



Hot Flashes



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March 2015



February 4 - A 2-alarm fire heavily damaged a single family home adjacent to Illinois Route 15 near Our Lady of the Snows Shrine.

The fire started in the master bedroom. Firefighters arrived within 5 minutes of being alerted and found intense flames and heavy smoke conditions. The home was unoccupied at the time of the fire.

The wind was from the northwest and steady at 16 mph and quickly spread the fire to the attic. The temperature was 28 degrees

with light snow/freezing rain causing for slippery footing for firefighters. Despite adverse weather conditions, firefighters were able to stop the spread of the fire and complete extinguishment. There were no fire hydrants in the area and water had to be brought in via tanker trucks. Firefighters were on-scene for 5 hours.

As *Hot Flashes* was being composed, the exact cause of the fire was still under investigation. Preliminary indications suggest that this fire was preventable. Check the Fire Department's website, www.SHFD.net for additional photos and details.

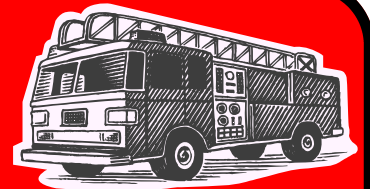
Congratulations to Jim Melichar for volunteering for 55 years. Jim has served as a volunteer firefighter, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Chief and as President of the Fire Association Board during his tenure.

Thanks Jim for making your community safer!



Emergency

Dial 9-1-1



Remain calm. Give location, name and type of emergency clearly. Always let the telecommunicator hang up first.

Non-Emergency.....277-3500
Administrative.....397-1995

www.SHFD.net





A Message from the Chief



March 2015

Winter was off to a late start this season. Unfortunately, on February 4th, a fire associated with cold weather destroyed a single-family home. (See cover story) Fire only takes a few minutes to take away a lifetime of cherished memories and treasured belongings.

On a more positive note, I would like to acknowledge the unselfish service that Jim Melichar has provided to the Signal Hill Fire Department and his community since October 1959. In addition to the many positions he has held within the Fire Department, the most important is that of a mentor to young firefighters. Over the last 55 years Jim has been there to shepherd literally dozens and dozens of volunteer firefighters -- an extraordinary accomplishment. Thanks Jimmy!

Page 3 of *Hot Flashes* lists other volunteer firefighters and members that received recognition for their years of service. In addition, there is an overview of the Department's emergency response activities and educational achievements for 2014.

Lindenwood University has acquired the Harmony School property on Wilshire Drive for its track and field venue. The purchase has necessitated the relocation of the Fire Department's storm warning siren located on the property. The siren's new location will be the Stookey Park on South 74th Street. Thanks to the Stookey Township Board for their cooperation and willingness to assist.

The Fire Department owns and maintains three outdoor storm warning sirens. The sirens are activated by the County's Emergency Management Agency in the event of severe weather. Sirens are tested the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

The Signal Hill Fire Department's primary objective is to reduce and eliminate fires. We cannot accomplish this without your cooperation to adopt and practice good fire safety habits in and around your home.

As spring rapidly approaches, please take a few minutes and review your family emergency plans. Whether it is a fire emergency, automobile safety, severe weather event or other disaster, pre-planning can mean the difference in being a survivor or being a casualty.

I welcome your comments and suggestions. My telephone number is 397-1995 or my e-mail is render@SHFD.net.

Thanks,

Greg

Greg L. Render, E.F.O.
Administrator / Chief of the Department

At its Annual Appreciation Dinner on March 7th, the Signal Hill volunteer firefighters and associate members were recognized for their dedication and service to improve the quality of life in our community.

Volunteer Firefighter Pat Lenz - 1 year
 Volunteer Firefighter Kurt Engel - 1 year
 Volunteer Firefighter Derek Trower - 5 years
 Volunteer Firefighter Sandra Jones - 5 years
 Associate Member Leroy Wilderman - 10 years
 Volunteer Firefighter Pat Cowden - 20 years
 Associate Member Michelle Bainter - 20 years
 Volunteer Captain Gary Bainter - 35 years
 Retired Chief James Melichar - 55 years



Welcome New Members -- Adam Davis, Jamal Dunn & Danielle Touchette

Signal Hill Fire Department 2014

Volunteer Firefighters Pat Lenz, Kurt Engel, Matt Paul and Gabe Toennies earned their State of Illinois Advanced Technician Firefighter at Southwestern Illinois College. Matt also completed two other courses towards the completion of his Associate Degree in Fire Science.

Volunteer Fire Captain Jace Wilderman completed Vertical Rescue Operations and is sharing his acquired knowledge with other firefighters.

Signal Hill Volunteer Firefighters recorded almost 2900 hours of continuing education and training and almost 760 hours associated with 153 incident responses.

The incident response breakdown for 2014:

Structure Fires - 5 [2 Private Dwellings, 1 Public Assembly, 2 Storage]

Other Fires—20 [2 Vehicles, 1 Non Structure/Vehicle, 9 Brush/Grass, 1 Rubbish, 2 Other]

Rescue – 6

False Alarms – 45

Mutual Aid Given – 47

Haz Mat – 5

Other Hazardous – 13

All Other Responses - 17



Prevent Home Garage Fires

Signal Hill Volunteer Firefighters responded to two garage fires in 2014. The leading cause of garage fires is electrical malfunction. This can be due to shorts in wiring, damaged wires, and overloading electrical outlets.

Keep your home safe by following a few easy tips.

