace the aging Brockway. It was received in September 1957. In November the Brockway was sold for \$140 for use at an amusement park somewhere in New England. Although it is reported to have been seen during the last couple of years, efforts to locate it have failed.

During 1958 a smoke ejector fan was purchased. In 1959, radios were installed on both trucks bringing them on the Albany County radio band. In 1960 the old siren on the firehouse was replaced, and a Portajack, for rescue operations was purchased. In 1962 the leased telephone line was replaced with Telephone Co. Public Emergency system with six fire phones and in 1963 an electronic siren was installed on the Dodge truck.

With two large fire trucks in the Department soon became apparent that the outmoded firehouse would have to be replaced with larger quarters. The trucks were first parked side by side but this was very inconvenient. Parked in tandem there was only one foot in front of the first and less behind the second and six inches between. In March of 1961 the Commissioners began exploration for a new site, a search which almost ended in frustration as site after site was found unavailable. In 1964 the report of the Board of Underwriters on the fire defenses of McKownville was received. Specifically it mentioned the replacement of the fire house. The search became more and more desperate. In January 1965 efforts to purchase the site at 1248-1250 Western Avenue began after one by one of the other 15 parcels had proved fruitless. Condemnation proceedings on this parcel were instituted in March of 1965. On June 15, 1965 voters approved 357 to 64 the acquisition of this site and construction of the firehouse.

On October 28, 1965 condemnation was approved by the Court and Commissioners of Appraisal appointed. In March of 1966 Architect August Lux was authorized to prepare plans for the building. After long and many hearings the court appointed appraisers set a value on the land of \$102,000, far above the \$50,000 which an appraiser hired by the Fire District had set and also the \$67,000, the last sale price. On January 26, 1967 voters approved an unprecedented bond issue of \$285,000 to cover the additional cost of the land, build the building and acquire a new fire truck, by a vote of 232 to 17. In January 1967 an appeal was filed on the price and in March bids were taken on the fire house.

On April 8, 1967 ground was broken for the new fire house and the new truck was ordered from the American LaFrance Co.

In October 1967, the five judges hearing the appeal voted to uphold the price of \$102,000 unanimously. The Commissioners were advised by attorney as well as by the Attorney for the Association of Fire Districts of New York that in the light of the unanimous decision, further appeal in the final court was futile and the case was dropped regretfully to save interest charges. However, things brightened as the trucks were moved into the new house in December 1967 and in January 1968 the Fire Department held its first monthly meeting there.

On March 9, 1968, truck #3 arrived from American LaFrance to fill the third stall and on March 18, 1968 a referendum was held to give permission to dispose of the old firehouse building in use since 1935. However, the building was never sold and is still in use by the department.

1968 also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Department. The new firehouse was in use and it was time to celebrate, so a dinner-dance was held with a 1918 theme. The affair was a festive occasion that is still remembered as the great social event of the Department.

On Christmas Eve 1969 the Department was called out to a fire at the Kraemer home on Arcadia Avenue. It was first thought that the fire originated in the Christmas tree, but most of the fire was in an adjacent room. This fire was confined to the area where it had started. The house was the scene of three fires over a period of years. The last one caused extensive damage due to the fact that the occupants had to evacuate the building and they had considerable problems locating a telephone to report the fire. Eventually the house was renovated, and is still in use.

A major change in the area in the 1960's was the purchase of the Albany Country Club for the construction of a university which is now known as SUNY of Albany. During the early days of the construction on the former golf course, a dam at the Country Club pond collapsed and McKownville Fire Department was called about 5 a.m. to assist at the flooding of Western Avenue. Upon arriving at the scene firemen found fish flipping in the road and cars washed off the road into the gully one hundred yards south of Western Avenue. The construction site was also the location of several serious fires during the 1960's to which the Department responded.

