

Hall of Flame

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News



Restored 1947 Seagrave Fire Engine Goes on Permanent Exhibit

In November of 1998 Hall of Flame staff and volunteers pushed a down at the heels 1947 Seagrave fire engine into Don Hale's restoration shop. The rig was painted an odd shade of brown; the brakes did not work; one wheel turned with great difficulty, and the 530 cubic inch V-12 engine would not start. Research found that the rig was originally painted green, the preferred color scheme of the Volunteer Fire Department of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania. Seagrave historian Matt Lee found two factory photos of the rig which showed the decoration scheme as well as the original design of the hose bed, which had been greatly modified by the Vandergrift firefighters.

Don replaced the fuel pump, rebuilt the braking system, and replaced a number of wires in the electrical system. With the old truck now running well, he disassembled the hose bed, rebuilt it to its original canopy cab configuration with a bench for 4 firefighters and two hose bed



Above: Don Hale with restored 1947 Seagrave Engine. Photo was taken by Hall of Flame volunteer Jim Pearson.

sections, and repaired a large number of dings and dents. The final stage came when Don stripped the paint to bare metal, primed the truck and repainted and re-stripped it in its original green and gold configuration.

The canopy cab model was the first American fire engine design to provide on board seating for an entire engine company, in

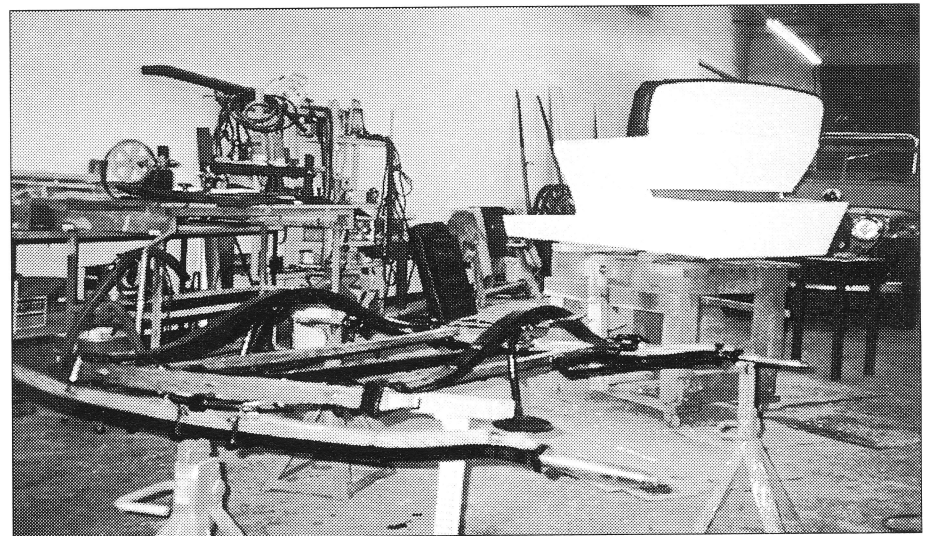
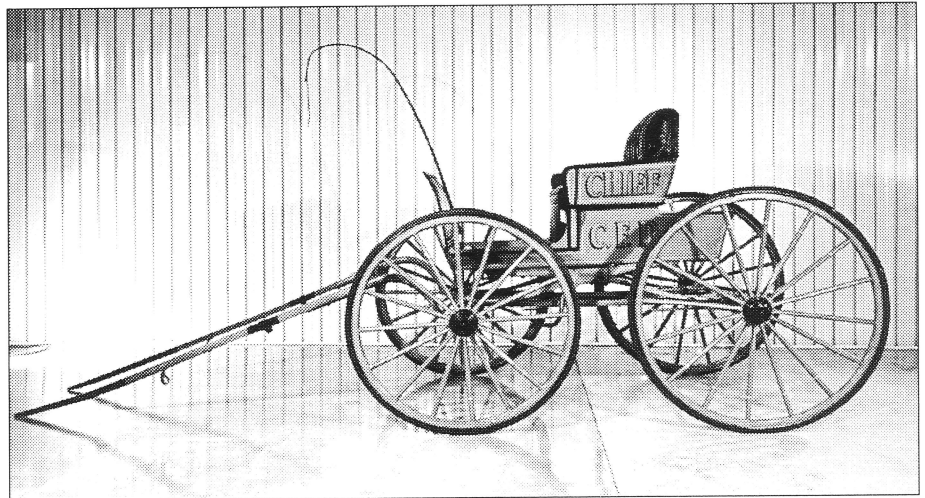
contrast to the hazardous practice of forcing crew members to ride to a fire on the tail or running board of a rig. Falls from fire engines caused many line of duty deaths during the 1940s.

