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As the president of the Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce I am so very pleased and proud to be involved with this project. The Chamber’s mission statement includes these words: “The purpose of the Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote, protect and serve the general business interests of the City of Chardon and the surrounding area.” And while we may do that, this magazine is dedicated to some real heroes - the people and departments that risk their very own safety to protect and serve our citizens.

I hope you enjoy these stories but more importantly, I hope you appreciate the people they are about. I’d like to say thank you to each and every dedicated frontline worker and all those involved in the safety community for your lifelong devotion and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Catherine Peters
President,
Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce



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Dear Readers,

Thanks for flipping to this page and picking up a copy of this magazine saluting "A Common Heart...Uncommon Devotion." It's an absolute pleasure to be able to share in words and photos some highlights of the past and present of Chardon Fire and Police departments.

As a local feature writer whose personal mission is to highlight amazing people in our world and share their inspiring stories, this project evolved from learning about the rich history of Chardon safety forces and a desire to highlight the special people involved.

Chardon Chamber of Commerce stepped up to help make my vision become a reality, as well as all of the advertisers and a tribute magazine was born. A special thank you is extended to Executive Director Stacia Clawson. I am forever grateful for your kindness, trust and positivity.

To readers, I hope you enjoy the memories and may you be reminded of the dedication made by these fine men and women who continue to make Chardon such a very special place to live, visit and raise a family.

It's been an absolute pleasure orchestrating this endeavor. I wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021.

Love & Blessings,

Rose Nemunaitis

Rose Nemunaitis
Safety Forces of Chardon, Writer & Co-Editor

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Ode to the Volunteer Firefighter

By Dale Wedge, *Former volunteer firefighter, police officer and Geauga County Emergency Services Director*



It was a different time.
It was a volunteering time.
It was a bonding of men time.
And also a painful time.
But, it was “our time.”

We honor those that came before us and mentored us as we gave back to the community that we loved. In some cases, through mutual aid, we assisted our fellow communities to save a life and put out a fire. We even laid next to a fallen citizen as he or she was dying, contemplating the hurt of the family and loved ones, but knowing we had done the best that we could.

The fire department was made mostly of business men and a few invited members after months of attending meetings with no recognition until the “secret” vote came from the membership as to whether you were in or not. And yes, there was always that one negative vote.

Bankers, TV repairmen, pharmacists, elected officials, Illuminating Company workers, postal employees and those of a younger age looked up to these men, hoping for that yes vote.

Mine came in 1978 after dogging the membership through months of work at meetings, hoping that I would be accepted. And the vote came. All yes and one no. It was expected.

I was given the number 21, recently retired by Hiram Covell, an employee of the City of Chardon.

Thursday night was training night as well as social night. You learned by listening to those that served before you. You learned at the fire scene. You stood on the back of the fire truck in full gear holding the rail as someone would yell, “Bend your knees. There is a railroad track coming up.”

You missed dates. You ruined clothes. Sometimes you even ended up in the hospital as your mom was home, listening to her scanner and wondering if you were the one that was hurt. And on three occasions, I was.

All this for \$1 dollar per hour to cover your workers’ compensation and hospitalization. But it was worth it. There was no better time in my life. And I’d like to do it again, but only longer and with the maturity of those that I looked up to.

I’ve gone to many funerals of my beloved past members. As I approach their pictures and casket I recall all of the fire scenes that I was proud to be a part of with them. I drop to a knee after saluting and just say, “Thank you. You have no idea how much you enriched my life and my memories.”



Volunteer Firefighters Ken & Art Temple

For now we will continue to ride the back of the fire truck together, with sirens sounding, always on a quest to help. Just help. We shall share that eternal Thursday night training night and talk of the old, the new and the future.

“There is nothing like being a volunteer firefighter.”



**THEN, NOW, AND
LOOKING FORWARD**

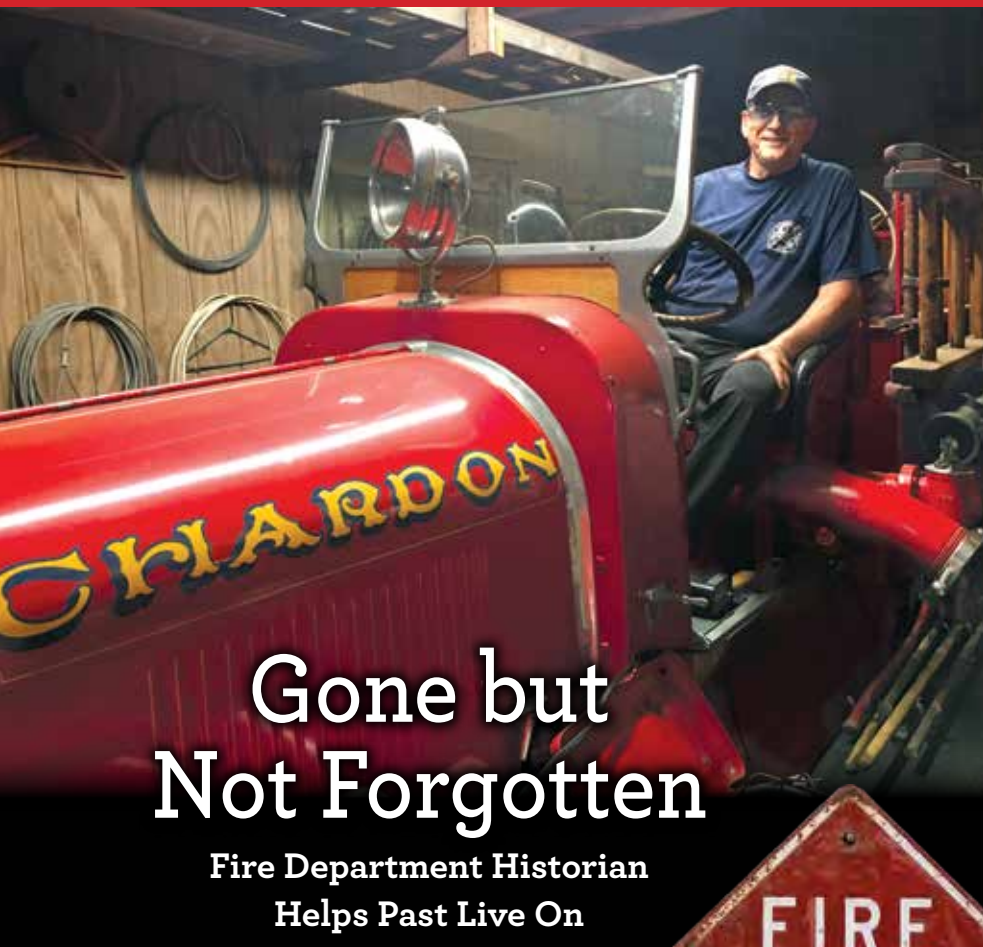
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Gone but Not Forgotten

Fire Department Historian
Helps Past Live On

By Rose Nemunaitis



To say Bob Painter has a penchant for history may just be an understatement. It takes one look inside his expansive garage housing some of the Chardon Fire Department's early apparatus and listening to the rattling of his history-book knowledge to know he is hooked on its history.

Born in Cleveland, Painter grew up in Chester Township. "As an elementary student we would visit the Burton History Museum (Geauga County Historical Society) and that is where I saw the first view of the Chardon apparatus that was kept there," he said. "I have enjoyed old and new things for as far back as I can remember. Saving history means saving the heart and souls of the county. Meaningful history lives in a lot of the older fellas."



Bob Painter, West Geauga High School

Painter played football at West Geauga High School and in 1966 was second highest scoring back in the Chagrin Valley Conference. Following graduation, the west coast called, and he answered.

Painter earned a football scholarship from College of the Sequoias in Visalia, CA, and finished at Cal State University in Fresno. He never forgot about his hometown and married his high school sweetheart, Nora Hollis, one year behind him at West Geauga High School.

◀ 1877 Ladder Truck



Chardon Fire Dept. Historian Bob Painter

After graduating from college he became a mental health recreational therapist for a day treatment program.

On a whim one day he stopped by the Doyle County Fire Department, drawn by its old unique design. "The next thing I knew I had boots, coat and helmet," he said. Thus began a loyal devotion to the fire safety services.

In 1972 he started working part-time as a paid call fireman for the Tulare County California Fire Department and also with the Porterville City Fire Department. "I was drawn to the fire service to provide a community service and to meet a personal challenge," Painter said.

He returned to Chardon to take a job with the Geauga County Metzenbaum Center in 1976 and started with the Chardon Volunteer Fire Department in 1977, eventually serving as a corporation officer as president, vice president and trustee.

"I am the last of the State of Ohio Certified Volunteer Firemen on the Chardon Fire Department with 43 years of service," Painter added.

In 2012 he was appointed as historian and curator of the CFD with responsibility to oversee historical documents and the 1877-1928 fire apparatus. The apparatus is used for education, public relations and restoration. "The purpose is to preserve the equipment and documents for future generations to enjoy," Painter said.

The main reason he became interested in the history of CFD was because of the town's historic fires and the importance of the department to the community. "When serving as president of the Fire Corporation, I became interested in the condition of our first motorized pumper (1928 Prospect Fire Engine) CCFE (Chardon Community Fire Engine)," Painter said.



Restored 1928 Prospect Deluge Master Fire Engine on Display

A decision was made to bring the Prospect Deluge Master Fire Engine back to life. The project started in 1984 and took until 1994 to finish.

"After the Prospect project, I was able to work with the Geauga County Historical Society to use the 1877-1890 hand-pulled apparatus on a loan agreement," Painter said. The deal also included the *hand-pulled 1877 ladder truck*, *1877 large wheel hose cart*, a *1890 Howe hand pumper* and a *chemical engine*.

The equipment is now used for special events like bicentennial programs, festivals, Memorial Day, Fourth of July celebrations and others. "My attraction to the importance of history was because Chardon still had fire apparatus available and written documents and photos in their archives which needed to be preserved and not destroyed," Painter added. "Our photos and articles show a lot of what was happening after the terrible conflagration fire of 1868." (That fire destroyed the commercial center of Chardon's downtown.)

Since then the department has come a long way, Painter said. "Chardon Fire has always been a proactive fire department with progressive training within the fire science field."

When the need arose, the department expanded into emergency medical service to meet the community's needs. "We have always taken great pride in the level of professional service that we have provided because we are the community," Painter said. "We have a rich history and we are very proud of our commitment to share this history with the community of the Chardon area."

▼ 1890s Howe Pumper (served Chardon Village until 1956)



Gone, but Not Forgotten (Cont'd)

Painter is active in many fire apparatus restoration groups. He is a member of Cleveland's Western Reserve Fire Museum and the Antique Fire Muster Group, a charter group of the Society for the Preservation & Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America.

"I continue to want to start a county-wide organization like our Geauga com-

munity antique fire battalion with other county fire departments and fire buffs like myself," he said. "I have a great interest in restoring old things. I like old trucks. A decision to save an old truck from destruction says 'I love and respect you.' A fire truck is your lifeline in times of need. Why do we discard these? They need our respect and appreciation."



Bob Painter's first restoration purchase ►
a 1952 GMC Fire Engine



Before



After



Chardon firefighter Roy Nieman with his horse team at Chardon Bicentennial

Photo Above: 1877 High-wheel Hose Cart

Photo/right: Display of Antique Chardon Fire Department Helmet Medallions ►



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Chardon Square 1868 before the fire

History of Large Fires in Chardon

By Chief Larry Gaspar,
Chardon Fire Department

Chardon's First Documented Fire and Establishment of the Department

Chardon community's need for a fire department sparked as a result of a devastating event – the first fire documented on July 25, 1868 – whose massive destruction burned business row and the county courthouse to the ground.

