

ENGINE! ~ ENGINE!



Smeal Aerial Apparatus

by Steve Hagy

Production of fire equipment began when the Snyder (NE) Fire Department approached Donald Smeal to see if a tank on a piece of apparatus could be repaired at his machine shop. It was determined that the tank couldn't be fixed and instead a new, and unusual, tanker with a 42' aerial was constructed for the hometown department.



This is the first fire engine constructed by Smeal Fire Apparatus. A 1964 International chassis was used to construct a tanker with a 250-gpm pump, 1200-gallon tank, 42' aerial and a crew cab compartment. John Denney photo.



Smeal builds quite a few aerial towers. Summerville (SC) purchased this unit in 1980. A rear-mounted 65' tower was installed on a Mack MC chassis equipped with tandem rear axles. Photo by the late Rick Rudisill.



Ogallala (NE) took delivery of this quint during 1976. The "C"-series Ford chassis was equipped with a 750-gpm pump, 250-gallon tank and a 45' "Astro Star" aerial. Dennis Maag photo.



A White Road Commander 2 chassis was used for this 104' aerial. Prestonsburg (KY) was in the market for an aerial and purchased this demonstrator unit off the floor during the 1983 Fire Department Instructors Conference in Cincinnati. Steve Hagy photo.



(ISSN 0362-2487)

2025-3

Third Quarter

Published quarterly by SPAAMFAA, the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America, P.O. Box 296, Carthage, NY 13619, an educational, historical, non-profit corporation chartered by the Regents of the Education Department, State of New York.

President
Timothy "Cos" Jones

President Emeritus
Frank Tremel

Editors
Scott Rollins
Duane Trautman
Associate Editors
Walter M.P. McCall
Steve Hagy
Richard Horstmann
(1958-2009)

Alexander C. Black
(1958-2014)
Thomas H. Scott,
Ph. D. Emeritus
(1932-2020)
Ed Peterson
(1932-2024)

Editorial Office
4486 E Hadley Road
Mooreville, IN 46158



Yearly subscription to Engine! ~ Engine! is payable as part of \$35.00 annual Society dues. Rights to the title, Engine! ~ Engine! (USPS 921-920), are reserved by The Home Insurance Company of New York, which has granted permission for its use. Change of address or request for membership information should be mailed to: Candy Bennett 8035 Bird Pond Road, Adams Run, SC 29426-5545. Copyright (C) 2025, Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America.

Table of Contents

Chief's Chair	1
Editor's Notebook	2
Letters	3
GMC/L.R. Hunter Restoration— The Finale	8
Archives.....	28
Owners Pride.....	Back Cover

~ On the Front Cover ~

After a 14-year restoration, Dr. Mike Denbar started taking his 1939 GMC/L.R. Hunter pumper on the muster circuit in 2025. It has been a hit from the SPAAMFAA Winter muster in Florida to Frankenmuth in Michigan and many cities and states in between.

We have been following Mike and the GMC's restoration for at least 10 years in Engine!~Engine! and Mike has written the final article for this issue. Also, thank you to Mike Sanders for the great photos he provided!

Chief's Chair

Hi fellow members,

The Kansas City Summer Meeting was a momentous event. The Independence 76 Chapter did an excellent job. There are many historical sites in the area and unfortunately, there was not enough time to visit them all. Especially, the National WWI Museum and Memorial which I have now been to twice and I have still not seen it all. The Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum was another tour that Jeanne and I went on and we did not see it all. Guess we will make another trip there.

Your Board of Trustees met for close to eight hours on SPAAMFAA Business. One of the most important items we dealt with was the Archives.

Earlier this year we knew our lease of the space at ATHS was up for renewal. Archives Chairman Warren Lunn was in constant communications with ATHS about what the renewal cost may be.

We held our Board of Trustees meeting at the ATHS building and our Executive Committee met with ATHS's Executive Director for a long discussion. Long story short, after that meeting, your Executive committee took the recommendation back to the Board of Trustees to move the Archives out of the ATHS building and Kansas City. The question then was where to? District 9 Trustee Owen Franz volunteered to house the Archives at his museum in Slinger, WI. This was approved by the Board of Trustees. Trustee Franz spearheaded the move. He arranged the packing and transportation to Wisconsin. This proved to be a great savings for SPAAMFAA. There will be more to add to this story later.

As you know, I have mentioned that the website is being redone. It is taking longer than expected due to the first vendor backing out. A new vendor has been hired, and templates have been sent to the Board of Trustees for their approval. Slow, but sure progress.

Chief's Chair (continued)

As I mentioned in my last Chief's Chair about starting a Membership Committee. District 5 Trustee Tom Hooker has stepped up to chair this committee and they have started to put together a program.

In this issue of E!E! you will find the registration form for the Winter Meeting in San Antonio, Texas at the San Antonio Fire Museum. The Museum has put together quite an agenda.

We will be staying at the Historic Menger Hotel. If you want to stay in the old part of the hotel that may be haunted (that's where I'll be) request your room to be in the old section. Hope to see you there.

Lastly, the summer muster season started off with a bang, the Pennsylvania Pump Primers had 125 rigs in attendance. What a show! Then it was off to Frankenmuth for the Great Lakes International Antique Fire Apparatus Association's Muster with over 80 rigs taking part.

The Bavarian Inn (in Frankenmuth) has a new water park, and I can tell you the grandkids had a wonderful time there. We had beautiful weather for both events.

As always it was Fun, Friends, Family, and Fire Trucks!

Remember, I can always be reached at timothycosgrovejones@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

Best,
Cos

Upcoming SPAAMFAA National Conferences

Winter 2026 - San Antonio, Texas

March 3 - March 7

Summer 2026 - Marlborough, Massachusetts

August 27 - August 30

Winter 2027 - Dallas, Texas (Texas Fire Museum)

March 18 - March 21

Summer 2027 - Oshkosh, Wisconsin

TBD

Winter 2028 - Open

Editor's Notebook

Greetings,

I cannot imagine what it would take to look at a rig in a field in deplorable condition and decide "I'm going to restore this pumper." Luckily, Mike Denbar made that decision with his 1939 GMC/L. R. Hunter. After 14 years of dedication to the project Mike has a piece of fire apparatus that gets rave reviews everywhere it goes. Hopefully, the photos included will make admirers of Mike's restoration skills out of you as well.