We wish to thank Matt Lee and Chief Thomas Schaeffer of the Volunteer Fire Department #1 of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania for their assistance with the project.

Nation's Largest Firefighting Museum

Don Hale's Next Restoration Project: Chicago Fire Department Chief's Buggy

Don's next restoration project is one of the first pieces to be added to the Hall of Flame's collections — a Chief's buggy once used by the Chicago Fire Department. The Chicago Museum of Science and Industry donated the buggy as well as a horse drawn hose wagon to the Hall of Flame in 1960. The rig dates from around the turn of the century. There is no maker's name, but it is quite possible that it was one of five buggies built for the Chicago Fire Department in 1907 by the Peter Pirsch Fire Apparatus Company of Kenosha, Wisconsin. The Museum of Science and Industry did not provide any information about the buggy's provenance or restoration. Despite its pristine appearance in the photo at the top right, its paint and trim were not original, and the wheels and body were in need of repair. As the photo at the right shows, Don is well along in his repair and restoration efforts. They should be complete by August.



Firehouse Magazine Rescue Award Winners Recognized in Hall of Heroes

In June the photographs and citations for over 100 recipients of the *Firehouse Magazine* Rescue Awards for 1997 went on display in the National Firefighting Hall of Heroes. The exhibit honors all Rescue Award winners, from Grand Prize to Honorable Mention. The magazine honors these firefighters in its April edition. It is the only national award available to structural fire-

fighters, both paid and volunteer. We are truly honored that *Firehouse* has seen fit to send the full records for each recipient to the Hall of Flame for inclusion in our archives. We supplement the *Firehouse* programs by expanding the size of the citations, printing color photographs, and extending the recognition period from a single issue to many years. Since most of our visi-

tors are members of the general public, we are also able to make them aware of the quality of their local firefighters.

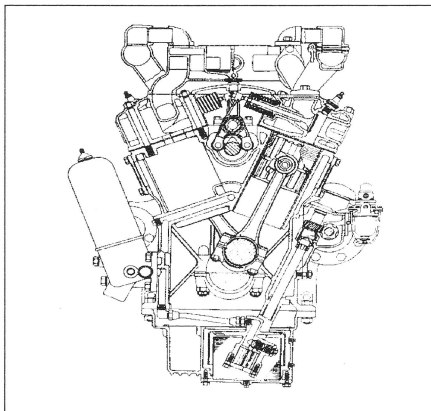
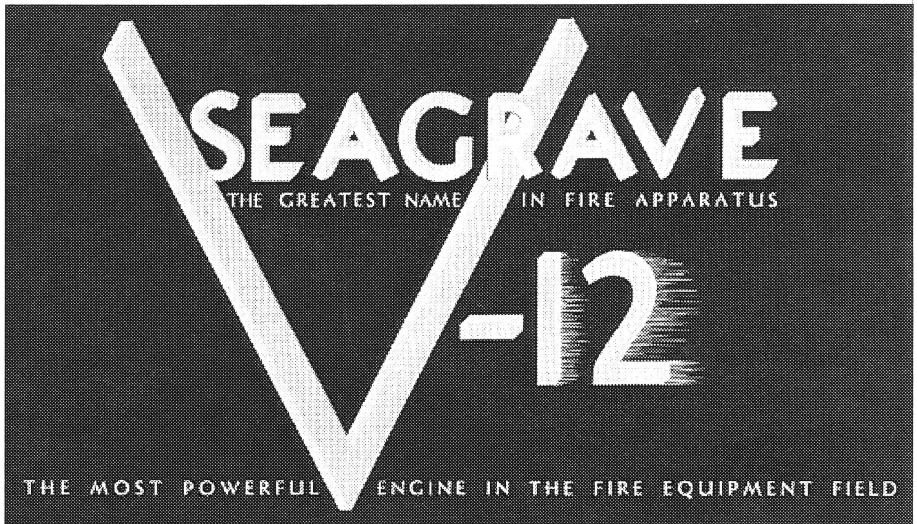
It takes over a month to create the exhibit, involving hours of work with a computer, scanner, printer, mat board cutter and T-square. We hope to add the 1998 winners to the gallery walls by the end of July.