In 1875 the town began proceedings to establish a fire department and order hand-pulled fire equipment. The Chardon Fire Department was established on March 21, 1877, mainly comprised of townspeople who would run to help. A fire bell to alert the community was purchased in 1879 and is still displayed today on the south end of Chardon Square.

Chardon Square after the 1868 fire ►



Chardon Square Fire July 25, 1868

Between 2 and 3 a.m. a small fire was discovered on the outside rear of the building at J.O. Teed's Saddle and Harness Shop as reported in the Geauga Democrat on August 3, 1868. Two other fires nearby were discovered.

Those at the scene suspected arson. The fires spread so fast that by the time people living nearby were woken, the flames could not be stopped. Townspeople used their feet to stomp out the fire and put wet carpets on roofs to try and slow the spread. Their efforts were all to no avail.

Soon, entire row of buildings were ablaze, including the courthouse, post office and Democratic office.

Many men tried to save the courthouse by ascending to the roof and cupola, but once that became unbearable from the heat they were forced off. Thankfully, the Courthouse safe, books and records were saved before the fire grew too large. ■



1879 Chardon House Hotel Fire

The large hotel caught fire in 1879 and was heavily damaged. The fire was contained by patrons and residents and the newly formed fire department. The hotel was repaired and rebuilt. It would later be completely razed in 1937 to make way for a service station and the historic Geauga Lyric Theater. ■

1928 Asplin Basket Company Fire

At 6 a.m. on July 29, 1928, Mrs. Ranti, who lived to the north of the Basket Factory on Washington Street, noticed smoke coming from the factory. She ran to a house on factory property where she pounded on the bedroom window of Milo Ross, a truck driver for the company.



1948 Geauga County Farm Bureau Warehouse Fire

On April 24, 1948, at about 2:30 p.m., several customers and employees of the Farm Bureau noticed a sudden burst of flames coming from the top of the grain warehouse. The building was located off of Water Street along the railroad tracks.

The fire is believed to have been started by a B & O Lake Branch Railroad locomotive sitting on the tracks next to the warehouse while it was switching rail cars.

The prompt action of firefighters kept the fire in check despite strong west winds that threatened to ignite adjoining buildings and a nearby lumberyard.

Chardon's first police chief John Bohl blocked traffic at Water and Washington Streets with his police cruiser. Bohl was also a Chardon volunteer firefighter. That same cooperative excellence still exists to this day between the Chardon fire and police departments. ■

1928 Asplin Basket Co. Fire (Cont'd)

Ranti, of Finland, spoke little English. She was alarmed and yelled to Mr. Ross "Basket." It didn't take long for Ross to figure out what was going on, and he rushed to the factory and sent in a fire alarm.

Many residents turned out in mass that morning to help and watch. While the fire department laid out 650 feet of hose, all they had at that time, many men and boys carried baskets out of the factory in order to save some stock. The fire was brought under control around noon.

The factory was Chardon's main employer at that time, turning out baskets for use by local vegetable farmers, and suddenly more than 50 employees were out of work.

Factory owner William Asplin was interviewed two days later and said it was believed the fire was set by two "tramps" - men that had been seen leaving the building before the fire was noticed. These two "tramps" stopped at the Konicek home north of Chardon and were fed breakfast by the family. They admitted to spending the night in the factory. ■

◀ The structure known as the Beehive, built on the south end of Chardon after the 1868 fire as temporary housing for essential businesses of Chardon during the Main St. reconstruction.

1966 Spear's Auto Dealership Body Shop and Barn Fire

On September 7, 1966, long time Chardon historian Joe Spear was helping his grandmother at her home east of his family's farm and auto dealership and garage located just east of Chardon Village and into Hambden Township on G.A.R. Highway.

Spear noticed smoke coming out of the top of their barn. He ran and told his father who then called CFD. The Department was notified by fire phones or party lines in the firemen's homes, and by siren on top of the fire station.

(Continued on pg. 16)



1966 Spear's Auto Dealership Body Shop and Barn Fire (Cont'd)

The Spear family worked to get their horses and cattle out of the barn. By 2:45 p.m. the barn and attached body shop were fully involved in fire. Joe believes the fire was caused by an electrical problem or wet hay in the barn, but no one really knows. CFD worked very hard and was able to save Spear's

home and auto showroom located about 30-40 feet away from the fire. Paints and petroleum products in the body shop and hay in the attached barn helped to fuel the fire. The buildings that caught fire were a total loss. ■



1976 Weekly Mail Fire

At 12:18 a.m. on June 18, 1976, CFD was alerted of a fire at the Weekly Mail building on Grant Street. The fire reportedly started in the publishing company's layout-composition room and worked its way into other first floor areas of production.

The fire did heavy damage to the inside of the building and caused heavy smoke damage to the second floor. Comprised of cinder block and concrete slabs, the building withstood the fire, but the contents were destroyed. ■



Fire Chief Lew Richard and Captain Chad Thrasher discuss tactics as firefighters prepare to enter

1982 Van Gorder Warehouse Fire

At 1:23 a.m. on October 10 a fire was reported in the Van Gorder Warehouse in the alley behind Main Street by a resident living in an upstairs apartment.

Right after first fire engine arrived, it was discovered the fire had such a head start that it had already broken through the roof.

The warehouse was owned by the Van Gorder family and rented by Ted DeGroot to store office furniture. The building also housed the century old wagon for the Chardon Rube Band, a staple at the Geauga County Maple Festival.

The firefighters opened the doors to the basement to check for fire and immediately saw the wagon in the building. They teamed up to push it out. In the wagon were many old-timers' beaver skinned hats the band wore. All were saved.

Chief King reported the fire was deliberately set. An award of \$10,000 was offered for information on persons seen in the area. Damage to the building and contents were well above \$50,000. The arsonist was never found. ■

1993 Grand River Hardwood Fire

At 4:51 a.m. October 26, CFD received an alarm of a fire at Grand River Hardwood Company at 332 Center Street. The fire was lit by the dark sky and could be seen for miles around. A passing motorist noticed flames coming from the building and notified the department.

On arrival of the first units the roof of the building had already collapsed and all firefighting was done from the outside, which is called a defensive attack.

The fire was brought under control at 6:30 a.m. The Geauga County Arson Team was called to the scene. The fire was later believed to have been caused by faulty electrical wiring. ■

Chief Gaspar spent countless hours researching for this article in the Anderson Allyn Room's genealogical archives with the kind assistance of the Chardon Public Library staff.

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1999 Bostwick's Hardware Store Fire

At about 6:50 a.m. on December 22, CFD with automatic aid from the Hambden and Munson fire departments received an alarm of a fire at Chardon Plaza. On arrival there was a heavy fire in Bostwick's Hardware Store.

The store, which was the first building to be built in the plaza in 1956, had brick walls on both sides which helped control the spread of the fire laterally.

Four ladder trucks including Chardon's 1972 Mack Snorkel were set up and began flowing water into the top of the store. The roof joists began to bend and sag from high heat underneath. Adding to the danger was the fact that hardware stock, including paints and small propane cylinders, were burning. Later it was revealed that two young men, who had broken into the store and tried opening the safe, became discouraged and set the blaze. ■

2008 Chardon Street Department Fire

At 3:50 a.m. March 17, a man walking his dog down Park Avenue noticed a large amount of smoke coming from the roof area of the Chardon Street Department Garage at 320 Park Avenue and called the fire department.

Fire crews attempted to make entry through a side door with an attack line. Once inside they were met with heavy smoke and heat and then had to back out. The front garage doors were cut open and water was sprayed into the truck bays and shop areas. With help of service department employees, firefighters were able to move some of the plow trucks out.

As the sun rose that morning, the fire had been contained to just the tire rack. Shortly after it was completely out. The fire was later determined to have been caused by a fluorescent light mounted on the ceiling that had been left on overnight and overheated. ■



▼ 1999 Bostwick's Hardware Store Fire



2018 CarStar Fire

At approximately 10:20 p.m., September 27, a Chardon police officer noticed a large amount of smoke coming from the inside of CARSTAR, Chardon Square Auto Body, at 537 Water St. On arrival of the Chardon Fire Department, it was discovered that a large amount of smoke was coming from the top of the business, and could also be seen through the large glass windows in front. Firefighters deployed a hand line through a side door to put out the fire. Soon after, fire started coming out of the top of the roof, and the firefighters backed out of the building.

Eventually the fire was brought under control with the aid of 12 fire departments after a long and tedious battle. The last hoses were picked up at 6:00 a.m. on September 28.

Investigators determined that the fire started in the attic of the business. Originally the building had a flat roof, but later a wooden pitched rain roof was added over top. Once the fire began to burn away the trusses of the pitched roof, it collapsed down onto the flat roof and sandwiched the fire in-between the two making it extremely hard to extinguish.

The cause of the fire was labeled "electrical undetermined." Since then the business has been rebuilt. ■

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Building a Family Legacy

Thomas C. Hummel Jr., Assistant Chief, Chardon Fire Department



Asst. Chief T. Hummel

By Rose Nemunaitis

The sun is shining brightly on the Chardon Square, and in clear view across a Norman Rockwell-like scene is home to a group of Chardon's finest.

In front of the Chardon Fire Department, a fire chief pulls in. His door opens representing a Chardon family legacy, and one who has earned his rank up fire department ladders.

"As a child, I always knew I wanted to be a fireman when I grew up," says Thomas C. Hummel, Jr., chief of the Painesville and assistant chief of the Chardon fire departments.

His CFD memories are many, and equally are a history of familial role models bearing his name.

Around the same year Babe Ruth hit his final career home run, Hummel's grandparents settled into Chardon. Thus began a love affair with being a member of their fire department.

Grandfather Carl Hummel was a volunteer for many years. His own father, Thomas Hummel Sr., joined in 1964. Both were active in social or operational sides until their passing (Carl in 1983, Tom Sr. in 2001).

Grandpa was a captain. His father served as an assistant chief, like himself, as well as treasurer, secretary-treasurer, and corporation vice president.

"I even thought, as a child, if my dad became chief, we would get a bakery," Hummel says. "This was because the chief at the time was Lew Rickard, who owned and operated Rickard's Bakery on the Chardon Square."

When his dad joined the CFD there were 29 members, and 28 worked in the village. When there was a fire, many firemen could be seen running across the Square to the station.

"I can remember running down into our backyard to get my father because he could not hear the fire siren blowing while he was operating the lawn mower," he remembers.

When his dad first joined the department, Hummel says firemen were called to the station by two sirens, one uptown and one on the Finch Cleaners building next to the old motel. Later the firemen got pagers, or "beepers" which alerted them to fire calls.

As a young boy, he cherished his grown-up fire department responsibilities. "I always helped out during the Maple Festival, setting up, cleaning up, bussing tables, helping in the kitchen, and occasionally getting to work the cash register if there was a fire and all the firemen had to leave," he says. "We also got to ride on the fire trucks in the parade, which made all the hard work worth it."

Then every Memorial Day he helped mark the graves of the deceased firemen with flags and geraniums. He continues the tradition to this day with his own kids, his brother-in-law (a fire department member) and his brother-in-law's kids.

One glance at old CFD photos, and it is apparent Hummel has the same boyish enthusiasm for the fire service then as today.

"Riding to fires with my father was a thrill beyond compare," he says. "We often hoped for a fire when we were out,

Photo/Top: Carl Hummel, 1940s (front row, fourth from the right)

so we could go speeding through town, lights flashing and siren blaring, as we raced to the fire station. Then we could hang out in the day room."

After high school graduation in 1983, he spent a summer working at Bostwick's Hardware and hanging around the fire department, officially becoming a member in 1984.

While attending basic fire school at Auburn Career Center Hummel learned that the CFD began to run emergency medical calls taking over the ambulance service from Geauga Ambulance, where most employees were area volunteer firemen.

