

July 2022

SPARTA LIVING

An exclusive magazine serving the neighborhoods of Sparta and Lake Mohawk

SPARTA TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT A PASSION FOR VOLUNTEERING



 **Best Version Media**

Cover Photo by Caitlin Courtney Photography

ALSO INSIDE:

*When Railroads Came To Sussex County
Summer Concert Series Takes The Stage
Sparta Celebrates Senior Volunteers
Get Caught Reading This Summer*

And more!



SPARTA TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT A PASSION FOR VOLUNTEERING

By Teresa Sellinger | Photo by Caitlin Courtney Photography

"Where are America's volunteers?" asked a 2018 research brief from the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy examining the widespread decline in volunteering in the United States. The brief goes on to call this decline a "troubling trend," stating that "...fewer Americans are engaging in their community by volunteering and giving than at any time in the last two decades."

Unfortunately, this sad downward trend continues today. Many of our local volunteer organizations find themselves begging for volunteers to assist with even the simplest of tasks.

Luckily for Sparta residents, one critical all-volunteer Sparta Township organization continues going strong after nearly 100 years—an organization that answered over 500 calls last year alone to protect our properties and literally save our residents' lives: the Sparta Township Fire Department (STFD).

Organized in 1923 and incorporated in 1925, the STFD operates out of three locations—Woodport Road headquarters, Sparta Lake Firehouse and The Ridge Firehouse on Stanhope Road—and employs nine pieces of equipment including two chief trucks, four fire engines, a rescue truck and a ladder truck. The Department currently boasts 64

members—32 of whom are active firefighters and seven of whom are probationary firefighters—all of whom are volunteers.

Chief Justin Muldoon, a third generation firefighter and the first STFD chief to hold that position for four terms, has been a Sparta Township volunteer firefighter since 2004.

"It's just something that I love to do," Muldoon shares. "I was born into a firefighting family, so it's always been with me; To give back to the community and help people is something I've always been around."

Muldoon and his wife, Tina, have two children: Emily, a Northern Hills Academy student, and David, who attends Sparta Middle School. In addition to raising a family and volunteering in a leadership role for the STFD, Muldoon works full time for the Sussex County Sheriff's Office.

"I'm the tech for their 911 center," Muldoon explains. "So when I'm not at work at the 911 center, I'm home and responding to fire calls in our community. I'm around emergency services all day, every day."

Like Muldoon, STFD firefighters Jim Castimore and Dylan Herbst cite family firefighting traditions as influencing their decisions to

volunteer for the department. Herbst adds, "I always looked up to my father for being part of the department."

Deputy Chief Chris Angelucci joined the STFD after being a volunteer firefighter in his previous town in upstate New York.

"When my family moved to Sparta eight years ago, I got the itch to serve my new community as I had before. I originally became a volunteer firefighter because I knew I was capable and I wanted to serve my fellow residents in what may very well be their greatest time of need."

Firefighter Eric Krapohl also enjoys serving our community.

"I became involved because I felt that community service and helping neighbors in need is important to making a town a great place to live."

Firefighter Jose Gavira volunteered following a personal tragedy.

"Years ago, my house was almost destroyed by a fire incident but, thanks to the quick response by the STFD, they were able to control the situation and save the day," Gavira says. "I realized what a great group of volunteer firefighters we have in our town and felt it would be an honor to be part of the STFD."

Firefighter Tom McIntyre Sr.'s volunteering inspiration derived from a less serious source.

"I was a big fan of the TV show "Emergency!" back in the early 70s. Every time I heard the fire siren, I thought it would be neat to be in on the action so, as soon as I turned 18, I put in an application and I've been hooked ever since!"

Regardless of their reasons for volunteering, once they become STFD firefighters these volunteers dedicate vast amounts of their time and talent to our township and do so with great passion. What drives them to continue doing so?



The Sparta Township Fire Department marches in a Sussex County parade in October, 1957. Courtesy of STFD.

Capt. Ryan Odom enjoys "...being able to help the citizens of Sparta who call upon us in their time of need. I also enjoy the camaraderie and loyalty found in our organization. The STFD is a giant family whose dedicated members are always willing to help and support each other."

Firefighter Samir Saba appreciates "...seeing volunteers from different walks of life, age ranges and abilities come together and move in the same direction for a united cause at a moment's notice, day or night. By training together, we strengthen our camaraderie and build relationships that go beyond the firehouse."

"It's the camaraderie." Vice President Karen Ruzycki agrees. "Being part of the woven fabric that makes the department what it is—when we're in full dress uniform attending a service, when we're

DESIGN

CONSTRUCT

MAINTAIN



info@gsglandscapes.com

908-879-2228

www.gsglandscapes.com



Firefighters from Sparta and surrounding towns battle a house fire on Rocky Terrace in 2014. Submitted by STFD

donning fire gear to a call or drill—after volunteering for 30 years going strong, it still takes my breath away to know I'm part of this band of brothers.”

