

Preserving the history of the Los Angeles County Fire Department

Fire Warden



Los Angeles County Fire Museum

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Fall 2010



Final touches

Loving restoration of
1903 American Metropolitan
steam engine nearly complete

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

General membership is available for active and retired fire and EMS personnel; associate membership is available for other supporters. For details, visit lacountyfiremuseum.com or contact Dave Boucher.

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Paul Schneider (right) accepts a check from new museum sponsor Coca Cola.

Once again I find myself marveling at how fast the days fall from the calendar. While the year flies by, we're adding to the accomplishments at the museum. Restorations of vintage fire apparatus continue as always, we've launched our new website, we are now on Facebook and YouTube, and we hosted a dinner gala at the Biltmore in honor of four doctors who established the paramedic program. All the while, we've made steady progress in our preparation to launch our building campaign next year. Here are some details about our efforts on our members' behalf.

Pioneers of Paramedicine

On May 8, we hosted an incredible evening at the Biltmore Hotel honoring the "Pioneers of Paramedicine," the four doctors who were instrumental in establishing the paramedic program. These four men and their wives were wonderful to meet and talk to. Three were WWII veterans, including one who fought with Gen. Patton's army through Europe and at the crucial Battle of the Bulge. On May 7, all four doctors spent the day with us at our Bellflower facility. We assembled a professional film crew to film the doctors being interviewed individually and as a group by Randolph Mantooh and Kevin Tighe from the 70s TV series "Emergency!" along with Dr. Baxter Larmon from UCLA Medical Center and Daniel Freeman. It was a wonderful experience to see these great men finally honored for their collective achievement. See pages 4 and 5 for more details.

Restorations: '41 Ford, 1903 American steam engine, '30 Moreland

Joe Woyjeck has nearly completed the in-depth restoration of our '41 Ford. When it's finished, it'll be put on display at old FS30, which has been restored by the Artesia Historical Society. Our 1903 American steam fire engine is about 80 percent complete. Once finished, we will have a fully functional, very accurately restored horse-drawn steam fire engine. Although our department formed a few years after the fire horses had been retired in Southern California, having a steam engine is very important; it represents the foundation of the professional fire department from which we all benefit. Another major project is a 1930 Moreland, which was LACoFD Pumper J. Engines in the brush areas were lettered not numbered



1903 American Metropolitan

Seems like just yesterday that we began restoration of the museum's first steam engine, a 1903 American Metropolitan (second size). What began as a simple cleaning, wheel repair, painting and minor touch-up has evolved into a complete and thorough restoration.

I will never forget seeing our beautiful steam engine lying on its side at the boiler shop stripped down to nothing but the boiler and two frame rails. Even the boiler was apart. The vertical tube bundle was standing in the yard behind the shop. I was sickened. What had I done!

Now it's seven years later, and the engine once again looks like a fire engine. The boiler's now repaired and ready to safely produce steam, and the steam motor's ready to drive the water pump. Gold leaf once again adorns the seat and the water tank on which it is mounted. Just a small percentage of gold will cover the old engine, but it's enough to show that soon the job will be complete.

Attention to detail is truly a double-edged sword. We wanted this restoration to be accurate, while at the same time we wanted to keep costs down. Well, you simply cannot have both. So we chose accuracy. At least the labor has been free. Well, at least free to the museum, no so to the labor!

Our strategy has been to slowly restore this piece and spread out the cost of the machining, plating, fabricating, casting, painting, woodworking, gold leafing and all the other "ing" that has been required. We have painstakingly ensured that we have been accurate in every aspect that we can imagine. If it was plated originally, it has been replated. And the plating is nickel, not chrome. While chrome is much easier to maintain and keeps a sharper shine much longer, they simply did not have chrome in 1903. So no chrome. Nickel in my opinion looks far superior to chrome on something of this vintage, even as it loses its luster.

Our next big steps in this restoration are the painting, installation, final assembly and decoration of the 700 GPM bronze piston pump. Following that process we'll restore and install the coal box and tailboard. It's the tailboards on steam fire engines that lent their name to the tailboards on all subsequent fire engines, by the way.

After that, the whole thing will be hauled to the paint shop to paint the wheels and touch up all the nicks and scratches preparatory to final gold leafing and striping. While at the paint shop, a healthy amount of metal smithing will be conducted on the brass smoke stack. One hundred and seven years of dents and tears need to be worked out. After all that, there will still be many minor items to address, but at least "Sacramento Engine 5" will be ready once again to join the line-up and show people what a fire engine looked like in 1903.

– President Paul Schneider



back then. This restoration is a total frame-off project, same as the steam engine. When complete, Pumper J will be the only restored LACoFD green fire engine in our collection. (The engines serving in the brush area were green until after WWII.)