"The squad was going out every day, and I wanted to be a part of it so I took my basic EMT class at Geauga Hospital in 1984," he says. "The first year I

had my EMT card I personally responded on 220 of the 365 EMS calls to which we responded."

Times have changed. The commitment level doesn't.

When he first joined, firefighters still "rode the tailboard," -- a platform on the rear of the truck with grab rails to hang onto and windshields to protect them. Before the mid-to late '70s, there were no "jump seats" on fire apparatus. Firemen also at times rode on side running boards of trucks.

"My father was usually driving, and his expertise (and speed) was renowned," he says. "We always had to remember to bend our knees and hang on tight as we went over the railroad tracks on South Street, Center Street or Water Street, as you could end up with



Asst. Chief Tom Hummel Sr. at fire scene.

your feet as high as your head. I can also remember straddling another fireman while they got dressed on the back of the truck, while going to a call...How times have changed."

When CFD got its first true motorized fire truck (1928) the rule for calls for assistance from other towns was that not less than six, and not more than 10 men would go on the truck.

"This is hard to imagine today," he says, adding that the old truck only had seating for two, meaning that others would be left standing on the running board or tailboard exposed to the weather.



Asst. Chief Thomas Hummel Jr. with the engine dedicated in memory of his father.



L. to R.: Carl Hummel, Tom Hummel Sr., and Bob Hummel (Photo by Loel Stofan)



Thomas Hummel Jr., Chief of Painesville Fire Dept.

There have been a lot of spectacular fires in his time with Chardon. One of the more memorable was the barber shop fire on Main Street. "It was about 2:30 a.m. and when my father and I got to the station, we could see fire coming out the second floor window," he says. "We got there, I put on an air pack, and Rick Melzer and I took the hose and went in. Rick had to force a couple doors by breaking the glass out and unlocking them, and we went in and put the fire out."

"What amazed me was when we came back out to change our air tanks. Across Main Street, in the park, were probably two or three dozen people, some sitting on lawn chairs, watching the proceedings. It amazed me our

townsfolk would come out in the middle of the night to watch a fire. Ward Lawrence (my insurance agent, who has an office in that building, actually where the fire was) still remarks to me to this day what a great job we did in saving the building. You can also still smell the fire at times."

There were other big fires. "There was the Grand River Hardwood Lumber Co. fire, the fire at Bostwick's (I no longer worked there when that happened), and many house fires," he says. "We also helped many other fire departments

with fires, like the fire at Joe's Beverage in Munson, or Grantham Barn fire in Hambden, and Colony Lumber fire in Painesville."

Hummel has seen many changes in his years of service from riding tailboards to being seated and belted in enclosed cabs to wearing canvas coats, three-fourths length rubber boots, rubber gloves and complete sets of Nomex bunker gear to a change in air packs. "The firemen of my father's era never even wore air packs most of the time," he says. "Now we don't go in a fire without one."

The CFD has evolved from an all-volunteer department to a paid career and part-time organization. He said in 2020, there are seven full-time employees, six of whom work a 24-48 shift rotation, and 40 part-time employees who also work 12 or 24-hour shifts. "We have gone from running about 150 fire calls as a volunteer fire department (when I joined) to responding to almost 2,000 emergencies annually," he says.

"One thing I find unique to our department is a sense of family," he says. "I am proud to be a third-generation member of the Chardon Fire Department. My son, Thomas III, is also a member, bringing the Hummels to four generations. In addition, my uncle Ron Jonovich as a past chief and currently serves as the department treasurer, my cousin Mark Jonovich is a lieutenant, my brother-in-law Paul Marks is a member and past lieutenant, and my nephew David Marks is also a member. Mark's brother Tim Jonovich is also a past member."



Paul Marks with sons David & Jeremy



Timothy Jonovich - cadet 1996-2000 CFD & EMS 2001-05



Mark Jonovich - as cadet 1995-98 CFD & EMS 1998-2021



Jim Jonovich - cadet 2001-2004

There is also the brotherhood of the fire service embodied at the CFD. That sense of family often comes into play during emergencies.

"It seems that one of us always knew the family of the person we were called to rescue, or name of the occupant or owner just by the address," he says. What struck him personally and was particularly telling was during the school shooting at Chardon High. I realized that every one of our firemen who responded had a relative (child or otherwise) in the school that day.

"It didn't really hit me until later, when I realized I had assigned tasks to our firemen that took them away from the school. No one complained; they just did their jobs. But I did not consider that they were beside themselves with worry about their loved ones, just as I was. One of our firemen, who was inside the school rescuing victims, actually saw his son in the cafeteria, and he said, 'I'm OK, dad.' This was overwhelming for that fireman, and we had to relieve him from further duty. These are things that happen in small towns that emergency services in big cities rarely experience.

"I have had the blessing to bring a wife on this journey with me, who for the 32+ years of our marriage has never known me as anything but a fireman, either volunteer or career," he says. "I have also raised three wonderful children, who always got to be proud to show off 'Dad' during Fire Safety Week at school, because I would come to teach fire safety."

He also has his share of sad memories. "Times when I held someone who was dying, times when I could not help no matter what I did, times when no matter how hard we worked, a family's home and possessions were lost to fire," he says. "But I will always know

in my heart I have done my best, and I am proud to have been able to spend so much of my life with so many fine members of our Chardon community."

Many, many things have changed during his career "from the gear we wear, to the apparatus we use, and sometimes these changes can seem overwhelming," he says. "Today, as a fire chief, I get very little time spent at actual fires, and 'running the business' of firefighting takes up most of my time.

I would still not change anything about my life or my chosen profession.

"I am definitely living my dream," he says. "As a child I always said I would be a fireman when I grew up. I got the chance to be with some legendary men, and to eventually try to fill those shoes."



Members of the 1995 Fire Depart. (L to R) Rescue Capt. John Blauch, Phil Treadway, Jason Dorn, Tom Buth, **Paul Marks**, Larry Baptie, Rick Willman, Gregory Ventura, John Mauer, Keven Bennema, **Tom Hummel Jr.**, Bob Painter (seated) Lt. Larry Gaspar, Capt. Gene Adams, Capt. Art Temple, **Asst Chief Tom Hummel Sr.**, **Chief Ron Jonovich**



Photo Left: Thomas Hummel III



CHARDON FIRE RESCUE



◀ 2007 UH Geauga Medical Center EMS Crew of the Year:

Left: John Blauch, Theresa Reinhart, Ken Pitt Jr., and Adam Georskey (pictured above)

History of Chardon EMS

By Rose Nemunaitis

John Blauch, EMT Captain of Chardon Fire Department provided the information for this article. Blauch has been teaching for 22 years as EMS/Fire Instructor at Auburn Career Center.

Calling 9-1-1 in North America is a universal lifeline in an emergency.

However, it wasn't always as simple as dialing three digits to get help in a life-threatening situation. Modern Emergency Medical Services (EMS) did not come around in the United States until around 1972. There was no formalized standard of care or even standards for ambulances until then.

"In general the American fire service did not embrace EMS in their stations until the 80's and 90's when it became evident that to have firefighters cross-trained as EMS providers was a way to 'justify' their jobs," said John Blauch, Chardon Fire Department EMT captain.

If there was an emergency prior to the 60's policemen would often rush to

the scene in an ambulance that resembled a hearse.

"The police officers would go get the ambulance, load up the patient with no one in the back," Blauch said. "It was often only by the grace of God that you survived."

Or many times a family member, friend or coworker would drive their own vehicle to the hospital.

Good news for Chardon soon came in the form of private ambulance services in the 1960s, 70's and early 80's.

Two primary providers in the area were Geauga Ambulance (Burr Funeral Home-Chardon) and Trask Ambulance (Trask Funeral Home-Middlefield). The reason many ambulances services ran out of funeral homes is they were only ones that had hearse station wagons that could double as ambulances.

Marc Burr of Burr Funeral Home recalled helping his father answer emergency calls as a kid. He said he could

barely reach his leg far enough onto the floor board of the car to press the foot switch that operated the wind up siren.

In 1975 Geauga Ambulance Service was established and came to the rescue with a Ford van made into an ambulance. During this time, Chardon Fire Department would only get paged to assist when a need arose for fire or heavy extrication tools at an accident.

When GAC decided to cease ambulance operations, the Chardon and Hambden Fire departments jointly purchased one of the remaining ambulances designating it "Squad 3353."

The ambulance was headquartered at the Chardon fire station. Most of the personnel were members of the Chardon and Hambden volunteer fire departments. However, other EMTs and paramedics were hired to run calls in the response area. They included local dentists, nurses, and business owners on the Square. The pay was 60 cents per hour, primarily to cover workers compensation in the event of an injury. Many members gave their small stipends back to the organization.

Soon, the life-saving idea of a national emergency number was recommended by a federal government panel.

AT&T would eventually call it 9-1-1, and roll it out in big cities in the early 1980's.



1985... 9-1-1 comes to Geauga County

Before 1985 residents had to dial the seven-digit emergency phone number for each fire department.

"At the same time, a new 800 mhz radio system was installed as part of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant emergency preparedness system," Blauch said. "Around 1988-1990, a lack of volunteerism affected many fire and rescue operations nationwide. Hambden FD bought their own ambulance, and Chardon also bought a new rescue squad at the same time."

Also at that time, CFD formed two separate EMS and fire divisions, and personnel could choose to function as fire or EMS personnel or both. And this was also the first time that women were hired for CFD operations.

Another transformation occurred within the local EMS, as most departments transitioned from EMT (Basic Life Support)

to paramedic (Advanced Life Support) care.

In 1993, advanced life-saving equipment arrived, Blauch said. CFD

acquired a Marquette 1500, the first 12-lead capable EKG defibrillator in Lake or Geauga County.

"This allowed personnel to acquire an EKG and send it to Geauga Hospital's ER by cell phone telemetry, a service unheard of in the area," he said. "Many local EMS professionals scoffed at this purchase. However, this technology is now accepted as the standard of care for all EMS squads."

UH Geauga Medical Center in Chardon has served as the medical control hospital for CFD's EMS operations throughout the years.

Under Blauch's direction, CFD began offering its own EMS continuing education under a certificate from the Ohio Division of EMS. A variety of lectures and monthly courses included Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, Advanced Airway Management, Hybrid Vehicle Extrication, Phar-

macology and Reading 12-lead EKGs. UH's EMS Institute took over Chardon's continuing education in 2010 as EMS education evolved.

Over the years, Chardon Fire Department's EMS personnel have offered community CPR and first aid classes and have become an Ohio-sanctioned site for child seat installation.

"The scope and breadth of EMS care has dramatically evolved since EMTs were first certified in Ohio in 1974," Blauch said.

The increases in call volume and educational requirements and technological equipment advances have caused CFD to employ full and part-time paramedic personnel.

"Although the volunteer days have passed, our focus has been on remembering those that have gone before us while embracing the change necessary to move EMS care forward," Blauch said.



▲ In 1994 a barn roof collapsed trapping Emily Glenn (age 7). Chardon EMS came to her rescue.

Chardon EMS members Phil Treadway, Bob Painter, Carol Knesebeck, Tom Hummel, Bill Crowley, Tom Buth, Paul Marks, John Mauer, Marl Burr are shown here with Emily receiving the "Gift of Life Award" at UH Hospital.





Chief Larry Gaspar The Heart to Succeed

By Rose Nemunaitis

Larry Gaspar embraced a pure love of the fire department from as early as memories take hold.

"It was all about the trucks, the sirens, and what the volunteers meant to the community," Gaspar said.

Growing up, he lived less than a mile away from the Chardon Fire Department, and so did a volunteer firefighter he looked up to.

"One day I saw him run out of his house, jump in his car, and take off with sirens blaring," Gaspar recalled. "As a child, hearing the fire siren go off on the Square was a huge thrill."

Back in those days, and up until the 1990s, whenever a call for the fire department came in, the police and fire dispatcher would press a button and a World War II air raid siren would blow for three minutes, alerting volunteer firefighters.

