

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I write this, the disastrous Thomas Fire north of Los Angeles, CA has burned hundreds of thousands of acres, destroyed hundreds of homes, and is still only minimally contained. Fortunately, the losses of people's lives have been few. From news reports it seems that fires this intense in this region last occurred in the

1930's. A big difference this time is that many more people are living in this area. Also, the intense aridity of the winds and the lateness of the rains are adding to the danger. This follows one of the most active fire seasons the world has seen in many, many years. This underscores the importance of our mission. People need reminders of the intense efforts in the past that have restored forests to our region. And we all need to know that these efforts must continue to meet the new challenges we face.

While our summer season at the Forest Heritage Discovery Center is over the museum is still ready to go. On December 3 we had a visit from the Bendersville Fire Company Juniors. These young volunteers have been trained to fight wildfires in their area. Check out the website for pictures. It was great to host their visit. Over the winter months if you know of a group who would like to visit our center please let me know. If I can't make it I am sure we can find someone to open the museum. Thanks to the Caledonia State Park we have heat and water all winter long.

We had a very successful annual meeting this past November at the Norlo Park Community Building. We appreciated Austin Grove's presentation on his experiences on a helitack crew in Colorado this past summer. I enjoyed the videos of his work, but am glad that my own job keeps me firmly on the ground. The print raffle was helped us make this meeting a financial success, too. Thanks to everyone who contributed their time and effort to the meeting.

As an outcome of this meeting we have created a way to build our history of conservation and firefighting. During the annual meeting Mike Klimkos challenged us to a writing project. He asked that, starting in January, each of us spend

five minutes a day to remember our work and experiences in forestry, wildfire fighting, and conservation, wherever and whenever they happened. To facilitate this we have created a special page on our website, <http://paforestheritage.org/forestry-history-writing-challenge>. All you need to do is navigate to this page and start remembering. All the writing experts say this is a great way to get started. It doesn't have to be like Hemingway, it just has to be written down. Your submissions will only be used to further the historical mission of the PFHA.

I would like to thank two board members who are stepping down, Rick Flowers and Roy Siefert. Their service over the years has really helped advance the mission of our organization. I would like to also welcome our newest board member, Dan Bubnis, who is also the Pennsylvania Director for the Forest Fire Lookout Association. Thanks to all our board members and volunteers for keeping this organization going. Finally, I urge everyone to renew your membership promptly when you get the renewal notice in the mail. Keep an eye out for our web page and Facebook page. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Happy Holidays for All!

*Peter Linehan*

## Five Minutes a Day

We all have experiences with wildfires, or other forestry issues that we remember. Many of those memories are good memories, though some are so horrible that we may want to erase them entirely. Unfortunately those little wands the X Men used haven't been invented yet so we are stuck with the bad as well as the good. It is time – right now – to share those memories.

To that end the PFHA has created the Five Minute Writing Challenge. Go to the PFHA website at <http://www.paforestheritage.org/> and click on the Forest History Writing Challenge tab at the top of the page. Fill in the required information.

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Then take five minutes every day during the month of January to share your experiences and thoughts.

Don't worry about things like punctuation, spelling and grammar. Write like you talk. Write it like you would tell it to someone.

Tell us about the time you were overhauling a fire and a skunk crawled out of the log; the time you were underneath an airdrop; the day you burned your new uniform; what it was like to eat a cold baloney sandwich sitting on a charred stump; or any other experience you may have had.

There are two ways to accomplish this task. Go the PFHA website and click on the Forest History Writing Challenge. Then begin typing. If you do not want to write on a computer get a notepad and begin writing your thoughts down.

At the end of the month send the handwritten manuscripts to the PFHA at the address found at the end of this newsletter. That's all there is to it.

Remember these are your stories! When you are gone so are the stories.

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## Jimmy McGuire Forest Fire Warden

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Jimmy McGuire lives in Cross Fork, Potter County. It is an area of the state known by some as "The Black Forest", by others as the Susquehannock State Forest, and by some as "The Pennsylvania Wilds." Jimmy calls it home.

He worked for the Bureau of Forestry beginning in 1965 as a semi-skilled laborer. His stay with them was brief however as he was drafted in 1967 and like many others, sent to Vietnam. He was lucky and he made it home. In 1972 he again began working again in District 15.

