

THE WATCHDESK

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



COLLECTING • PRESERVING • EDUCATING • INTERPRETING



♦ LIVING HISTORY ♦
♦ "TOMMY" FIREBOAT ♦ SPRINKLER SYSTEM ♦

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Fire Museum of Maryland is to educate the public about the history, technology, and innovation of the American urban fire service through a unique collection of operating apparatus, memorabilia, and programs.

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Walt Mathers

In March we lost our beloved Santa, Walter Frank Mathers. Walt was the inspiration for the idea that the Fire Museum should save the Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. Fire Boat and he proceeded to convince the staff that this crazy adventure was the perfect project for us. But for families throughout Baltimore, their fondest memories of Walt were as our annual Santa Claus. Walt was the kindest, sweetest Santa ever, and he is deeply missed.

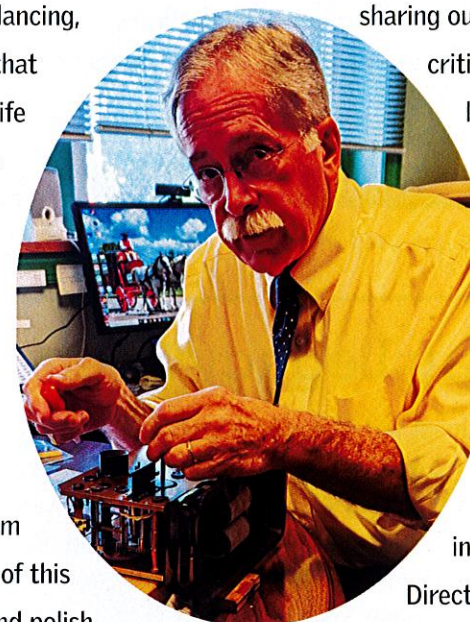


Director's Message 2023 Edition

I am looking forward to LANTERN NIGHT as I write my message to you. I know that by the time you read this pithy bit of erudite historical non-fiction, Lantern Night will be an image in the rear-view mirror. Nevertheless it is a wonderful look at dancing, flickering, colored glass in lamps that were hand-made at a time when life was slower and people could take extra time to study the structure of a lantern. I'd like to think that here at the Fire Museum of Maryland we present wonderful moments of all kinds to our friends.

If per chance, you visit the Museum once a year, you experience some of this magic that we, the staff, design and polish into the care of our gorgeous collections; or we, the board of directors lead the way in raising the money it takes to keep our programs sparkling and our visitors learning new ideas. If you live too far away to come in annually, we upgrade the website with images for your viewing pleasure and hope that occasionally you are transported to new realms and aspirations.

One of those 'realms' was the vision of the fireboat TOMMY last Christmas (2022) when, for the first time in Lutherville, she was decked out in Christmas lights. Another was the 1888 Clapp & Jones steamer which is slowly entering into the 'gleaming' category for the first time in an hundred years.



This column offers me an opportunity to say 'thank you' in the loudest-possible terms, to you who have given money to support that dream that was born back in 1964 when my father and I started thinking about sharing our collection with the public. Your help is critical to the Museum's survival. Over the last several years (including COVID) our donor base has grown significantly and also we have more donors who are pledging on a quarterly basis. Please consider joining the 'donor family' even if you only give \$25 a quarter. Your support is important! Right now I am trying to find a source(s--- could be several) to lead us into a new position known as the Deputy Director, to commence in January of 2024.

The Board and I hope to bring in a fresh person and to allow me time to train this person, as I slowly turn over the reins. The old brain is not as fast as it used to be! There is a reason why one is supposed to retire before age 70! It has been an amazing journey for me personally and obviously for many of you, no matter when you joined the Museum family. (Lee Smith joined in 1982 so that makes him a long-tooth, too.) Together we have forged one of America's treasure spots, worthy of a holiday trip any time!

Steve Heaver

MEMBERSHIP



Memberships is a popular option for supporting the Museum
All levels of membership include a year of free admission.

Family membership (\$100) and above include reciprocal admission for two guests to several Baltimore area museums through the Greater Baltimore History Alliance, as well as discounted tickets to our annual Great Fire of Baltimore event in February.

For more membership information, please visit our website at FireMuseumMD.org/membership, call 410-321-7500, x103, or stop by and chat with our staff.

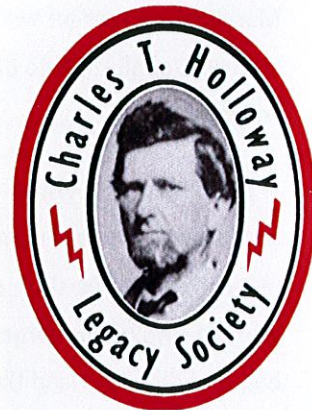
Charles T. Holloway Legacy Society

Money. We don't like to talk about it (at least not in polite society), but we all need it; use it; and probably wish that we had more of it! I think that Charles Holloway, one of the fire service's heroes, would agree. He died in 1903 in Baltimore but was internationally known. The Fire Museum's Legacy Society was established a dozen years ago to encourage income for the Museum's endowment and our goal is 3M to support a basic operation. Since the term 'legacy' suggests a gift in one's estate, I ask that all of our readers consider leaving an amount to the FMM in their will. Just add a codicil to the principle document, and, if you will (get the pun?) send us a letter documenting this. The annual yield from this Legacy will be used to support our operations.

Now for living money. The Board and I are always trying to raise money to keep the Museum vital. We talk about new exhibits and projects like the 1920 Seagrave but we don't discuss funds for staff salaries. I'm departing from the traditional path (please take note!) and must write about the need for \$60,000 to support a new Deputy Director. The Board and I would like to see this person start in 2024. As I stated in "Watchdesk" 2022, I am retiring in 2026 and this Museum needs a person who will commence learning a range of operational details, and I am the best person to teach this.

New money to support a \$55,000 salary plus bennies is the goal. I do not draw a salary and I doubt that a new Deputy Director will work for free! So...we have developed several plans: One is to have one donor pledge the complete amount for three years, naming the new position after the donor, e.g., the George and Lily Cumberbund Deputy Director; Plan Two is to enlist the help of 2-3 donors who share the load; Plan Three is really a portion of No.2 plus help from the government. I hope that you will take me (us) seriously and give our 'need' (and a possible solution) enormous thought. I have a job description that I will be pleased to share with you.

Consider how critically important is the knowledge of the senior staff of the Fire Museum of Maryland. We do not want to re-invent the wheel in three years!