Gaspar would stand on the corner of Karen and Claridon roads and listen where the sirens from the trucks were headed.

"The site was awesome to see, and a great part of my day," he said, with the same boyhood enthusiasm.

A burning dream soon took hold, years later culminating into Gaspar becoming chief of the Chardon Fire Dept.

One look and Gaspar's journey resembles a boyhood Mayberry-like television series set a couple decades later in the heart of Geauga County.

Back then, he saved up \$100 over a year or so by delivering newspapers, and asked his mom to drive him to Uncle Bill's Department Store in Mentor to buy his first real bike.

As a kid, Gaspar and his friends would ride everywhere around town. "We would ride out Aquilla Road with our fishing poles and small tackle boxes to go fishing at Lake Aquilla," he said.

He remembers being excited being around fires even at a young age. Once while staying overnight with friends, the fire department was summoned to the house next door.

"It was early morning, and we all ran outside in our underpants to see the trucks," he said. "Their mom yelled at us to get back in the house."

"When I was about 10 or 11, I was in Cub Scout Pack 93 and we were having a meeting in the Pilgrim Church next to the fire station," Gaspar added. "The fire siren went off and our troop leaders told all of us to stay in the church. Too late, we all bailed out the front doors just to watch the volunteers arrive in their personal cars and then don their fire gear, jump on the trucks and pull out with sirens blaring."

Fire Dept Siren ►

A house fire on Sylvia Drive in 1979 also comes to mind.

"Once the fire was out, my friends and I looked in the windows and could not believe the devastation and destruction that fire can do to a home," Gaspar said. "It was pretty horrifying actually of what fire can do and how it can affect a family."

The best day at school every year for Gaspar was when he would go to the fire station or the fire department would visit his class at Hambden Elementary School.

At age 12 he was the starting catcher for the Chardon All Star little league baseball team, and later played catcher at Chardon High School. He graduated in 1985.

All throughout, the dream of becoming a firefighter burned brightly.

He often made trips to the fire station just to see if anyone was there. If they were, he'd walk in and ask questions and admire the trucks.

"I always looked up to the older guys in the department because they were very reputable people in the community," Gaspar said. "They had to be - that was the only way you could get on the department."

"Later after I joined the department, a few of the older guys asked 'hey aren't you that kid that always came up here on your bike?'"

Every April came another priceless opportunity.

It was Geauga County Maple Festival time, and the fire department sold food. "One year at the Maple Festival, I think I ate 10 ham sandwiches in one day just so I could hang out in the station," Gaspar said.



During his senior year at CHS and for a year after he worked at Ash Motors Sales. Many of the firemen would come there for gas, guys like Dan Muchmore, Bob Painter, and Ed and Tim Brick.

"One day while talking to Ed Brick, then a captain on the department, and I mentioned to him my interest in the fire department," Gaspar said. "He told me to come up to the station and join up." That conversation would start the wheels turning on a 35-year career.

"On June 12, 1986 I walked in the front door of the fire station," Gaspar said. "It was a Thursday evening and I knew there would be members of the department there."

Thursday nights were meeting and training nights. "The first person I saw was Tom Hummel Jr. who I knew from school," Gaspar said. Fast-forward years later, both now work side by side managing the department.

"I asked if I could get an application to join the department," Gaspar said. "He looked at me and said, 'Well, it's not that easy. You have to come around for a while before we give you an application.'" From that point on he became a "hang around."



Chief Gaspar (right) with Art Temple, a member of the Chardon Fire Department for more than half a century. He still holds the rank of honorary member.

I attended every training, every work night, lived at the station all four days of the Maple Festival working, and would drive up to the station when the siren blew, even though I was not allowed on a fire truck yet," Gaspar said.

Ten months later, he was given an application to join. At that time Phil King was fire chief. "Phil was very strict and

ran a tight ship, all with good cause," Gaspar said. "I did my best to be seen and not heard, kind of under the radar."

He remembered one of his first fires he responded to was a mutual aid to a Chesterland house fire on Blackberry Lane off of Mulberry Road.

"We stayed together as a crew and found ourselves in a stairwell leading to the second floor searching for additional fire," Gaspar said. "It was night-time and the smoke was so thick that I couldn't see my hand in front of my SCBA mask. Thankfully we have thermal imaging cameras today to help us see through the smoke."

He was part of a group of young guys on the department including Hummel Jr., Adam Georskey, Niehus brothers Scott and John, Tim Brick, Melzer brothers Andy and Rick, Jason Dorn, John Blauch and Paul Marks.

"I'm not sure how Chief King didn't go crazy because of this young group," Gaspar said. "We had a lot of guidance from older members of the department, men who we highly respected because of their stature in the community and their selfless dedication to helping others, all for no pay."

Phil King Jr., Chardon's former mayor, said he had the honor of serving with Gaspar as a volunteer fireman from 1977 to 1990. "As for Larry developing to become chief, first Larry was committed to serving his community as were the rest of us," King said. "Secondly, Larry is a good well-grounded person who loved fire-fighting and working hard. And finally he had many good men who mentored him and the rest of us into who we are today. Credit also goes to the past members of the department."

Some of his best memories were serving with "the many great, non-selfish, community-minded men, who would drop everything they were doing when the fire siren went off. They were your school teacher, pharmacist, baker, television man and the guy next door. They would run across the Square to the fire station at any time, night or day."

In those days both Fire and Rescue were housed in the fire station but were two separate divisions.

Both were ran by King Sr. and both had members who were in both divisions, as well as members who were just firemen or EMS.

"Even though I had no interest in EMS at first, I found that a way to get on the good side of Chief King was to join the department's EMS division and found myself in Emergency Medical Technician School in the Spring of 1988," Gaspar said.



He would later complete the 200-hour full time firefighter school and paramedic school and become, along with Hummel, one of the first two full-time firefighters for Chardon.

"When I went to paramedic school in 1992 I thought for sure that I would be a doctor after one year of schooling due to the knowledge and the time frame that you have to learn," Gaspar said. "I often tell young members of the fire service that there are many things in a paramedic book that you will never see on the streets, and there are many things on the streets that are not in those books either."

He added, "A paramedic or firefighter becomes good at the job as they are exposed to a few years of all kinds of emergency situations."

In March of 1992 he was promoted to lieutenant. "I was 25 years old and kind of a rarity," Gaspar said. "Before the three of us, in order to get promoted, you had to be at least 35 years old, own a home in Chardon, be married and have a few kids. I had none of that."

In 1992 he began working full time for the department.

"I was in heaven," the still youthful-looking Gaspar said. "This was a dream come true."

As many young firemen do, he was taking full time firefighter civil service exams all over the east side of Cleveland.

September 1994 he was hired as a firefighter/paramedic with the City of South Euclid. "The fire service, for the most part, is loved and admired by the public," Gaspar said. "There are many bright spots in a firefighter's career but there is a dark side to it as well. We often find ourselves at horrible car accidents, in people's homes where a loved one is in cardiac arrest, or has been assaulted in a domestic violence situation."

Then there are the calls where kids are involved, whether sick or injured.

"The two worst days of my career where first, on June 16, 1994, when my partner and I were first on scene of a horrible motor vehicle accident at Chardon Windsor Road and Route 608 in Claridon Township," Gaspar said. "Despite all of our effort a 4-year-old and a 6-year-old lost their lives."

The second was on June 6, 2017 with another horrible motor vehicle accident at Hosford Road and Route 44 in Chardon Township.

Gaspar arrived on scene first. "It took the lives of two 18-year-old kids that I knew well and had just graduated from Chardon High School a week earlier with my son," Gaspar said.

He said many times it is the bad calls that will change a young firefighter's mind about wanting to go any further in their career.

"I always try to explain to new members what they can expect – good and bad and a career in the fire service may not be for everyone," Gaspar said. But, Gaspar can't imagine a life without it.

He still has the adrenalin going when he responds to a structure fire or a bad accident.

"There is a lot of responsibility managing large incidents and making sure everything goes right," Gaspar said. "You want to make sure that you do everything possible to stop the horrible things that are happening to the people who dialed 911 and need your help."

Since working for the South Euclid Fire Department he has risen through the ranks from lieutenant to captain.

"Getting hired there was the best of both worlds," Gaspar said. "In a three-day period, I could work a 24-hour shift at South Euclid, then work part-time and be available for emergencies the remaining 48 hours in Chardon."

In January of 1999 Gaspar became chief of the Chardon Fire Department and at the time the youngest fire chief, at age 31, in Geauga County.

"I was 31 years old," Gaspar said. "It only took a few minutes for me to realize I was suddenly responsible for the safety of a lot of people in the community."

Since then the CFD has grown in number of calls with 388 in 1989 to 1,933 in 2019. There are five firefighter paramedic/EMTs on duty around the clock made up of two full-time and three part-time personnel.

"The area of coverage since I joined the department has not changed," Gaspar said. The department still covers 42 square miles including Chardon City, Chardon Township, Claridon Township and Aquilla Village."

An active member of the community, the fire chief is a graduate of the Ohio

Executive Fire Officer Program, Leadership Geauga Class of 2007 and will serve as the Rotary Club of Chardon's next president. He still loves going to CHS reunions and seeing kids he went to school with.



Gaspar and his wife Sherri were married on Sept. 3, 1994. They rode in a fire engine from the church to the reception.

"My wife and I both graduated from CHS, along with our two boys, and decided to stay here in the community and give back," Gaspar said.



Chardon Fire Chief Larry Gaspar

Although growing up in the community can have its sad moments too. "The bad part about working Fire or EMS in the town where you grew up is that sooner or later you will respond to an emergency of someone you grew up with or their parents," Gaspar said.

He credits his mother, Diane Ridley, with some of the greatest life lessons he has learned.

"Here is a lady that found herself with little money, no spouse and children to raise," Gaspar said. "She told herself that she was going to do whatever it took to raise her children on her own and not have to put them up for adoption."

"Something I learned from her was that if you really want something there is only one way to get to your goals and that is through hard work and perseverance. Also, to treat others the way you would like to be treated."

Ridley still holds loving memories of Larry as a child waiting to see the fire trucks go by. "I'm immensely proud of him," she said.

Interestingly three of his five siblings are also in the fire service. "I have a brother that is a captain with the Virginia Beach Fire Department, and my sister is a firefighter paramedic here in Chardon,"

When he became a lieutenant at the Chardon Fire Department at age 25 he told himself to never forget where he came from, meaning the firefighter ranks.

He still to this day tries to live by that strong belief when interacting with personnel on the department.

"I have always had a good work ethic too," Gaspar said. "I love the fire service and have been blessed to have been able to have a career in my hometown. I love the job and being able to assist others."

"A few words that I have always tried to live by are honor, integrity, and professionalism. Our residents deserve the best and need to know that when the Chardon Fire Department is called on in their time of need that we will provide the very best service through hard work, training, professionalism and state of art equipment. After all the people who we serve are our families, friends, and neighbors."



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Solid Rock on Which We Stand, LLC is a provider of residential services owned by Justin and Tiffany Smetana. When they first started the residential program in 2011, their goal was to create a place where both their clients and their staff could thrive in a Christian faith based environment. The satisfaction of their clients proves they have been successful!

The Smetana's philosophy is to treat and support their clients the way they would treat their own family members. They do so through their Christian faith and strong belief in having an eternal impact on the lives of their clients and staff.

"We wanted to change the standard of care in our field," Tiffany Smetana said. "We want to build lifelong relationships with both staff and clients so we can have a long-term effect on people's lives. We are constantly pushing each other to strive for the next level of excellence."

Solid Rock's 26 residential clients live in eleven different locations across Geauga County. Each resident lives in a typical apartment or house, paying rent to a landlord. Solid Rock provides support for the clients in their daily needs, such as grocery shopping, meal preparation and housekeeping. Solid Rock also supports additional clients with transportation and respite care needs.

