MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
As I write this, Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner yet again, and while this time of year seems to be so hectic for us all, it is still a special time. Including getting together with family and friends for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner, catching up with loved ones, giving and receiving, and reflecting on the year that just seemed to fly by. This is also the time of year that we in the fire service hope we don’t get ordered to work on Thanksgiving or Christmas. I think I have worked the last five Christmases and would like to spend this one at home with my family. But I have always enjoyed Christmas at the firehouse too. Ever since I was a kid, I have spent Christmases and other holidays at a firehouse. My immediate family together with our fire family. Not too bad at all. Just one more reason to be thankful for the job we have.

Since our last newsletter, the pace at the museum has not let up, which is good. It means we are getting things done. In October we were fortunate enough to be able to buy about $10,000 worth of tools, equipment and fasteners for $4700. We were also able to grab a very nice forklift for $4000. The forklift alone is worth $9000. Our gain is, unfortunately, due to the demise of a local company. They had to liquidate fast and they gave us first crack at their shop. With the addition of an air compressor of about 15 to 20HP and a sand blasting cabinet, our restoration shop will be pretty well equipped.

We have already made great strides in the fitting out of our shop and now it is much easier to do the work that is required to resurrect and preserve our great history. Restoration work on our two main projects has been slow while we have been concentrating on building our shop, but now work is moving along again.

I know this time of the year is not the best time to ask for financial support but organizations such as ours, depend on the generosity of its members to not only exist but to move forward. We desperately need a facility that we own. Regardless of our plans in Bellflower, we need a warehouse to house the collection that would not be on display in the Bellflower showroom.

Please contact a museum board member and ask to have your monthly contribution bumped up to $20 if you are not already at that level. And don’t forget to check with your tax advisor regarding your contribution being tax deductible.

We can’t do it without you!
And to all of you who have supported us, and continue to do so, thank you!

Thank you so much for your generosity, and more importantly, your commitment to our great history.

- Paul Schneider
President
Los Angeles County Fire Museum
Yesterday I stopped by the museum intending only on picking something up and quickly leaving, the night before we hosted the Departments’ Christmas party. The preparation had consumed most of my free time the past two weeks.

My wife came into the room where I was and told me some people from NY wanted to see the museum. This happens quite often, people visiting Southern California stop by in the off chance the museum is open. I always enjoy accommodating visitors, but this day I was tired from the party the night before.

It turned out one of our visitors was retired from FDNY. My fatigue was quickly forgotten. As I showed him around, I asked him about his time on the Department. He told me his last assignment was Ladder 10. Ladder 10 is located directly across the street from the World Trade Center! This visitor who came to see us, and specifically Engine and Squad 51, had been first in on the worst attack on American soil. I was humbled to be standing next to a man that saw so much, worked so hard, lost so many and gave his all. Ten years have fallen from the calendar but that day will never fade in the hearts of those that were there.

Like a kid he climbed into Squad 51 and then both engines, an LACOFD 51 helmet on his head, and smiling ear to ear. I was given yet another reason to carry on with the seemingly endless work at the museum. When this brother firefighter entered our building, he did not notice our 9-11 display. We walked into the lobby and I pointed out the fire hydrant from building 7 at the trade center. NY firefighters sent this hydrant to the museum as a thank you for our efforts in assisting Engineer Bobby Watanabe as he was fabricating wooden flag cases for their fallen.

Surrounded by images of the trade center, our hydrant is one item we encourage visitors to touch. Our special guest did just that. He was moved, as was I. He shared with me briefly what he has endured since 9-11; lung cancer, nightmares, anger, and the loss of 400 additional FDNY firefighters who worked on the recovery operations for months after 9-11! 400 more have died from disease since 9-11! Through all he has experienced and endured, he amazed me when he said that they think the world of us “out here”.

Remember them always. Honor them always. And continue to earn their respect…… always! God Bless the FDNY.
Paul Schneider
LACOFD

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 the two Engine 51s 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 museum is located at 9834 Flora Vista St., Bellflower, CA 90706. We encourage visitors to check our website at www.LACountyFireMuseum.com for the latest schedule and updates. Many photos and articles showcasing our activities can also be found on the website. Our Facebook page provides some highlights and discussions with our members.

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 over 3,000 active-duty Los Angeles County firefighters, retirees, members of other fire departments, and the public.

PHOTO: MUSEUM PHOTO ARCHIVE

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BUY Museum photos: www.LACoFireMuseum.com
Most of the Museum's old fire engines once were front line marvels of engineering serving our very own LA County Fire Department. One such engine is our 1928 Seagrave.

In 1928 the Alta Dena Fire Protection District of our LA County Fire Department was in need of a second Engine Company to protect the growing community from our age old friend and foe; fire. So land was acquired, a firehouse constructed, men were hired and a brand new Triple Combination Seagrave fire engine was purchased to bring it all together.

The Company number "12" had recently been made available when the original Engine 12 and its district was lost due to annexation by the City of Signal Hill. It was purely by chance that Engines 11 and 12 would both serve the same city. Our Engine 12 served the citizens of Alta Dena until being replaced by a 1949 General Pacific. Roughly 20 years of front line service in a time when technology advanced rapidly and each subsequent year of fire engine development brought forth faster, more capable and far safer fire apparatus.