A Simple, Flexible and Tax-Efficient Way to Give

Eric Walker

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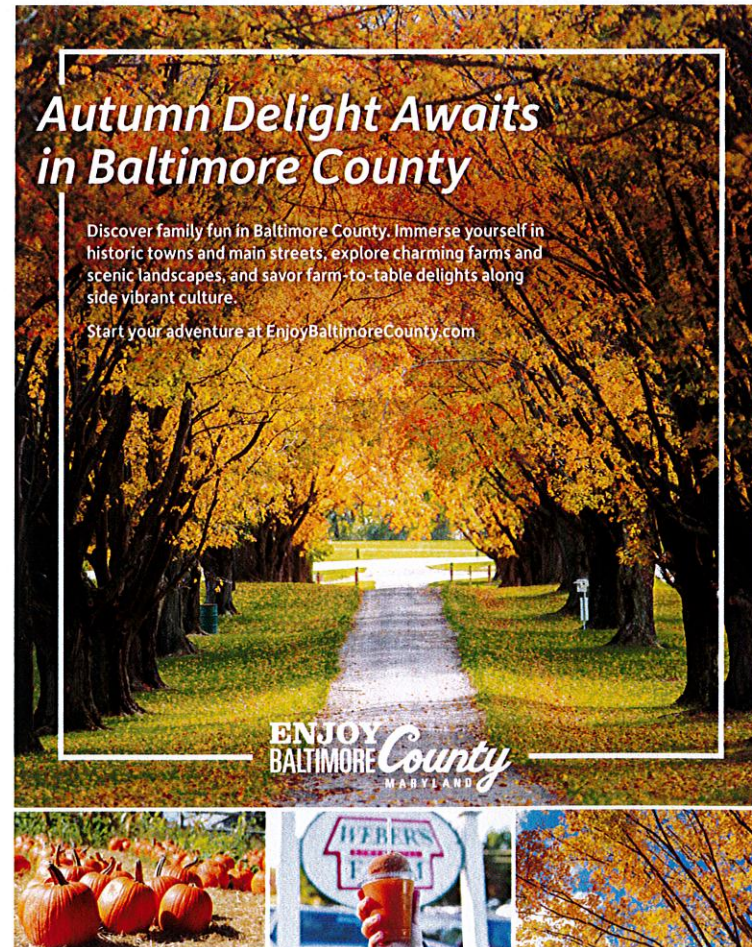
As soon as you make a donation, you are eligible for an immediate tax deduction. As with all tax matters, you should consult with your tax advisor on how a donation to a DAF will benefit you.

Call us to learn more about a Donor Advised Fund and how you can establish one for all of your charitable giving.

Stephen Heaver 410-321-7500 x101.

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Rental Roundup

Amy Landsman

Horses and dogs are natural partners for some of our historic fire apparatus, and our Museum rental events reflected that partnership.

The Maryland Horse Industry Board rented space for a meeting and tour. Horse Industry leaders loved learning about the key role horses played during the age of steam.

And we had dozens of happy dogs in the building for a National Association of Canine Scent Work event. Similar to search-and-rescue, the dogs go through the property, seeking and finding different hidden scents. We have quite a few fire hydrants here at the Museum, but these well-behaved pups completely stayed on task, never once got distracted, and steered well clear of the artifacts and exhibits.

Our rental events aren't for just horse lovers and dog parents. A fire sprinkler association, our local community college, and individual families all rented the property for everything from networking events to family reunions. For information on museum rentals, please contact Amy at alandsman@firemuseummd.org.



Have Fire Education, Will Travel!

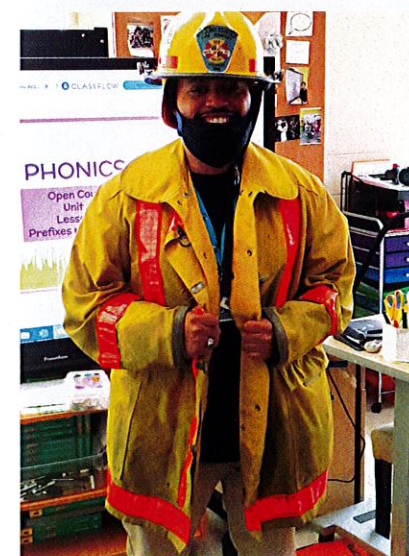
Aaron Lippencott

2023 was one of the Fire Museum's busiest years, and it was our busiest year ever for outreach visits. What exactly is an outreach visit? It's when the museum's education staff goes offsite to conduct an educational program. In 2023 the museum conducted twenty outreach visits to schools, one to a Senior Center, one to a library, one to a day-care center, and one to a cub scout pack.

Schools were our most popular outreach destination in 2023 and our most popular school program is a modified version of our Bucket Brigade tour. This program is named for the earliest form of organized firefighting, where neighbors passed leather buckets of water to each other to extinguish blazes. The program starts with the guide introducing themselves. Next is most important, fire safety instruction, which we include with all our youth education programs. The focus then shifts to the history of firefighting, accomplished by the bucket brigade game and a modified version of Simon Says called Fire Chief Says. The last part of the program ties back to fire safety with our Fire Rescue Game.

The Fire Rescue Game is typically an extra charge for on-site programs, but we include it free of charge for outreach visits. Students dress up in kid-sized fire jackets with pretend helmets and air tanks. Then, one of the teachers goes into the hallway and closes the door behind them. Students must act like a real fire rescue squad and rescue their teacher! Most can do so by following proper fire safety instructions, just as a real fire rescue squad would do. This includes crawling instead of walking, to not breathe smoke, and checking the door to know there isn't a fire behind it.

To set up an outreach visit, a school or organizational representative should contact Education Director Aaron Lippencott to discuss details of the visit. alippencott@firemuseummd.org Depending on the timing, supplies may be gathered the day before so they may travel quickly. The museum's authentic props are one of the reasons outreach programs are popular, and include genuine muffin bell, a replica tin speaking trumpet, replica fire buckets, four child-sized pretend turn-out coats, helmets, and air tanks, and one real adult turn-out jacket and helmet.



