



BOX 42 NEWSLETTER

"Serving the fire community since 1942"

November 2016 - (all images: click twice to enlarge)

MEETING INFORMATION

Normally meetings are held on Saturday late in the month at various fire stations. Guests are welcome.

The November meeting will be at 1000 hrs on Saturday, November 19th

at [Taylor Fire Department, Station #2](#)
[25303 Ecorse, 1/3 mile east of Beech Daly](#)
(enter on east side)

Remembering Walter Harris

It was eight years ago that Walter Harris, of DFD Engine 23, was killed while fighting an arson fire at E. Kirby near Sheridan. His death, on November 15, 2008, came as a shock to the community as the highly admired veteran firefighter of 17 years was also very active in a number of civilian roles.

At the time of the tragedy, Harris' son, James Hill-Harris, was also a DFD veteran, having joined the department at 18. James is now a lieutenant with the arson squad.

On February 18, 2013, Lt. Hill-Harris was interviewed by Frank Beckman on WJR, giving his thoughts on the arson problem in Detroit.

To hear the WJR interview (11:00)
[\[click here\]](#).

This WDIV newscast told the story on the day of the fatal fire, as well as the severe firestorm occurring in California at the same time.

To view the 2008 newscast (5:00)
[\[click here\]](#).

Walter Harris Training Center

October's meeting took the Box 42 membership to the new Walter P. Harris Detroit Fire and Emergency Services Regional Training Center at 10200 Erwin. The facility, which is still being remodeled, was formerly the Davis Technical Aerospace High School, and is situated at the west end of runway zero seven of the Detroit City Airport. Interestingly there is still an airplane engine on display at the entrance.

Our thanks to to Captain Robert Stokes for hosting our visit and giving a tour of the large facility, which measures 300' x 300'.

Captain Stokes is the senior instructor at the academy, which has a training staff of seven.



Capt. Robert Stokes

Taylor Rig Lost To Drunk Driver

When Box 42 meets at Taylor station #2 this month, one thing they won't find there is Engine 2. It was struck from behind while



The Chrysler was also damaged

inside the rig sustained minor injuries. The automobile involved, a Chrysler 300, was moving at a high rate of speed, driven by a drunk driver.

WDIV ran this report on the incident.
To see it (2:00) [\[click here\]](#).



Taylor Engine 2

working at a crash scene on I-94 near Pelham on September 30th. Three firefighters who were

CONTACT US You can contact Box 42 by US mail or email. Submissions are always welcome and highly encouraged.

email: box42@box42.net US mail: **Box 42 Associates, Inc., P.O. Box 1810, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1810**

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Police vs. Fire Chili Cook-off Benefits First Responders

The third annual Police v. Fire Chili Cook-off takes place at the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak on Saturday, November 5th. The event is hosted / sponsored by Charlie LeDuff, Grace Keros, and Dean Bach. LeDuff is an author, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, and an investigative reporter, formerly with the *New York Times* and *The Detroit News*. Grace Keros and Dean Bach are the owners of the American Coney Island in Detroit, and Dino's Lounge at Woodward and 9 Mile in Ferndale, respectively.

The chili cook-off, with participants coming from all over the metro Detroit area, was initiated for the benefit of first responders injured or killed in the line of duty. This year's event will benefit the family of DPD Capt. Ken Steil, who was shot and killed in September by a suspect wanted in two other shootings. To see a flyer for the event [\[click here\]](#).

In a recent segment of "The Americans," Charlie LeDuff reviewed some of the benefits provided by the proceeds from the past Chili Cook-off events, and interviewed Brandon Milewski and Rock Turnipseed, both injured while fighting fires with DFD.

To view Charlie's piece (5:00)
[\[click here\]](#).

The Box 42 Newsletter welcomes all ideas for input and features and would be happy to hear from any interested persons who have job stories, historical information, newspaper clippings, photos, or other material that you would like to share with the Box 42 community. Please send all news and information to the address on the front page.

Editors: Bill and Mike Rosenblum

October Fires Rage Again

Just a year after October fires in Detroit dipped to a recent low, a surge in recent fires suggests that the despicable practice of arson in the city has re-emerged. While not all fires have been suspicious, a number of fires found to be heavily or fully involved upon arrival and/or in close proximity to other fires are noteworthy.

On the late morning of October 11th, DFD responded to five fires within a three hour time span, all less than a mile from Gratiot and 7 Mile.

And before dawn on October 25th, a booming fire destroyed a house at 8027 E. Edsel Ford. The only other house on that block between Van Dyke and Maxwell had already burned. Then, just after 6 am, an abandoned apartment building burned at 7511 Seneca, just 1/2 mile away. That fire went to a second alarm.

This is a clip of the DPD radio traffic for the Seneca fire.

To listen to the clip (20:00)
[\[click here\]](#).

And here is some video of that fire from WDIV.

To see the clip (1:00) [\[click here\]](#).



Although abandoned and in bad shape, the Seneca property, which was built in 1926 and is now owned by the City of Detroit, bore some interesting architecture. This is the front facade.