He has been on too many fires to count. He smiled as he recalled his first day on the job in 1965. They had a fire in back of Wharton. The crew had to walk back into the fire and as they arrived the laurel caught fire surrounding them. They were lucky and got out.

Jimmy is quick to note that things have improved a lot in wildland firefighting. There is better equipment and training,

but he is also quick to note a large fire could very easily happen now.

And if you want to know the history of Cross Fork (originally called Peltzon) Jimmy is the man to talk to.

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## Association's Annual Membership Meeting

On November 11, 2017 the PFHA held their Annual Membership Meeting at Norlo Park in Franklin County. Twenty-five members were in attendance.

In addition to the usual association business the members heard presentations by Dan Bubnis relating to the Forest Fire Lookout Association and how they are working to keep the story of fire towers alive. Austin Grove did a presentation on wildfires in Colorado.

It was reported that it was a successful summer at the Visitors Center at Caledonia State Park with 1,114 visitors stopping by. But the Center still needs help with staffing and all members are encouraged to find at least one day to be at the center.



Jelly Elliott and the Knotheads provided after lunch entertainment. Currently the association has 165 members.

Two prints were raffled off at the meeting. The Game Commission print was won by James Tritt, Enola, PA and the trout print was won by Dan Bubnis, Johnson City, NY.

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## PA Forest Heritage Association

### Officers

**President** Dr. Peter E. Linehan

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**1st VP** Paul Sebasovich

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**2nd VP** Bob Rudy

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**Secretary** - Lisa LaSalle

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**Treasurer** – John Bitzer

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**Immediate Past President** - Jack Graham

jatogr@embarqmail.com

### Permanent Chairs

**DCNR Secretary's Designee** - Roy Brubaker

robrubaker@pa.gov

**PA Forestry Association** - Rich Lewis - rlewis7575@aol.com

**DCNR Bureau of Forestry, FFP** -

Charlie Choplick - cchoplick@pa.gov -

### Directors

Dan Bubnis - 2020

John Berst - 2020 - berst\_2@msn.com

Jeff Stuffle - 2020 - jandmstuffle@verizon.net

Joe Devilbiss - 2019 - joendot2@verizon.net

John Eastlake - 2019 - jeastlake@comcast.net

Bill Parr - 2019 - wwparr@comcast.net

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*The average size of a wildfire in Pennsylvania in 2017 was 3.14 acres. The average size of a wildfire in Pennsylvania in 1917 was 150.5 acres. In the year of America's entry into the War to End All Wars, Pennsylvania had 1,902 fires that burned 286,184 acres. The cost of extinction was \$27,831.28 or \$501,098.17 in 2017 dollars.*

## Wildfire Statistics to December 4, 2017

Total Fires - 512

Acres Burned - 1,610.52

Total Damage - \$532,663

Most Fires – District 17 – 94

Most Acreage – District 18 – 336 acres

Structures Damaged – 10

Structures Destroyed – 19

Injuries – 5

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### PaFORE

#### PA Forest Heritage Outreach & Education

The PaFORE Project has slowed a bit, with hunting and the holiday seasons upon us. The association is still actively seeking grants for the necessary equipment. One of the aspects of the project is for contributions from our members – thus the “Five Minute Writing Challenge. Five minutes a day each day during the month of January will add volumes to the PFHA’s rapidly expanding collection.



**A Sikorsky S-55 Helicopter making a demonstration water drop near Big Pocono State Park, 1965. From the PFHA archives.**

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### Tower Moved

The Big Pocono Fire Tower has moved. Originally erected near Tannersville, the tower has moved to Grey Towers in Monroe County. Grey Towers is the Pinchot family home and is administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

In its new incarnation the tower will act as an educational and interpretive site where visitors can learn about fire detection.



P.O. Box 176  
Fayetteville, PA 17222-0176

*Return Service Requested*

«Name»  
«Street»  
«City», «St» «ZIP»

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association is to preserve and showcase the rich heritage of forestry and forest protection in Pennsylvania, and to inform and educate the public about present-day forestry, including forest fire protection, and its future in the Commonwealth.

### 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**