One of the topics at the Summer National Muster and Convention was the "new" apparatus that is showing up at musters. Admittedly, it is hard to acknowledge that the pumper I first served on is now an antique, but it was obvious in both Independence (MO) and again in Frankenmuth that these "newer antique rigs" are here to stay. This is good for two reasons, one, it means fire apparatus is being saved and two, younger generations own these rigs and hopefully will become SPAAMFAA members. Anyway, Anthony Buono has written a great article covering this subject titled "The New Antiques." The article covers many of the manufacturers of fire apparatus that were around in the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

The muster season has been going for several months and we have yet to get any event photos for Engine!~Engine!. Members please encourage your chapter officers to send photos.

Thank you all,
Scott Rollins, *Co-Editor*
Duane Trautman, *Co-Editor*

Future E!E! issue submission due dates:

2025-4 due by 10-01-25

2026-1 due by 01-01-26

2026-2 due by 04-01-26

2026-3 due by 07-01-26

Contact your Editors:

Scott Rollins

Call: 317.439.8425

Email: editoreditor@comcast.net

Mail: 4486 E Hadley Road
Mooresville, IN 46158

Duane Trautman

Call: 717.926.2531

Email: dtrautman67@outlook.com

Mail: 136 S. 8th St.
Lebanon, PA 17042

Letters

Hello. I have met Scott several times at musters, but I don't think I have met you, Duane. I immensely enjoy reading the quarterly book and commend you for the work you do in putting this together. Well done.

But I have a comment for your consideration. This latest picture issue prompted me to make this comment.

On most of the pictures the rigs are identified by year and city of service. The picture lists the person submitting the photo. I feel the caretaker, owner of the picture book quality rig is more important to us as readers than the photo supplier. I know you are aware of the interest and time the owners put into preservation and operations of these old trucks and the expense to move them to shows. There is a pride in seeing our truck in *Enjine!~Enjine!*, and it would be gratifying to have our name published with the baby picture!

Please consider this, and thanks for your promotion of our hobby.

Francis Glenn / Blenheim, Ontario, CANADA

Hi Francis,

The folks submitting photos send many photos, which is fantastic, but a portion have little to no information. Usually, we only know who the photographer is because that is who sends us the photos (but that assumption has been wrong before) and we will ask them for information first. If the photographer has no information, we spend hours every year on the internet trying to chase down information on rigs and/or exchanging emails with folks from the chapters that hosted events to get good information for the captions.

For the record, we hate publishing photos with no information BUT we'd rather have the photos that cover a muster without information to publish than no photos at all.

*So, all that to say if we are given the owner's information we do publish it, but if there is no information on a photo in the muster issue of *Enjine!~Enjine!* we were not given any information when the photo was submitted, and we cannot find information on our own either through our photographer contacts and/or research on the internet.*

I hope this answers your concerns. Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

Duane & Scott

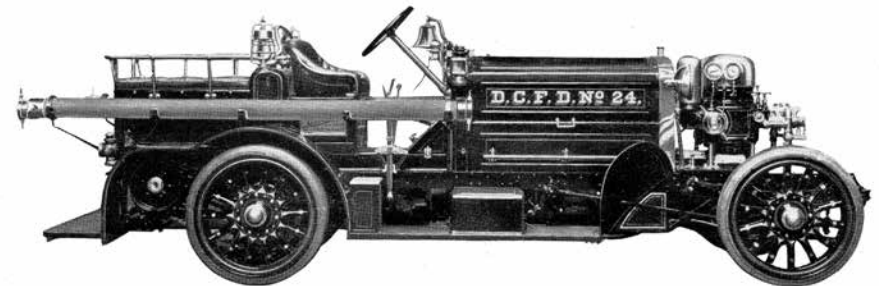
Dear Editor,

Where have all the 700s gone? Not that long ago you'd see at least 4 or 5 at every muster you went to. Now you rarely see one. They seem to have been replaced by Tilt-cab Fords and, in my opinion, that's not an improvement. What happened to all of them, I realize that as we get older the new enthusiasts are more interested in what they are familiar with and that's fine, but I have a hard time believing that these rigs survived from the late 40s and 50s into the 80s and 90s only to be scrapped then. They must be hiding in garages and barns all over the place.

There were so many produced and, like all fire apparatus, when in service received great care and maintenance that they entered the hobbyists' hands in great condition so, where are they? If you know of a 700 or even an 800 hiding in a barn somewhere, or, God forbid, languishing outdoors in a field, post it on the American LaFrance 700/800 Series Fire Apparatus FaceBook group or let me know. It'd be great to light a fire, so to speak, under the owners and help them get them back into circulation.

Steve Prange / PPPSI

FOOT LOOSE FOR A SINGLE PURPOSE



CAPACITY
750 Gallons Per Minute.

Model "B" Pumping Engine.

UNLIKE ANY OTHER, UNLESS IT'S ANOTHER "AHRENS-FOX"

Hi Scott

I just opened my latest issue of Engine Engine. Love it!!!

Please take a close look at the lettering on the engine cover of that Foamite Childs.

Peeking out from behind the siren horn is the letter "J"