The 1970's brought massive changes to the hamlet of McKownville and presented many new challenges to the fire service. McKown's Grove which had been a community focal point in past years closed, creating a period of activity and a source of sadness to the Department. The Grove had been home to the turkey festivals of the Department for many years, and also was the location of the Department's New Year's Eve parties, installation dinners and summer picnics. After closing, the buildings became "fair game" for fires and McKownville was called there for structure fires in July '72, April '73 and December '74. The 1974 fire marked the end of the grove when extensive damage ruined the dance hall building.

While we were losing the rural atmosphere of the hamlet by the demise of the grove, new buildings were being erected in the area. The high rise buildings of Executive Tower, 1450 Western Avenue and the Ramada Inn brought an urban feeling with vast new problems for the fire service. Training and drills were aimed toward these problems and mutual aid became much more important. Although the fire service was being updated, the water supply became a grave concern. The supply from the McKownville Reservoir was barely adequate for the protection of the new buildings. This was particularly noticeable at the east end of the system where the Ramada Inn is located. The McKownville Water District merged with the

Westmere Water District, and the Town made the necessary connections which increased the pressure and flow of water.

In 1973 an area landmark, the red school house at the corner of Western Avenue and Schoolhouse Road, burned on March 31st. The building had long ceased to be used as a school and had been converted to a retail store. The school had stood on that site since 1877.

The Board of Fire Commissioners purchased a Chevrolet Box Van in 1974 and sent it to Medi Coach Company in Oneonta, NY where it was customized to the present Squad 53. The finished truck was delivered and placed in service on January 3, 1975.

After the eventful 1970's the Department started the 1980's with a call to a basement fire on Westlyn Place on February 24th. The first crew on the scene entered the basement where the fire had had an extensive start but was forced to retreat after an explosion occurred. A second attempt to fight the fire was blocked when a piano crashed through the floor into the basement.

In 1983 Air Bags were purchased, mainly for rescue use. The value of these bags were seen in a very short time when they were used to lift a heavy construction truck off a teenager trapped under the truck as a result of an accident between the truck and a moped.

On January 7, 1984 E-57 was delivered to McKownville. This is a 1983 American LaFrance pumper with a 1250 gpm pump and a 500 gallon tank. With the arrival of this truck E-56 was moved to the Arcadia Street Station, but kept in service. E-56 was later repainted and equipped with a fifty gallon foam tank pre-connected to the deck gun. This truck, although now an antique, is still in service and is used as the Department parade vehicle.

The mid-80's also saw a big change in the fire district. The Woodscape development was constructed off McKown Road, adding 200 new residential homes to the district. While this added the responsibility of more homes to protect, it had the effect of reducing the number of outdoor and brush calls.

On May 20, 1985 McKownville Fire Department was called to the "Chapel House" fire on the SUNY Campus. The structure was a former large wooden residence located in a secluded area. The fire was of suspicious origin and because of its remote location the fire had a good start before it was discovered and reported. The Department had previously been to this same location for a fire in the garage. Following the "Chapel House" fire the building was removed and an InterFaith facility was construction on the campus perimeter road where it is more accessible.

1985 was a sad year in the history of the McKownville Fire Department when two members, very prominent in the Department, died during the year; Fred B. Abele and Thomas

W. King, Sr. Fred was a long-time secretary and president of the Department. He was an assistant Town Historian, so it was natural for him to be concerned about the history of the Department. He compiled many articles and photo albums, and wrote the history which was printed in the 50th Anniversary book and which has been reprinted as the early part of this record. Tom joined the Department on February 13, 1934 and was still active at the time of his death. For his fifty-one years of active service as member and officer, the membership voted to rededicate the Arcadia Avenue Station to his memory in 1986.

The Town of Guilderland constructed a pocket park in the McKownville District, on Strawberry Lane off Schoolhouse Road in 1986. The park was named Fred B. Abele Park and was dedicated in June of that year. The fire department sponsored a parade to the park for the official opening and dedication. Since then the park has served as a physical training area for the firemen who play softball each week in the summer, touch football in the autumn and occasional basketball. It is also an area where many drills are held.