Activities at Solid Rock are individualized for each client. The clients work with the staff to help create dinner menus, plan group outings, explore hobbies, etc. Each client and site is tailored to the individual's lifestyle, desires and needs. The Smetana's goal is to create a true family atmosphere by eating meals together and talking about their days to build their clients' social skills.

"We started this company just three weeks before our first son, Brandon, was born," Tiffany said. "He and our younger son, Ryan, have both grown up with our clients in their lives. They have formed bonds with many of our clients, and it is wonderful to see everyone truly interact as a family."

Clients at Solid Rock are very active in the community. Each group participates in various activities such as horseback riding, church programs, art programs, Special Olympics, music groups, service projects and more. Client birthday parties are also big events that everyone looks forward to! Each year, Solid Rock hosts a company-wide Thanksgiving celebration in November. All clients, staff and family members are invited, and everyone is asked to bring a family side dish, while Solid Rock provides the turkey. Each year, over 100 people attend this event!

"It is important for us to get our clients out into the community and for us to educate community members about inclusion," Tiffany said. "We want to give community members the knowledge and confidence to interact with our clients. In Burton Village, where the majority of our clients reside, they are well-known and loved by community members and business owners. This is, we feel, vitally important to our clients' success and happiness."

Solid Rock partners with The Enhanced Hope Foundation; a non-profit which raises money to support the clients by providing funds for items or activities they would not otherwise be able to afford.



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Junction Auto Family



The Night Watch

By Scott Niehus

A century ago Chardon was a small enough community that a watchman could patrol the town alone at night accompanied only by his night stick and a large dog.

For many years prior to the establishment of a police department, the Village of Chardon was protected by the night watchman. The position was established in 1908. The pay was \$0.65 per night to patrol the village streets and was paid by the merchants for the protection provided to their places of business. In addition to protection from crimes, the watchman would sound the alarm in the event of a fire.

Watchmen Michael Fisher and Roy Willman held the position for many years. The watchmen were a familiar sight on Chardon Square. In the later years an automobile was furnished so they could cover their "beat" more rapidly. In the 1890s a position of village marshal was added. The village marshal was paid \$25.00 annually.

During the 1920s and '30s the night watchman position and the Village Marshal positions were combined. This enhanced marshal position allowed the marshal to enforce traffic ordinances in the village. Roy "Shorty" Willman was the first village marshal.

Marshal Willman accompanied by his large black guard dog "Jack" was a familiar sight all around town.



Watchman Michael Hugh Fisher, in front of the barn on his property at 323 South St., Chardon

Roy "Shorty" Willman, the first Village Marshal.



Michael Hugh Fisher served as a Village Marshal from 1925 to 1938.

The family of Marshal Fisher has deep roots in the city.

Patricia Benedict, Marshal Fisher's granddaughter, grew up in Chardon in a home behind her grandfather's house on South Street, the same place where the photo of Watchman Fisher on page 32 with his night stick was taken. The Fishers emigrated from Ireland. Patricia says her grandfather

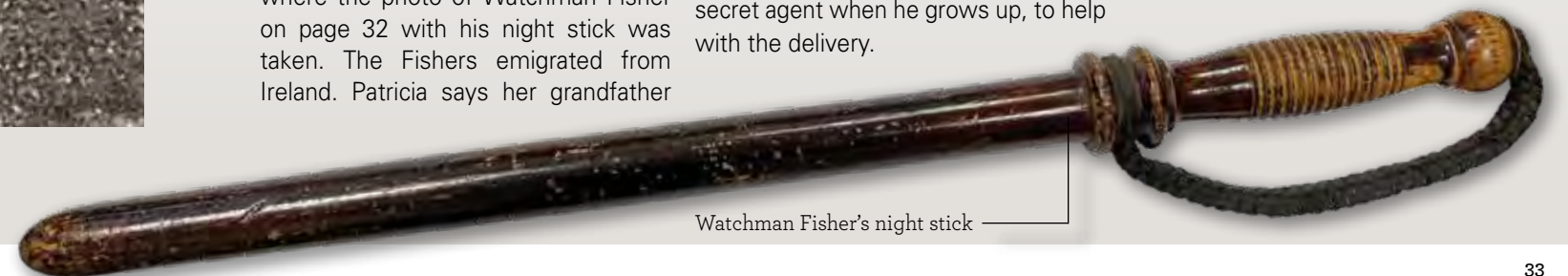
enjoyed being an "Irish cop". She presented the Chardon Police Department with a framed copy of that photo as well as her research tracing her grandfather's history from local historical documents. The night stick in the photo was passed down through her family eventually ending up in her sister's house.

In 2017 the family decided to donate the night stick because they felt it belonged with the Chardon police. The donation was made on behalf of all of the grandchildren of Michael H. Fisher: Mary Fisher Baginski, Michael H. Fisher, Donald J. Fisher, Christopher W. Fisher, Patrick K. Fisher and Patricia Benedict.

Mrs. Benedict enlisted her grandson Asher Benedict, a kindergartner on spring break who has plans to become a secret agent when he grows up, to help with the delivery.



Mrs. Benedict and Grandson Asher
Photo Courtesy of Geauga Maple Leaf



Watchman Fisher's night stick

Chardon's First Police Chief Leaves A Lasting Legacy

By Rose Nemunaitis



Firearms, fingerprinting and photographing advances were established during his tenure. He replaced Chardon's first police vehicle, a used 1936 Ford sedan purchased in 1938, with a new 1949 sedan which was eventually equipped with a two-way radio, some firefighting equipment, and a riot gun.

Bohl played many roles including captain of the Chardon Volunteer Fire Department, president of Lake-Geauga Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 16 and later president of the Geauga County Fireman's Association. He belonged to the Masonic Lodge, the Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce, and several other police groups.

"He was a policeman's policeman according to those who knew him, and he genuinely cared about the community," Niehus said. "He remains legendary for his service to the people of the Village of Chardon, and he certainly was the definition of a community servant who practiced community policing long before that concept came into vogue."

The year was 1947. Harry S. Truman was president, the first airplane broke the speed of sound and Chardon Village Council decided it needed a full-time police force.

John Bohl would become Chardon's first police chief and would build a spirit of community policing and caring.

A veteran of the Ravenna Police Department, Bohl began his law enforcement career at age 19, serving as marshal for New Matamoras in southeastern Ohio in the 1930s.

When World War II began, he joined the plant guard force at Ravenna Arsenal, and at war's end he joined RPD before coming to Chardon.

Bohl became very well-known throughout the community. He lived in the village, and frequently could be found patrolling on foot or in his personal car.

"Chief was a popular leader, and he was instrumental in having his officers well-trained and capable of handling any situation," Chardon Police Chief Scott Niehus said.

He visited the schools often and became a role model for children throughout the community. He also initiated Chardon's school crossing guard program.

"He frequently spent time talking to youngsters, especially those he suspected were headed for trouble," Niehus said.



Chief Bohl with the new 1949 Ford Patrol Car



Bohl's step-grandson, Allan Toole, recalls seeing his grandfather last when he was three years old.

"From what my father told me - my mom and dad are now both deceased - John Bohl was a friendly, jolly type of guy, and he was well respected by the men on the Chardon police force, and the public at large," he said. "He was a big man. Dad told me that your typical bathroom scales at the time didn't go high enough to measure his weight, so he would go down to either a train station depot or a truck scale (I can't remember which) to weigh himself. Just a big, really nice guy."

Toole plans on gifting Bohl's service revolver along with a desk calendar that he inherited to CPD's growing history collection. "I would be proud for these things to be displayed there," he said.

October 25, 1966, was all set to be Bohl's last day as police chief, as he had planned to retire.

He spent the day doing things he loved about the job, including reading to young students at Park Elementary School and giving safety talks at St. Mary School. At 4:15 p.m., as his day was coming to an end, he learned of a serious motor vehicle accident on U.S. Route 6, near what is referred to as Stukey Hill by All Souls Cemetery in Chardon.

Bohl arrived to discover the horrific after effects of a head-on collision. There were five fatalities, and a sixth victim died later at the hospital.

While assisting victims, Bohl was stricken with a heart attack and collapsed at the scene. Efforts of fellow officers to revive the 51-year-old were unsuccessful. He was pronounced dead at Geauga Community Hospital.



The community was deeply saddened by the chief's sudden passing. Tributes flooded in from near and far, and a Chief John R. Bohl Community Scholarship fund was established in his honor.

Frances Bender, principal of Park Elementary, told a Chardon Times Leader reporter, "He was firm but loving with the children and they loved him. Members of the safety patrol used to look forward to his coming to their posts and he made the rounds at least once a day.

"When problems would arise at school, he would never take sides but would sit down and talk with the children and guide them so that they would find their own solution to the problem. He saved a number of children from taking the wrong path in life, just because he took the time with them to show them the right road to travel. There have been times when he would spend an entire afternoon with a youngster who had a problem. He will certainly be missed by them."

Bohl's memorial service was held inside Park School auditorium and attended by officers throughout Ohio.

"The entire community showed up to honor the chief who was laid to



Chief Bohl Funeral Procession on Chardon Square



rest in Chardon Memorial Cemetery," Niehus said. "Business owners closed early, and the traffic pattern on the Square was reversed to allow the large procession to proceed from the auditorium to Chardon Cemetery in a final tribute to a man who had given so much to the community."

In 1967, the new Chardon Middle School building was dedicated in memory of Bohl.



A memorial fountain was also constructed on the south end of the Village Square.

"Unfortunately, the last 50 (plus) years have been hard on Chief Bohl's memorial," Niehus said. "The Chardon winters have taken their toll on it. The water fountain has not functioned for at least 10 years, and flowers have replaced the once flowing fountain feature. The mortar is failing, and the structure of the once prominent memorial continues to erode at a faster pace every year."

Niehus is pleased that funds are being collected to update the memorial and relocate it in front of the Chardon Police Station.

Chief Bohl has also been memorialized in other ways. His name appears on the Greater Cleveland Peace Officers Memorial Wall at Fort Huntington Park. In 1991 it was to the National Peace Officer's Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.

His legacy was also captured in a poem written by Walter C. Corey, M.D., known as the country doctor.



*"John Bohl was ever a gentleman"
Is the tribute you hear today,
Whatever else they say.
You remember that time? They begin,
And tell a little tale,
Of something John probably forgot
Tho' it might make another quail.

For nineteen years he served us
Twenty-four hours a day,
And the men he gathered about him
Stood by when he was away.

The greatest tribute we can pay him
Has been made by big strong men,
Who openly wept when they heard the news
I add my own **amen.***

*There are women who admired him
For the care he gave a child,
The troubles he has helped to solve
With a manner kind and mild.

He did his duty, the erring knew
He treated them all the same,
And of hundreds, he knew their background
And called most of them by name.

A memory of John is all we have
A memory beyond belief,
A memory of a wonderful guy
The man we called the Chief.*



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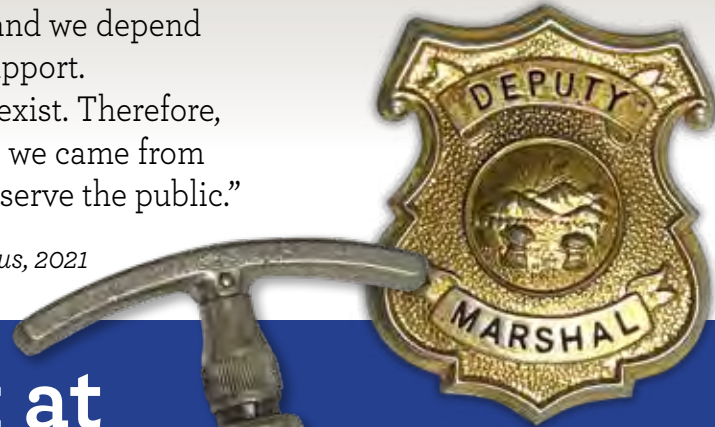
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"We are a small police department and we depend on our community for their support. Without the community, we cease to exist. Therefore, it is important for us to value where we came from and to never forget that we are here to serve the public."