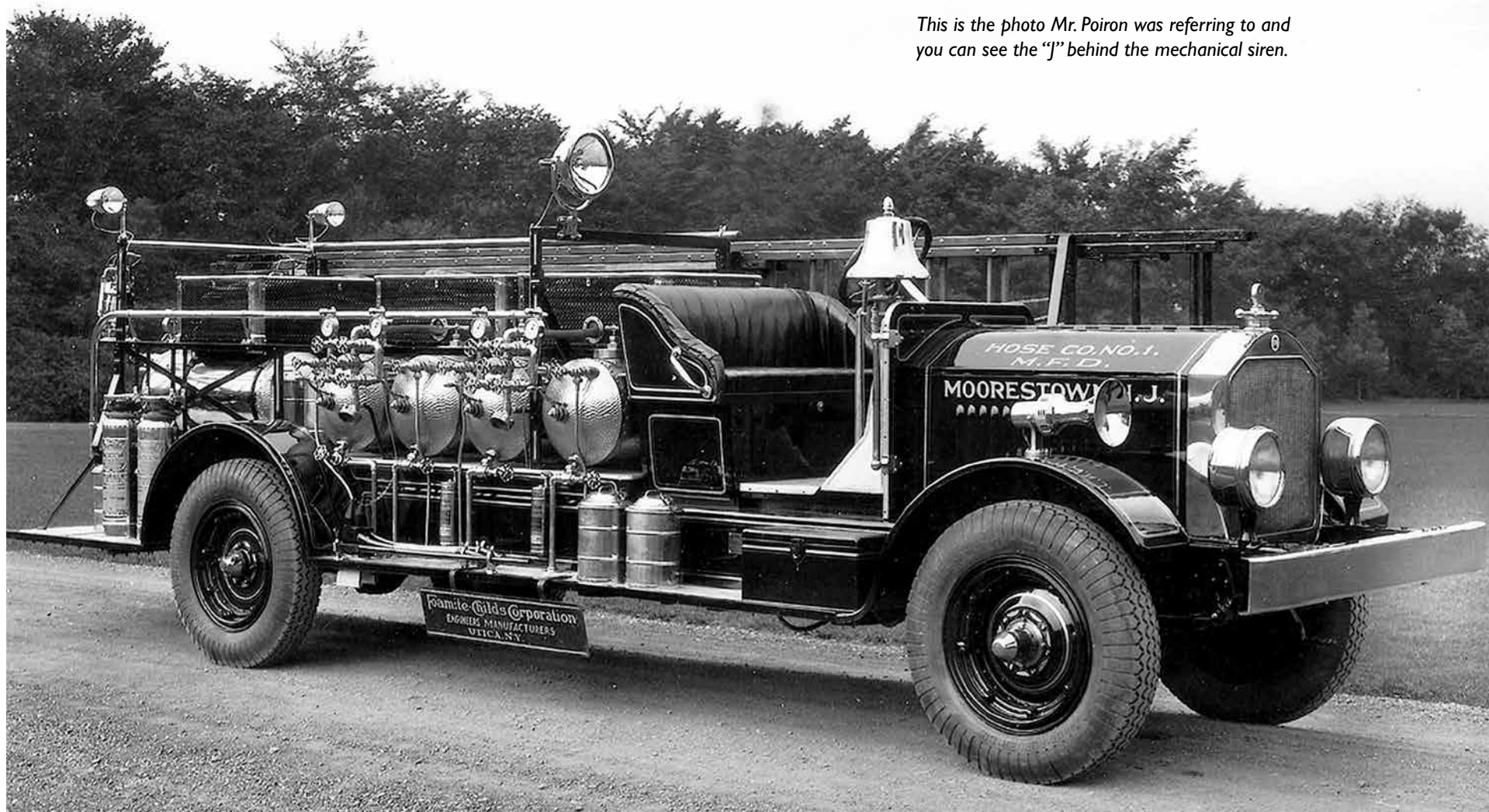
My guess is that this truck is from Moorestown, NJ in Burlington County.

God bless,

John Poiron / Milwaukee WI

Mr. Poiron, you are correct. After looking at the photo and confirming with personnel from the Moorestown Fire Department, this is indeed their Childs pumper. This photo was part of the article Also Made in New York that appeared in Engine! ~ Engine 2025-2 (on page 16).

This is the photo Mr. Poiron was referring to and you can see the "J" behind the mechanical siren.



GMC/L.R. Hunter Restoration—The Finale

Restored and owned by Dr. Mike Denbar

In 1939, GMC built 220 Model 303 1½ ton chassis. This one is number 146. She was built by the L.R. Hunter Company to the specifications of the Gordonsville Volunteer Fire Company. This truck seems to be an early rendition of today's rigs providing inside seating for at least 8 in safety and comfort. This truck has a very colorful past that has been detailed to me by two surviving crew members, Mr. Garnett Taylor and Mr. Tommy Ross. The original homemade beer can opener permanently mounted in the truck and the ceramic tile floor between the two back seats testify to this.

Engine!~Engine! readers have followed the progress of my restoration of the 1939 Gordonsville, Virginia GMC/Hunter fire engine. I acquired this truck 14 years ago and began the restoration. The cab was not restorable, and I replaced it by cutting it off the body, cutting the back out of a 1940 cab and welding that back in place. I then separated the body from the frame, picked it up, and laid it on its side on a homemade trailer. In addition to the cab replacement, I fabricated and welded more than 1200 lbs. of patch panels. While I rebuilt the 500-gpm American Marsh pump, she will not pump at all as the original plumbing had been removed. That said, someone in another time can recreate it.

More a remanufacturing project than a restoration, I believe this one-off apparatus was worth the time, effort and expense to preserve firefighting history.

Editor's note. Some previous Engine! Engine! Articles from the restoration of the Gordonsville pumper:

2004-4, pg 12, Cabover issue

2014-4, pg 12-14, GMC restoration

2017-2, pg 8-12, GMC restoration part 2

2017-4, pg 24-27, GMC restoration part 3

2021-4, pg 8-9, Gordonsville GMC update

2021-4, pg 24-25, Restoration Idea



This truck was produced at the end of the Art Deco period. The truck did not originally have skirts. I made skirts because I like their appearance and are period correct.



This homemade opener was made from a flat piece of steel welded to a hood latch. The end of a beer can opener and a nail were welded to a combination wrench that pivoted on the hood latch. This provided the 2 holes required in the steel cans of the day.



Remnants of the original headliner were fabric. I used ABS plastic and vinyl upholstery to make the interior. All photos by Mike Sanders.



Hunter placed everything in a compartment or niche on the rear of the rig.



Mike's attention to detail really shows in this photo of the cab.



The New Antiques

By Anthony G. Buono



While this 1995 Seagrave pumper may not look like what most people would envision when someone says "antique fire engine," at 30 years old, apparatus like this are antiquated by modern safety standards and few remain in frontline service today. As fire trucks from the 1990s are being retired, some are being purchased by collectors. These are the new antiques.



This is the factory photo of the 1926 American-LaFrance pumper that a very young Richard Horstmann purchased in 1958 when he was nurturing the idea that would become SPAAMFAA.



The same year that Richard Horstman purchased the 1926 American-LaFrance pumper shown above, Hot Springs, Arkansas, took delivery of this 1958 American LaFrance 900 Series 1000-gpm pumper. These photos vividly illustrate the dramatic evolution of fire apparatus in the 32 years between the construction of these two pumpers.

When SPAAMFAA was founded in 1958 by Richard A. Horstmann, the first antique on the roll of apparatus was Horstmann's 1926 American-LaFrance Type 75 pumper, which he purchased from the City of Watervliet, New York. At 32 years old, the pumper was an antique. Compared to the American LaFrance 900 Series pumpers being built in 1958, the Type 75 clearly was from a very different era. The form of fire apparatus had evolved, and apparatus grew in both size and in its capabilities.