Lt. Jordan Lang concurs, “It’s the brotherhood. Volunteer or not, this is the greatest job in the world.”

In addition to the camaraderie and community connections serving as a volunteer firefighter provides, Lt. Spencer Winberry adds that there are practical benefits as well.

“If you wanted to become a career firefighter, there are certain fire departments that would recognize the Firefighter 1 and 2 certifications. Regardless, you're gaining experience putting on a pack and learning how to fight a fire and locate and correctly operate equipment,” Winberry explains. “You don't want to see a lot of fires. You don't want to see a lot of wrecks. You don't want to see a lot of calls because it means somebody's having a bad day, but it's what we signed up for. It's our calling. It's the reason for our passion and, by doing that, you're gaining experience and readying yourself for that next step if you choose to take it.”

Probationary firefighter Nick Senatore agrees with Winberry, saying, “As a firefighter I've gained invaluable skills and hands-on experience as a result of the many different emergencies to which



STFD firefighters review extrication techniques at a drill in 2022. Submitted by STFD

we respond. The privilege to play a small role in the service done by STFD has and will continue to round out my ability as a firefighter and as a resident of Sparta.”

Winberry stresses that beyond answering fire-related calls, the STFD is deeply involved in community events and welcomes the community to become better acquainted with the STFD.

“Sparta Day is huge for us, and there are additional events in which we participate including carnivals and Sparta Recreation’s Trunk or Treat. We want the community to know that we’re not only there for them when they need us in an emergency, but also when they just want to stop by and talk,” Winberry says. “If you see us on the side of the road after a call or when we’re training, stop and bring your kid to jump in the fire truck and take a picture. If you see us at the firehouse with the doors open and people just shooting the breeze, swing by and ask for a tour. We want people to be involved. We want people to come around.”

Muldoon and the entire STFD in general feel that if more Sparta residents were to realize that the STFD is 100 percent volunteer-staffed, there would be more community interaction and increased firefighter membership.

Lt. Brian Pumo agrees. “I’m always surprised by how much of the community doesn't know we're a 100 percent volunteer service.”

Lt. Ed Seugling Jr. concurs. “Many people who don't know us ask if we're a paid fire department. The answer is simple: we do not get paid for any of the services we provide. The STFD has been volunteer since 1923 and we'll continue to volunteer with pride for years to come.”

Firefighter Tom McIntyre Jr. adds, “While this may not seem like an issue at face value, we rely on residents to join and volunteer their time for something for which many larger cities are simply able to hire and pay. Without members willing to donate countless hours to train and respond to emergencies, the STFD would not be able to provide the level of protection that the community both expects and deserves. It’s my hope that outreach such as this helps to make people aware that we are not only members of the STFD, but members of the Sparta community.”

Dr. Zelia Cannon



Gentle Dentistry Group PC

The art of
Cosmetic Dentistry

A practice committed to
AESTHETIC EXCELLENCE AND PATIENT COMFORT



Offering the **LATEST TECHNOLOGY** and
SUPERIOR SOLUTIONS FOR SMILE ENHANCEMENT

973-729-9044

www.gentledentistrysparta.com | 25 Woodport Road, Sparta, NJ

“We’re made up of people from all walks of life,” explains President John Dmuchowski. “We have members who are private contractors, pilots, police officers, professional firefighters, information technology specialists, electricians, property management managers and many personnel with other diverse occupational backgrounds. This wealth of talent gives us the opportunity to provide the very best, well-rounded, professional service to the community when called to duty.”

Odom states, “The Sparta Fire Department is always looking for new members, and our membership requirements are pretty simple. Anyone interested in joining should stop by our Woodport Road STFD headquarters any



Santa Claus, aka Mike Zingaro, prepares for the December 2020 Santa Run that allowed Sparta children to see Santa during the COVID-19 pandemic. Submitted by STFD



**Firematic Leaders/
Firefighters:**

- Chief Justin Muldoon
- Deputy Chief Christopher Angelucci Sr.
- Captain Ryan Odom
- Lieutenant Ed Seugling Jr.
- Lieutenant Brian Pumo
- Lieutenant Spencer Winberry
- Lieutenant Jordan Lang

**Administrative Leaders/
Firefighters:**

- President John Dmuchowski
- Vice President Karen Ruzycski
- Treasurer Bob Wilhelm
- Secretary Nickolas Mayben

Firefighters:

- Christopher Angelucci Jr.
- Keith Arnold
- Richard Cronenberg
- Ed Eltringham
- Howard Fisher
- Jose Gavira
- Ben Griffin
- Dylan Herbst
- Mike Herbst
- Brian Jennings
- Wayne Jennings
- Eric Krapohl
- Nick Mayben
- Tom McIntyre Jr.
- Tom McIntyre Sr.
- Art Meletta
- Terry O’Brien
- Matt Rider

- Robert Rider
- Peter Ruzycski
- Samir Saba
- Robert Tarleton
- Craig Wilson
- Joe Yanko

Probationary Firefighters:

- Carlo Calvo
- Anthony Dugan
- Jim Fisk
- Peyton Gaughan
- Grant Masser
- Nick Senatore
- Paul Williams

ATHENIA
MASON SUPPLY
 MASONRY & HARDSCAPE SUPPLY
 at Route 23
Patio & Mason
 Center

LET THE OUTDOOR LIVING BEGIN
Create Your Own Oasis

69 Route 23 North Hamburg, NJ | 973-875-3287 | www.route23patio.com

Thursday at 7pm, call 973-729-4500 Ext. 2, email contactUS@spartanjfd.org or message us on Facebook. All training and equipment is provided by the department at no cost to the member.”

Winberry adds, “All applicants must be Sparta residents and be 18 years of age. There is no maximum age limit. The STFD does not have a physical test/requirement, but the fire academy is a physically rigorous course (as is general firefighting). Once an application is received, a new member will be voted into the department and become a member. The member will then be approved on the township’s insurance and can begin running calls as a probationary firefighter, limiting them to purely exterior assistance level tasks until they graduate Firefighter 1 certification. Members are expected to be available to run calls 365 days a year whenever available and to attend meetings and drills the first

and second Monday of every month as well as every Thursday evening. They’re also expected to participate in other training sessions scheduled at random. Sometimes they fall on a Sunday, sometimes not.”

Muldoon adds, “We also have a volunteer auxiliary that’s a great support division for us.”

The STFD Ladies Auxiliary holds fundraisers for purchase of STFD equipment and delivers locally-donated food and refreshments to firefighters when they’re operating on the scene at long incidents.

As the STFD enters its hundredth year of volunteer service, what are Muldoon’s hopes for the future of the Department?

“That we continue to grow, learn and provide the best service we can to our town.”

Our community couldn’t ask for more.

3 LIFESAVING SAFETY TIPS

Submitted by STFD

Following these three simple Firematic tips from the Sparta Township Fire Department could save your life or that of someone near and dear to you:

Smoke detectors save lives: Every household should have adequate coverage of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. These detectors expire! Most smoke detectors need to be replaced every 10 years or sooner and most carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced every 5 to 7 years, according to the manufacturer’s specifications.

Close before you doze: The Fire Safety Research Institute has released the “Close Before You Doze” campaign to educate the

nation on the importance of closing your bedroom door before going to sleep. Not only does a closed door isolate your bedroom from damage in a fire, but it can also provide valuable survivable space even when there are heavy fire conditions right outside.

Slow down, move over: New Jersey’s Move Over Law requires all drivers approaching stationary emergency vehicles, service trucks and other highway safety vehicles displaying red, blue and/or amber flashing lights to move over one lane or, if not safe to move over, then slow down below the posted speed limit. There have been many line of duty deaths and severe crashes due to vehicles not moving over when encountering emergency vehicles.



Hamburg Dental Care
BARRY N. EISENMAN, DMD
& ASSOCIATES

LIMITED TIME OFFER
\$500 OFF
Full Ortho Case

Orthodontics for Children, Adolescents and Adults
Only \$4,250 for 24-30 Months of Treatment
FREE Ortho Exam • Call 973-827-8804

Barry N. Eisenman, DMD • Since 1999 • NJ License #15746
Dr. Haim Tawil, DDS, Associate • NJ Specialty Permit #06541
Heritage Village • 106 Quarry Road • Hamburg, NJ 07419



SEE WILLCO FOR ALL YOUR SUMMER AIR CONDITIONING NEEDS

10% OFF
New Maintenance Agreement

Willco
AIR CONDITIONING
REFRIGERATION & HEATING
LEADING EDGE TECHNOLOGY INSTALLED WITH OLD-FASHIONED RESPONSIBILITY.
937-200-6640

Visit our website at willcoairconditioning.com for information on rebates and other specials!

15 Mill Street, Branchville, NJ 07826
Family owned and operated for over 30 years
Prompt, Professional Service

LENNOX
Air is life. Make it perfect!™

Home Improvement Contractors License #13VH00527500 Master HVAC license #19HC0421100 Pump Installer License # 0001910
© 2022 Lennox Industries Inc. Lennox Dealers are independently owned and operated businesses.