Chardon Police Chief Scott Niehus, 2021

A Look Back at CPD History



Deputy Marshal's Badge
Circa 1940's

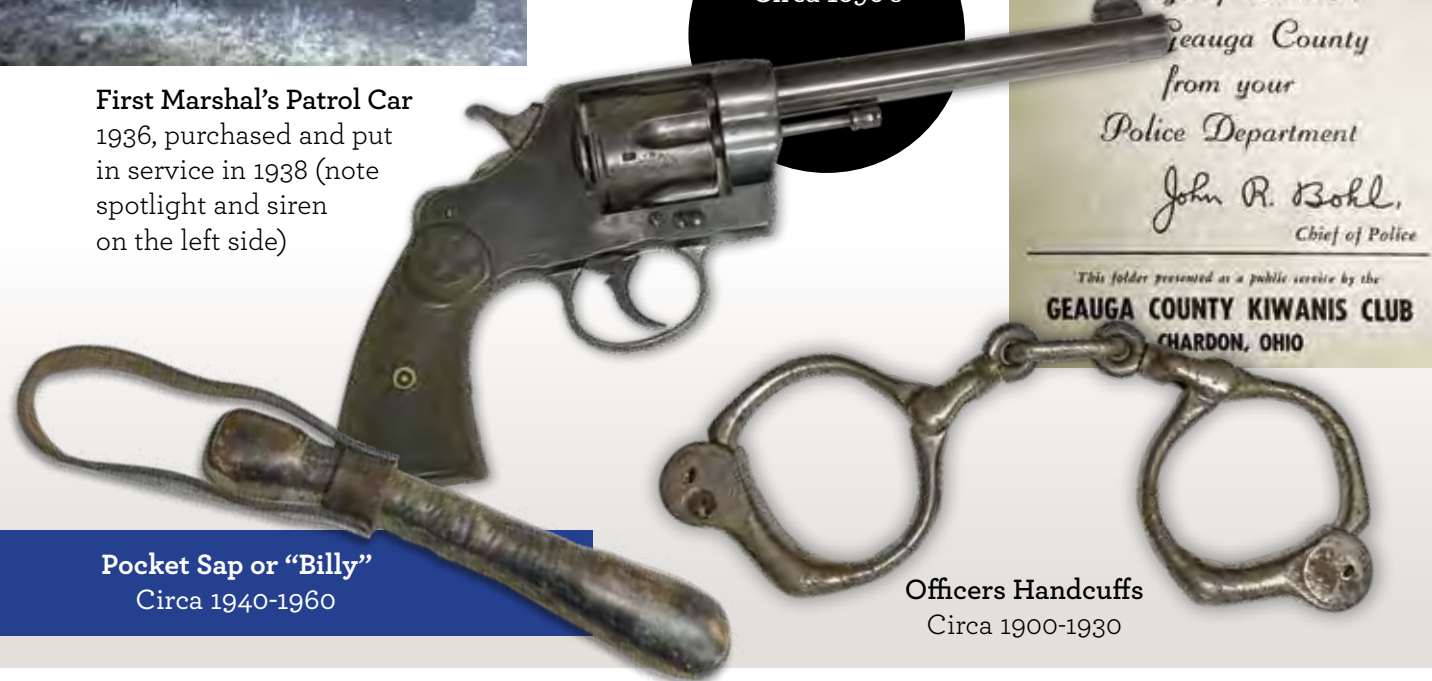


The Iron Claw:
Used for restraining and controlling an arrested person. The pincers were ratcheted open, then shut around the wrist of the person to be transported. The officer would hold onto the Iron Claw's handle for control. The pincers would lock tight and if the individual tried to resist or escape, a broken wrist was the likely result.



First Marshal's Patrol Car
1936, purchased and put in service in 1938 (note spotlight and siren on the left side)

Colt 45
Circa 1890's



Pocket Sap or "Billy"
Circa 1940-1960

Officers Handcuffs
Circa 1900-1930



Early jail cell keys



Chardon Police
Radio Call Sign KBC 200

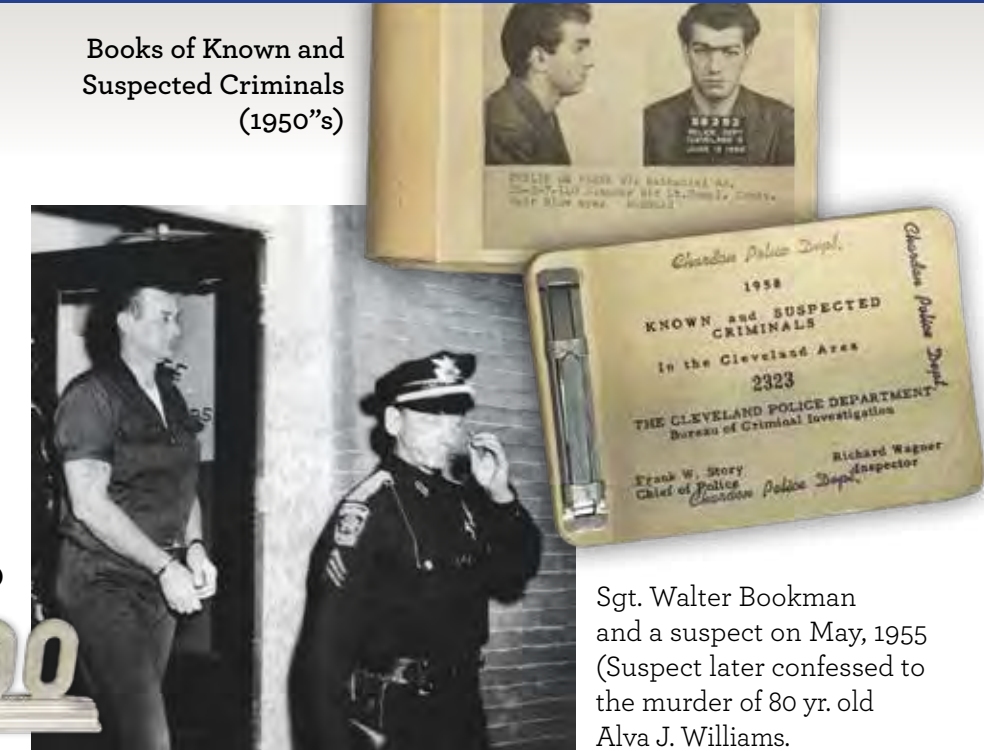


Sergeant Walter "Walt" Bookman,
Patrolman William "Bill" Niehus
Circa: 1966

New Police Uniform Design



Books of Known and
Suspected Criminals
(1950's)



Sgt. Walter Bookman
and a suspect on May, 1955
(Suspect later confessed to
the murder of 80 yr. old
Alva J. Williams.



Chief John Bohl,
Sgt. Walter Bookman and
Assistant Prosecutor Tom
Rowley. review evidence in
the Williams' murder case.
The case was broken in
just three days. Evidence
compiled by CPD officers
was instrumental in
bringing the case to a
conclusion. May, 1955

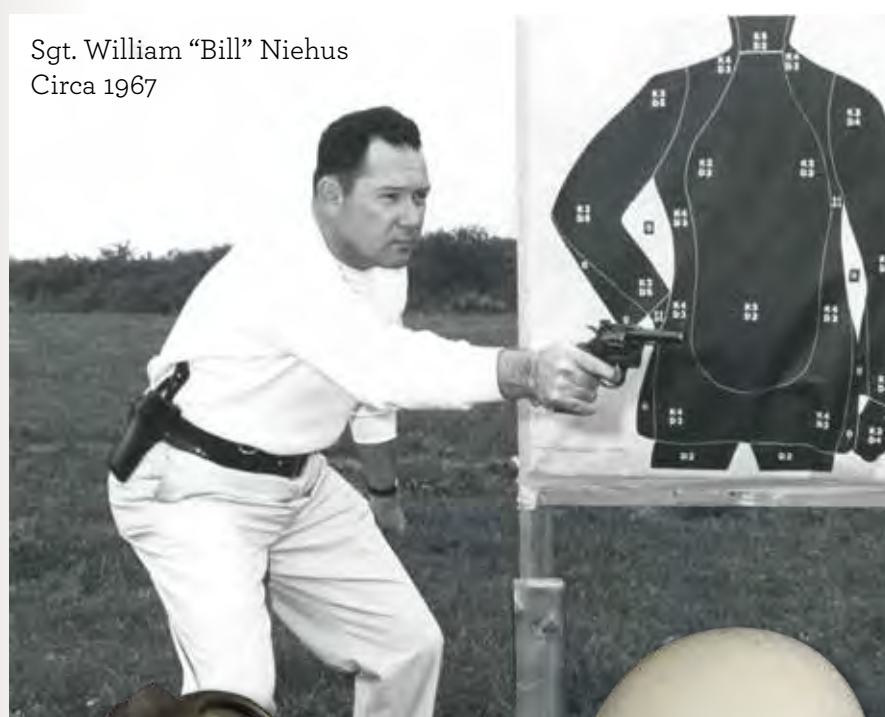
Oscillating Warning Light
- rooftop mount 1960's-70's



Patrolman Carl Henderson
with patrol car. (1960)

A Look Back at CPD History (continued)

Sgt. William "Bill" Niehus
Circa 1967



Protective Gas Mask



Officers Helmet Circa 1960

Chardon Police Chiefs Past and Present



Chief John Bohn
1947-1966

Chief Walter "Walt"
Bookman
1966 - 1975

Chief William E. Niehus
1975-1986

Chief Fred Heyer
1986 - 1990

Acting Chief
Stephen L. Gazdik
Feb-Dec. 1990

Chief David Hyslop
1990 - 2004

Chief Timothy McKenna
2004 - 2014

Chief Wm S. (Scott) Niehus
2014 - Active



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DAREing



To Make a Difference

By Scott Niehus

Back in the early 1980s the Los Angeles Police Dept. and Los Angeles Unified School District united together - **daring to make a difference** in the lives of young people.

They recognized enforcement alone would not be enough to curtail the use and abuse of illicit drugs.

Thus was the start of Drug Abuse Resistance Education otherwise known as D.A.R.E. Originally developed for elementary students, the program emphasized putting a local "human face" to drug prevention in schools.

The program quickly gained the attention of law enforcement and school districts across the nation including Chardon's.

Recognizing the need for this kind of teaching, Chardon Police Sgt. Tim McKenna and Maple Elementary Principal Millie McClelland collaborated to start a local program. In 1988.

Although the curriculum has changed significantly over the years, the program is still being taught to Chardon students.

Since the program's inception, the Chardon Police Department has had five D.A.R.E. instructors.

Photo Right: Ptl. Matt DeLisa and students

Photo Above: Dep. Mark Bertone (left) and Sgt. Tim McKenna (right)

Sgt. Tim McKenna (1988-2006)

McKenna said D.A.R.E. was a much-needed program back in the early 80's. Drug and alcohol presented challenges for our youth, and there was very little, if any information available.

"Working within the community, and responding to calls for service, we were encountering younger and younger children who were either making bad decisions, or were being influenced by those who were, in our area," he said. "We wanted to do something about it, and the D.A.R.E. program was just the inroad we needed in order to make a difference for our kids."

He said one of the challenges faced early on was presenting information about the dangers of drug and alcohol



hol with the knowledge that students were seeing some of these behaviors at home.

"The instructor program taught us how to present the curriculum, while being sensitive to students who might be in such a situation, and to present the material in a non-judgmental way," said McKenna, who became the future CPD chief.