The evolution of fire apparatus continued steadily through the early 1990s, when the form of fire trucks reached its zenith. Starting in 1990, fire trucks were required to have fully enclosed cabs to comply with revised safety regulations. After 1990, virtually all fire trucks were built to a boxy orthodoxy with rectangular four-door cabs that were designed and built to promote firefighter safety, although it would be several more years before all firefighters would actually ride inside these cabs.

The form and function of fire trucks has changed little in the last 30 years. As a result, to the average observer, most fire trucks from the 1990s may be indistinguishable from fire trucks of the 2020s. Despite the outward sameness, the technology under the skin of these machines has evolved substantially. Electronics and computers, as well as safety improvements and new emissions standards, have radically changed what cannot be appreciated by plain sight.

Behind many of these changes under the skin is the National Fire Protection Association, which is better known as the NFPA. The NFPA promulgates standards for fire apparatus. While not law, these standards are followed by apparatus manufacturers. These standards are updated periodically and were just updated in 2024.



The photos above and below were taken in the late 1960s at an early SPAAMFAA summer muster along the barge canal in Syracuse, New York. The 1926 American-LaFrance Type 75 pumper, above, served in Owego, New York. Other than the Sterling Siren Light on the fender, this triple combination is in very original condition.



This 1964 American LaFrance 80-foot Aero Chief was in frontline service with the Syracuse Fire Department. Relatively speaking, at the time these two photos were taken, it is older today than the Type 75 pumper shown above.

According to the NFPA's *Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus*, fire apparatus should be in front line service for 15 years. Then for five years, it may be used as a reserve unit to stand in when a front-line piece of apparatus is out of service for maintenance. The NFPA recommends that apparatus be retired after 20 years unless it "has been deemed in excellent mechanical condition." The standard also provides that "retired apparatus must not be used for emergency operations due to safety measures."

Given the many variables in the use and maintenance of fire apparatus, the 20-year retirement rule is rather arbitrary. An engine in a busy urban department may run a few thousand calls per year, while an engine in a volunteer fire department in a small town might get out of the station more for weekly driver training or drills than for actual alarms. Retiring a well-worn fire truck with 120,000 miles on the odometer makes sense. However, retiring well-cared for fire truck with 10,000 miles on the odometer, even one that is 20 years old, in many cases does not seem to be reasonable. With the rapid increase in the price of apparatus over the past few years, in the near future there may be many more fire trucks that serve well into a third decade.

Nevertheless, today, the fire trucks built in 1995 and earlier are antiques. Most, but not all, have been retired. Some still are in service, often serving as a reserve apparatus. Of those that are retired, some will get shipped abroad to Mexico or South America, where they go into frontline service for a second career free of the NFPA standards. Others will become razor blades, paperclips and soda cans.



Many fire trucks have many years of service life left in them when they are retired. However, because of its age or insurability, a fully operational fire truck may be too old to be sold in the United States. In recent years, American fire apparatus has been donated to fire departments in Mexico, Nicaragua, Ukraine, Guatemala, and several other nations. In April 2024, the Massachusetts National Guard coordinated the donation of two trucks from the Boston Fire Department to Paraguay military. The trucks were flown from the Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

While it is not possible to save them all, some are harder to save than others. A 30 foot long pumper is not going to fit in even the largest home garage that was built for a passenger automobile. However, a small barn provides a viable option. A tractor-drawn aerial ladder truck, which may be 60 feet long, requires serious space that is far beyond the budget of most collectors. Hence, ladder trucks are far less likely to be collector owned than pumpers and very few tractor-drawn aerial ladder trucks are collector owned. This 1959 Seagrave tractor-drawn aerial ladder served for 16 years in Valley Stream, New York, before being retired and sold to Valatie, New York, where it had a long second career serving until 1994. It is seen here 17 years later in a junkyard in central Massachusetts rusting into oblivion with just 8500 miles on its odometer.



Collecting Modern Antiques

Upon retirement, some fire apparatus from the 1990s are purchased by collectors. These are the new antiques. Despite the fact that these trucks may not look antiquated, relatively speaking, these are as old as the 1926 American-LaFrance pumper that Dick Horstmann purchased in 1958.

SPAAMFAA is the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus in America. "Antique" motor fire apparatus in America now includes many new antiques from the 1990s, as well as those from the 1970s and 1980s. These generations of fire trucks continue to show up more at fire truck musters, antique truck shows and parades. One of the many wonderful things about the world of antique fire trucks is that the variety of antiques continues to grow.



These two modern antiques were photographed on June 21, 2025, at the SPAAMFAA National Muster in Kansas City, Missouri. They were two of several antiques from the 1980s and 1990s that were on hand. Left, this Pierce pumper now is lettered for "Late Model Auto Parts." Above, after 31 years of service in Yates Center, Kansas, this 1981 Pierce Arrow with an 85-foot LTI tower was retired and sold at auction to a collection.