The Sound of DFD Overnight

While the city was sleeping -- well, much of it anyway -- the Detroit Fire Department was busy taking care of business. This clip depicts what the DFD did overnight on October 30, 2016.

To listen to the clip (6:00) [\[click here\]](#).

A New Use For Old Stations

While it's sad to see many historic firehouses falling into ruin, some, on the other hand, are being renovated and repurposed.

In February we showed a video about an 1870 Cincinnati firehouse finding new life as a pizzeria. [\[To review that issue, click here\]](#).

Recently The Detroit News ran an upbeat story about several Detroit police and fire stations being renewed in the same way.

To see the piece from The News
[\[click here\]](#).

A Look At The Troy Fire Department

Members of On My Own of Michigan, a non-profit organization offering training in skills of independent living for adults with intellectually developmental disabilities, approached the Troy Fire Department with an idea to raise funds for their group. They proposed a softball game between their own team, The Eagles, and the Troy Fire Department volunteers.

Troy Fire Chief Dave Roberts organized 15 members and actually created a team to meet the challenge. The teams met for their game on October 6th at Boulin Park on Crooks near Wattles.

Bruce Benson, the executive director of On My Own, said the group serves about 50 adults and offers classes in basic living skills. The Eagles participate each year in the Special Olympics.

Donations from Hollywood Markets, Kroger, Dearborn Brand, and Better Made Snack Foods, as well as a visit from the Detroit Tigers' mascot Paws, made for a successful event and some good PR for the Troy Fire Department.

The Troy Fire Department was formed in 1940 in the then Village of Big Beaver, 15 years before the City of Troy was incorporated. The initial company had 19 members and an American LaFrance pumper. A second company was formed a few years later in the community of Troy Corners, near Livernois and Square Lake.

Now the largest fire department in Oakland County, and the largest volunteer-combination department in the state, the department operates out of six stations and utilizes six engines with two in reserve, six trucks including three platforms, a rescue



The Troy Volunteers

Chief Roberts and Bruce Benson posed for photos after the game.



rig, a grass rig, and several other specialized units. The department ran over 1100 runs last year, including 167 fire runs, and currently has over 150 volunteers and 11 full time staff. Chief Dave Roberts, who has been with the department for 38 years, replaced William Nelson last year, who retired after 22 years as chief.



Troy FD's show piece: a 1940 Ford (photos by Mike Rosenblum)

Troy Station 5 members performing training exercises on extrication. (photo by Keith Harper)



Feature: A German View of DFD

After seeing a number of documentary presentations on the Detroit Fire Department, this is one with a different perspective. Published by The Bild Reporter, a German tabloid with the largest circulation among German newspapers, this presentation was conceived and filmed by Lucas Negroni, who spent time with the houses of Engine 54 / Ladder 26 and Engine 50 / Ladder 23.

To view his 2015 production (29:00)
[\[click here\]](#).

New Detroit Engines Delivered

The first three of six new Smeal engines have been delivered in Detroit to Engines 9, 17, and 32. The rigs boast 1500 gallons per minute pumps and 500 gallon water tanks. 10 engines were deployed last year, and three more are expected shortly. New trucks, squads, and ambulances are in the works for next year. (Additional photo, next page)

Engine 9's new Smeal 1500 gpm engine.
(photo by Alan D'Agostino)



Reader Comments

From Greg Pearn

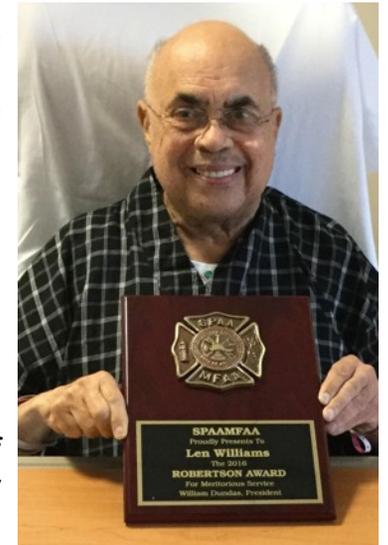
Thank you. Very informational and entertaining as well.

From Jim Leininger

Another great issue of the newsletter. I brought Len to his first Box 42 meeting at the "room above the bar" on Schaffer in Dearborn back in the 1960s. The first time we met Len was at the old Engine 11 quarters. Walt McCall and Clarence Woodard were also with me and as I recall we were there a few hours. Eng. 11 had an "X" rig - a 1938 Seagrave with RotoRay that responded to a run while we were there. From then on Len was really hooked!

From Len Williams

I believe that most of you know that I have been ailing for a while. However, I was pleasantly surprised over the weekend when I was awarded the prestigious, Robinson Award over the weekend in small hospital bedside ceremony. The award is in Memory of one of early members of the Society for the Preservation & Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America.



Len Williams

Photos



Engine 17's new rig (photo by Dan Jasina)



2nd alarm, E. Eight Mile at Sunset, 10/21/2016 (photo by Dan Jasina)



Left::
2nd alarm,
Seneca at Gratiot,
10/25/2016
(photo by Dan Jasina)



Right:
Walter Harris
(AP photo)