McKenna reflected back on the program's lasting power. "A program that has been around 32 years speaks for itself," he said. "Anytime you as a police officer are given an opportunity to work with our youth has dividends. You never know when someone you have in class as an adult will say 'you were my D.A.R.E. instructor.' "

Ptl. Jeff Powers (1995 - 2006)



Officer Powers and students at the Maple Festival

"When I joined the Chardon Police Department in 1991, I was asked if I would be interested in becoming a D.A.R.E. officer if the position would become available," Powers said. "I said yes as I thought, then as now, the only way that you can promote change is by working closely with people letting them get to know you as a person not just a uniform."

Powers still believe this today. "D.A.R.E. provided this opportunity by building the knowledge base of the student then adding in current information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs." The education also involves discussing resistance skills and finding how some worked better in some situations than in others.

"During my time instructing D.A.R.E., I had the opportunity to teach in Chardon Middle School and at St. Mary School where I had the occasion to work with some outstanding students in both schools for the ten years that I provided D.A.R.E. instruction," Powers added. "I felt the program had many benefits teaching resistance skills to the elementary and middle school students."

Ptl. Matt DeLisa (2006-2016)

Officer Matt DeLisa started his tenth and final year as a D.A.R.E. instructor in 2016. During the decade that he was responsible for presenting the program, he touched the lives of hundreds of young people providing them with important information and strategies to help them to "Just Say No to Drugs and Alcohol."

To this day many of his former students, now adults, approach him, often greeting him with a, "hey, do you remember me?" followed by "you were my D.A.R.E. instructor", and their favorite memory of their shared experience.

"The program gives the students confidence in themselves to help them make healthy, responsible decisions in their lives," DeLisa said. "It also gives them information on the negative effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, and provides a strong base for them to resist them if ever offered."

During Sgt. DeLisa's tenure the program was taught in two schools, Saint Mary's Elementary and the Chardon Middle School.

"While going through the D.A.R.E. training we were always told how big of an impact we would have on the students that we would interact with," DeLisa said. "I would honestly have to say that my whole experience with the D.A.R.E. program has been extremely rewarding. Not only for myself but the students I went through this experience with."

Officer Shaw (2016-2019)

As Chardon Schools Resource Officer, Shaw was trained in D.A.R.E., before instructing the program within the Chardon Schools at the middle school level and at St. Mary's in the fifth grade class for about two years.

"Bringing the D.A.R.E. curriculum to these students provided a great opportunity to get to know students, to work

Photo Below: Officer Shaw and Chardon Dance Team stir up enthusiasm.



Officer Carlson (2019-Present)

The D.A.R.E. program continues in 2020 with Officer Carlson. A native of Chardon, he is a Hilltopper alumnus and former D.A.R.E. graduate himself. He is also the first Chardon graduate of the D.A.R.E. program to go on to become a D.A.R.E. instructor.

Although Carlson's tenure as a D.A.R.E. officer has been relatively short, having been through the program himself, he recognizes the value of the resistance education that is taught to the kids. More specifically, he appreciates that an important part of the program is to provide students with strategies that they can use to help them make smart decisions and to help them extricate themselves from difficult situations.

"The challenges faced by our children today are much different than those faced by children in the 1980s. There are newer and more dangerous drugs available today," he said. "We continue to face an opiate epidemic in Ohio that has claimed hundreds of lives, and our children are living in a virtual world that presents its own unique set of dangers."

The curriculum being presented is constantly changing to keep up with the challenges that today's youth are experiencing.

"We have presented lesson plans focused on texting while driving, sexting, cyber bullying, as well as vaping," Carlson said. "We believe the D.A.R.E. program is valuable well beyond just the lesson plan. The relationship that the student forms with their D.A.R.E. instructor is equally as important. We hope to continue to provide the time and resources necessary to continue our collaboration with the Chardon Local Schools to present the D.A.R.E. program for many years to come."



Officer Shaw and students

with them, and to hopefully influence them in a positive way," he said. "I truly believe that introducing students to the ideas behind D.A.R.E. at these younger ages can have a more lasting impression on them as they move ahead into their later years of schooling."

Shaw also worked with second grade teachers at Park Elementary, presenting a simpler curriculum to younger students.

"While I only visited them for a handful of weeks, at just a half hour each week, these children had the chance to get to know a police officer as well as learn some important materials that they could use in their daily lives," he said.

Photo Below: Officer Carlson and students



Q&A

with Chardon Police Chief Scott Niehus



Scott Niehus proudly serves as Chardon Police Department's seventh chief. He continues a strong family legacy of service to Chardon. His father William E. Niehus served as Chardon's third police chief.

By Rose Nemunaitis

We each live a story.

I sat outdoors with Chief Niehus on a few beautiful fall mornings at a popular Chardon destination for coffee and conversation. He shared his wisdom, appreciation for what's important in life, and above all his unwavering commitment to his beloved hometown of Chardon.

Poet Maya Angelou said, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time."

Chief is a beautiful example. I think back at our initial meeting. He is a con-

sistently inspiring and strong leader, and caring person that makes others feel valued. When he talks to you, between police scanner alerts and tossing back and forth memories with Chardon Fire Chief Larry Gaspar, he gives his full attention and answers questions without reservations.

Q: Born and raised in Chardon, your family planted roots here. How grateful are you to be raised in such an idyllic and beautiful place? Your family even ran the local ice cream shop now known as King Kone.

A: Chardon is a great place to live, work, and raise a family for sure. When I was in high school, I remember many of my classmates saying that they couldn't wait to move out of Chardon, and many of them did. Many of those same classmates returned here to raise their families though. Chardon is home, and I think sometimes we lose sight of just how good things are here compared to other places.

Growing up we owned Country Custard, which we started in 1979, on Chardon Windsor Road, just outside of town. In 1981 we had an opportunity to move Country Custard over to Grant Street next to Conley's. Many of the night shift policemen, deputies, and friends would stop in to check on my brother and I while we were cleaning up after we had closed for the evening. It was a great experience, and it really kept us out of trouble. Going to King Kone brings back a lot of memories for me.

Q: It seems early on you just knew a career in safety forces was calling. You started first as a volunteer firefighter at the Chardon Fire Department and your father was the Chardon police chief. What attracted you from the get-go? Was there a single ah-ha moment?

A: I grew up watching "Emergency" and "Adam 12" and was drawn to anything that was police or fire related. Everything in our family revolved around my dad being a police officer. Missed holidays, family dinners, and most other events were common. Dad was at work a lot, and he worked a lot of side jobs to make ends meet. My mom tells me there was a lot of hot dog and bean dinners back in those days. Policemen didn't make a lot of money. Anyway, growing up we had a police radio mounted in the family car so that my dad could always hear what was going on. Being a police officer was much more than a job for him, it was a way of living. It was a responsibility that he couldn't just turn on and off. It was who he was. So, I guess for me it wasn't necessarily a conscious decision but more a function of conditioning.

My original plan was to go into the military, but a football injury my senior year delayed that, so I went to Hiram College. During the summer after my sophomore year, I was on my way home from the ice cream stand, about 1 a.m. in the morning. I saw a vehicle turn its lights off and drive up behind a doctor's office on Wilson Mills Road, where Lake Erie laundromat is now. I knew something wasn't right, so I waited for a few minutes, and when they didn't come out, I decided to go see what they were doing.

Upon driving in, I witnessed that they were in the process of stealing Corvette tires from Dean Pontiac on Water Street. They had just come out of the woods carrying the tires. I confronted them and had them bring their driver's licenses to me one at a time.

After I had their licenses, I told them to stay there. I backed out and went to the police station and told the police dispatcher, Scott Hildenbrand, what was going on. Ptl. Mike Barrett took me back up there with him. Three of the four

were still there. Anyway, when I went to Chardon Police Department to meet Officer Barrett to go to the grand jury to testify about what I had witnessed, Lt. David Easton, who was a Lieutenant at the sheriff's office, was there. When he heard what I had done he told me that the sheriff's office was hiring deputies and that I should apply.

Three weeks later I was sworn in by Sheriff James C. Todd, and I was headed to the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy in Columbus for basic training. So, I guess that was really my "ah-ha" moment.

Q: Most people strive to make their parents proud. What do you think your dad thought of you becoming chief?

A: My dad passed away September 30, 2014, so he was there when I was sworn in as chief. I know he was enormously proud of me, and he was ecstatic that I had been appointed chief. I learned a great deal from my dad, and I miss him dearly.



Image from newspaper article here Chief William E. Niehus is shown fingerprinting Justin Geiss, age 2 (photo by Marilyn Whipkey)

Q: What drives you to do this job?

A: I've been really blessed to be surrounded by outstanding personnel my entire career. I'm especially proud of the work that our Chardon officers do. Being a small police department, we don't have some of the resources that a larger department does. However, our personnel understand the bigger picture and they work hard to get the job done. Most importantly, they understand how important our relationship with the community is, and they know that the public appreciates us.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: I really enjoy tackling multiple projects, while simultaneously working with city staff, residents and police employees. Every day there is something new to learn and new challenges to be undertaken. There is very little that is routine in my day, and I really enjoy the variety that goes with being very involved in the community.

Q: What is the greatest challenge of your job going forward?

A: I believe that the greatest challenge is going to be attracting and maintaining officers and dispatchers. Due to the COVID-19 virus most of the police academies across the State of Ohio were shut down, many of them are not planning to run academy classes through 2021. Quite frankly, I believe that some of the community colleges will be dropping their academy classes all together. Coupled with the effects of the negative media attention and protests occurring across the country, has led to far fewer candidates getting into the field. These

are challenges that are already impacting police agencies, including us. Fewer officer candidates and greater numbers of officers leaving the field is going to continue to be a challenge.

Q: What keeps you grounded?

A: First, I get to work with a staff of employees who are first rate, and who are motivated to get the job done. Second, I've had the good fortune to gain a lot of different types of experiences in my career, and I've worked with a lot of great law enforcement professionals. I know that I have a support network that I can rely upon to help me tackle any challenges that my come way.

At home, it's clearly my wife and family. We have been through a lot over the years, and we've faced many challenges together. We have faith, hope and each other and that has gotten us through everything that has come our way.

Q: Any favorite quotes?

A: "TEAM - Together, Each, Accomplishes, More"
from Coach Bob Doyle.

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Celebrating & Sustaining: The Importance of Remembering and Documenting Our History

By Scott Niehus

"An organization, no matter how well designed, is only as good as the people who live and work in it," Dee Hock

Much of the history of the Chardon Police Department remains with a few who have had the honor to do the noble work required of their positions within the Department. Unfortunately, many of those members who have come before us have passed into eternal life, taking with them their wisdom and experiences that were seldom recorded.

Growing up in the Chardon Police family, if you will, for my brother John, and sister Melanie, our childhoods revolved around the goings on with the Department. We had the good fortune of knowing many members. Officers and dispatchers became in essence defacto family to us, and as we grew older many of those members became mentors and friends to us. When I was in grade school, I remember how much I used to look forward to getting the annual Official Safety Coloring Book. I could not wait to look at pictures of the department members inside the cover, pictures of the men and women whom my dad was always talking about, and with whom he spent so much of his time. Those pictures included: Chief Bookman, my dad, Dick Albright, Steve Gazdik, Gene Hayes, Bob Sinarski, Clark Hoffman, George Randolph, Lynn Bahr, Dick Price, Mike Barrett, Howard Richardson, John Parinish, Clyde Young, Henry "Buddy" Purcell, Randy Kolesar,

Eleanor Brown and so many others who are all gone now. Their stories only exist in the memories that we have of them.