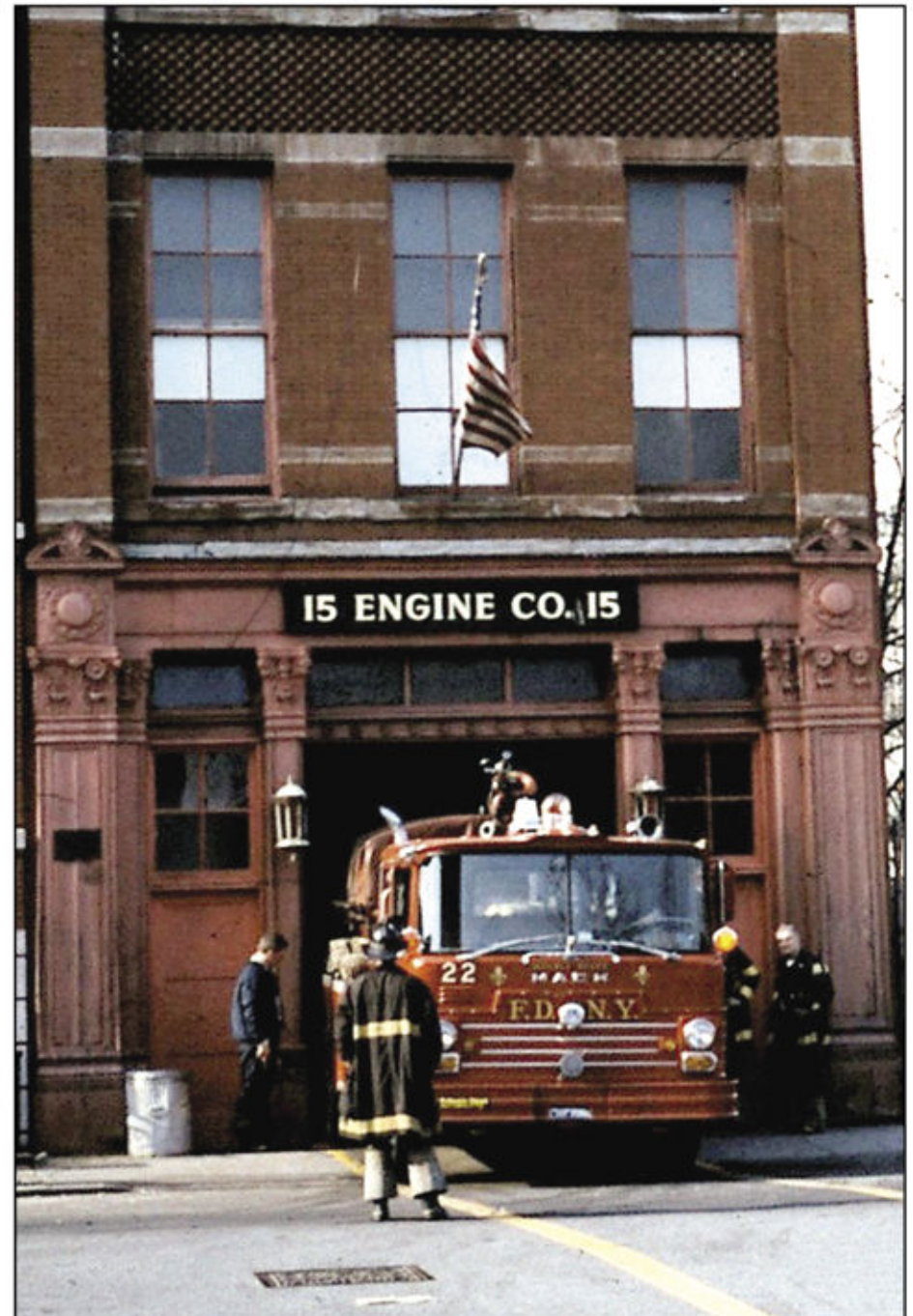
Who Collects What

At the SPAAMFAA National Summer Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, this past June, there was an interesting discussion about these new antiques and the folks that own and collect them. Often people collect fire trucks that remind them of their youth. This could be the type of fire engine that was in their neighborhood firehouse when they were a kid. This could be the type of rig that their father rode on. It could be the type of rig that they rode on or drove when they first joined the fire service. For most of us under 60, these are apparatus from the 1980s and 1990s. This is not to say that anything is wrong with the perennial classics from the 1920s through the 1950s. It just is that the men who drove these when they first joined the fire service or grew up around these now are pushing 80 if they are not pushing up daisies. The reality of the situation is that as the demographics of antique fire apparatus collectors change, it is inevitable that the types of fire apparatus collected will change too.

These new antiques offer some distinct advantages over classics from the 1920s through the 1950s. Foremost among these is that they can be driven to shows and musters and do not need to be hauled on a trailer or flat bed. They also offer an enclosed cab in which to sleep if your wife kicks you out of the house for buying another fire engine after being warned several times that there is no more room left in the driveway or that you are supposed to save money for the kids' college funds.

For the kids who grew up in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s, their neighborhood firehouse probably had a Mack CF pumper at some point.

Engine 22 in Manhattan operated this 1969 model and is covering for Engine 15, which operated a 1970 model.





The three photos on this page provide vivid illustrations of the size differences between antique fire apparatus of various vintages. The top left image was taken in 1998 by Walt McCall. It shows the size difference between a late 1990s American LaFrance pumper built on an Eagle chassis and a 1923 American-LaFrance Type 45 pumper, both of which served in Toronto. The photo at top right shows the size difference between a late 1940s American-LaFrance 700 Series pumper and a late 1950s American LaFrance 900 Series pumper both of which served in Miami Beach, Florida.



This 1996 photo by Steve Hagy shows 78 years of the evolution of pumpers. From right these are a 1916 Ahrens-Fox, Model M-4, a 1947 American-LaFrance 700 Series, a 1964 American LaFrance 900 Series, and a 1995 Seagrave. It is interesting to note that despite the significant growth in the mass of these pumpers, the increase in pumping capacity was not dramatic. The Seagrave had a 1250-gpm pump. Both the 700 and 900 Series of American LaFrance pumpers were offered with 1250-gpm pumps, and, by 1919, Ahrens-Fox was building its Model P, which had a pump capacity of 1300-gpm.

There are downsides to these new antiques. The most notable is their size and weight. For example, a typical pumper from the 1990s might be around 28 or 29 feet long, ten feet tall and weigh 30,000 pounds. Meanwhile, a classic 1950s American-LaFrance 700 Series pumper, is just 25 feet long, less than nine feet in height and tips the scales at around 12,500 pounds.

The other major downside is maintenance and maintenance costs. It may be much easier to find someone who can work on a 30 year-old Detroit Diesel than on a 70 year old gas-powered Lycoming V-12 engine. However, with these new antiques there are exponentially more things to brake, wear out, malfunction or fail. Most of these are things that cannot be fixed in the driveway with a few friends and a good set of Craftsman tools.



SPAAMFAA brings together people from all walks of life, like at this 2022 Muster in Wilmington, Massachusetts, which had dozens of pieces of motor fire apparatus spanning the teens to the 1990s, a large flea market, as well as demonstrations of pumping 19th Century hand fire engines.

(Photo courtesy of Doug Budrow)

Living History

SPAAMFAA is not a “living history” organization per se. However, its mission of the preservation and appreciation of antique motor fire apparatus is a living one. SPAAMFAA lives through the antique motor fire apparatus that is preserved, collected and operated by its members. It lives in the fire companies that have saved a cherished piece of their history. It lives in the antique motor fire apparatus that is exhibited at musters and shows or driven in parades. It lives through the photographers who photograph these machines, the authors who write about them, the curious who read about them, the modelers who craft examples of them, the collectors who collect fire equipment and smaller pieces of fire service history, such as bells, badges, alarm telegraphs, as well as the people from all walks of life who attend musters and shows, visit fire museums, or just stop what they are doing to watch a fire truck go by.

Further, SPAAMFAA does not live only through preservation and appreciation of the same models and makes of antiques that were common or popular several generations ago. SPAAMFAA lives, and grows, through the new antiques and the new generations of people who appreciate these machines. For an organization like SPAAMFAA to remain relevant in today's world, it needs to be relevant to new generations of members, who very often appreciate newer generations of antiques.

