



BURNING ISSUES

www.paforestheritage.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As many of you may know, I spent most of the fall in and out of Hershey Medical Center dealing with complications from gall stones and pancreatitis. I got out of the hospital just before Thanksgiving, which was great. I am doing much better now and hope to resume teaching, at least for one course, at Penn State Mont Alto for the spring semester.

One aspect of being in the hospital is that you meet a lot of people. The nurses change three times a day. At each shift change I met a new nurse and nurse's aide. To break the ice they would often ask me what I did for work. Very few of them had ever heard of foresters, which isn't too surprising since we are a small and reticent tribe. However, I was surprised that almost none of them knew about Pennsylvania's extensive forests and amazing network of public lands. Of course they knew nothing about the long historical struggle to protect our forests from over-exploitation and conserve them for future generations. They also didn't know how important our forests are to protect our sources of fresh, clean water.

Of course, this was not a scientific survey. And I am by no means picking on the nurses and other medical professionals, to whom I owe my life. I assume that most members of the public would have the same responses. Instead it inspired me as to how important the mission of the PFHA really is. Every person who comes through the Discovery Center in the summer is learning something critical to protecting the forest resources of our state and country. Also, everyone we can reach through the website and Facebook will be educated to some extent. It's really important for us to continue our efforts. Please take the time to renew your membership and consider serving on the Board or volunteering at the Discovery Center next summer.

ANNUAL MEETING

November 12, 2016

The annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association was held on November 12, 2016 at the Caledonia State Park Office Conference Room. Twenty members were in attendance.

Some things of note that occurred at the meeting were

- The board of directors are seeking comments from the membership on the wording of the mission statement (found at the end of this newsletter). Since the name change is official the statement should reflect that.
- Jim Hyland from the Bureau of Forestry in District 12 is heading the BOF Forest History Committee.
- The Golf Outing will be held June 23, 2017.
- The Association received and opened the photo collection of Thomas C. Harbison, a graduate of Mont Alto and a former State Representative.
- During the year the Discovery Center had more than 1,300 visitors.

Joseph A. Dague Receives George Wirt Award



If you stop by the Discovery Center on a regular basis you are likely to run into Joe Dague. Joe is tireless in his volunteer efforts to promote PFHA, and for his outstanding efforts he was presented with the 2016 George H. Wirt Award for his work on behalf of the mission of the association. Joe is pictured here with Jack Graham who presented the award

Fire Warden Charlie Myers



Anyone who has been around firefighting in southcentral Pennsylvania for any length of time will recognize Charlie Myers. Charlie has an extraordinary resume and fire experience and he has always been willing to share his knowledge and expertise.

He began his firefighting avocation in 1960 when he started on a firefighting crew under the leadership of Fire Warden Chester Shaeffer in Shippensburg.

In 1962 Charlie joined the Vigilant Hose Company in Shippensburg and quickly rose through the ranks. Charlie became Chief of the Company, a position he held for 20 years. He was the Assistant Boro Chief in Shippensburg for 14 years as well as President of the Cumberland County Fire Chief's Association for 18 years; President of the Cumberland County Firefighters Association; and President of the five state Cumberland Valley Volunteer Fireman's Association. Charlie is a Past President of the Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania.

Since 1990 Charlie has been active with the Shippensburg Fire Police, where he holds the rank of Lieutenant and the office of President. He also serves as Chaplain.

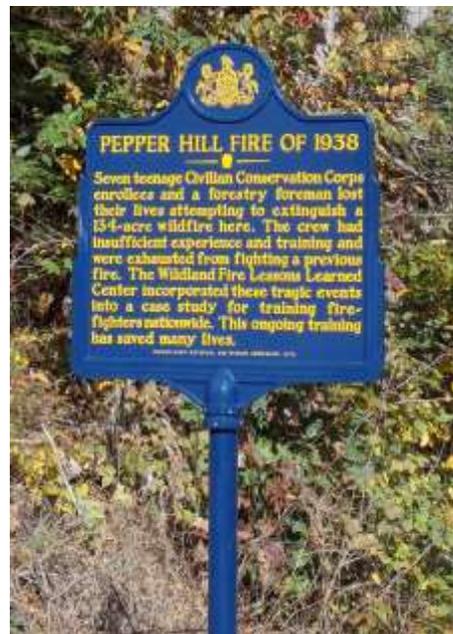
In 1975 Charlie became a state Forest Fire Warden. He is a charter member of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association and a former board member of the Association. He is now a life member of the association.