Growing up, my family attended picnics and pool parties, steak roasts, and other holiday and department functions. As a little boy, I looked up to the officers, they were bigger than life to me. The department was and has always been a small family. I sometimes reminisce about Patrolman Charlie Houchen, who used to stop at the house and take my brother and I for rides in the police car and Sgt. Albright who used to let us play with his pet racoon, and Chief Bookman who always had a pipe in his mouth, and who invited us to come stay with him at his cabin in Tidioute, PA. Sgt. John McKinney who used to stop and talk to us while on patrol and who years later would parachute onto the football field at Chardon High School during our Career Day, and his brother Chuck who would stop at school and lift weights with us.

I can still remember the phone ringing in the dead of the night - calls that most of the time led to my dad rushing to put a uniform on and leaving the house hastily. I remember the night Officer Dick Baker interrupted a breaking and entering in progress and had been involved in a shooting with the suspect, and the night Officer Gazdik was shot. Or the night the phone rang, and I heard my dad exclaim, "He did what?" Overhearing that an officer had chased a motorcycle onto the golf course at Legend Lake Golf Club, and had crashed the police car into a creek. To add insult to injury, the unit the officer was driving was brand new. There was always something going on, it wasn't always bad, just part of the territory for a small-town police chief.

Memories continue with Ptl. Brown scolding me for idling my car in front of Fishers Big Wheel and Scott Hildenbrand, Mike Barrett, Henry "Bud" Purcell chasing my brother and I around town making sure that we were flying straight. Dispatcher Vicki Craig, who had an English degree sometimes proofread my high school papers. As I entered the profession, it was Hildenbrand who accompanied me to get outfitted with my uniform, and who taught me where things should be positioned on my Sam Brown belt. Not long after being hired as a deputy sheriff, Lt. Gazdik left me a message to stop at the police department. He wanted to be sure I was wearing a ballistic vest, and when I told him I did not have one, he gave me one to wear and helped me to order my own vest. He insisted I wear it religiously. I later learned that he had done the same thing for State Game Protector Reno "Jay" Reda. Jay was shot in the line of duty and it was the vest that Gazdik helped him to acquire that saved his life.

As we got older, some of the officers were like second fathers, and others were like big brothers, and we were always under their watchful eyes. Parinish, Brown, John and Chuck McKinney, Hildenbrand, Barrett and others were always keeping an eye on us. As an EMT, I remember being paged to a shooting involving Officer McKinney at the Gulf Station at the corner of Wilson Mills Road and Water Street. I responded to the scene on the ambulance with Fire Chief Phil King, only to find that McKinney, whose K9 Seven had been stabbed, was no longer there. McKinney had scooped his wounded partner up to rush

him to the veterinarian. Seven, although severely injured, recovered and later returned to work. I remember all too well the overwhelming feeling of concern I had about them both.

Every department member and their family members have their own stories to tell, our own histories if you will. Recording those stories will be equally important for future members who follow us to gain a better understanding of the noble work that has been done here, and foundation from which our ideals, our core values, and our mission statement are built. I will forever regret that I did not have the opportunity to interview my dad before he died. There is so much history about the police department, and of this City that I could have learned from him, that he could have easily explained. I am committed to meeting those former members who remain in order to record their stories for the appreciation of future generations of police employees. Legacy employees such as Officers Ronald Jonovich, Timothy Snyder and Dispatcher Debbie Talarcek and Dispatcher/Clerk Sally Harmasek, retired and former officers such as Chiefs Tim McKenna, and Dave Hyslop, and Officers Max Wachob, Leonard "Lenny" Glover, Carl Henderson, Barbara Noll, and our

recent retirees Lt. Troy Duncan, Sgt. Michael Shaw and Parking Enforcement Officer Patricia Janouskovec all have stories that need to be recorded. Equally important will be recording history of our current officers, their experiences and their lessons learned.

For others to understand the critical responsibilities that department members perform, for them to see the goodness and humility in which we perform, and honor in what we do, we must share our stories with future members, and with the public. Sharing the history of the important work that has

been done here will help to impart the lessons learned from the experiences and sacrifices of our predecessors. I believe that finding ways to sustain and celebrate the good of who we are is something that we must do, to tell the stories of officers who have gone before us and how they have dignified the uniform, is an especially important message to be understood by younger officers in order to help ensure that they do not do anything to tarnish what, and who, our badge represents.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SALUTES THE HEROES IN RED & BLUE OF CHARDON

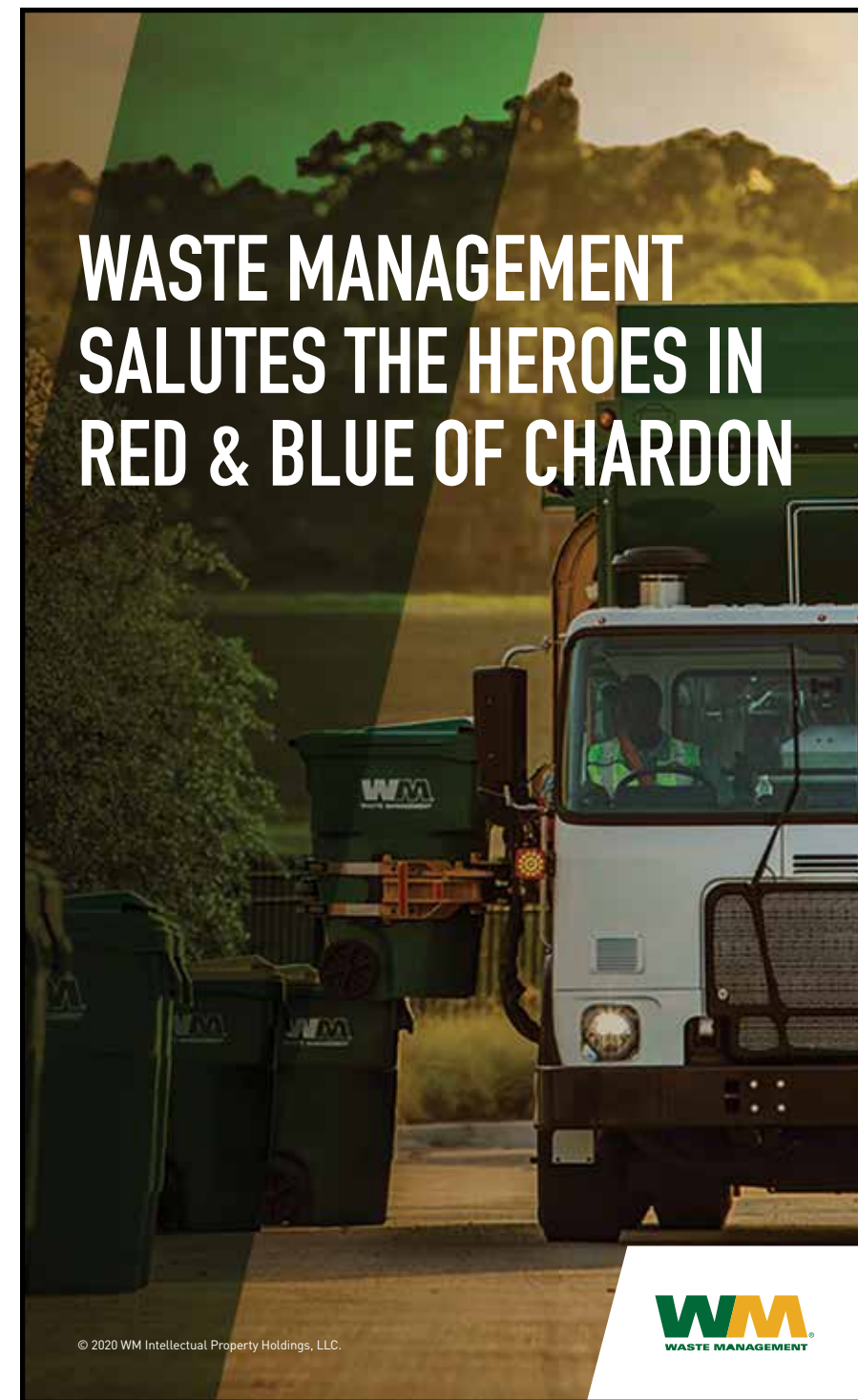
Thank You
to the



**Chardon Police &
Fire Departments**
for their service
to the Chardon
Community

**In the Past,
Present & Future!**

~
Scott & Karen Simpson



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Committed to protect and serve our community

We are in the midst of unprecedented times as a Country and as a profession. The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the lives of millions of people, including us. In addition, protests calling for police reform and social justice change have also been occurring across the country. Some of the protests have turned violent and rioting has occurred in many areas of the country.

We remain committed to our mission to provide a superior level of service to our community, accomplished through vigilant protection of the public, just enforcement of criminal and traffic laws, and proactive attention to quality of life matters.

We will remain guided by our core values, and the principals of service, justice, and fundamental fairness. To that end we are continuing to work on policy development and certification with the Ohio Collaborative to ensure that we are meeting standards that have been established for police agencies across the state.

Police Chief Wm. Scott Niehus

The men and women of the Chardon Fire Department are on the front line of the Covid-19 pandemic every day as well as all other medical, fire, storm damage and motor vehicle emergencies.

The hard work of our members through their daily efforts allow the Department to provide exceptional service to the public. We are dedicated to responding promptly to each call for service and working proactively to prevent fires through our Class 3 ISO rating and to minimize the impacts of tragedies and disasters. Each day our fire personnel are responding to incidents, completing inspections, preparing for disasters, training to improve, sharing public education and providing numerous support functions.

We are proud to be given the opportunity to protect our families, friend and neighbors in the City of Chardon, Chardon Township, Claridon Township and Aquilla Village.

Fire Chief Larry Gaspar



2021 Chardon Fire Department

FIRE CHIEF - Larry Gaspar

ASST. CHIEF - Thomas Hummel

CAPTAINS

Adam Georskey, Mike Homovec

RESCUE CAPTAIN - John Blauch

LIEUTENANTS

Scott Meyer, Mark Jonovich
Chris Grossman, Brian Davidson
Justin Geiss

FIRE INSPECTOR

Stephen Bohm

FIREFIGHTERS

Paul Marks, Robert Painter

FIREFIGHTER / PARAMEDICS

Nick Aldridge, Christian Bonk
Keith Davidson, Austin Georskey
Jason Gladwell, William Haines
Cory Hiscox, Daniel Hough
Thomas Hummel III, Clayton Kovats,
Daniel Murdock, Amy Lomas, Zachary Luzius
Brad Majetich, David Marks
Jonathan Porter, Ken Pritt Sr.
Ken Pritt Jr., Jonathan Sague
Dominic Shea, Robert Thompson,
Craig Vatty, Bill Weema, Troy Yoder

FIREFIGHTER/EMT

Ron Jonovich, Zachary Lawrence
Devin McCartney, Daniel Mckenna
Scott Snyder, Brian Weck

SECRETARY - Karen Doering



2021 Chardon Police Department

POLICE CHIEF - Wm. Scott Niehus

LIEUTENANT

Troy Duncan

SERGEANT

Matt Delisa
Michael Shaw

PATROLMEN

Chris Childs, Jason Bryant,
Jasen Elam, Chuck Pirnat, Paul Pfister
William Bernakis, Nicholas Bruckman
Derek Carlson

DISPATCHERS

Debbie Talarcek, Melissa Leslie
Amy Shaw, John Kloski

RECORDS CUSTODIAN

Sally Harmasek

PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Pat Janouskovec

PART TIME PATROLMEN

Timothy Snyder, Ronald Jonovich
Allan Frantz, Brian Lender
Jake Mullet, James Klima
Charles Tercek

PART TIME DISPATCHERS

Debbie Easton, Jennifer Hanas
Hannah Willis, Rachel Boehnlein

We salute our local law enforcement,
fire fighters and first responders and we
are deeply grateful for their service.



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**For God and Country
We associate ourselves together for the
following purposes...**

**To uphold and defend the Constitution of the
United States of America;
to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate
a one hundred percent Americanism.**