What follows is a gallery of photographs from the SPAAMFAA Archives of apparatus that mostly were built in 1995. While this collection of photos might appear to be images of front line apparatus that are on the road now, these rigs really are the new antiques.



The Alexis Fire Equipment Company of Alexis, Illinois, was founded in 1947 and remains in business today operating from a 55,000 sq ft facility where it manufactures a full line of firefighting apparatus. This 1994 Alexis pumper was built on a HME 1871 Series chassis with a 1500-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt. It recently was sold online.



*The American LaFrance Eagle was a custom chassis introduced in 1995 after American LaFrance was purchased by Freightliner Trucks. The Eagle initially was sold as a custom chassis to other firms until 1999, when American LaFrance resumed building complete apparatus. The 2004 American LaFrance Eagle above served in Waldorf, Maryland.
John Floyd photo.*



Left, Philadelphia Sqrty 9 was this 1998 pumper built by 3D Manufacturing on an American LaFrance Eagle chassis. 3D Manufacturing Inc., of Shawano, Wisconsin, was formed in 1972. The company built a full line of apparatus until 1999, when it was acquired by American LaFrance. It then was operated as a regional builder for American LaFrance until the 3D Manufacturing factory was closed in 2004.



Custom Fire Apparatus Inc., also known as CustomFire, was located in Osceola, Wisconsin. CustomFire built the pumper above for Thornton, Illinois, in 1995 on a HME Series 1871 chassis with a 1500-gpm pump, a 750-gwt and a 50-foot Telesqurt. The 1871 Series was developed by Hendrickson Mobile Equipment in the late 1980s and was named after the year of the Great Chicago Fire. The 1871 Series initially were sold only to Grumman Emergency Products of Roanoke, Virginia. When Grumman shut down its emergency division in 1992, HME began selling the 1871 Series chassis to several other apparatus manufacturers. These included the Alexis Fire Equipment Company, the Smeal Fire Apparatus Company, 3D Manufacturing Inc., Saulsbury Fire & Rescue Apparatus, Fort Garry Fire Trucks, 4-Guys Fire Trucks, and General Safety Equipment Corporation.

Right, Clark County, Nevada, operated this 1992 Grumman pumper built on an 1871 Series chassis with a 1500-gpm pump and a 500-gwt.



Butte County, California, operated this 1500-gpm pumper, with a 650-gwt, which was built by Westates on a HME 1871 Series chassis. Westates Fire Apparatus of Woodland, California, started building fire apparatus in the late 1950s. Weststates left the business in 2009.





Crystal River, Florida operated this 1995 Southern Coach pumper that was built on a Spartan chassis with a 1500-gpm pump and a 750-gwt. Southern Coach of Ocala, Florida, started building custom fire apparatus in the late 1980s using custom and commercial chassis. In 1998, the company left the industry after it was acquired by American LaFrance. Spartan Motors of Charlotte, Michigan, was founded by former employees of Diamond-Reo Trucks in 1975. The firm found a niche building a complete custom fire chassis with a cab, with which an apparatus builder could complete as a custom fire apparatus by installing the pump or aerial device and fabricating the body. In 1983, Spartan introduced its Gladiator chassis, which had the engine forward of the front axle. Spartan also sold its Monarch chassis, which had the engine behind the front axle. The Gladiator was redesigned in the 1990s and was offered in several different configurations for pumpers, rescues and all types of aerals.

Left, Hampden Township, Pennsylvania, operated this pumper that was built with a 1750-gpm Darley pumper on a Spartan chassis.



Moon Township, Pennsylvania, operated this 1992 Boardman pumper that was built on Spartan chassis. It had a 1000-gpm pump, a 750-gwt and a 55-foot Tele-Squrt. Like Southern Coach, the Boardman Company of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, was purchased by American LaFrance. In 2002 Boardman's production was moved to North Carolina where it then was phased out by American LaFrance.





Quality Manufacturing of Talladega, Alabama, built this mid-mount aerial ladder truck for Temple, Texas, on a Spartan Gladiator chassis in 1995. Its aerial ladder was built by Aerial Innovations Inc., of Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Aerial Innovations had been founded in 1993 by Mahlon Zimmerman, who previously founded Ladder Towers Incorporated (LTI). Aerial Innovations was purchased by American LaFrance in 1999. Quality Manufacturing was purchased by Spartan Motors in 1997. That same year, Spartan purchased Luverne Fire Apparatus of Brandon, South Dakota. In 2003, Spartan discontinued the Quality and Luverne names and founded Crimson Fire to build complete fire apparatus. In 2012, Crimson Fire was renamed Spartan ERV and then later renamed Spartan Emergency Response. In 2020, Spartan was acquired by the REV Group.

Right, Luverne Fire Apparatus built this 1993 pumper on a Spartan chassis for the Chicago Fire Department. It had a 1500-gpm pump and a 500-gwt. Note the front intake and the supply line on the front bumper. Chicago was one of Luverne's best customers.



The Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District in Carbondale, Colorado, operated this 1994 General Safety pumper that was built on a Spartan chassis with a 1750-gpm pump, a 750-gwt. and a 65-foot Telesquirt. General Safety Equipment of Wyoming, Minnesota, operated from 1956 until 1995, when it was acquired by Rosenbauer of Austria. General now operates as Rosenbauer America.





The R.D. Murray Company of Hamburg, New York, started in business refurbishing fire apparatus. In the early 1990s the company began to build complete apparatus using a variety of chassis, including Spartan. In 1998, American LaFrance purchased R.D. Murray. In 2008, American LaFrance closed the R.D. Murray factory. The Hilton Parma Fire District in Hilton, New York, operated this 1992 pumper built by R.D. Murray on a Spartan chassis with a 1250-gpm pump and a 500-gwt.



Spartan custom chassis provided a reliable and economic platform upon which several fire apparatus firms were able to develop a broad product line before ultimately developing their own custom fire service chassis. Among these was Ferrara Fire Apparatus. The company was founded in 1982 as the Ferrara Fire Equipment Company in Baton Rouge. Through the early 1980s Ferrara built custom fire apparatus using Spartan and Hendrickson chassis. In 1988, Ferrara Fire Apparatus opened a new 150,000 square foot factory in Holden, Louisiana. Over the next decade Ferrara grew to be a national player before introducing its own custom fire service chassis, the Inferno. This 1992 Ferrara pumper was built on a Spartan chassis with a 1250-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt for the Mid Valley Fire Department in Fresno, California.