A Year of Events

Amy Landsman

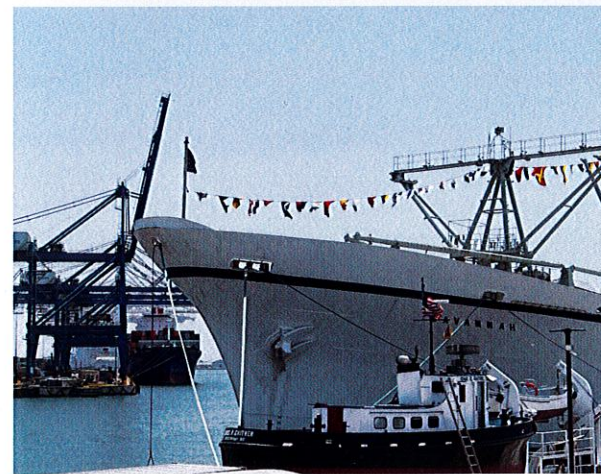
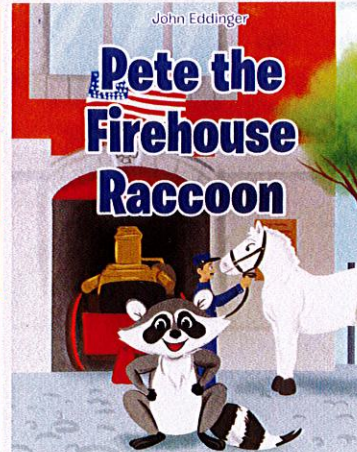
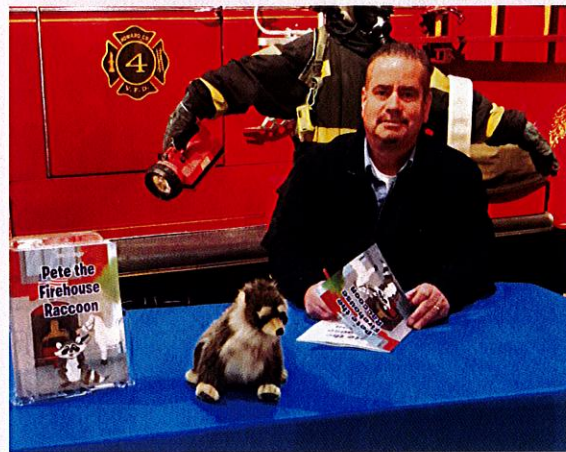
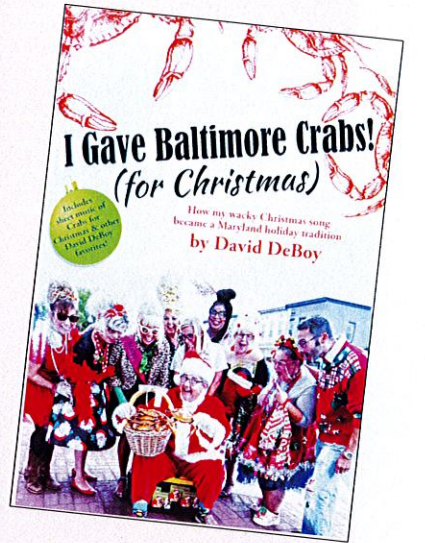
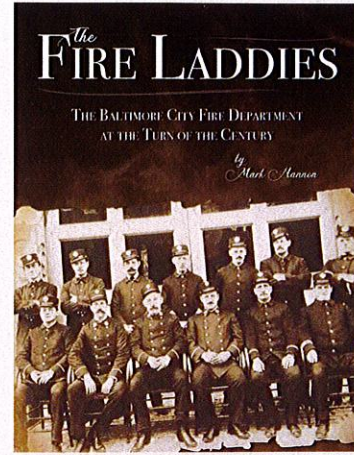
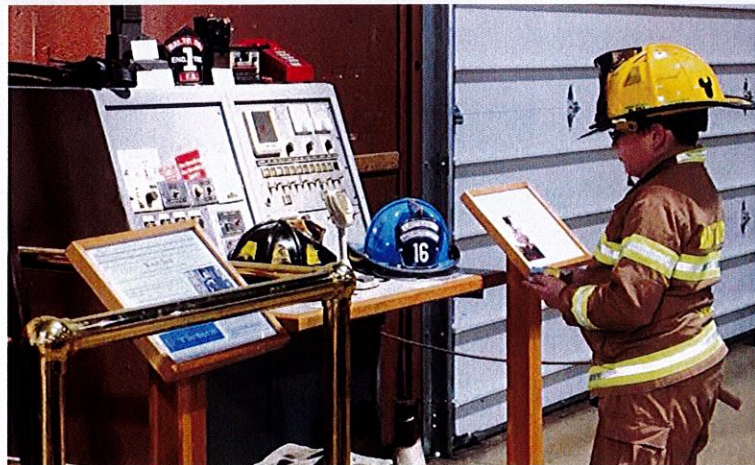
We had so many great events this past year. We hosted three authors: Dave Deboy, who wrote "I Gave Baltimore Crabs!(For Christmas)", "The Fire Laddies" author Mark Hannon, and the Museum's own John Eddinger, who wrote "Pete, the Firehouse Raccoon." These books are all available in our Museum shop.

As usual, our Holiday Train Garden pulled in big crowds in November and December. In January, we gave parents and caregivers are great indoor option for for playtime with their babies and toddlers with our regular "Cabin Fever Mondays."

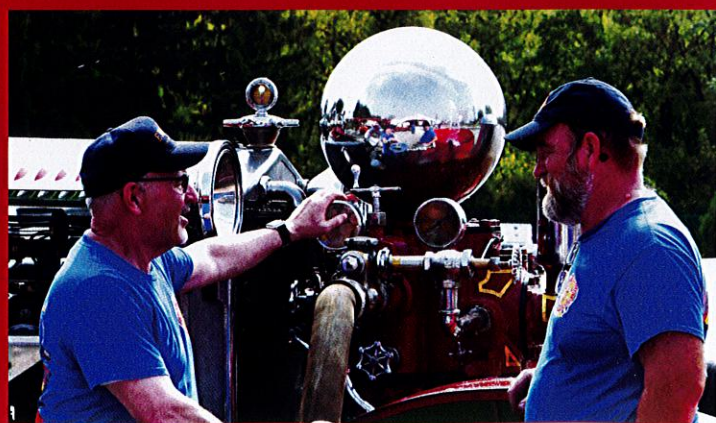
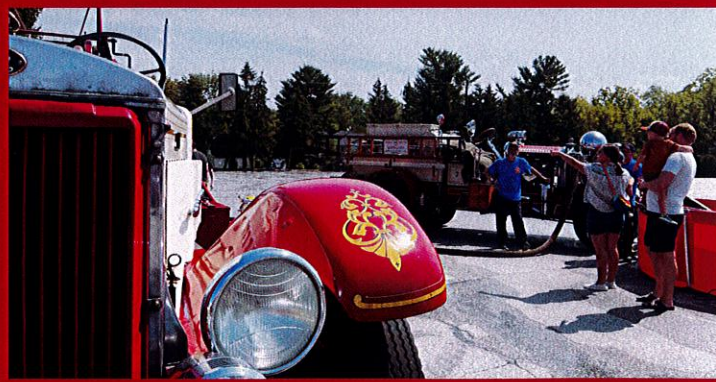
Our annual Great Fire of Baltimore event in February featured historian Charles Duff. In February we hosted a Zoom forum

on African American firefighting. In March, our Zoom program showcased pioneering women firefighters. For the third year, families showed up in force for our mid-week spring break open day.

For National Maritime Day in May we joined the Liberty Ship SS John W. Brown, and the Nuclear Ship Savannah at Canton Pier 13. On the 4th of July, we took our 1898 Hale Water Tower (pulled by a 1933 Mack), our 1920 Seagrave and our 1922 Ahrens-Fox to the Towson parade. Over 115-thousand people watched the Facebook video of this amazing line-up. That's just a partial list, but as you can see, we are always cooking up something new.