Seagrave V-12 Engine Joins Collection

A few weeks ago we received a call from Mr. Roger May, a collector of classic automobiles and an occasional fire engine. He has the skills to do all of his own restoration work, and has some very fine pieces in his collection, including a fully operational 1911 American La France fire engine. Several years ago Roger purchased a Seagrave Model 900 V-12 engine that had been removed from a late 1940s vintage fire engine. It was in poor condition, but Roger put his skills to good use. In short order the engine was in operating condition with all of its necessary components. Roger intended to purchase a Seagrave and equip it with the engine, but never found the right rig. He decided to donate the engine to the Hall of Flame.

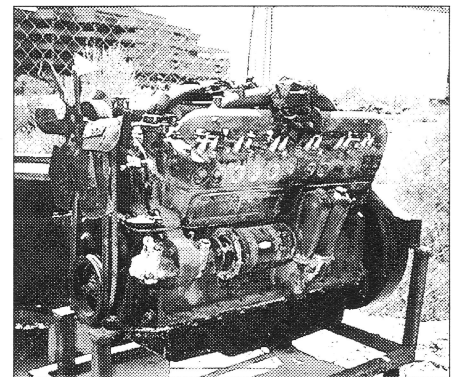
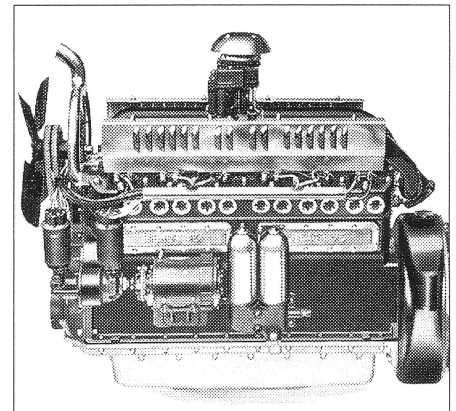
Seagrave introduced the Model 900 V-12 in 1932, to compete with a V-12 built by competitor American La France. The engine was a quantum leap over the T-head straight 6 engine used in all previous large Seagrave trucks. Its carburetion, ignition, and valve operation provided more power, more torque, and smoother operation than earlier engines. Seagrave built this engine model until well into the 1960s, when diesel engines replaced gasoline engines in fire apparatus.

We plan to display the renovated engine, which weighs just over 2,300 pounds, next to our 1955 Seagrave Quad fire engine, which was originally equipped with a Model 900 V-12.



Above: a front view of the engine shows its compact valve operation from a single cam shaft. The valves could be replaced with the engine in place in a simple operation, a crucial feature in an era of low grade gasoline.