Engine 12 still has two wheel mechanical brakes with vacuum assist. Fancy way of saying you better get out of the way! By the time Engine 12 was replaced, four wheel hydraulic brakes and air brakes were common, as were windshield, cabs with doors, 12 volt electrical systems, sealed beam head lights, sealed cooling systems, and so much more. Many fire engines built in the 20s were actually obsolete by the late 1930s. They had great pumps and were very capable, but compared to fire apparatus coming from American factories, the older fire engines and trucks just didn’t compare.

Many were slated to be replaced and relegated to reserve status. Fire departments across the country needed more modern equipment but in the 1930s our nation was deep in the greatest economic depression thus far. So the old workhorses had to soldier on. Then came WWII. While the war put Americans back to work, it also tapped production and raw materials. America's cities would have to wait a bit longer, as fire engine manufacturers filled military orders first, building all manner of wartime material instead of fire engines.

We needed tanks, planes, rifles, ammunition, ships and a million other items required to kick ass across the globe. Fire engines from the teens, twenties and thirties would protect our nation until the war could be won. In fact thousands of the famed horse drawn steam fire engines did their part for the war effort. All but around 500 were scrapped. Their brass, bronze and iron would be melted down to build bombs, bullets and trucks.

When Germany and Japan had had enough of being devastated, our nation did what we had done following our victory in WWI. Swords were turned back into plowshares as the saying
Old Engine 12

Make: Seagrave
Model: 6 DWT
Capacity: 750 GPM
Motor: 6 Cylinder F6 “T” Head
Top Speed: Faster then you’ll want to go
Brakes: Maybe
I have been sorting through the thousands of images we have scanned over the last few years. We will be sharing these with you through our newsletter and eventually our website. I like this picture because it is just funny. Rescue 18 stalled at Jefferson and Centinella and needed to be push started. So instead of scratching the bumpers on Engine 58 or the rescue, the decision is made to place some padding between the two expensive vehicles and give it a try.

So Fireman Albert L. Elliot is elected to serve as the padding, no doubt he didn’t possess an advantageous seniority number. Apparently FIBOR (firefighters Bill of Rights) was not on anybody’s minds in 1958. I am not sure if this evolution produced the desired result but I am sure glad someone was grabbing some pictures instead of helping to push.

Engine 58 is a 1954 Crown Firecoach. It is very similar to the Museum’s 1955 model. A true “open cab”. 365 days a year air conditioning and plenty of sunshine too. The 54’ was the first year our Department purchased these great fire engines, and a total of 131 or so would serve the County over the next 50 plus years. Where do I plug in my iPhone charger??

Rescue 18 is a late 40s Ford Panel wagon similar to the 1947 Ford we have in the museum, which was lovingly created to replicate Rescue 11 by the late BC James O. Page. Rescues carried physical rescue tools, breathing apparatus, inhalators and very basic first aid gear among other items. Ah the good old days, no base stations!
On November 15th, your Museum played host to a group of women who inspired us with their support for one another, their commitment to our Department and their reason for being a group in the first place. Our guests were all widows of brother LA County Firefighters.

Chief Osby was in attendance and pledged our Department’s support to these wonderful ladies. Also in attendance were Chief Heinzel, Kristine Hajar, La-fonda Riggins, CSR for Div.4, and Roxanne Benavides-Ortega, Director of Human Resources. Each of them pledged their support to help the group stay in touch with their fire department family as well as support those in need who suffer loss within our extended family.

Engine Co. 23 stopped by and visited with the ladies, and all enjoyed the time spent together. It was a pleasure hosting such an important group of fine people. Joe Woyjeck and Alex Rodriguez took care of rearranging all the fire apparatus to allow space and set up the tables and chairs. At the last minute, Joe realized we did not have a photographer. He made a phone call, and 30 minutes later Jim Edwards showed up. We had a photographer. Jim also happens to be the Mayor Pro Tem of Cerritos, as well as a long term friend and supporter of the Museum. Thanks Jim, you are always there for us!

In September 2009, Museum personnel were among a cadre of committed individuals who assisted in the Memorial at Dodger Stadium for Capt. Ted Hall and Engineer Arnie Quinones. We played a role in one of the most significant, demanding, and emotional efforts of our careers. We had a banner made with the Camp 16 logo with Ted and Arnie’s names on it. This banner was proudly flown over the procession route during the Memorial for those two brave men. That banner now hangs in the Museum.

We were worried that seeing it again might be tough for Kathy Hall and Laurie Quinones. Instead, these two brave women smiled and asked to be photographed with it. So they both climbed on top of Engine 51 for the camera. Seeing these two women smiling and laughing together was a great experience. Having the time to talk to them, and all twelve of our brothers wives, was a pleasure. We really enjoyed discussing their lives, their husbands, and their group.

This reminded us even further that we are all a part of a large and wonderful family. These women are our sisters. They are our family, and we need to keep them in our thoughts. They all want to hear from us. You can bet your Museum will be making sure they hear from us. How about you?

GET ON OUR EMAIL LIST
Go to www.LACountyFireMuseum.com and SIGN UP!
Watch a video of Engine 12 cruisin’ the streets of Bellflower:
http://www.lacountyfiremuseum.com/1928Seagrave.html