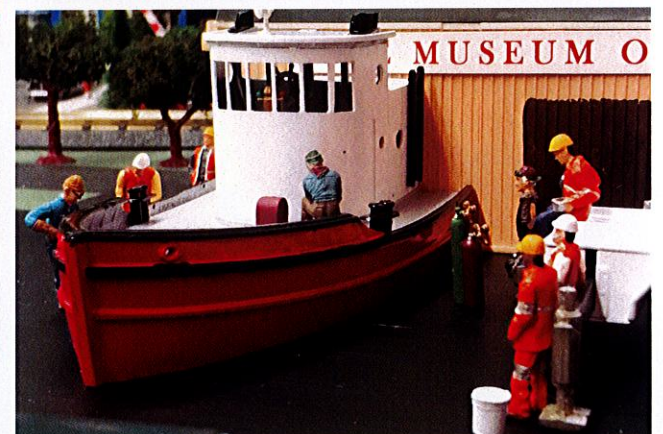
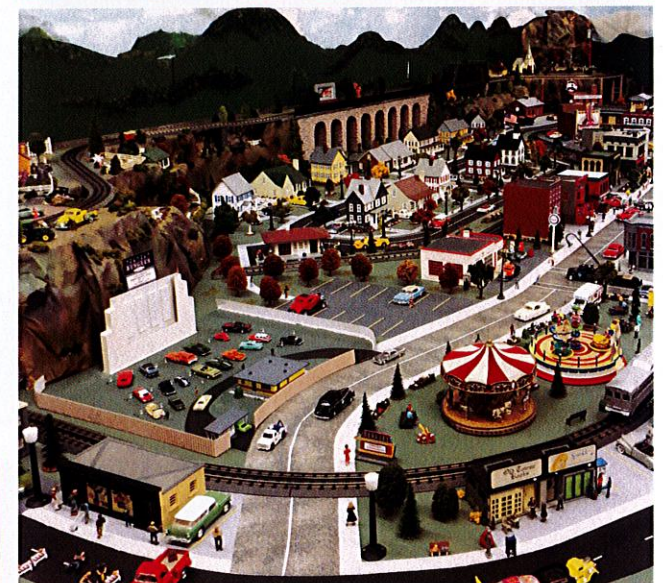
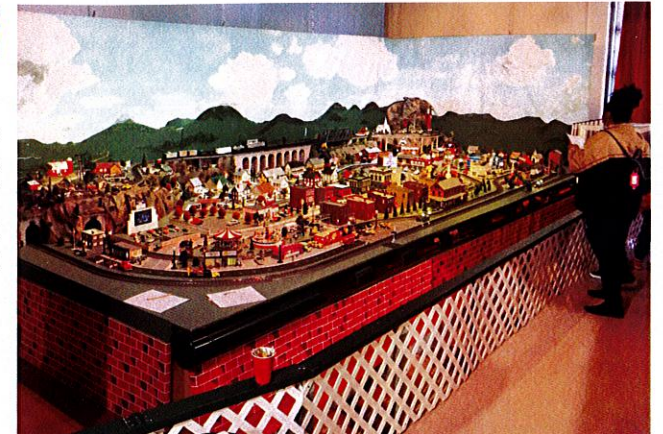
Motor Muster



Christmas gardens are a Baltimore firehouse staple that we really enjoy at the Fire Museum. Moravian Germans brought Christmas handicrafts to Baltimore in the nineteenth century, and the addition of electric trains and animated toys created the national tradition that everyone now loves. Firehouses in particular build elaborate train gardens for their communities to raise support and awareness.

The Fire Museum's Christmas train garden goes back to 1985. Over the years it grew from a single 4x8 foot table to an elaborate ten by twenty five-foot miniature world. Our trains run on automated schedules and stop at local stations, and our garden has lots of places you know like Benjie's Drive-in, the Bromo-Selzer tower, and even your favorite Fire Museum!

Each year our Christmas garden has a featured diorama. In the past we've had Friendship Airport and a Baltimore fireboat fighting an Inner Harbor blaze. Last year we introduced a scene of our own fireboat Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. arriving at the Fire Museum on three flatbed trucks. You can see it again this year, and we'll also have a new display of historic toy trains. On Saturday, November 25 you can even take your own free photo with Santa! *Paul Rubenson*



Capital Improvements

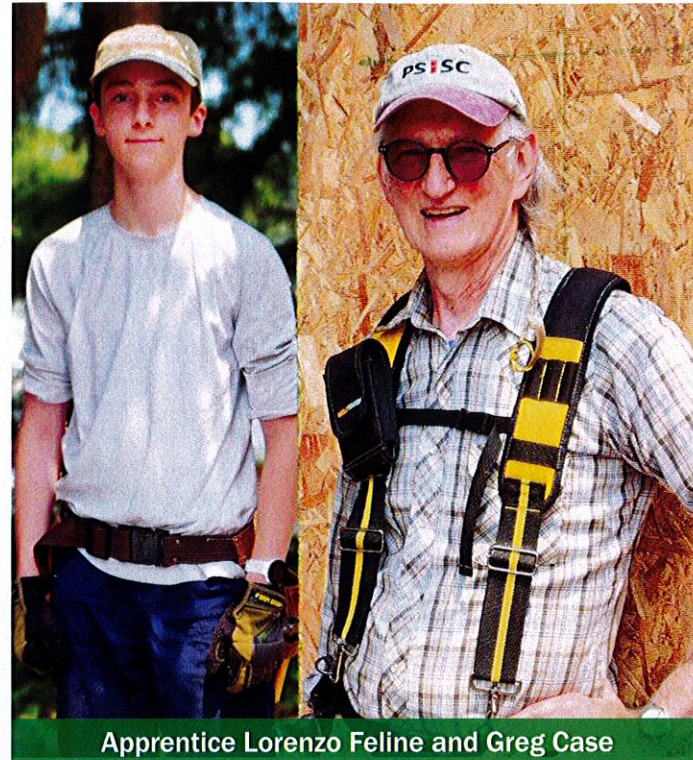
Paul Rubenson

2023 was a big year for buildings and grounds at the Fire Museum. One large project reached completion, another is ramping up, and myriad smaller projects ran their course.