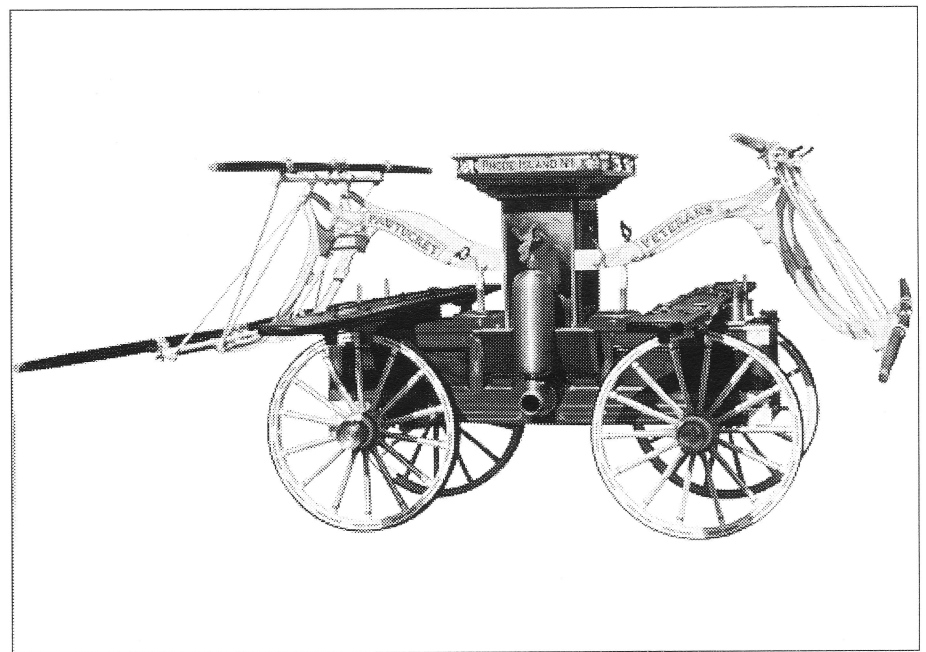
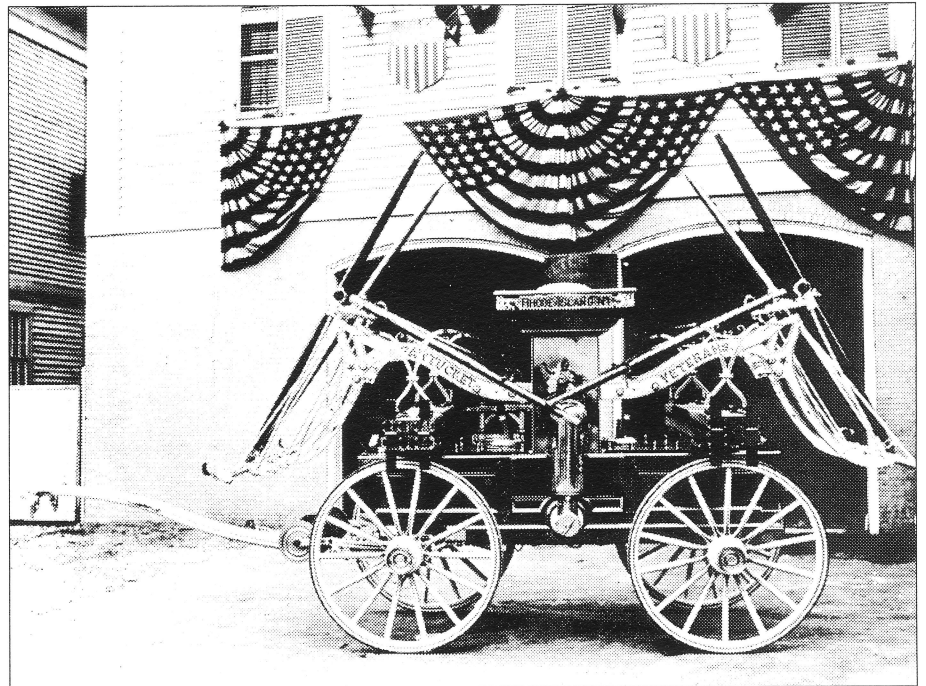
Above right: A left hand view of the engine shows its round valve access ports, oil filters, twin magnetos and heavy duty generator. Oil capacity is 20 quarts. Dual ignition required 24 spark plugs. It required 82 feet of spark plug wire to connect all plugs. Gas mileage was about 3 mpg.



Above: Our engine. Carburetors, wires, and ancillary equipment are in separate containers. The engine is in running condition, but needs clean up, painting, and plating.

Photo of Jeffers Provides Useful Information

A few months ago Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, Researcher with the Spaulding House Research Library of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, wrote with a request for information about the “Haycart”, a fire engine used by the Rhode Island No. 1 Volunteers of that city since 1844. The Hall of Flame acquired the rig in 1977, and Don Hale restored it in 1980. It was originally built by Joel Bates in Philadelphia, but the rig was rebuilt in 1848 by a member of the Pawtucket Volunteers, William Jeffers. So successful was his rebuild that he decided to manufacture fire engines. Over the course of the next 40 years his company produced several dozen hand engines and steam fire engines, all of which were highly regarded by his customers. The Haycart remained in service until the 1860s, when it was replaced by a steamer. It now began a second career as a “muster rig”, competing with other hand engines throughout New England. It won most, if not all of these contests with a stream of water over 250 feet in length. Mrs. Johnson sent the photo at the upper right. It is of excellent quality, and probably dates from 1848, immediately after its rebuilding by William Jeffers. Of great interest are its rope reels and towbar, which were removed from the rig by the time we purchased it. In its place were a draw bar, doubletrees, and ironwork that made it a horse drawn pumper, a great rarity in the United States. It is likely that this change was made during the 1860s to allow it to be pulled to muster sites throughout New England.



Top: Spaulding Library researcher Elizabeth Johnson found this undated photo of the Jeffers “Haycart” posed outside its firehouse for a 4th of July event. The bunting shows 30 stars, dating the photo to between 1848, when Wisconsin became the 30th state, to 1850, when California became the 31st.