In early 1990 we learned that Engine 55, which had been in service since March of 1968, was having serious engine problems. Bids were sent out and in September of 1990 we received a 1500 gpm, center mount pump panel, American LaFrance Pumper, the current E-55. The old pumper was traded in to American LaFrance who used it for its parts.

A special meeting of the Department was called on August 29, 1990, when the purchase of a flat bed trailer was approved. This trailer has been used primarily to carry floats for "Mardi Gras" parades. The membership is proud of its innovative float designs and the tremendous participation of firemen, auxiliary members and their families, which has resulted in numerous trophy awards.

In 1990 the Fire District and Fire Department jointly purchased new dress uniforms. This gave the members a new appearance and a new sense of pride to represent McKownville in parades and at other functions.

On two occasions during August of 1991 we were called in the middle of the night to face similar suspicious fires. In the early hours on Friday, August 16th, we responded to a fire on Elmwood Street, which was quickly knocked down, thereby saving the vacant building. Two weeks later on Friday, August 30th, at the same time we again were called out. However, this time the fire had a vicious start and was raging out of control when the first engine arrived on Highland Drive. The Miller family escaped but sadly lost their home and many possessions.

Problems started to occur with Squad 53 in 1991. The additional equipment that had been purchased since the squad was put into service in 1974 became too heavy for the truck. Plans were made to have it replaced and on March 3, 1993 bids were opened. It is hoped that the new squad will be ready for service this summer.

As we celebrate our 75th anniversary we can look back with pride at how the growth and expansion of our fire defenses have kept pace with growth of the hamlet of McKownville. Government regulations have forced many changes to the volunteer fire service. McKownville Fire Commissioners have provided the equipment mandated by these regulations, and McKownville firemen have attended the necessary drills and courses required by the regulations. Physicals and shots required have been provided by Department Physician, Dr. Michael Melas.

We can be justly proud of the dedicated members who have given so freely of their time and energies as firemen, officers and commissioners. We are thankful for the friendship and comraderie we have gained through the fire service. We are grateful and proud of the people and businesses of McKownville who have supported the volunteer service these past seventy-five years. Lastly, we look forward with eager anticipation to the changes and challenges of the fire service in the future of McKownville.

McKownville Fire Department Auxiliary

In 1935 a group of women in McKownville formed an organization known as the McKownville Woman's Club. The organizational meeting was held in the home of Mrs. John Feidman. The women were very civic minded and their first concern was to raise funds for the furnishing of the new firehall being built on Arcadia Avenue.

During World War II many of these women worked with the American Red Cross to aid our servicemen, and for the holidays they made gifts and favors for the patients in the Tuberculosis Sanitarium which was located at the end of Tudor Road, now part of the State University.

In 1952, under the leadership of its president, Mrs. Thomas King II, these women agreed to become the Ladies' Auxiliary to the McKownville Fire Department. Among their many activities they assist the firemen by serving coffee and food when they are called out to fires. On numerous occasions the members have stayed up during the night and in the cold giving aid whenever possible.

For many years the Auxiliary prepared and served the Department's annual installation dinner until it became a joint installation. Now they put on an annual appreciation dinner for the firemen. When the new firehouse on Western Avenue was completed, they provided the draperies in the meeting room and in the kitchen.

The Auxiliary has worked with the firemen in conducting the annual Halloween and Christmas parties for children. Each year in October they sponsor a Craft Fair, and their annual Election Day bake sale dates back to the beginning of the Auxiliary.

In recent years they have participated in the "Mardi Gras" parades to help the Department win numerous awards, and in 1992 the Auxiliary acquired new dress uniforms to march in Dress parades with the Department.