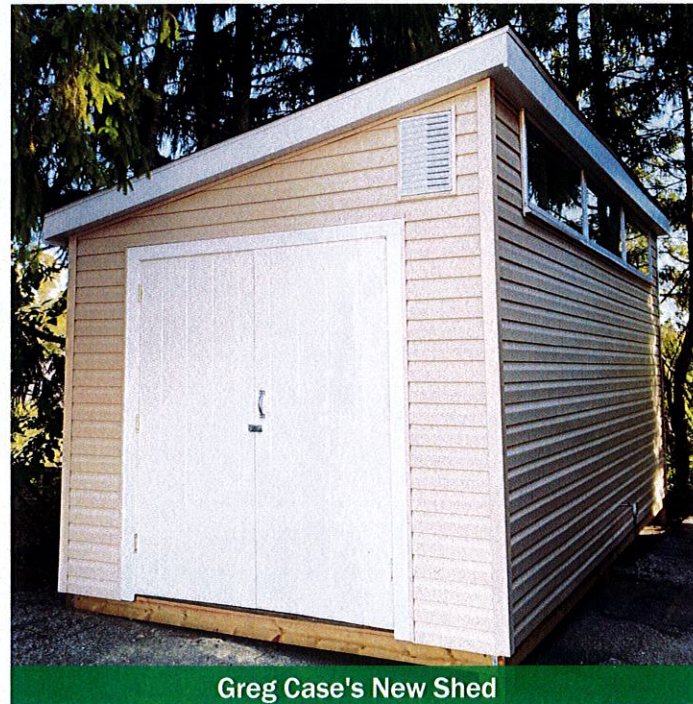
This summer marked the completion of the new Jasper and Anna Peabody Marsh Research Center. This major, multi-year effort involved converting the museum hall's former mezzanine, parts which were enclosed years ago, into specialized workspaces. The official start of the Marsh center began in 2017 with upgrading the lighting to LED. From there we built walls and added infrastructure. Now the Center is fully open for business. It consists of a library, archives, registrar's workshop, and two collections storage rooms. The last element was installing the Center's dedicated HVAC system this summer.

Sprinkler protection for the museum is another important long-range project that finally became visible this year. Six years of planning by Marty Smith of ADT, who retired this year, brought together 22 different vendors to donate labor and materials. With plans and county permits in hand last spring, we laid pipe into the campus from the county mains. Over the summer the coalition installed a complete sprinkler system in our maintenance annex, and this fall will install the larger system in the main museum building. The new year will see the Fire Museum fully protected!

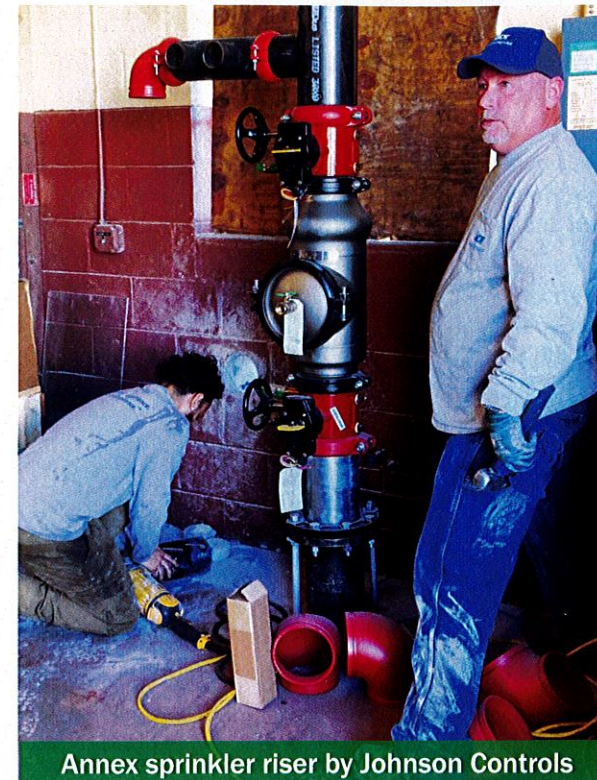
Smaller capital projects this year included a new utility shed built by volunteer Greg Case, using all-weather and maintenance-free materials, and a new storage room for the museum store facilitated by board member Jack Day.