Open house update, email reminders available

Remember that our Bellflower facility is open the first Sunday of each month, excluding holidays. As we mentioned in the previous issue of the "Fire Warden," we participated in the annual Bellflower car show on September 11, 2010, and hosted a BBQ, car show and 9/11 commemoration. We'll have details from the event and information about our upcoming open house in the next issue. If you would like to receive email reminders about museum events, please send us an email to info@LACountyFireMuseum.com with the subject line "Fire Museum Alert." Rest assured, we'll keep your email address private.

New website and social media launches

Be sure to visit our new website – lacountyfiremuseum.com – and submit comments and suggestions to help us make it even better. The website is an ongoing project, one we will be steadily adding to as resources permit! Our immediate goal is to showcase the museum and our collection. Once that is complete, we'll add images and text relating to Los Angeles County Fire Department history. We have been collecting and digitizing images for quite a few years now, and we are very excited to share them with you. We also are now on Facebook and YouTube. Facebook has given us the ability to interact with fans and museum supporters from all over the world.

New building

On our new building front, the first draft of our exhibit development plan is currently being reviewed, and we have recently interviewed a project management firm. Much of what we are doing to now is prep work to enable us to begin our capital campaign early in 2011. Of course much depends on the economy, but we are at least getting all of our ducks in a row so when we do launch a capital campaign, we will be ready.

Asking all hands for \$20 per month

We certainly appreciate our corporate sponsors, including our new partner, Coca Cola. However, your monthly contributions are the lifeblood of all we do. Please keep up the support and consider upping your dues to \$20 a month. We are asking this of all the new recruits, and we have asked five battalions so far to make this increase. Most have agreed to the \$20 a month contribution – we are so thankful. Many others have bumped up to \$10 and \$15 per month, which has also helped immensely.

Keep up the support and we will keep turning wrenches, bustin' knuckles and making it all happen. It is an honor to be preserving the history of the American fire service and our department's contributions to that history. The more I learn of our own contributions, the more proud I am to call myself a Los Angeles County fire fighter. Thank you!

– President Paul Schneider

About your fire museum:

The County of Los Angeles Fire Museum Association is a public benefit nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, established in 1975 and incorporated in 1989. Acquisitions, restorations and operating funds are supported by monthly and annual membership dues paid by 3,000 active-duty Los Angeles County fire fighters, retirees, members of other fire departments, and the public.

The museum's collection includes more than 60 examples of historic apparatus, some dating back to the late 1800s, as well as hundreds of artifacts and thousands of photographs. The most popular vehicles in the collection are the original paramedic/rescue Squad 51 and Engine 51 from the 1970s television show *Emergency!* The collection is currently housed in warehouse locations in South Gate and Bellflower, California.

The Museum Association is governed by a seven-member board of directors, nominated and elected by the membership every two years. All board members are non-compensated volunteers who provide the organization longevity in leadership and forward-thinking vision for the future. James O. Page was the sitting president at the time of his passing in 2004. Randolph Mantooth has served as honorary chairman and spokesperson since 2005.

The board of directors has retained world-renowned museum consultants ERA of Los Angeles and museum exhibit design experts Jack Rouse & Associates of Cincinnati to provide a feasibility study and business plan and to create a visitor experience package as they move forward with plans to construct a new museum and exhibit hall, including a restaurant and meeting and event facilities, targeted to open to the public within the next three years.

Crew on the set with Leonard Cobb (seated on left) and Randolph Mantooth.



Standing from left: Joe Kiani, Baxter Larmon, Nancy McFarland, Paul Schneider, Kristen Connors, Randolph Mantooth, Joe Covelli, Jason Maravelias, Joe Woyjeck; seated from left: honorees Eugene Nagel, Leonard Cobb, Eugene Nagel, J. Michael Criley, Walter Graf.



Kevin Tighe and Randolph Mantooth;
seated from left: Walter Graf, Leonard
Cobb, Eugene Nagel, J. Michael Criley.

Pioneers of Paramedicine

Organizing the “Pioneers of Paramedicine” interviews and Gala Awards ceremony was one of the most challenging experiences of my life, but without question, one of the most infinitely rewarding. It was a privilege to become acquainted with the four honorees, all of whom were humble and humorous, gracious and down to earth. Their stories reminded us that as individuals, we can make a difference, but that together, we have the power to change the human condition for the better.

I salute the members of the Pioneers committee – Randolph Mantooth, Baxter Larmon, Kristen Connors and Joe Covelli – as well as video producer Denny Hare, director Russ Doran, and special guest Kevin Tighe for donating their time and considerable talents to this project. I thank our wonderful sponsors for their generous support; we’ll be featuring them all in an upcoming issue with more details about the event and the interviews.

The biggest tip of the hat, however, belongs to my fellow museum board members for supporting this project in so many ways, and for their dedication to preserving this unique and valuable history for the education and inspiration of future generations.

– Nancy McFarland, Pioneers Committee Chair



Fire Warden

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