Above: The Haycart as restored by the Hall of Flame. It is configured as a horse drawn fire engine.

Bernie Lowe Makes Generous Donation

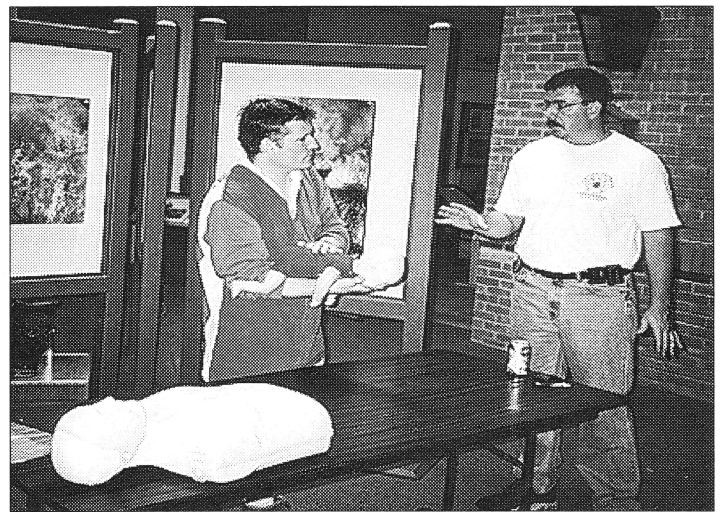
Hall of Flame Trustee Bernie Lowe (pictured at right with Hall of Flame President George Getz) donated \$2,500 to the museum's Capital Campaign. Bernie is one of the Hall of Flame's most generous supporters. As a Trustee he provides the benefit of his experience as a successful businessman. He has made several generous cash donations to the Capital Fund over the past few years. He also donated a rare 1935 American La France Model 400 fire engine to the Hall of Flame. Only 168 Model 400s were built during the years 1934-1938. This engine is one of less than a dozen operating Model 400s still in existence. Bernie is somewhat of an expert on ALF Model 400s. He owns another Model 400, ex Burlington, Iowa, which he has restored to pristine condition.



Bernie Lowe (left) with George Getz in front of the 1935 American la France Model 400 which Bernie donated in 1996.

Hall of Flame Members and Staff Get CPR Training From Phoenix Firefighters Local 493

On Saturday, June 19, The Hall of Flame hosted a CPR training class for members and the general public at the museum. Members were admitted to the three hour session at a reduced admission. About 20 people availed themselves of the opportunity to learn about this valuable technique. About half of the participants were refreshing their skills. CPR experts recommend that citizens re-acquaint themselves with these skills every two or three years. Local 493 of the International Association of Firefighters provides well trained instructors as well as training aids and a video. The video was instructive, but the "hands on" instruction, which requires every participant to actually demonstrate his or her skills in rescue breathing, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and Heimlich maneuvers make the course well worth the time and money.



Curator of Education James Ward learns how to clear a blockage from an infant's throat from Phoenix Firefighter Paramedic Tom McCracken.

Museum Workshop Proves to be Popular With Local School Children



The students of Saint Peter's School had a wet and wonderful time at the Hall of Flame during a workshop in mid-June. About 90 school children ranging in age from 5 to 14 dropped by for instruction in fire safety, the history of firefighting, and actual practice as members of an 1880 pumper crew. As an additional bonus, Phoenix Fire Station



26 parked a fire engine, and ambulance, and a tower ladder truck in the parking lot and provided some additional instruction. The kids learned a lot and had a great time. In the picture at left Firefighter Nunez fits a St. Peter's Sister with a set of turnouts. Later the kids broke up into teams and pumped a steady stream from the museum's 1880

Deming pumper. The rig's cast iron construction allows it to be used with no damage.

The museum provides workshops year round, with special rates for members. Curator of Education James Ward is in charge. For additional information call James at 602 275 3473.

Shadow Boxes Replace Windows In Gallery I

The four windows which were built into the walls of Gallery I have been replaced by four shadow boxes fashioned by Don Hale. The windows served no purpose, and the shadow boxes allow the exhibit of many of the Hall of Flame's smaller objects. These two boxes contain a few of the spectacular models of hand and horse drawn fire apparatus built by Oswego fireman and model maker Jim Jackson during the 1940s. Other boxes will display some rare cast iron fire toys and 19th century Japanese firefighting equipment.