Charlie has led crews on too many wildfires to recount them all. The biggest fire he ever worked was the notorious Big Flat Fire in 1963. The fire complex on South Mountain fire began on May 4, 1963. Three fires burned an estimated 850 acres. The largest fire was a 600 acre conflagration that burned near Big Flat. The fire jumped the Arendtsville – Shippensburg Road at one point and burned down the mountain. Another fire near Mainsville burned 250 acres of South Mountain and the third fire at the intersection of Ridge Road and the Huntsdale – Pine Grove Road (Route 233) burned less than an acre.

Charlie points out that things have changed a lot since he began in the fire service. Crews were often picked up off the street. They had people on the fire line with little or no experience and protective gear was almost non-existent. "That's changed for the better," notes Warden Myers with some pride. Charlie encouraged the changes and help bring them about. On the downside Charlie notes that help is dwindling and it is hard to get a wildfire crew together.

Charlie worked for 45 years in a textile plant on the night shift and he continues to work part time (as he has for more than 50 years) at a funeral home in Shippensburg.

One of Charlie's mantras, regardless of whether it is a structure fire or wildfire is, "You don't leave a fire as long as there is smoke!"



On October 19, 2016, 87 years to the day after the tragic Pepper Hill fire in Cameron County, the PHMC and DCNR dedicated a historical marker along route 872 to honor the eight CCC firefighters killed in the blaze. The marker is located at the mouth of Pepper Hill Run.

PA Forest Heritage Association

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Wildfire Statistics to December 2016

Total Fires - 836

Acres Burned - 12,067

Total Damage - \$3,560,626

Most Fires – District 18 – 120

Most Acreage – District 19 – 8,759 acres

Structures Damaged – 17

Residences Destroyed – 9

Injuries – 12

Fatalities – 1

The fatality occurred in April when an elderly man burning debris in Valley Township, Montour County had a fire get away from him. He was overcome by the fire and died on the scene.

Southern Appalachians

The fires this past fall in the southern Appalachian mountains were devastating. Thousands of acres burned. In Tennessee alone more than 1,600 structures were damaged or destroyed and 14 people lost their lives. The numbers are still being tabulated showing more than 120,000 acres burned in more than 50 fires were fought by more than 6,300 firefighters, 74 aircraft and hundreds of pieces of apparatus.

Pennsylvania sent two type 6 engines, one 10-person crew, and 7 individuals in overhead positions to Georgia and North Carolina this fall to help on the fires.

In an effort to help the people and communities affected by the fires, singer and country music legend, Dolly Parton, conducted a telethon that raised over \$9 million.



One of the artifacts in the Association's collection is George Wirt's badge for the International Forestry Conservation Congress held in Pittsburgh in 1917. PFA on the medal indicates he was a member of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association. Stop by the discovery center to see other items of significance or curiosity.



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Return Service Requested

Mission Statement

The mission of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association is to preserve and showcase the heritage of forests and fire protection as they relate to forestry. The association celebrates Pennsylvania’s pioneers in forest stewardship – past, present and future

Vision Statement

The Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association is a place of discovery. Significant artifacts and interactive exhibits trace the past and point to the future of forestry in Pennsylvania. The museum is dedicated to the stewardship of all forest resources and honors the men and women who sustain today’s forest. Here everyone can enjoy a variety of experiences that further an understanding of forestry and forest fires. In addition to indoor and outdoor exhibits, the facility includes a library, training center, classrooms, volunteer accommodations, museum store and administrative offices. Future plans include outreach programs, transportable exhibits, an auditorium and food service.

Membership Application

Please enroll the following as a member of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ St _____ ZIP _____

E-Mail: _____

Check One:

- Student/ Youth \$5
- Individual \$15
- Family (number in household _____) \$25
- Sustaining \$35
- Non-Profit Volunteer Organization (check below) \$35
 - Forest Fire Crew
 - Volunteer Fire Company
 - Forest Fire Wardens Assoc.
 - Other Organization _____
- Corporate \$100
- Life \$300
- Contributing \$ _____

I do not wish to join but I would like to make a donation \$ _____

Make Checks payable to:

Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association

Mail to:

**The Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Assoc.
6151 Route 209
Stroudsburg, PA 18360-7039**