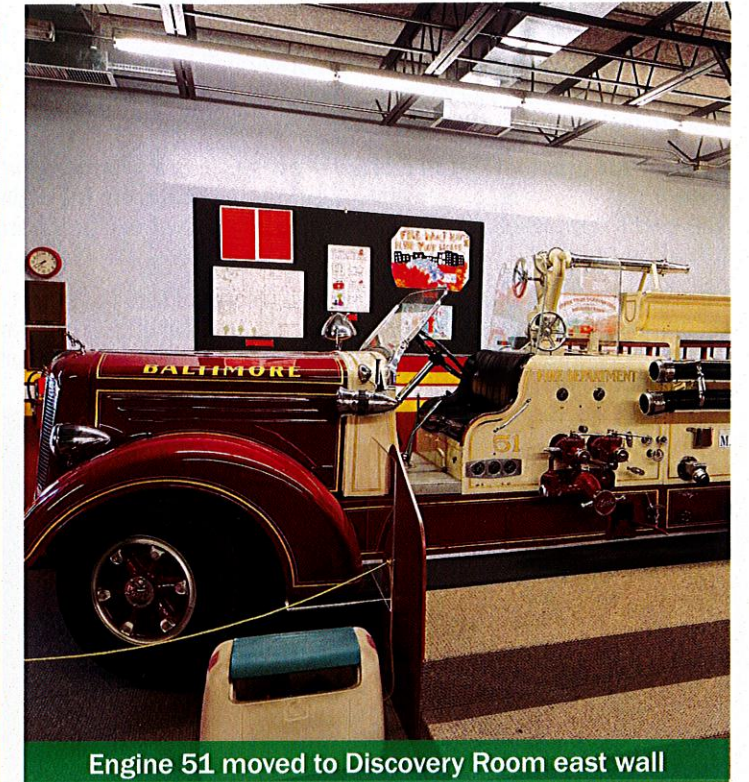
Apprentice Lorenzo Feline and Greg Case



Greg Case's New Shed



Annex sprinkler riser by Johnson Controls



Engine 51 moved to Discovery Room east wall



New museum store storage in Discovery Room

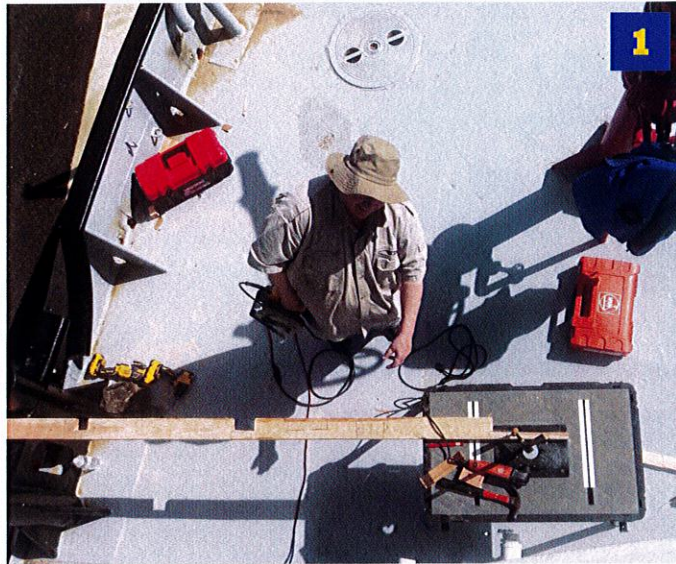


Progress on the Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. Fireboat

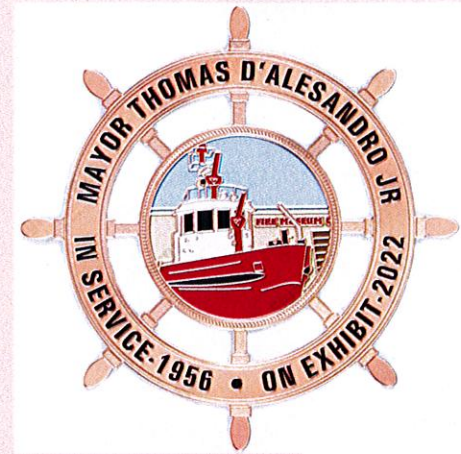
Those who've been to the Fire Museum of Maryland lately have seen our newest addition, the Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. Fire boat. You can't miss it, projecting into the parking lot from the front of the museum! The "Tommy" was Baltimore's flagship fireboat from 1956 to 2007, with four Fairbanks Morse opposed-piston diesel engines developing 12,000 gallons-per-minute of pumping power. She retired from reserve service in 2015. Partially scrapped in 2018, the Tommy's remaining 40' bow section came to the Fire Museum last year.

In 2023 we made great strides to restore the fireboat to its former glory, and to integrate it into the museum. Our most important achievement this year was to open a passage into the boat from the main museum hall, and to erect a steel staircase to bring visitors up to the boat's deck level. By Christmas we will conduct our first hard-hat tours, taking small groups into the pilot house to see the restoration progress.

Inside the boat, we've put in new lighting and electrical service, begun to reframe and insulate the walls, and are piecing together the original instrumentation and controls. We are starting to display fireboat-related artifacts around the stairs in the main museum hall. Eventually we plan a small exhibit in the boat's former galley, and the pilot house will be an historic space much as it was outfitted in 1956. —Paul Rubenson



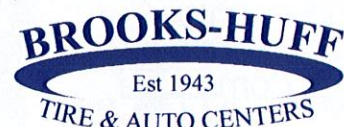
1. Cutting interior studs on deck
2. Staging salvaged parts to connect Tommy to the museum
3. Stair arrival, April, 2023
4. Welding Tommy door to museum hall, April 25, 2023
5. Jim Morrissey installing ceiling framing



New "Tommy" Fireboat Challenge Coins

Order your Mayor Thomas D' Alesandro Fireboat Challenge Coin and help the museum continue preparing "Tommy" for visitors! Soon we hope to finish restoring the pilot house and to open the fireboat to the public, but we need your help to take on the challenge. Give your support by purchasing a new Challenge Coin featuring a unique ship's wheel design and cutout spokes for \$35 at the front desk or online at the museum website for the same price plus shipping. Thank you for your continued support and dedication! —Grace Bussard

www.firemuseummd.org/shop



Birthday Fun *Amy Landsman*

What a record year it's been for so many things: for birthday parties, for rental events, for outreach, and for connecting with the community.

By October, our birthdays had already set a record – 68 parties, three more than all of last year, and 2023 isn't over yet. Families love the ease of hosting a party here, where the pint-sized turnout gear, the real fire engine to climb on, and all the toys in the Discovery Room keep the kids happy and active for a very long time. Engine rides, visiting firefighters and our fire-rescue game were popular party add-ons.

As we know, families love our Discovery Room, but it was really showing its age. In 2022, we replaced the carpet. This year, we've done even more. Our Tuesday night volunteer crew moved the 1938 Mack fire engine from the south wall to the east wall. It's the first time this engine has been moved in over 20 years, and it was a pretty major project! Repositioning the engine opened up space for construction of a long-overdue storage area for our Museum gift shop. The Discovery Room is still a work in progress, as we make plans to add elements focusing on fire safety and first responder career options. To book a birthday party, email Amy at alandsman@firemuseummd.org.



Maintaining the Driving Fleet

One thing that sets the Fire Museum of Maryland apart is its operational fleet. Of its forty-seven major pieces of apparatus on display, we keep at least a dozen running at any time—including our 1899 coal fired American steamer. We feel it is important for the public to not only see historic artifacts, but to witness their operation—their mechanical action, sounds, and even smells. We are a living museum!

Keeping vintage vehicles running is no mean feat. In addition to their routine maintenance—oil, tires, light bulbs, etc.—some of their mechanical parts must

occasionally be creatively repaired or remade. In 2023, the museum performed an upper engine rebuild on our 1933 Mack BQ water tower, put new tires and a new generator on our 1949 Mack sedan, and replaced the carburetor on our 1935 Stutz open pumper. We also refined the 50-year restoration of our 1920 Seagrave Combination Pumping Car, and are prepping our 1919 Baltimore City Mack wrecker to drive to this fall's American Towman Exposition at the Baltimore Convention Center—after thirty years of static display.

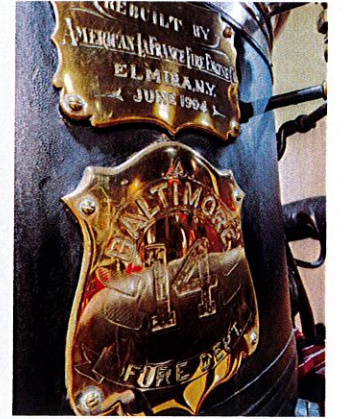
—Paul Rubenson



1949 Mack sedan pumper receives new tires



Cleaned details on BCFD Engine 14, 1888 Clapp & Jones steamer



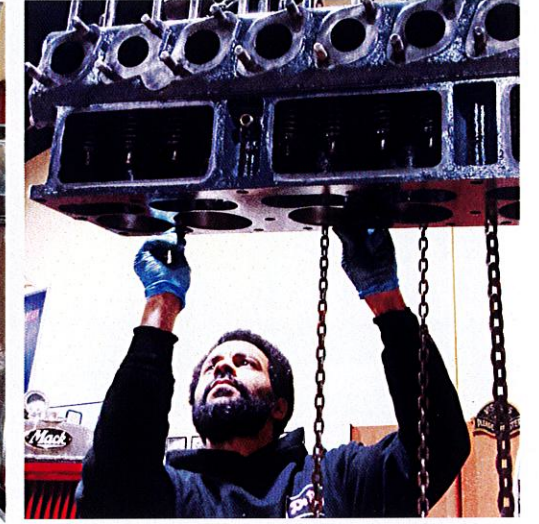
Polished brass on BCFD Engine 14, 1888 Clapp & Jones steamer



2022-3-29, Hale-Mack water tower, hoisting cylinder block, T Miller, D Shimp, A Krongard, S Heaver