Left, another firm that was able to build its business using Spartan chassis was the Smeal Fire Apparatus Company of Snyder, Nebraska. The company was founded in 1963 and in the 1970s and 1980s began building its own aerial ladders. North Las Vegas, Nevada, operated this 1995 Smeal pumper that was built on a Spartan chassis with a 1500-gpm pump and a 750-gwt.



The Saulsbury Fire Apparatus Corporation was the subject of an article in *Enjin!-Enijne!* 2024-4. Saulsbury was one of the biggest users of Spartan chassis for its pumpers, rescues and ladder trucks. Saulsbury built this 1995 pumper on a Spartan chassis for Homer, New York. It had a 1500-gpm pump and a 500-gwt.



Cleveland, Ohio, operated this 1995 Simon Duplex-LTI pumper that was built with a 1500-gpm pump, a 500-gwt and a 54-foot Sqrut. The Duplex name traced its roots to the Duplex Power Car Company that was founded in 1907. The Duplex Truck Company started building fire trucks chassis after World War Two. In 1986, the company was purchased by the British Simon Group and its name was changed to Simon-Duplex. Simon also acquired LTI and started building complete apparatus on Simon-Duplex chassis using LTI aerial devices, such as the Sqrut and the TeleSqrut, as well as a variety of aerial ladders and ladder towers. In 1998, the Simon Group sold its LTI holdings and shut down Duplex

Left, Saulsbury built this Stealth pumper on a 1994 Simon-Duplex chassis for Altomonte Springs, Florida. It had a 1250-gpm pump and a 750-gwt. The Saulsbury Stealth had its engine mounted midship, and the pump panel was moved to a rear compartment on the driver's side with the intakes and discharges located on the rear of the apparatus.



The New Lexington Fire Equipment Company operated in Rockwood, Pennsylvania, from 1992 to June 2006, when the company defaulted on its debts and was put into receivership. The year before New Lexington imploded, it built this compact looking pumper on Simon Duplex chassis as a demonstrator. Later in 1995, the rig was purchased by Cooperstown, Pennsylvania. The pumper has a 1250-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt.



The West Friendship Fire Department in Howard County, Maryland, operated this 1994 American Fire Eagle pumper that was built on a Pemfab-chassis with a 1250-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt. There is a lot of fire apparatus history in this pumper. American Fire Eagle, Ltd., operated in Summerville, South Carolina, from 1994 through 1999, when it was renamed Hammer Fire Apparatus. This name change was prompted by a trademark infringement lawsuit was brought by E-One, which had purchased another company named American Eagle Fire Apparatus in 1989. American Fire Eagle was one of many firms that used chassis built by Pemfab, which was the trade name of Pemberton Fabricators of Rancocas, New Jersey. Pemfab had purchased Imperial Fire Apparatus in 1975 and instead of building complete apparatus, focused on a manufacturing a variety of custom chassis, including the Royale, the Sovereign and the Marquis, which were used by many smaller builders.

Left, the Marion Body Works is located in Marion, Wisconsin, and has been in business since 1905. In 1964, Marion began building all-aluminum fire apparatus bodies and in 1970s Marion started building complete fire apparatus. Marion built this 1995 pumper on an HME chassis for Wrights Corners, New York. It has a 1500-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt.



E-One, Inc., was founded in 1974 in Ocala, Florida, as Emergency One. The company pioneered using modular body components built from extruded aluminum. This method of construction reduced production time significantly and produced a fire truck that did not rust. In 1984, E-One introduced its first custom chassis, the Hurricane. This was followed by the Cyclone in 1985. The Germania Volunteer Fire Company in Galloway Township, New Jersey, operated this 1994 Cyclone pumper.



The Cyclone was redesigned in 1996 and designated as the Cyclone II. Boston Engine 41 was this 1996 Cyclone II that has a 1500-gpm pump and a 750-gwt.



E-One started building its own aluminum aerial devices in the early 1980s. In 1984, Boston purchased its first E-One rear-mount aerial ladder truck, which was assigned to Ladder 2. It was replaced by this 1993 100-ft rear-mount ladder truck that was built on a Hurricane Chassis.



The Sentry was an entry level custom chassis that E-One built from 1993 to 1996. Providence, Rhode Island, operated this 1995 Sentry as Engine 4 and later Engine 20. It has a 1250-gpm pump and a 750-gwt.



In 1946, John "Sonny" Kovatch opened a repair shop in Nesquehoning, Pennsylvania. In 1983 Kovatch Mobile Equipment entered the fire apparatus business. Then in 1985, KME Fire Apparatus was founded after Kovatch purchased some of the former assets of HME. In 1988, KME introduced its Renegade custom chassis. Then in 1992, KME purchased Grumman Emergency Products and began using Grumman AerialCat ladders and towers. In the late 1990s KME filled many military orders including this 1995 Renegade pumper that was built for the United States Navy. It had a 1250-gpm, a 750-gwt and carried 100 gallons of foam.



KME became a major player in the fire apparatus industry with a very extensive product line. KME built a variety of apparatus using the Renegade custom chassis through around 2003. The Renegade was followed in the 1990s by the Firefox, which had the engine behind the front axle. In 1996, KME introduced the Excel custom chassis. This was followed by the Predator and Panther chassis in the early 2000s. In 1993 KME introduced its contoured tilt-cab version of the Renegade, which was used for this 1995 pumper that served in Philadelphia. Engine 24 had a 16-inch raised roof, a 1500-gpm pump and a 500-gwt. It was one of six delivered. In 1995, Philadelphia also received two similar KME 1500-gpm pumpers with top-mounted pump controls. In April 2016, KME was sold to the REV Group. Its manufacturing then was moved from Pennsylvania.

West Babylon, New York, operated this 1995 KME pumper with an extended cab, an extended wheelbase, an 18-inch raised roof and an enclosed top-mounted pump panel. It has a 2000-gpm pump, a 500-gwt and a 100 gallon foam tank. In 2022, its service on Long Island ended and it was sold to Pangburn Arkansas, where it still is in frontline service.



Pierce Manufacturing of Appleton, Wisconsin, is the largest builder of fire apparatus in the United States. In 1979, Pierce introduced its first custom cab, the Pierce Arrow, which was the industry's first custom all-aluminum design. Long Beach, California, operated this 1995 Pierce Arrow.



