

TALKING FIRE

THE FIRE THAT SPARKED A TRADITION (FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, OCTOBER 3 TO 9, 2004)



On a balmy evening in October 1871, Daniel "Pegleg" Sullivan was sitting outside his house enjoying the unusually warm weather. His contentment was suddenly shattered by the site of flames inside the barn of his friends, Patrick and Catherine O'Leary, who lived across the street. Daniel rushed to the barn to help but the fire was already too far advanced and not much could be saved.

Aided by a strong wind, the fire spread at lightning speed through the predominately wooden structures of greater Chicago. By the following day, October 9th, when the fire was brought under control by the use of explosives, much of Chicago had been devastated. At least 300 people had perished and some 18,000 buildings were destroyed. Almost one third of Chicago's population of 300,000 was left homeless.

Understandably, the cause of the fire became the focus of much speculation. The popular theory revolved around Mrs. O'Leary's much maligned cow, which was thought to have kicked over a lamp and set the barn on fire. Ironically, the O'Leary house survived the disaster with only minor damage.

Thereafter, on each October 9th, the people of Chicago commemorated the fire with parades and ceremonies. In 1911, the Fire Marshals Association of North America officially declared the date as Fire Prevention Day. Ontario became the first jurisdiction to observe Fire Prevention Week during the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9th falls.

This practice continues to this day in communities throughout North America as a constant reminder that fire prevention is the ultimate cure.



Paul Butson has served with the Stratford Fire Department for 16 years. During that time, he has held the positions of firefighter, fire inspector, and currently Director of Fire Prevention.

Paul is certified as a "Public Fire and Life Safety Educator" and working towards his designation as a "Fire Protection Specialist". Paul and his wife enjoy spending time with family and friends. They have two sons aged 11 and 13. As parents, they value the opportunity to participate in their children's educational and sporting endeavors.

HISTORY

A fire at the Post Office on Ontario Street (approximately where Knox Church is located) in 1858 killed the Postmaster A.J. Mickle and his daughter Margaret. This was the second fire in a year at the Post Office. Also in 1858 the Victoria Hose Company was formed with their firefighting equipment being housed in the northwest corner of the city.

Contributed by Lieutenant Richard Micks

STATS - JULY & AUGUST 2004

Fire Suppression:

Emergency Responses
July 121
August 114

Fire Prevention:

Inspections 88
Public Education 240
Home Inspections 355

Training Evolution's:

Water Supply Pre-Plans	380 hrs	New Operational Guideline	72 hrs
Aerial #1 Operations	36 hrs	Pumper #4 Operations	36 hrs
Pumper#3 Operations	36 hrs	Ground Monitors	36 hrs
New Quick Attack Nozzle	18 hrs	Avon Rescue Boat	54 hrs
Pumper Pressures and Nozzles	36 hrs	Medical 1st Aid Bags	36 hrs
1st Aid Certification	40 hrs	Presentation by Stratford Police	54 hrs
Hose Testing	36 hrs	Hose Testing	36 hrs

FIRE SAFETY TIP TIME FOR A CHECKUP!

Fall is here and it's time to ask yourself, is your heating system healthy?

Your furnace, fireplace or woodstove need yearly checkups to ensure they operate safely and efficiently. Heating appliances should be cleaned and inspected annually to prevent fires and deadly carbon monoxide gas in your home.

It's time for a checkup! Contact a qualified service technician to clean and inspect your furnace, fireplace or woodstove. Remember - a healthy heating system is a safe heating system.

Anyone with questions in regards to fire and life safety is encouraged to contact the fire prevention bureau at 271-3212. Visit our website at www.city.stratford.on.ca