Paul Rubenson at work on BCFD Water Tower 1, Aug. 2023



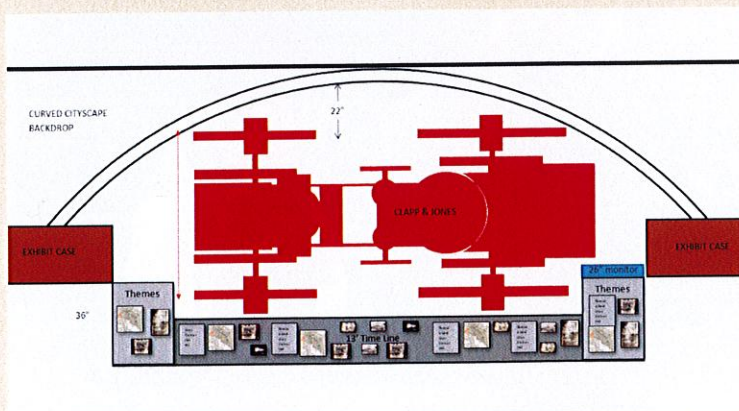
Dan Shimp, Mechanic positions water tower upper engine block, 2023



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EXHIBITS Paul Rubenson

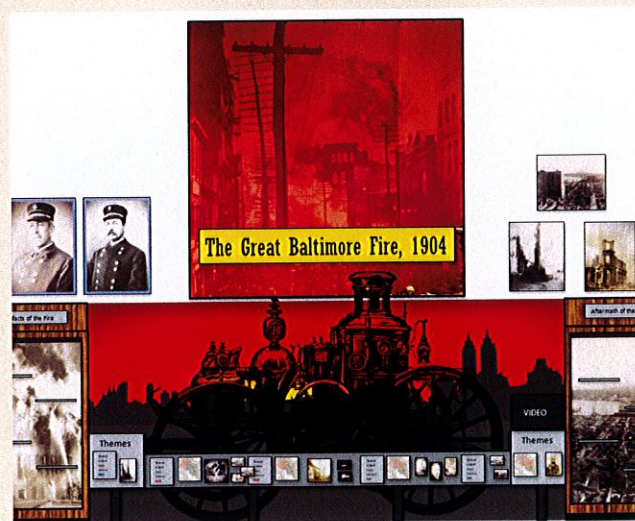
Museums use exhibitions to interpret their collections for the public. The Fire Museum's dense installation of its historic objects makes exhibits a challenge, but we use creative techniques to make best use of our limited space.

The Fire Museum mounted three new exhibits this year. In August, *ADT: The Firefighters' Ally* opened to highlight the 150th year of the American District Telegraph Company, one of America's most enduring companies with its roots in Baltimore.

A smaller effort popular with kids big and small is our new showcase of large toy water towers—

This page, clockwise from upper left:

- ADT: The Firefighters' Ally, 150th anniversary exhibit of the American District Telegraph Co.
- Plan view of new Great Fire exhibit
- Elevation drawing of new Great Fire exhibit



recent acquisitions that draw attention to our full-size Water Tower No. 1, hero of the Great Baltimore Fire.

Our largest new exhibit is the ongoing renovation of the *Great Baltimore Fire Exhibit*. The new display will center around the Engine 14 Clapp & Jones steamer that also fought the Fire, and will allow space for an eventual expansion of the full-size Engine 8 firehouse diorama.

This page, clockwise from upper left:

- Paul Rubenson hangs photos for Great Fire exhibit
- Fire boat exhibit takes shape
- ADT: The Firefighters' Ally, 150th anniversary exhibit of the American District Telegraph Co.
- Toy Water Tower Display



Living History –

Ed Burgee

In 2021 education director Aaron Lippencott formed the idea of a living history program at the Fire Museum of Maryland, to make the rich history of the fire service come alive. It is one thing to visit a museum and view artifacts in a pristine and orderly setting--and quite another to see a "person from the past" interacting directly with visitors. What exactly is "living history?" According to Wikipedia, it is "an activity that incorporates historical tools, activities, and dress into an interactive presentation to give observers and participants a sense of stepping back in time."

As background, the early 1960's celebrations of the centennial of the Civil War brought out thousands of history buffs to re-enact historic battles. In those early days, 'uniforms' were often little more than blue or gray work shirts and pants with stripes sewn down the legs. Headgear, at times, was souvenir-grade at best. Those days are gone, and a cottage industry has grown up to supply historic clothing and equipment that a person of the past could better relate to. Authenticity is the key.

But living history is more than just period-correct clothing. That could simply be placed on a mannequin, and there is no "living" in that. The keys to effective living history are knowledgeable interpreters to engage visitors in a meaningful way. They can converse or lecture, but best are those who research and develop personas of specific characters--known as "first person" interpretation. Here the interpreter gives the impression of stepping out of the past. They are knowledgeable about themselves and their time but know nothing about the present--and can seem shocked by what they see, modern clothing for example. One of the best examples is at Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts. There it is always the year 1627 and the interpreters are not familiar with anything later.

This year Aaron recruited Tom Miller and me, both retired firefighters, to participate in his new venture. For our first demonstration Tom and I, with Aaron himself as emcee and all of us dressed as 19th century firefighters, spoke about the earlier times and equipment used in the fire service. The performance was about a half hour including a question/answer session.

Our next presentation was in the hand-drawn area using a rough script. Tom was a young member of the 'new' paid Baltimore City Fire Department, and I was a grizzled relic of the old all-volunteer days. I lovingly wiped down my reliable old "engine," proud in my snazzy Mechanical Fire Company parade uniform. Tom heckled me from the front of the Engine 8 fire station diorama, asking why I wasted my time on an old thing that wasn't needed anymore. Barbs went back and forth with some humor thrown in, and visitors got a good feel of those days. The action then moved inside the station where we both explained the "modern" steam engine and the "new" way of doing things.

Our visitors seem particularly interested in the early period because it is so new to them. Living history is a great way to help them understand unfamiliar times and the changes up to the present, as we develop more educational scenarios are presentations.