- Store oil, gasoline, paints, propane and varnishes in a stand-alone shed away from your home.
- Keep items that can burn on shelves away from appliances.
- Plug only one charging appliance into an outlet.
- Don't use an extension cord when charging an Appliance.



Refueling Power Equipment

- When refilling gasoline power equipment, start with moving the equipment and gasoline outside and away from buildings.
- Only store gasoline in approved safety containers with the Underwriter's Laboratory seal of approval.
- Always refuel a power mower when it is cold before starting the engine. Gasoline spilled on hot surfaces is easily ignited when the engine is restarted.
- When starting a mower, make certain it is on a level, solid surface and out of gear.



- Stand firmly; make sure your feet and hands will not accidentally come in contact with the blades.
- Do not run a gasoline mower in a closed room while making adjustments or repairs. Gasoline engines give off exhaust fumes containing carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.
- Never fill the gasoline tank completely to the top. Allow expansion space. Heat causes gasoline to expand and fire can result if it spills over the hot engine.
- It is always a good idea to have a fully-charged fire extinguisher in your garage or equipment shed at all times.



Every day Americans experience the horror of fire but most people don't understand fire.

Fire is FAST!

There is little time! In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick

black smoke to fill a house or for it to be engulfed in flames. Most deadly fires occur in the home when people are asleep. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

Fire is HOT!

Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes, a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once - this is called flashover.

Fire is DARK!

Fire isn't bright, it's pitch black. Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire, you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you've lived in for years.

Fire is DEADLY!

Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

Only when we know the true nature of fire can we prepare our families and ourselves.

Thank You



Thanks to all of the Fire Protection District residences and businesses that responded to the October fundraiser. Our volunteer firefighters greatly appreciate your generous donations. All of the funds received are reinvested to improve or enhance the Fire Department's capabilities to serve you.



Vacations and business travel make hotels and motels our home away from home. It is just as important to be prepared and know what you would do in a hotel/motel emergency as it is in your own home.

Remember the following fire safety tips when planning for vacation or traveling overnight.

- When making lodging reservations, ask if the hotel or motel has smoke alarms and fire sprinklers.
- Read the fire evacuation plan carefully. If one is not posted in your room, request one from the front desk.
- Locate the two closest exits from your room.
- Use <http://apps.usfa.fema.gov/hotel/> to find a list of hotels and motels that adhere to life safety.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Volunteer Firefighter Mark Bagby has been at Signal Hill for 7 years. Mark is the Emergency Management Director for Washington University in St. Louis. He is also an adjunct instructor for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In addition to emergency response, Mark assists with continuing education & training of the other volunteer firefighters, and advising on equipment and apparatus procurement.

“I joined the fire service in 2001 and have responded to many unique emergencies (plane crashes, hazardous materials spills, building collapses, multi-vehicle crashes, etc.). Being a firefighter is much more than putting out fires. With these unique emergencies, it requires constant training and education to be able to think quickly, take decisive action and sometimes using “out of the box” thinking to handle the situation. It is human nature to want to help people that are in need. Being a volunteer member of the fire department helps me fulfill that need. It is a tough commitment, but thankfully I have a supportive family that understands that somebody has to be there to answer the call when somebody needs help.” Mark Bagby



“Being a firefighter is something Mark really loves and is proud of. I grew up in this community, but he did not. I think being a part of the fire department really helped him feel included into our community. It also has come with the added bonus of allowing the whole family to make some great and lasting friendships.” Danyel Bagby

The Bagby family enjoys camping and fishing at state parks in southern Illinois and Missouri.

Mark, Abigail, Kyleigh, Connor, & Danyel.

This job is hot.

Think you can
stand the heat?



**VOLUNTEER
NOW!**



www.SHFD.net or 397-1995

Signal Hill

Fire Department

329 Hazel Avenue
Belleville, Illinois 62223

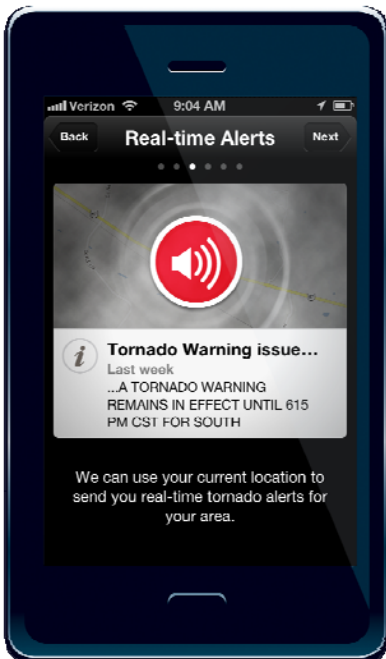
NONPROFIT ORG.
CARRIER ROUTE
PRESORT

PAID

Belleville, Illinois
PERMIT NO. 880



To Report a Fire Dial 9-1-1



Spring is traditionally a time that severe weather can adversely impact southwestern Illinois. In order to be alerted to threatening conditions, make sure that your smartphone is set to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA).

The National Weather Service and other public safety officials use reliable systems to alert you and your family in the event of natural or man-made disasters via the WEA. You can receive important lifesaving alerts no matter where you are - at home, at school, or at work.

What does a WEA message look like? WEA will look like a text message. The WEA message will show the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, and the agency issuing the alert. The message will be no more than 90 characters. This service is offered for free by wireless carriers.

Stay Alive by Staying Alert. Be prepared to act quickly if warnings or alerts are issued for our area.

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