The Pierce Quantum was introduced in 1995. With its bulging front grill and unique angular face, nothing looks like a Quantum. Seminole County, Florida, operated several Quantums, at least two of which were painted in this bold orange livery. This 1998 Quantum top-mount pumper served as Engine 34. A 2000 Quantum served as Engine 42, and was immortalized with a Code 3 Collectibles 1:64 scale diecast model in 2000. Production of the Quantum was discontinued the 2024.



The second custom chassis, and first tilt-cab, model built by Pierce was the Dash. Introduced in 1984, the Dash went through several incarnations before being retired in 2020. Raleigh, North Carolina, operated this 1995 Pierce Dash. It had a 1250-gpm pump and a 500-gwt.



Jersey City, New Jersey, operated this 1995 Pierce Saber 1250-gpm pumper. The Saber was introduced in 1992 as an entry-level custom chassis. A second generation Saber was introduced in 2014.



The FDNY was the biggest user of Seagrave pumps through the late 1990s and into the early 2000s. After more than two decades of purchasing pumps built on Mack CF chassis, in 1992 the FDNY purchased 12 Seagrave pumps followed by 80 in 1993. Between 1994 and 2000, the FDNY purchased another 133 Seagrave pumps for a total of 225. During that same eight year period, the FDNY also purchased from Seagrave five tractor-drawn aerial ladders, 40 rear-mount aerial ladders and 30 Aerialscope tower ladders. This is one of the 16 Seagrave pumps that the FDNY purchased in 1994. After a career at Engine 66, the Seagrave was rebuilt as a rescue pumper and ran as a spare squad.

If someone wants a new antique that fits into a larger residential garage, the choices are extremely limited. Probably the only option for a collector would be a mini-pumper, like this one that was built by Marion Body Works for the Owings Mills Volunteer Fire Company in Maryland on a 1995 Ford pickup chassis.



The Eureka Volunteer Fire & Ambulance Company in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, operated this 1995 Seagrave rescue pumper. It had an extended cab with a raised roof. It was equipped with 1750-gpm pump and a 1000-gwt. It was retired in 2019.





The Sutphen Corporation traces its roots back to a family business founded in 1890 in Amlin, Ohio. Sutphen is unique among apparatus builders. The company still is family owned in an industry that has been, and still is, dominated by mergers and acquisitions. Above, the Dormont Fire Department protects an area south of Pittsburgh. It operated this 1995 Sutphen SP 70 aerial platform until 2018, when it was replaced by a Sutphen rear-mount aerial ladder. Right, the fire department in Mount Airy, North Carolina, still operates this 1995 Sutphen 1250-gpm pumper along with its twin.





by Owen Franz

Good day to all of you from Wisconsin,

SPAAMFAA's Board of Trustees and The Vintage Fire Company are pleased to announce that the archives have been packaged and moved to Slinger Wisconsin as of September 4th.

As many of you may have read in the Chief's Chair in this issue of Engine!~Engine! or heard about at the Summer Convention, AHS gave SPAAMFAA the boot as their intention was to sell their headquarters. The board was given until October 9th, to remove the archives from the AHS building.

At the 2025 Summer Convention in Independence (MO), the SPAAMFAA board decided to take an offer from The Vintage Fire Company to house the archives at no expense to SPAAMFAA as its new permanent home.

The Vintage Fire Company is going to be providing a room to house the Archives, once they have raised enough money to do so. This fundraising is expected to take up to three years.

On September 2nd myself and Cary Rodregiez (board member of The Vintage Fire Company) rented two large box trucks and retrieved the 28 pallets worth of history that SPAAMFAA and its members have worked so hard to collect and preserve! I'd like to say thank you to Warren Lun of the Archives Committee, for taking the time to supervise the packaging and palletizing of the Archives to streamline collection and transport.

If anyone has any questions please feel free to reach out to me. Thank you to all our members for their continued support!

Owen Franz
District 9 Trustee
owenfranz@gmail.com



Some of the 28 skids of Archives material that is now at the Vintage Fire Company facility.



Owen has put the skids of archival material in pallet racking.



Cary Rodregiez moving a skid out of the ATHS facility with a pallet jack.

Owner's Pride



1995 Seagrave JB-30-D pumper

Novi, Michigan Fire Department
Jason and Melissa Giszewski

In 1995, the Novi (MI) Fire Department took delivery of a new 1995 Seagrave JB-30-DF pumper. Equipped with a 1,000-gpm Waterous Pump and a 1,000-gallon water tank. This delivery continued a long tradition of Seagrave apparatus purchases by Novi. The white over lime green with black stripe was very eye-catching. Novi has since switched to more traditional red fire apparatus.

Jason was looking for a newer more reliable truck to take to musters farther from home. When the Seagrave was spotted online it checked all the boxes. Detroit engine, more reliable, and the lime green paint wasn't a deal breaker. Jason began his firefighting career in 1993 with a department that had lime green apparatus.

The rig was purchased by Jason in July of 2018. At the time, Jason also owned a 1950 American-LaFrance 700 series pumper (ex-Plymouth, IN). Jason later sold the 700 series to a collector in Missouri.

Jason bought his Seagrave home and commenced a frantic pace to get it ready for the upcoming New Haven (IN) Fire Muster in late August of 2018.

Jason being born in the 1970s and growing up in the 1980s was a fan of fire trucks and Ghostbusters movies. Jason and the family named the pumper Slimer. Work continued through 2019 to get the Seagrave all fixed up to attend the SPAA/MFAA Summer National Muster in late

July of 2019 in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Slimer attended the very hot National Muster that year. After the muster season, more work continued through fall and winter 2019.

Jason and family love driving and taking Slimer to musters and shows. While being a 1995 it still looks modern. It's decked out with very bright Whelen Led lightbars, Mars lights and Roto-Ray. Slimer also sports under glow lights. The Seagrave is a crowd favorite at nighttime parades.

Work on an antique rig is never done. Each fall before the rigs are put away for the winter hibernation they are inspected, and a punchlist is made for items needing attention in the off season. You can follow Jason, and Slimer on Facebook @1963Seagrave

Jason has several other pieces of apparatus in the Giszewski Collection.

The Mistress, a 1963 Seagrave KAB900 100' Mid-mount ladder truck. This rig served the Purdue University Fire Department and the Flora (IN) Fire Department. Jason purchased her in 2019.

The Beast, a 1952 Seagrave 70th Anniversary Series Safety Sedan with a 1,000-gpm pump. This rig served the Detroit Fire Department as Engine 5. Jason bought this rig in late 2024.

Jason's wife Melissa says this is the last rig Jason can buy...



Photo by Jason Giszewski.