Ed Burgee



Aaron Lippencott



Ed Burgee, Aaron Lippencott, and Tom Miller



Tom Miller, Aaron Lippencott, and Ed Burgee



Aaron Lippencott as Turn-of-the-20th-Century firefighter



The Ford Group at
Morgan Stanley



O'CONNOR CARES SOLUTIONS

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Volunteers & Interns

Paul Rubenson

The Fire Museum of Maryland has a small paid staff, but relies on the tireless work of countless volunteers and academic interns. This year three students from Towson University performed internships at the museum: Wilson Adam, Regan Hyde, and Grace Bussard. After graduating in May, Wilson is now our museum store manager, and Regan likewise stayed on as a tour guide. Our acting registrar, Will Peper, cut his teeth as an intern last year from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Bob Rynes and Dennis Crawford work on 'Christie-mobile' for the Discovery Room



Tuesday Volunteers with newly rebuilt Water Tower 1



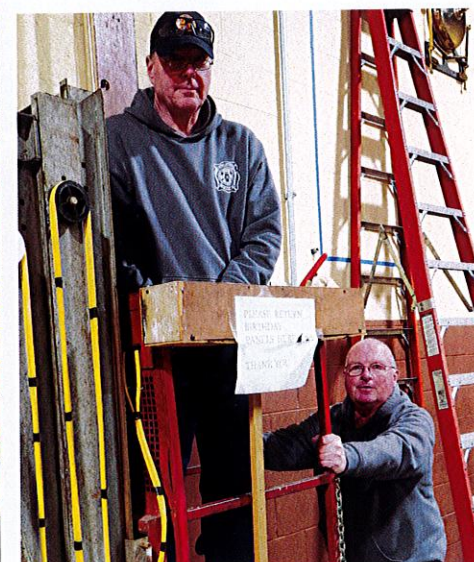
Grace Bussard, intern



Wilson Adam, intern and store manager

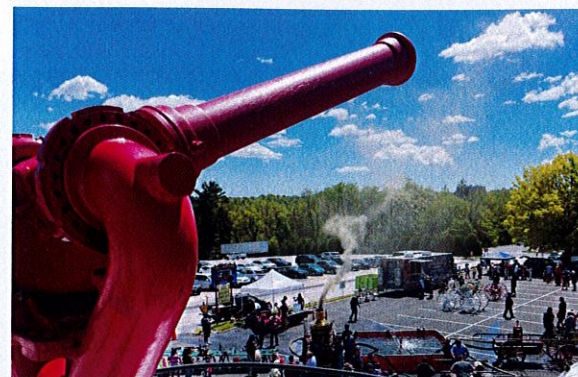


Regan Hyde, Intern, tour guide



Tom Miller & Lee Smith put up signs for Fire boat exhibit

STEAM DAY 2023



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Amy Landsman

There is a new history group in Baltimore County. It's the Baltimore County Heritage Network, and it's a group of 15 history organizations from around Baltimore County.

The Heritage Network has a new monthly e-newsletter which will let you know about public programs and events happening here at the Fire Museum, as well as at other local history organizations in

the network, all in one place. You can check out the newsletter here: conta.cc/3Th9J5m.

If you would like to join the Heritage Network and receive the newsletter directly to your inbox every month, please email:

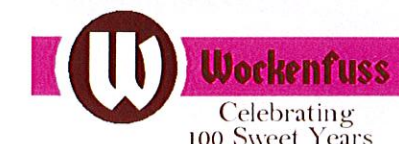
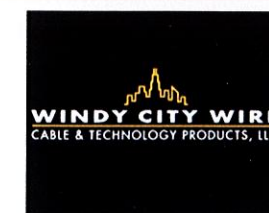
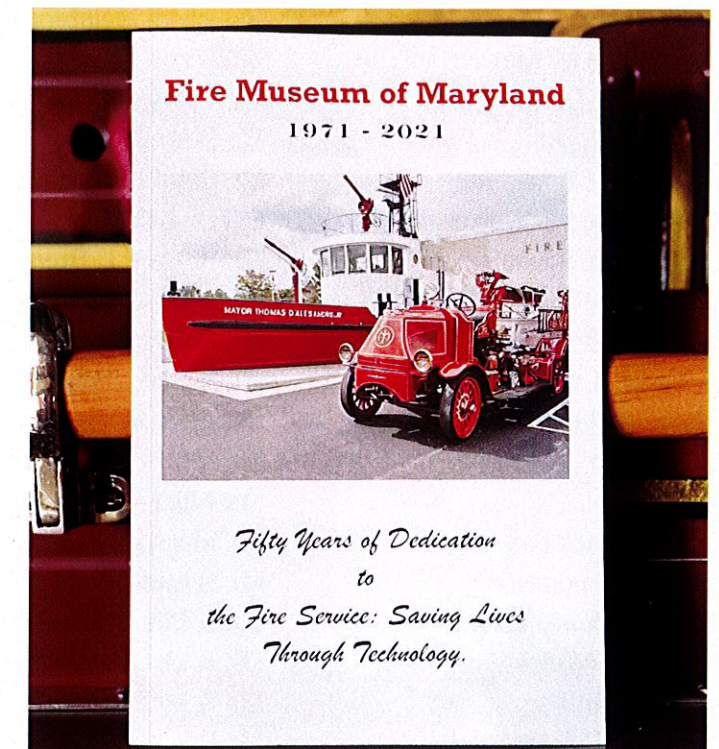
bcheritagenetwork@hsobc.org.

These emails will not be used for anything but BCHN newsletters or announcements.



Settle down and take a look back at 50 years of Fire Museum history! Our 50th anniversary book is now complete and available for sale in our Museum store. If you'd like us to mail you a copy, give us a call at 410-321-7500, x103, ask for Amy. The cost is \$10 plus shipping and handling. Or, if you're in the area, just stop by and pick it up in person. All proceeds benefit our Museum Endowment.

<https://www.firemuseummd.org/shop>



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2024 Special Events at the Fire Museum of Maryland

Please visit our website at FireMuseumMD.org,
or call 410-321-7500
to check for any updates or changes to our programs.

Feb. 4—Great Baltimore Fire Event

1pm-4pm. Learn all about the 1904 blaze
that destroyed more than 1,500 downtown buildings.
Tickets available online at FireMuseumMD.org or by calling 410-321-7500.

March 2 – Family Safety Day—Free Admission

10am—4pm. Join our community partners &
learn about disaster preparedness.

May 4 – Steam Day—Free Admission

10am-2pm. See working steam & hand engines.
Wagon rides, kids' games & activities.

July 6-Antique Car Show

11am-2pm. Chesapeake Region, Antique Automobile Club of America

Sept. 7 – Honoring our Heroes Motor Muster-Free Admission

10am-3pm. See antique & modern fire engines as we salute Fire, Police & EMS.

October 26-Lantern Night

6pm-8pm. See the Fire Museum by lantern light!
Snacks, reeneators, family friendly.
Ticket at the door.

November 30-Holiday Train Garden Opens

10am-4pm. O-gauge trains wind through a 20th century town.

Take a free photo with Santa on Opening Day, 11am-2pm

Open Sunday, December 1, Noon-4pm **Museum Store Day**

Open Saturdays: December 7, 14, 21

Open Holiday Week-

Friday-Monday, December 27-30

Sunday hours: Noon-4, All other days 10-4



Hours: Saturdays, 10am-4pm all year
Summer Hours: June-August: Wed.-Sat. 10am-4pm
Birthday Parties, Meeting Space & Tours
available for all ages.

1301-R York Road, Lutherville, MD 21093