McKownville Fire Department Auxiliary LIFE MEMBERS



Standing, cft to right: Eleanor Adami, Peg Perry, Millie Karins, Terry Coburn, Ruth Abele. Seated, left to right: Kathy Barber, Marge Leddick, Rita Gecewicz, Ronnie Dugan, Bea Greenfield.

ACTIVE



Terry Coburn
*President
Life Member*

MEMBERS



Kathy Barber
*Vice President
Life Member*



Emily Baglione
Treasurer



Sharon Monaghan
Secretary



Ruth Abele
Life Member



Eleanor Adami
Life Member



Ronnie Dugan
Life Member



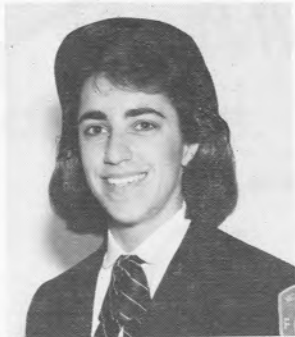
Rita Gecewicz
Life Member



Bea Greenfield
Life Member



Marge Leddick
Life Member



Emily B. Baglione



Maura Clancy



Carmella DiBella



Ann Garrison



Sharon Leddick



Karen Longale



Diane McDonald



Kay Miller



Nancy Parker

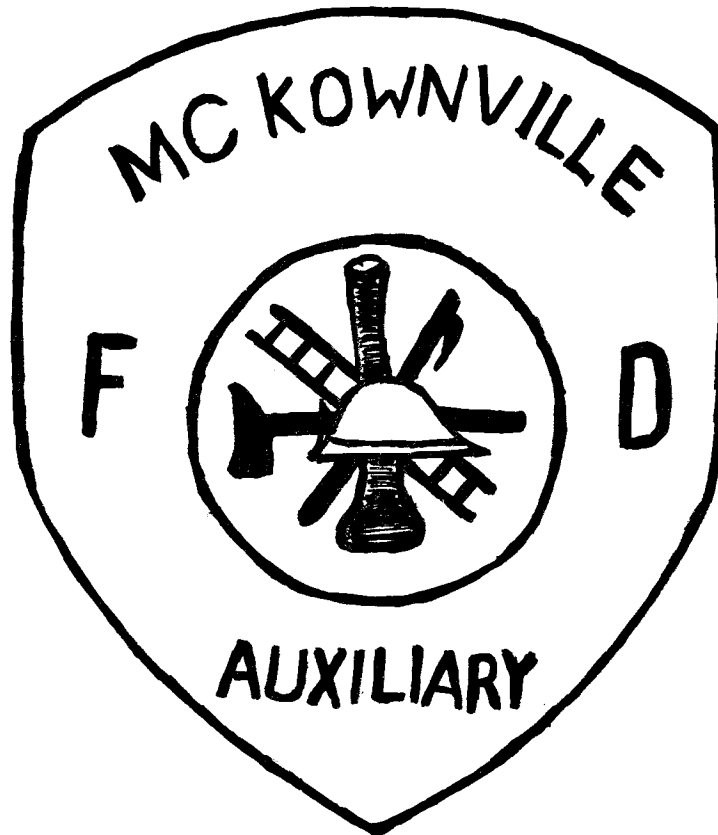


Peg Perry



Louise Warner

OUR CONGRATULATIONS
TO
McKOWNVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



in appreciation for your support

**McKOWNVILLE
FIRE DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY
1951-1993**



Annual Picnic at McKowns Grove 1955



Annual Installation Dinner 1989



Ready to Parade 1956



Ready to Parade 1982



McKowns Grove Fire April 1973



Westlyn Place Fire 1980



Chapel House Fire May 20, 1985



50th Anniversary Dinner-Dance 1968



Turkey Festival at McKowns Grove 1956



E-56 1957 American LaFrance in Active Service and Used as Department Parade Vehicle.



Parade Sponsored by McKownville Fire Dept. for Dedication of Abele Park, June 1986.

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